Indonesia has produced a significant number of nursing schools. The latest information from the Directorate General of Higher Education, MoEC, is that there are 733 nursing schools consisting of 368 schools providing vocational nurse training, and 385 provide professional nurse training, that represent a large increase over previous years. It is expected that these nursing schools producing a huge number of nurses is able to fulfill the need of society in Indonesia. But, as the matter of fact, nursing shortage is still happening in Indonesia, in terms of unfulfilled position. Minister of Health (MOH) estimates that the need of nurses were 87,874 nurses of 118,788 health workers were needed at hospitals; and an estimated 10,146 extra nurses are needed at primary health care level. This condition tells that the unequal distribution is a big challenge in Indonesia.

The unequal distribution of nurses is a crucial issue to address due to the health care needs of the people, especially in underserved rural and remote area. Ministry of Health indicated that there is 87 districts that located within 27 provinces (of 33 provinces) in Indonesia are left behind regarding access to basic health care services. There are also 92 districts in the outermost small islands and 34 small outlying islands do not have even basic services. Therefore, it leads to the question, “Where do Indonesian nurses stay?” Nurses actually prefer to migrate in the big cities in Indonesia such as in DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java, East Java, and North Sumatera. It is because the job opportunities are available in those cities while the technology has a great influence for nurse to move.

In this regard, to cope with the unequal distribution of nurses, Government of Indonesia initiate the contract scheme program or “Pegawai Tidak Tetap” (in Bahasa Indonesia) to distribute not only nurses, but also medical doctors to the
remote and rural areas, and also provide additional incentives for those who work in those areas. However, many nurses are rejected to be placement in those areas. The literature indicated that difficulties of geographic with lack of transportation and infrastructure facilities in most areas outside of Java, Bali, and Sumatra Island are causes of rejection. While low salary, lack of facilities and uncertainty of future carrier of nurses are also considered as other importance factors for unequal distribution of nurses in Indonesia. While Morel (2014) indicated that there are many factors influencing recruitment and distribution of health professionals, including nurses in rural and remote areas such as financial factors, professional factors, location, family and other factors.

Therefore, based on this condition the nurse leaders need to have a great strategy to provide pull factors to increase the intention of nurses to fulfill the position in the locations or areas as needed, especially in rural and remote areas. The nurse leaders might need to prepare for investment and increase the effectiveness of recruitment of new nurses to those areas. However, the author remarks, “the loss of nurses to other provinces or to locations in the city/district where the jobs are, including rural and remote areas is considered a positive investment and create market equilibrium. In contrast, if nurses just keep staying in the location that there are no jobs available, it will be considered a negative investment.”

REFERENCES