



Interplast

Repairing bodies & rebuilding lives
in the Asia Pacific region

Mongolia Country Program Review

2008-2014

In collaboration with:

Mongolian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA)

Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA)



Acknowledgements

Interplast Australia & New Zealand (Interplast) would like to thank the Mongolian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA) for welcoming the program review activity and the opportunity to discuss the society and the MSA Annual Scientific Conference (MSA ASC) with Interplast between 23-28 June 2014. In particular, Interplast would like to thank the current President of the MSA (Dr Unurzaya) and past MSA President (Dr Ganbold Lundeg) for their support of this program activity and participation in its development and implementation. Furthermore, this activity would not have been possible without Dr Bilguun Beck of the MSA, who organized all of the interviews with MSA Steering Committee members and made all transport and logistical arrangements for visiting hospitals in Ulaanbaatar and the countryside, as well as providing interpreting services for all meetings. We are incredibly grateful for all of the support of the MSA in this review initiative.

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Executive summary

Interplast has provided financial support to the Mongolian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA) since 2008 through the Australian Society of Anaesthetists (ASA) and Australian government funding. This funding supports MSA office and administration costs, as well as the MSA Annual Scientific Conference (ASC). A review was undertaken in June 2014 of the impact and outcomes of the funding provided to the MSA to ascertain achievements, challenges and sustainability.

This review has identified that the activities, outputs and impacts of the Mongolian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA) have significantly grown since the partnership commenced with Interplast and the ASA. The MSA is sustainable from a social (human resources) perspective, given the lifelong level of commitment and dedication shown by its members, however, it faces challenges from a financial sustainability perspective. Although, members of the MSA Steering Committee are committed to becoming financially sustainable and independent, and have identified a number of potential short and long-term funding and income generation opportunities.

This review has also found that the MSA ASC is an important ongoing professional educational event, providing a key opportunity to further develop skills and knowledge, and to help support and mentor anaesthetists from throughout the country. It also provides a valuable annual planning opportunity for the MSA, who has the majority of its members gathered this one time per year. Participants feel that it is having a positive impact upon reducing anaesthesia related morbidity (complications) and mortality (fatality) throughout Mongolia as the majority use MSA ASC knowledge and skills on a daily basis in their hospital practice, and as such is contributing to increasing respect for the profession. Senior local anaesthetists are now expressing increased confidence in mentoring and teaching younger participants, and local anaesthetists are now starting to present and facilitate workshops at the conference. Lastly, the majority of Australian anaesthetists who volunteer at the MSA ASC feel that it provides essential learning and it should continue (with increased local ownership), and that most would like to continue to be involved.

This program review initiative has confirmed the shared goals of the partnership as expressed by Steering Committee members, Australian volunteers and supported by Interplast, are to:

1. Strengthen local anaesthetic capacity and improve health services and outcomes for the people of Mongolia; and to
2. Strengthen financial sustainability of the MSA so that in the long term the organization may function and deliver activities independent of international funding support.

Various recommendations have been suggested in this report for the MSA to continue to strengthen their organization and the annual conference, and to increase local ownership and sustainability to achieve the above goals. Specifically in relation to the support provided by Interplast to the MSA moving forward, it is recommended that Interplast:

1. Continue to financially support the MSA office and MSA ASC for the next two years (until the end of 2016);
2. Provide mentoring support during this time to the MSA as requested to help develop financial sustainability of both the organization and the annual conference; and to
3. Review financial support to the MSA office and annual conference in early 2017.

Review rationale, structure and method

Interplast has provided a total of almost AUD \$90,000 in financial support to the MSA office and the annual MSA ASC since 2008 (through ASA and Australian Government funding), an average of approximately \$13,000AUD per year. In June 2014 a review of the impact and outcomes of Interplast financial support to the MSA office and the annual MSA ASC was undertaken to ascertain achievements, challenges and sustainability. All review materials used during the initiative were developed in collaboration with both the MSA and the ASA.

A set of interview questions was developed for MSA Steering Committee, to explore the human and financial sustainability of the volunteer-led organisation, as well as impact and outcome of the MSA on the anaesthetics profession and health system in Mongolia. Interviews took approximately 45-60 minutes, and were generally conducted one-on-one, with an interpreter also in attendance to assist where necessary.

In order to conduct independent quantitative assessment of the effectiveness of the annual MSA ASC, and to assess impacts and outcomes on Mongolian physicians and patients, a self-administered structured questionnaire was provided to Mongolian ASC participants to anonymously complete during the 2014 MSA held on 27-28 June.

The third and final part of this review initiative was an online survey undertaken between 10-24 September 2014, which was focussed on gathering input and feedback from the Australian volunteers who participated in the 2014 MSA ASC and/or prior MSA annual conferences regarding impact, outcomes, relevance, feedback and sustainability.

Findings summary

This review has found that the strength and capacity of the Mongolian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA) is growing, as are their actions, outputs and impacts since the partnership commenced with Interplast and ASA in 2008. With the profession gaining increasing respect through improvements to training and ongoing professional education, and with more rights and responsibilities being permitted by the government, the MSA is well placed moving forward to continue their critical work.

The MSA is very strong and highly sustainable from a social (human resources) perspective, given the lifelong level of commitment and dedication shown by its members, however, it faces challenges from a financial sustainability perspective. Although, members of the MSA Steering Committee are committed to becoming financially sustainable and independent, and have a number of potential short and long-term funding and income generation opportunities identified. The review team believes that MSA now needs to develop and plan more strategically for an even stronger future, which Interplast are happy to support where appropriate and requested.

This review has also found that the MSA Annual Conference is an important ongoing professional educational event, providing a key opportunity to further develop skills and knowledge, and to help support and mentor anaesthetists from throughout the country. It also provides a valuable annual planning opportunity for the MSA, who has the majority of its members gathered this one time per year. Participants feel that it is having a positive impact upon reducing anaesthesia related morbidity (complications) and mortality (fatality) throughout Mongolia as the majority use MSA ASC knowledge and skills on a daily basis in their hospital practice, and as such is contributing to increasing respect for the profession. Senior local anaesthetists are now expressing increased confidence in mentoring and teaching younger participants, and local anaesthetists are now starting to present and facilitate workshops at the conference. Lastly, the majority of Australian anaesthetists who volunteer at the MSA ASC feel that it provides essential learning, that it should continue (with increased local ownership), and that they would like to continue to be involved.

This program review initiative has shown that current shared goals of the partnership as expressed by Steering Committee members, Australian volunteers and supported by Interplast, are to:

1. Strengthen local anaesthetic capacity and improve health services and outcomes for the people of Mongolia; and to
2. Strengthen financial sustainability of the MSA so that in the long term the organization may function and deliver activities independent of international funding support.

The key findings and specific recommendations which have been highlighted in this report for the consideration of the MSA, Interplast and ASA are intended to support and achieve these above goals. In conclusion, it is recommended that Interplast:

1. Continue to financially support the MSA office and MSA ASC for the next two years (until the end of 2016);
2. Provide mentoring support during this time to the MSA where requested to help develop financial sustainability of both the organization and the annual conference; and to
3. Review financial support to the MSA office and annual conference in the beginning of 2017.