HEALTH POLICY PROJECT / AFGHANISTAN

Building capacity for improved health policy, advocacy, governance, and finance.

The Health Policy Project (HPP), funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), contributes to improved health through strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness, and equity of health systems.

To learn more, visit HPP at: www.healthpolicyproject.com

Overview

Afghanistan's health system has made significant progress over the last decade—delivering life-saving health services where few, if any, existed during the years of conflict. Despite this progress, significant challenges remain. Afghanistan's health statistics are still among the poorest in the world. Moreover, donor support is likely to decrease in tandem with the withdrawal of international military forces.

The Health Policy Project (HPP) in Afghanistan supports the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) by strengthening its capacity to successfully navigate this transition.

HPP/Afghanistan builds on the work of previous USAID-funded projects, including the Communication for Behavior Change: Expanding Access to Private Sector Health in Afghanistan (COMPRI-A) Project, Health Systems 20/20 (HS 20/20), and the Health Services Support Project (HSSP).

Since its inception in June 2012, the project has focused on

- Enhancing the MOPH's stewardship of the private health sector
- Improving the policy environment for private sector delivery of health services
- Strengthening health financing capacity and systems
- Increasing the capacity of private sector health organizations
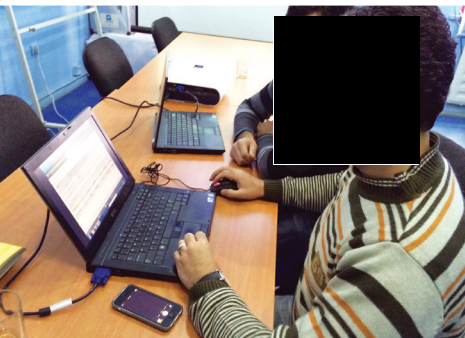- Mainstreaming gender throughout the health sector

Photo Credit: Health Policy Project/Christine Kim

Following HPP training, staff at the Ministry of Public Health's Health Economic and Financing Directorate now use the National Health Accounts tracking tool to conduct analyses and monitor the country's health spending.

Policy

The private sector continues to provide the majority of health services in Afghanistan. HPP partners with the MOPH to foster a more supportive policy environment for private sector health services, and to increase public-private cooperation in the health sector. This includes

- Partnering with the MOPH Directorate of Private Sector Coordination (DPSC) to implement the National Policy for the Private Health Sector
- Working with the MOPH, particularly its Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) Unit, to ensure the legal framework is supportive of private sector health services

Governance

Despite its predominance, the private health sector in Afghanistan remains largely unregulated, and there is weak government oversight. HPP contributes to health sector governance by building the MOPH's capacity to effectively engage with and oversee the private health sector. Key contributions include

- Building the MOPH's capacity to effectively implement the Private Health Centers Regulation Act (PHCR)

Capacity Development

Key divisions of the MOPH

- Gender Directorate—to enhance gender mainstreaming in the health sector

- Health Economics and Financing Division—to improve resource generation, tracking, allocation, and use

- Directorate of Private Sector Coordination and Public-Private Partnerships Unit—to enhance MOPH's stewardship of the private health sector

Private sector organizations

- ███████████████████████████ —to improve the quality of goods and services and ensure that private associations have a voice in policy dialogue and act as strong partners in the delivery of health goods and services

- ████████████—to strengthen ████'s organizational capacity, sustainability and technical offerings to position it as a leading local social marketing entity

- Strengthening the DPSC's organizational and technical capacity and helping it gain Directorate-level status

- Assisting the DPSC to adopt and implement revised Minimum Required Standards (MRS) for private hospitals

- Enhancing the PPP Unit's capacity, including its ability to design, negotiate, and manage PPPs with large hospitals

Health Financing

To improve health financing, HPP provides technical and financial support to the MOPH Health Economics and Financing Directorate (HEFD). Project contributions include

- Building staff capacity in applied health economics and financing

- Helping institutionalize resource tracking and the Expenditure Management Information System (EMIS)

- Evaluating the cost-effectiveness of contracting mechanisms

- Supporting implementation of the Health Financing Policy

- Conducting a feasibility study to inform the design of Afghanistan's health insurance system

- Providing training and support for production of the second National Health Accounts report.

How to Work with Us

For over 40 years, Futures Group has managed large and complex international health and development projects for a range of major development players, achieving significant results on the ground in more than 100 countries. Host-country partners with interest in receiving project assistance should contact their USAID Mission. All Missions may participate through field support. For information on how to work with the Health Policy Project please contact:

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