Profile



Patithin Phetmeuangphuan

he mortality rate of children under the age of five in Laos is unacceptably high, so I thought that if I could play a part in lowering the rate I would be very glad to do so, said Japanese midwife Ms Haruka Miyabayashi, who now works at a Lao hospital.

Ms Miyabayashi, 29, is employed by Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers, under the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and has been working at Thoulakhom district Hospital in Vientiane province since November

She works closely with her Lao counterparts and is helping to improve the health of mothers and children under her care.

Before coming to Laos, Ms Miyabayashi worked as a midwife at a university hospital in Japan where she cared for women during and after pregnancy and during childbirth, as well as premature babies and newborns.

She monitored women's progress during pregnancy and helped them through delivery, while advising them how to take the stress out of pregnancy.

A couple of years ago she

Japanese midwife embarks on a new life at Lao hospital



Ms Haruka Miyabayashi.

with JICA.

Ms Miyabayashi has been in Laos for 16 months and not only delivers babies but also advises doctors, midwives and nurses on the care of mothers and newborns.

To begin with she because of the huge gap in the working methods between Lao and Japanese hospitals. Another problem 'difficult delivery. Some staff was communication with patients as she struggled with the Lao language.

"Thoulakhom hospital doesn't keep clinical records Miyabayashi monitors for every patient.

So the staff have to record all the information in her colleagues. the mother and child book. patient's condition, such as blood pressure, fetal heart

"And staff also don't decided to look for work as maintain a regular checking made her rethink the most

description that suited her results of the checks they make. So I have advised that in Japan they focus everyone to keep records and have tried to explain why this is necessary," she added.

Now some of the staff are keeping records and it is needed. using them for reference.

found it really hard explanatory poster with pictures to indicate what pregnant women should do when they are at risk of a use this poster and it helps patients to understand the process more easily.

> During delivery, Ms the mother's progress and discusses the situation with

Japan is highly developed If you can have a central in this field and new mothers and permanent record of a and their babies are well cared for.

Ms Miyabayashi sound, health issues and hopes to learn from her so on, we can identify any experiences in Laos by problems and lower the observing perinatal care in She also trained younger risks, which results in a the Lao cultural context, so midwives and nursing much safer delivery," she she can learn lessons that she can apply in Japan.

Her experience here has



Ms Miyabayashi examines a patient.

how they can be further needs weren't immediately improved.

Ms Miyabayashi said entirely on the needs of the patient as that person is always considered to be the most important and they are given assistance as soon as

But at Thoulakhom She has also made an hospital she found that staff tended to neglect the needs of patients, mainly by taking a long lunch break or learning about Lao culture. arriving late so that patients'

attended to.

is the Lao way but it was a challenge to be immersed in a system that was so different to that of Japan.

However, she is optimistic that conditions in Laos will change step by step and that things will improve in the future.

Aside from her work, Ms Miyabayashi enjoys The differences between

Laos and Japan are enormous, and sometimes She understands that this she relishes these but at other times is baffled.

> She feels honoured to be involved in the Lao medical world, to work alongside Lao people, and be immersed in Lao culture.

Sne finds that her colleagues are always helpful and kind and willing to share aspects of their work to help her through the day and add to her understanding.



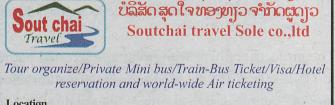
a volunteer and found a job schedule and record the important areas of care and Ms Miyabayashi visits a waterfall with some friends.

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