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→ Review of the National Rehabilitation Strategy 2018 - 2025 and Establishment of Monitoring and Evaluation Framework ←



There are about 2.4 billion people¹ worldwide living with a health condition that may benefit from rehabilitation, and in some low and middle-income countries there are fewer than half who receive the services they need. Rehabilitation is a vital health strategy, core to achieving universal health coverage, that contributes to people’s wellbeing, improves their day-to-day functioning; specifically, how they move around, care for themselves, think, communicate, and socialize.

Based on the global estimates, 15% of the population live with some forms of disability, Lao PDR may have over one million persons with some form of disability. However, its estimates vary on the prevalence of disability. The 2015 Lao PDR census estimated a disability prevalence of 2.8%.² Another disability survey in selected areas of Laos in 2016 reported a significantly higher disability prevalence at 10.8%.³ This variation in the estimates is due to different methods used for measuring disability in the surveys.



From March 21-22, 2023, key stakeholders from the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, UN agencies and INGOs met to discuss the MoH National Rehabilitation Strategy (2018 - 2025). The two-day technical meeting chaired by the Ministry of Health’s Director General, Department Healthcare and Rehabilitation, Dr Khamsay Detleuxay, WHO Lao PDR’s Health Systems Team Lead, Dr. Yu Lee Park, and USAID Okard Chief of Party, World Education Laos, Bernard Franck.

DHR and CMR led sessions presenting the implementation of rehabilitation activities and progress to achieve the strategic and operational objectives. WHO technical expert, Pauline Kleinitz led learning sessions and group work to design a draft monitoring framework including priority indicators. Productive discussions helped key MoH departments and health facilities understand their contribution to support rehabilitation data collection and monitoring, thus recognizing the need to improve communication and coordination between different stakeholders. Participants recognized the huge importance of rehabilitation data as part of the health information system to inform evidence-based decision-making to improve health systems strengthening and rehabilitation service provision.

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/rehabilitation>

² Lao Statistics Bureau, Results of population and housing census 2015. 2016, Ministry of Planning and Investment: Vientiane.

³ Fielding, A., et al., Improving Access to Social and Economic Services for People with Disability in Lao PDR. 2017.

Participants highlighted the meeting as a positive step towards improving rehabilitation services in Lao PDR and ensuring that the 2018-2025 National Rehabilitation Strategy is effective in improving the lives of those needing healthcare.

The WHO and Okard Mission team met with the Lao PDR Health Minister, Dr. Bounfeng Phoummalaysit, before and after the technical meeting to share key talking points. Dr. Bounfeng concluded “Data is critical to informing the future direction of the Ministry of Health on rehabilitation. Reviewing the progress of the Rehabilitation Strategy, developing a monitoring framework and increasing availability of data will help us to plan for the next ten years, so we can support the growing number of people who need rehabilitation. It will also increase access to quality rehabilitation services, to build capacity of the health workforce, and to inform the availability of assistive products through a multi-sectoral approach.”

DHR will continue to work on finalization and endorsement of the monitoring framework and start regular data collection and analysis to measure achievements of the National Rehabilitation Strategy.

Photo 1: USAID Okard and WHO meet with Health Minister to discuss rehabilitation data-driven direction - Photo credit: MoH

Photo 2: Ministry of Health and stakeholders review National Rehabilitation Strategy with WHO and USAID Okard support - Photo credit: Souliya Ounavong - USAID Okard Communication and Liaison Officer

Photo 3: Dennapha and her family moving around the house with her special wheelchair – Photo credit: Souliya Ounavong – USAID Okard Communication and Liaison Officer