

SOCIAL HEALTH PROTECTION PROGRAMME

Delivery of Quality Health Services Still a Challenge in Cambodia

The legacy of civil war continues to stifle the progress of health care in Cambodia, which has one of the lowest life expectancies in the Asia-Pacific region. Thirty years of civil conflict left behind over 10 million land mines, instigating a decline in the population's health and leaving over 10 percent with disabilities. The conflict also led to a rise in non-communicable diseases and the degradation of the public health care system. Today, Cambodians continue to suffer from chronic malnutrition, disabilities and a high maternal and infant mortality rate as an offset of the war.

The public health system is in urgent need of qualified personnel, standard equipment and improved facilities. The monthly salaries of nurses and doctors do not commensurate with the cost of living, making it difficult for them to maintain their positions in public hospitals and clinics.

The cost of private health services is a leading cause of household debt for most families in Cambodia. Many Cambodians prefer private over public clinics due to their perception of higher quality health services. In 2012, Cambodians spent an annual average of USD 42 per person on health care. Approximately 7 percent of households spent more than 40 percent of their disposable income on health, and 4 percent struggled to repay health-care-related debts.

Adding to the situation, Cambodian women experience trouble accessing health services if permission is not granted from their husbands, as domestic violence against women is a widespread problem. Furthermore, men are less likely to seek health care even though they are often at higher risk of exposure to disease.

Project name	Social Health Protection Programme (SHPP)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Cambodia
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Health

10 Years of Setting Standards in Cambodia's Health Care Services

- **Since 1995**, German Technical Cooperation (GIZ) has supported Cambodia's health sector in the areas of reproductive health, quality management and capacity development.
- **In 2005**, GIZ added social health insurance to its development efforts.
- **In mid-2009**, the Cambodian-German Social Health Protection Programme expanded "technical cooperation through German Financial Cooperation (KfW Entwicklungsbank).
- **In July 2011**, the programme's second phase began, focusing on the three components of the Ministry's Strategic Plan: health care financing, health service delivery and health system governance.
- **In July 2012**, GIZ's Social Health Protection Programme was extended for a further module on 'Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health'



Photo left: Nurse providing health information to a patient

Photo right: Promotion of charter on clients' rights and providers' rights and duties



Training of midwives

Collection of funds for transport and food allowances to facilitate access to health services for the poor

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GIZ provides strategic advice to the Ministry of Health, supporting the implementation of social health protection schemes and strengthening local health systems. GIZ also supports training centres, hospitals and health centres in rural areas. To improve health system governance, the Cambodian government, with support from GIZ, seeks client feedback to boost accountability provides information to patients on their rights and responsibilities.

Information and experience sharing ensures national guidelines are applicable for local health centres and hospitals. Lessons learned are reported back to the government to improve standards for countrywide implementation.

Providing Health Care Solutions for Women, Children and the Elderly

GIZ and its partners have made significant contributions towards improving the lives and health of women and children in Cambodia. For midwives, nurses and other health care providers trainings, coachings and continuing education courses have been provided, which increase capacity, enable safer deliveries and lower child mortality rates.

Additionally, KfW's contribution provides healthcare vouchers, improving access to family planning services and reducing maternal and infant mortality. GIZ's Rights-based Family Planning and Maternal Health Project provides emergency maternal and newborn health care and promotes sexual and reproductive health and rights.

GIZ also places an emphasis on addressing the special health

needs of older persons with chronic diseases and persons with disabilities. Early detection of disabilities for children is offered as well as public awareness and education campaigns for public health care staff and communities to challenge discrimination.

Putting Patients First: Prioritising the Poor and Vulnerable

Local health insurance schemes supported by GIZ provide over 177,000 people living in poverty with free access to health care services. More than half of these members are women. In cooperation with local faith-based organisations, free transport and food allowances when seeking health care is available in select locations.

Additionally, nearly 17,000 people have voluntarily signed-up for social health insurance by paying a low annual fee. Enrolment in health insurance schemes protects members from spiralling into debt when ill.

The Cambodian-German Social Health Protection Programme is improving access to affordable health care for impoverished and vulnerable populations in Cambodia. Cambodians that have access to public health services will enjoy healthier and longer lives.

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