

Improving Sexual and Reproductive Health through Reducing Early Marriage in Remote Ethnic Communities in Lao PDR



Local people with SRH information

BACKGROUND

The project is embedded in CARE's long term program on Remote Ethnic Women, who face multiple layers of disadvantages and discrimination as a result of gender inequality, which prevents them from achieving an equitable quality of life (limited access to land, education & health services, food insecurity, high maternal mortality rates and heavy workloads). In June 2018, CARE commissioned a Gender and Ethnicity Analysis to collate key findings and recommendations from the various gender analyses, baselines and final evaluations conducted by CARE Laos over the past 7 years. The analysis showed that 15,1 % of women of the Mon Khmer ethnic linguistic group, which includes Taiheng, Katou and Yae are married before 15 and 31,3% of women between 15 and 19 years of age are married, which goes along with a higher adolescent birth, fertility and illiteracy rate compared to the dominant Lao Tai ethnic group. Another emerging finding was that women in ethnic communities have important knowledge gaps around reproductive health. The project aims to fill these gaps by increasing access to SRH information for adolescents and their communities, and to shift norms on early marriage and pregnancy through a comprehensive SBCC approach. Furthermore, the project increases the quality and availability of confidential youth friendly SRH services at rural health centres.

AT A GLIMPSE



Location
Lamam and
Dakcheung Districts
Sekong Province

TimeFrame

01 June 2019 - 30 April 2022

Beneficiaries

Direct: 1,000 people, 500 women
Indirect: 4,500 People, 2,250 Women

Partners

Ministry of Health, Sekong Provincial Department of Health, Sekong Lao Women's Union, Promotion of Family Health Association (PFHA)

OBJECTIVES

Improved sexual reproductive and maternal health (SRMH) in remote ethnic communities in Sekong

DONOR

Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)



OUTCOMES

- **Result 1: Increased access to sexual reproductive and maternal health (SRMH) information, policies and rights**
 - Develop a Project SBCC (social behaviour change communication) package
 - Gender Social Norms Training (SAA) with local partners procedures
 - TOT on implementing SBCC package for local partners
 - Health awareness raising sessions for village health volunteers and peer leaders in Lamam and Dakcheung Districts
 - Creating girls and boys clubs and implement SBCC
 - Leadership and facilitation skills training for peer mobilisers and LYU members
 - Reflection and lessons learnt workshop
- **Result 2: Increased access to youth-friendly sexual reproductive health services**
 - Training in youth friendly services by Ministry of Health
 - Provide Private Spaces at Health Centres for SRH counselling to adolescents
 - Support health staff in promoting services in target communities including via Facebook
 - Monitoring application of standards in health facilities by local CSO PFHA, village health volunteers, and peer mobilisers
- **Result 3: Local partners (CSOs, Ministry of Health, Health committees) have the capacity to deliver key messages on the link between child marriage and pregnancy risks to the targeted ethnic minority communities**
 - Revision of CARE's existing Sexual and Reproductive Health curriculum considering youth and ethnic community aspects
 - Training of Trainers (TOT) for local partners in application of revised community SRHM manual
- **Result 4: Number of girls finishing secondary school is increased**
 - Social Analysis and Action (SAA) gender social norms training with communities
 - Creating an enabling environment through public debate
 - Story telling

IMPACTS

- Increased access to sexual reproductive and maternal health (SRMH) information, policies and rights
- Increased access to youth friendly sexual reproductive health services
- Local partners (CSOs, Ministry of Health, Health committees) have the capacity to deliver key messages on the link between child marriage and pregnancy risks to the targeted ethnic minority communities
- Numbers of girls finishing secondary school is increased



Local women are satisfied with their visits to their local health centers.