

Promotion of Primary Healthcare in Kyrgyzstan

Placing the person at the center of their health system

Context

The Astana declaration of 2018 renewed the commitment to primary health care (PHC) in pursuit of health and well-being for all, leaving no one behind. Its emphasis is on promotion and prevention, addressing determinants and a people-centred approach. Correspondingly, Kyrgyzstan’s health sector strategy, *Healthy person – Prosperous Country* (2019-30), has a strong emphasis on moving towards Universal Health Coverage, strengthening health service delivery with a focus on improving the quality of PHC services and changing to a comprehensive, person centred approach. Whilst the country has experienced success in working on health-related SDG targets, issues persist when it comes to PHC service delivery. Mortality from cardiovascular disease accounts for more than 50% of all deaths in Kyrgyzstan (WHO, 2020) and maternal mortality measures 60 per 100,000 live births (UNICEF, 2019). These figures are the highest across the WHO Euro region. The COVID-19 pandemic further exposed weaknesses in the system and underlined the importance of PHC in managing a pandemic, both now and in the future.

Our objective

The overall objective of the Kyrgyz-German project Promotion of Primary Healthcare is to improve the quality of health care services particularly at PHC level, with a focus on mother and child health, in the Chui and Osh regions.

Our measures

The project is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Kyrgyz Republic (MoHSD) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ) on

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behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Kyrgyzstan has been a partner country for German development cooperation since the early 1990s, and the PHC project continues to build upon a strong partnership whilst targeting health as a focus area. To achieve the objective, the project team supports the national partner in contextualising PHC and creating the appropriate model for PHC for the future. This includes reforming family medicine services, introducing a multi-profile, integrated, team-based PHC model, strengthening a multi-level quality improvement system and improving rural health models with mobile and digital services. Underpinning the efforts is the principle of “person centred integrated care”.

The project works in line with the National Development Strategy 2018-2040 and the National Health Strategy 2019-2030 and contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals SDG 3.1 (maternal mortality), 3.2 (neonatal and under-5 mortality) and SDG 3.8 (universal health coverage).

Performance of the health care system at primary health care level

We support selected PHC facilities in Osh and Chui oblasts to adapt and implement national frameworks and guidelines whilst providing guidance to the MoHSD in the development of an



L. to r.: Quality Improvement team is defining priorities with support of mentor, Osh.

Ainura Safarova, a rural family nurse, during a routine postnatal home visit in Vasilievka, Chui region.

Pg 2: A midwife Elita Alyaskarova during a routine antenatal medical examination at Alamedin Family Group Practice, Chui region.

Mothers, pregnant women and children at Osh Family Medicine Center.



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integrated care model. The newly adopted “Master Plan”, aimed at optimising performance through merging family medical centres and territorial hospitals, has started rolling out and we will work with facilities to navigate this new context.

Quality assurance of public health services

The project is assisting the development of quality improvement teams and works further through the mentorship programme introduced in the previous project. Coordination between different levels is facilitated, as the activities of the quality improvement teams must be supported by facility management and reinforced through a department of quality assurance within the MoHSD.

The importance of digitalisation in primary healthcare is becoming increasingly apparent and we are exploring digital solutions which contribute to improvements in the management of PHC. Tools may include technology in registration and administration of patients, inventory management, medication prescription, mentoring and counselling, referrals and networking between health professionals.

Strengthening competencies

Successful introduction of new approaches and new models of care need to go beyond guidelines, standards and protocols. Developing new skills, transforming mindsets and promoting multidisciplinary teams are crucial. We work with the MoHSD to incorporate the principles of person-centred care in practice by revising roles and responsibilities for nurses, midwives and doctors and introducing new professions, such as social workers. We will also help to train staff members taking on new tasks.

Our results to date

Since 2018, the previous project “Promotion of Perinatal Health in KGZ” has supported the former Ministry of Health in improving maternal and child health. Thanks to this cooperation in the area of strengthening healthcare organization, cases of hospital acquired infections in Neonatal Intensive Care Units have decreased from an estimated 7.6% to 5.8% in pilot regions; the proportion of women in pilot regions being prescribed folic acid during pregnancy has increased from 69% in 2017 to 88% in 2019; 13 healthcare organizations implemented quality improvement plans; task-shifting the management of normal deliveries to midwives was approved and piloted in regional and national maternity houses; 808 health workers upgraded their skills in obstetrics and reproductive health. The following products were developed:

- A National E-Register on Cerebral Palsy
- A national clinical protocol on antenatal care and management of high-risk pregnancies was approved by the former Ministry of Health for use in the country and integrated it into the curricula of continuous medical education
- A visualized algorithm for the referral of pregnant women based on their condition was developed for Chui region
- The Safe Delivery mobile application was adapted to national standards and translated into Kyrgyz and Russian languages with 3,291 downloads (April, 2021)
- A suite of HR documents to support the HR strategy for the country’s first tertiary level perinatal centre were developed and presented to the former Ministry of Health.

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