

MATERNAL AND CHILD HEALTH PROJECT LAOS



**Project Brief
2005**

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Atsaphangthong Maternal and Child Health Project, Laos

Background

The Atsaphangthong Maternal and Health Project aims to improve maternal and child health services through capacity building of public and village health service providers and local health facility improvement, and to improve the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to better care and nutrition of infants and children.

Mothers and children throughout the project area will benefit from the improved capacity of sub-district health staff, and village health workers. They will also benefit by the ability of traditional birth attendants to deliver more appropriate and comprehensive maternal and child health information, education and services.

The Atsaphangthong Maternal and Health Project targets 54 villages in the Atsaphangthong District, Savannakhet Province, Laos. The Atsaphangthong District comprises 61 villages in 7 sub-districts with a total population of 34,144 people. The 54 target villages are all within a 26km radius of the Atsaphangthong District centre.

Within the 54 target villages, the primary beneficiaries will be 6,383 needy persons in 16 villages (15 Lao Theung villages + 1 Lao Lum village) who have been identified as requiring "intensive" intervention. However, all people in the Atsaphangthong District stand to benefit directly or indirectly from the project.



Development Issues

High child mortality rates is a major problem in many parts of the Savannakhet Province, especially in remote and ethnic minority villages. Many people are not reaching their full potential in adulthood because of inadequate and inappropriate care. Lack of proper nutrition, especially in early childhood, is also a major contributor with mental and physical development being adversely affected.

Development issues include:

- Inadequately resourced, poorly managed, and underdeveloped district health system.
- High rates of early childhood mortality and morbidity.
- Poor access to health services and equipment.
- Poor knowledge, attitude and practice of mothers and young women.
- Poor access to clean water.
- Unavailability of latrines.
- Insufficient quality and quantity of food.

How Development Issues Will Be Addressed

The above issues will be addressed by working to improve Maternal and Child Health Services delivery in the Atsaphangthong District through capacity building of public and village health service providers and local health facility improvement.

Training and education of Health Care Workers will also be undertaken to improve the knowledge, attitudes and practices related to better care and nutrition of infants and children.

Development Objectives

Development objectives include:

- Improved training and skills levels of district and sub-district health staff.
- Increased capacity of target villages to manage a community based health program.
- Improved health facilities infrastructure including the construction and operation of 1 Sub-District Health Centre.
- Increased capacity to provide target villages with Maternal and Child Health team services and support.
- Improved motherhood, birth spacing and referral system and services.
- Improved Health Education for health workers and recipients.
- Implementation of a Project Management System incorporating planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Development Activities

A number of activities are being undertaken to ensure achievement of project objectives, some such activities include:

- Technical training of 4 District Staff in areas related to Medical Child Health and communicable diseases.
- Formation and strengthening of Village Development Committees in 45 villages including training of and equipping Health Workers with basic drugs and implementing activities in target villages.
- Refresher training of 61 Village Health Workers in target villages & 35 Traditional Birth Attendants
- Construction of, and provision of basic equipment for 1 Sub-District Health Centre and provision of motorcycles for 4 Maternal and Child Health teams
- Conduct of one annual household survey, including analysis of men's, women's and children's feeding practices.

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Project Benefits

Mothers and children throughout the project area will continue to benefit from the improved capacity of sub-district health staff. Village Health Workers and Traditional Birth Attendants will deliver more appropriate and comprehensive maternal and child health information, education and services. Accountability of local health services to local people will thus be increased.

People in two neighboring districts (Phalanexai & Atsaphone) will also benefit from the project, as the Atsaphangthong District Hospital will provide improved echography & caesarian services for this larger catchment area.

Funding

The Project is being funded by the ANCP (AusAID and Non Government Organisation Cooperation Program). With ANCP Schemes, AusAID will fund up to 75% of the project's direct costs provided the Non Government Organisation (World Vision Australia in this case) funds the balance.

Please note that should funds received exceed the matching amount World Vision is required to raise to meet this project's budget, the excess will be used in another, similar ANCP project