



AAMH
Asia Australia Mental Health

Partnerships for Community Mental Health
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Laos

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Community Mental Health Promotion in Lao PDR.

By

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Lao PDR



- 6 million population
- Multiethnic = >49 different ethnic groups
- Rural: 75% live in rural areas
- GDP per person US \$443
- % living on < \$1/day: 35 percent
- Life expectancy at birth: 59 years for males and 61 for females.
- Probability at birth of not surviving to age 40 is 28%
- Adult literacy is 68%
- Primary school enrolment is 84%

Background of The Program

- The community mental health promotion program was built in Vientiane, Lao PDR under collaboration with WHO country office and MOH.
- The program was built in 2011 using *top-down* strategy approach.
- Partner with MOH, WHO, NGOs, and other bilateral organizations in the country.
- The program targets policy makers, community leaders, other NGOs and bilateral organizations.

Aims of the Program

- To create domestic community mental health taskforce and network in order to influent policy change on mental health.
- To collaborate in building mental heath capacity for Lao PDR
- To exchange, share knowledge, and mental heath resources
- To create partnership and collaboration that build sustainable institution and community initiatives.
- To access research, training and new treatment strategies, skills, and services from neighboring countries and international mental health communities.
- To increase public awareness on mental health and improve quality mental health service to the community.
- To increase government ‘s attention to mental health capacity building and financing mental health work in Lao PDR.

Outcome of the Program

- MOH has become a stronger support for MH.
- WHO has decided to support for mental health consultant position to help MOH in developing mental health capacity building.
- MOH, WHO, NGOs, and other bilateral organizations have become a strong partnership to push forward a join partnership in mental health training for Lao doctors and service for children and adults in the remote areas.
- Still lack of funding to conduct mental health activities and dealing with multilevel organization and government remain challenge for the mental health promotion in Lao PDR.
- Lack of leadership among members have been challenge for MH promotion

Challenges and lessons learnt

- Difference training background and working experience of each members have created tension in working together.
- Community mental health has recently established and still immature.
- Interpersonal conflict and different vision among team members have remained big challenge.
- Lack of funding and leadership support for mental health
- Lack of open communication.
- Lack of technology and resources for teaching and training.
- Few mental health experts within the country.
- English language barrier makes it difficult for members to communicate with international mental health team.

Future Plan

- Seeks more support from MOH , WHO, other NGOs, bilateral organization and international mental health community.
- Increase team meeting and communication.
- Seeks funding and increase working collaboration with international mental health experts and organizations.
- Provides leadership training to the members.
- Integrating mental health training into primary care service.
- Provide mental health training to GPs and other health workers who work at provincial hospitals and community level.
- Attend international mental health conferences and workshops to exchange knowledge and lessons.