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What is MCSP?

The Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) is a global, USAID Cooperative Agreement to introduce and support high-impact interventions, with the ultimate goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths. In Laos, MCSP is integrated within the Save the Children Primary Health Care (PHC) program, working in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Luang Prabang provincial hospitals, five district hospitals in each province and five health centers in each district. In this issue, we highlight the mentorship working meeting held in Vientiane on the 31st July, 2018. **'Mentorship capacity building: Sustainable solutions for Lao'** gathered over 70 participants from MoH, central hospitals, University of Health Sciences and those involved in national programs, for example, EENC, EmOC and IMCI to share learning on effective approaches to capacity building.



Mentorship capacity building: sustainable solutions for Lao



MENTORSHIP

WHAT? Mentorship is learning by doing together in practice in the mentee's workplace
WHO? Mentors are experienced mother & newborn health care providers trained in the Mentorship approach. Mentees are midwives, nurses, doctors involved in MNH care
WHEN? Mentoring is part of everyday practice
WHERE? In 5 district hospitals in LP, 5 HC in each district and the provincial hospital
HOW? Trained mentors mentor their peers in practice with a buddy system of support
WHY? Mentoring builds skills & capabilities to improve quality care at the time of birth

Ownership and partner led advocacy

The meeting's success can be seen in the ownership taken by our LP and SYB participants, and the initiative the MoH took to arrange and lead the meeting. This ownership is not only critical for future sustainability but the partner-led advocacy was far more compelling and genuine; hearing from the voices and hearts of those implementing the approach in LP and SYB. SCI took 13 mentors and hospital directors from both provincial and district levels as well as the two provincial health department directors to the meeting. They presented and formed a panel forum and discussion to share their experiences of mentoring and how they have applied it in other areas of their work and other geographical locations. Their contributions were very meaningful and provide a great example of how government partners can advocate effectively at central level if given the opportunity and support to do so. Their success is testimony of what is possible and will set a great example for future partner-led meetings.

Capturing interest at central level

As mentioned above, one key success of the Vientiane meeting was gaining the interest and attention of MoH and other central level stakeholders in the mentorships approach. Other capacity building programs recognized the value and were interested in the progress achieved. It will be important to maintain momentum and to continue to advocate and inform other capacity development approaches.

Collaboration between teams in maternal, newborn, child health and education

A final success was the collaboration between various teams at central level who are all working on different strategic objectives under the RMNCH strategy. This was especially important for teams working on EmOC and EENC. Even at annual RMNCH meetings the participants and discussions are often separate. The mentor meeting therefore provided an opportunity to share learning and work collaboratively towards the goal of improving the quality of care at the time of birth. This meeting was only the beginning but has opened the door to allow further engagement at the national level.

Photo Captions: (consent was given for photographs)

Photo 1 Top: Group photo

Photo 2: Mentor and midwife from LP, Leutphana presenting on the national stage

Photo 3: Meeting participants including Dr Somanna and Dr Alongkone

Photo 4: Small group discussions on practical ways to integrate mentoring into national programs

Photos by SCI team