

P4H Asia Network Newsletter - April 2022



The P4H Network is a global health network aimed at improving social health protection (SHP) and strengthening health financing (HF) systems to promote universal health coverage (UHC) in low- and middle-income countries. In 2017, P4H created the Asia Network for Health Financing and Protection (ANHFP).

Eighteen countries came together to discuss common policy issues and experiences, best practices and lessons learned in SHP and HF for UHC. Key principles – communication, joint advocacy, collaboration and inclusiveness – guide the P4H Network.

Expert Speaks

Countries in Asia and the Pacific have made laudable progress in expanding SHP coverage over the past decades. However, the effective realization of the right to SHP is not yet a reality for all. According to recent estimates reported by the International Labour Organization (ILO), only 77.8% of the population in the region is legally covered by a health care scheme, and only 63.4% of the population is effectively protected. This means around 1.6 *billion* people are left completely unprotected. The region also has the highest number of people and percentage of the population who face impoverishment due to out-of-pocket health spending. Furthermore, inequalities in coverage and access to services are still pronounced both across and within countries.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light these gaps in SHP. By revealing the devastating consequences of gaps in coverage and adequacy for individuals and societies alike, the pandemic further increased the public demand for adequate SHP. Those unable to get the treatment required to recover from COVID-19, to access vaccines or to quarantine endanger both themselves and others, thereby undermining public health efforts to contain the SARS-CoV-2 virus. In response, governments around the world introduced emergency measures to ensure timely access to health care, roll out vaccination programmes and provide sickness benefits for their populations. These efforts included extending reach, improving adequacy and facilitating delivery.

The pandemic has been a wake-up call. Moving forward, it is crucial to step away from emergency responses to tackle the pandemic and to adopt more permanent, resilient and comprehensive social protection systems. Such systems must aim at universal coverage and effective access to affordable health care services and adequate sickness benefits, with a particular focus on people who lack protections and live in vulnerable situations.

In Asia and the Pacific, the CONNECT network actively fosters South-South collaboration on SHP, particularly on capacity-building and knowledge development. For example, in 2021, it produced country case studies on SHP in Asia and the Pacific with the P4H Network. Building on partnerships with existing networks such as CONNECT, P4H constitutes an additional and important platform to promote knowledge exchange within the community of SHP and HF experts around identifying concrete solutions to extend SHP. With its growing network of institutions in the region, supported by its dynamic [digital platform](#), P4H further enables active exchanges of information, thus supporting countries' efforts towards UHC.

Marielle Phe Goursat

Chief Technical Adviser, Social Health Protection Programme

for Viet Nam, Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar

Highlights of the Month

In March 2022, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, efforts to provide better SHP and access to essential health services continued among countries in Asia and were several. The Republic of Korea and Thailand improved financial incentives to enhance access to treatment for the entire population, while the Philippines added financial assistance to women with cancer to its range of essential health services. India adopted innovative HF models including public financing and mixed sources of funding to ensure the affordable care of the vulnerable population. Viet Nam started to improve its national data on health insurance through digital transformation, synchronizing health insurance information with national data on population.

Publications highlighted in this month's issue of the P4H Asia Network newsletter cover a range of topics. Topics include the following. In Thailand and Malaysia, political economy influenced HF reforms. Maldives released a report on health care expenditures. India addressed financial risk protection, access to care and issues related to unmet needs. Evidence from selected countries highlighted the importance of budget execution for UHC.

To promote knowledge exchanges and sharing experiences on SHP and HF in Asia, the P4H Network, together with technical input from ILO and the World Health Organization, hosted webinars on strategic verification for strategic purchasing and SHP and HF reforms in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States. Addressing SHP needs to reach effective coverage has become a prominent endeavour among the countries in Asia. By addressing SHP needs, Asia shows the importance the region gives to equitable and efficient allocation of HF resources to advance and sustain UHC.

Tweets of the Month

Unconditional cash transfers improve health, food security, and dietary diversity, two social determinants of health (i.e. the likelihoods of attending school and being extremely poor), + healthcare expenditure. #BasicIncome (29 March 2022)

Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews | Review - Intervention

New search Conclusions changed

Unconditional cash transfers for reducing poverty and vulnerabilities: effect on use of health services and health outcomes in low- and middle-income countries

✉ Frank Pega, Roman Pabayo, Claire Benny, Eun-Young Lee, Stefan K Lhachimi, Sze Yan Liu Authors' declarations of interest

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<https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD011135.pub3> 

[Read more](#)

EVENT UPDATE! Join P4H Network, @TheCollectivity, @blsqhub, PBF CoP as we host a webinar on Strategic Verification for Strategic Procurement on Wednesday, April 6 from 3-4:30 p.m. CET (29 March 2022)



[Read more](#)

Despite its challenges, 2021 was an extremely productive year for the Alliance. We supported seven journal special issues and 208 grants across 59 countries. Find out more in our 2021 Annual Report (28 March 2022)



[Read more](#)

Join Professionals for Fair Development, @msa49actu and @AFD_en for a webinar on #SocialProtection for the Agricultural Sector: Presentation of the French System and Perspectives to Design a Strategy of Coverage in #Cambodia (18 March 2022)



INVITATION

Webinar on **SOCIAL PROTECTION FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR: PRESENTATION OF THE FRENCH SYSTEM AND PERSPECTIVES TO DESIGN A STRATEGY OF COVERAGE IN CAMBODIA**

Dates

Session 1 – **22nd March 2022, 1:30pm – 6pm (GTM+7)**
Session 2 – **23rd March 2022, 1:30pm – 6pm (GTM+7)**

Format

Zoom with translation French/Khmer and French/English

<https://zoom.us/j/94006667077?pwd=QkNlVWNO5Fk4NjBYNDZzVVVpQjNzUT09>
Meeting ID: 940 0666 7077
Passcode: 625132

Host

GRET and CCMSA (Central agricultural social mutual fund)

Speaker

CCMSA
Mr. Pascal CORMERY, President of CCMSA
Mrs. Regine LAURENCE, Finance Director of CCMSA

Contact

Camille VAUTIER, Social protection project manager, GRET

[Read more](#)

Corrective health taxes require stronger policy commitments than seen during the #Pandemic. This policy note highlights why international financial institutions play an important role in helping countries strengthen their #HealthTaxes (4 March 2022)



Center for Global Development @CGDev · Mar 4

Throughout the pandemic, governments have failed to prioritize policies that could help them pay for #COVID19 vaccines & their pandemic recovery agenda: taxes on tobacco and alcohol.

New @CGDev note + key takeaways from past analysis

cgdev.org/publication/im...

[Show this thread](#)

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Trending News

ILO ITC launches the online course: E-Learning on Social Health Protection 2022 (29 March 2022)



The seven-week course started on 21 Feb 2022 and focused on health coverage within the context of national social protection systems. The course provided an overview of the objectives of SHP and its contribution to reaching UHC and universal social protection in the context of the 2030 Agenda.

[Read more](#)

Healthcare now, pay later: A new way for distress financing in India (24 March 2022)



Chris George explores an innovative HF model – embedded finance wherein health care services can be availed using a credit card with a 0% interest rate, thereby addressing the challenges of distress financing for health.

[Read more](#)

How philanthropic collaboratives can help the vulnerable in India (24 March 2022)



Philanthropic collaboratives are mobilizing funds from various sources and expanding the availability of affordable and quality healthcare solutions to the lowest-income population in India.

[Read more](#)

India's much-hyped health insurance scheme failed to cover hospital bills (24 March 2022)



Tabassum Barnagarwala writes about poor coverage of Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, India's largest government-financed health insurance scheme, the reasons for poor coverage and the health impacts.

[Read more](#)

Covid patients struggle to get documents to make social insurance claim in Viet Nam (18 March 2022)



In Viet Nam, COVID-19 patients required sick leave certificates to make a social insurance claim. Due to delays or procedural issues in generating documents, or due to self-treatment at home, many COVID-19 patients could not file a claim.

[Read more](#)

Viet Nam: Ready for the pilot implementation of chip-based ID cards in medical treatment with health insurance (18 March 2022)



Viet Nam Social Security (VSS) and Viet Nam's Ministry of Public Security have synchronized national data on health insurance with national data on population to develop chip-based ID cards. These cards allow a lookup of information about health insurance. The collaboration and card show a move towards modern administration and digital government.

[Read more](#)

PhilHealth provides financial assistance to women with cancer



PhilHealth's Z Benefit package includes treatment of gynaecologic illnesses, early-stage breast cancer (stage 0 to III-A), surgery, chemotherapy etc. to offer financial risk protection from cancer treatment.

[Read more](#)

Social security's digital transformation: putting people and businesses at the centre (11 March 2022)



VSS focuses on promoting digital transformation and information technology to service businesses and citizens, reviewing and simplifying administrative procedures and completing infrastructure and data linkage with ministries and agencies.

[Read more](#)

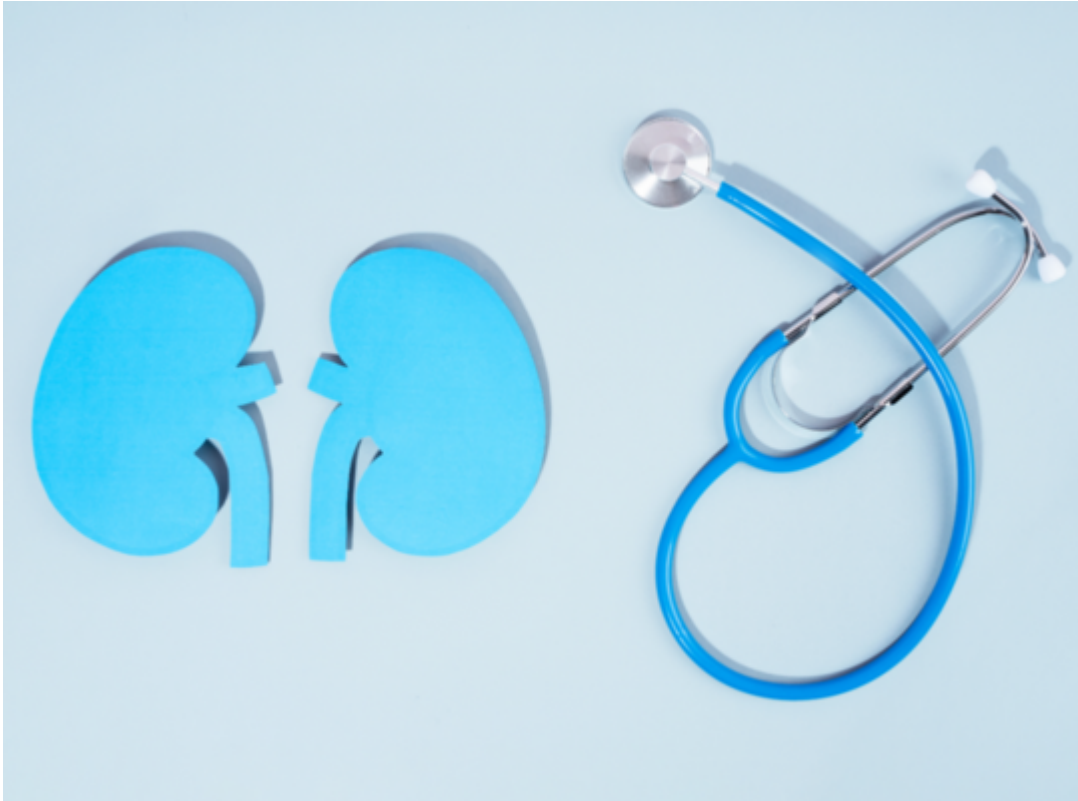
Health budget in light of pandemic in India (10 March 2022)



This paper attempts to demonstrate the planned reforms in the health budget, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. It remains to be seen how the financial allocation for the health sector impacts the health of the Indian people.

[Read more](#)

New payment rate for continuous renal replacement therapy in Thailand (10 March 2022)



The National Health Security Office has increased hospital reimbursement rates for continuous renal replacement therapy (CRRT), aiming to increase access to treatment among people with acute kidney injury. The new payment rate is expected to motivate hospitals to provide CRRT to patients, which in turn could lead to better access to treatment.

[Read more](#)

Korea enhanced the COVID-19 response and childbirth care (10 March 2022)



The Central Disaster and Safety Countermeasure Headquarters in the Republic of Korea discussed the weekly risk evaluation and related response measures for COVID-19, fees paid by National Health Insurance to health care providers to enhance care for pregnant women diagnosed with COVID-19, and the current status and response of local governments in relation to the pandemic.

[Read more](#)

Reports and Papers

- [The Political Economy of UHC Reform in Thailand: Lessons for Low- and Middle-Income Countries](#)
 - [The political economy of health financing reform in Malaysia](#)
 - [Intersection of class, caste, gender and unmet healthcare needs in India: Implications for health policy](#)
 - [Impact of public-funded health insurances in India on health care utilisation and financial risk protection: a systematic review](#)
 - [Maldives Health Expenditure 2020](#)
 - [Don't let the budget fool you](#) – World Bank Blogs
 - [“Demand Side” Health Insurance in India: The Price of Obfuscation](#)
 - [The relationship between health expenditure, CO2 emissions, and economic growth in the BRICS countries—based on the Fourier ARDL model](#)
 - [Facilitators and barriers to participation of the private sector health facilities in health insurance & government-led schemes in India](#)
 - [Illness and Wage Loss: Longitudinal evidence from India \(and Implications for the Universal Health Coverage Agenda\)](#)
 - [Addressing data and methodological limitations in estimating catastrophic health spending and impoverishment in India, 2004–](#)
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Meet the P4H Asia Team

Marielle Phe Goursat is the P4H Country Focal Person for Viet Nam



For over 15 years, Marielle Phe Goursat has been providing technical support to governments and social security institutions on designing and strengthening their SHP systems. She has focused on the sub-Saharan Africa and South-East Asia regions for international organizations, bilateral cooperation agencies, consultancy companies and nongovernmental organizations.

Marielle currently resides in Hanoi, where she works for the ILO as a Chief Technical Adviser for Viet Nam, Lao PDR and Myanmar.

Aungsumalee Pholpark is the Asia Network Community Manager



Aungsumalee Pholpark, a lecturer in the Department of Society and Health, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Mahidol University, Thailand, holds a PhD in social welfare from Yonsei University, Republic of Korea. Before joining the Department of Society and Health, she worked as a researcher at Health Insurance System Research Office, Health Systems Research Institute, Thailand. Her research has covered the assessment of health care insurance and long-term care insurance system and policy.

Join the P4H Network for latest updates in Health Financing and Social Health Protection

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P4H Asia Network Partners

