

Success Factors for women's and children's health

Study group internal communication

Brief update on Lao PDR multi-stakeholder review process, February 2014

The Ministry of Health (MoH) in Lao PDR considers the Success Factor Analysis to be an important part of its strategy to use data to track progress towards achieving the MDGs and to inform strategic planning to 2015 and beyond. In 2013, Lao completed an MDG progress update with the UN. The success factor analysis builds on this and related reviews – but looks in more detail at how results have been achieved – with an emphasis on the overarching policy and management best practices both within the health sector and in health-enhancing investments in sectors outside of health. The multi-stakeholder review process is supported by Dr. Bounfeng, Cabinet, Ministry of Health. It is coordinated on the ground by Dr. Eunyoung Ko, MCH Medical Officer, WHO.

The Lao multi-stakeholder review of the country's progress towards MDGs 4&5 involved five parts:

- 1) **Document review by health and development partners** including WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, World Bank, Lux Development, and several NGOs such as the Lao NGO network.
- 2) **MoH meeting.** Document presented and discussed with MoH staff.
- 3) **Multi-sector meeting.** Document presented and discussed with staff from reproductive health and other sectors including education, infrastructure/ water and sanitation, social affairs, the cabinet, and statistics office.
- 4) **One-on-one stakeholder meetings.** Additional meetings were conducted with staff with responsibility for EPI and malaria; and will be conducted with education, infrastructure/poverty reduction, and the Lao Women's Union.
- 5) **Presentation at annual national MCH review meeting.** A summary of the Success Factor review process and main findings was presented on February 20, 2014 at the annual national MCH review meeting, which brings national and sub-national staff together.

Emerging summary findings from the Lao PDR review (work in progress)

- Lao is 'on track' for reducing under five child mortality and maternal mortality – for national and MDG targets
- Child mortality rates declined despite relatively less improvement on related health indicators – e.g. relatively high rates of child stunting (38%) and underweight (27%)
- Maternal health essential health interventions – encouraging improvements, but coverage of key interventions still remains around or below 50% e.g.: Skilled birth attendance- 42%; Antenatal care coverage (4 times by any provider)- 37%, contraceptive prevalence- 50%.
- Coverage of key child health interventions – above 50% for most interventions e.g. immunization - 65%, but remains relatively low for several interventions: Exclusive breastfeeding 40%
- While there have been significant improvements in the health sector, the relatively low coverage levels of key interventions do not tell the whole story of Lao's progress to reduce U5MR and MMR.
- Stakeholders identified that sectors outside of health had contributed in many ways to reductions in maternal and child mortality (the analysis will include policy and program details and discuss plausibility):
 - under-five child mortality e.g.: proportion of people below the poverty line (28%), access to clean water (70%), improved sanitation (62%), net enrolment in primary education (95%)
 - maternal mortality e.g.: total fertility rate (3), female literacy (69%), GDP per capita (US\$2522), improved road paving to get to facilities.

Next steps

Stakeholder interviews will be completed in early March. Partners observed that this process: “worked as a third eye review which assisted the MoH to look back what they have achieved and to think about what they should do more for the next steps.” The Success Factor policy analysis will be revised and edited based on all inputs. It will be finalized by the MNCH Technical Working Group in end-March or early April 2014.

PMNCH update

Summary report from Dr John Murray, Consultant for the Lao PDR review