

Development of social safety nets for health in the Lao PDR through scaling up voluntary community-based health insurance



UN Trust Fund for Human Security



Fast Facts

Country: Lao PDR

Duration: October 2005 to September 2010

Implementing UN Agencies: WHO

Other Implementing Partners: Ministry of Health

Budget: \$1,289,750

Key Words: Access to health care; community empowerment

BACKGROUND

In 2005, although Lao PDR had made considerable progress in re-enacting its health-care system, insufficient access to quality health care together with financial barriers left poor vulnerable populations excluded from obtaining formal care when needed. While the primary mechanism for health-care delivery was through public health facilities, however, according to WHO data, Government revenues

together with external sources accounted for only 46 per cent of health-care costs, with the remainder coming from out-of-pocket expenditures. With limited resources, the poor were compelled to turn to informal providers in order to obtain low-cost drugs or medical care in event of illness, with detrimental consequences for their well-being.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project's overall objective was to increase access to formal health-care services for vulnerable populations, as well as to promote alternative health financing arrangements for those most vulnerable. To this end, the project sought to (i) establish equitable

community-based health insurance schemes; (ii) develop national and regional frameworks for promoting community-based health insurance; and (iii) evaluate the impact of community-based health insurance for replication on a broader scale.

BENEFICIARIES

The project established community-based health insurance schemes in Sisattanak, Nambak and

Champassak, covering 106,767 people without prior access to health care.