



STRATEGIC PURCHASING FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

ABOUT SP4PHC

The Strategic Purchasing for Primary Health Care (SP4PHC) project aims to improve how governments purchase primary health care (PHC) services, with a focus on family planning (FP) and maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH). The project is implemented by ThinkWell in collaboration with government institutions and local research partners in five countries: Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Kenya, the Philippines and Uganda. SP4PHC is supported by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The purchasing context in these countries is quite different; large national health insurance schemes cover most of the population in some countries, while ministries of health at the national and sub-national levels dominate the purchasing landscape in others. Across these different geographies, the project is working to strengthen schemes that are critical for improving the delivery of PHC and addressing the needs of the poor, while also improving alignment across different purchasing arrangements within the health system. Through its learning agenda, the project aims to generate and diffuse knowledge about strategic purchasing for PHC to influence policy and practice at the country, regional, and global levels.

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OUR APPROACH

- We implement strategies tailored to the country context.
- We have country-based teams in each of the five geographies, which are at the forefront of implementing country activities.
- We work with the public purchaser and other relevant government institutions in each of the countries to facilitate policy dialogue on strategic purchasing reforms.
- We use analytics to diagnose existing challenges, design potential solutions, and test the sustainability of those designs through pilot studies.

WHAT IS STRATEGIC PURCHASING?

As countries implement strategies to achieve universal health coverage, they are undertaking health financing reforms to mobilize more financing for health and ensure that available funds for health are used optimally and equitably. Strategic purchasing is linked to the second objective. Purchasing refers to how institutions controlling pooled funds – like ministries of health and health insurance agencies – allocate them to healthcare providers. Making purchasing strategic involves basing purchasing decisions on information about provider behavior and population health needs in order to improve health system performance in terms of equitable access, quality of care and financial protection.





The Government of Uganda (GoU) has initiated key steps towards universal health coverage that include the development of the 2016 Health Financing Strategy and planning for a National Health Insurance System (NHIS) that will build on existing results-based financing (RBF) and voucher programs. The policy environment around these issues is primed for improving how the GoU purchases FP and MNCH services within the context of a broader package of PHC. The current purchasing landscape is fragmented due to the myriad of purchasing schemes, from supply-side government budgetary allocations to donor-funded RBF and voucher programs. ThinkWell and Makerere University School of Public Health are collaborating with the Ministry of Health (MoH) to develop and implement a more coherent approach to purchasing that draws from the experience of these programs and leverages the full range of public and private health facilities in the country. They are collaborating on the following SP4PHC strategies:

HARMONIZE AND STRENGTHEN PURCHASING ARRANGEMENTS

SP4PHC is supporting the MoH to coordinate existing purchasing reforms (including both RBF and voucher programs), as well as develop and implement a plan for transitioning Uganda from a mix of disparate schemes to a more harmonized approach in the context of the planned NHIS.

CATALOGUE KEY LOCAL STRATEGIC PURCHASING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A range of strategic purchasing pilots and programs are being (and have been) tested in Uganda. Through policy reviews and implementation research, SP4PHC is synthesizing findings about the successes and challenges of these different efforts and determining how these lessons can be applied moving forward, especially with a potential NHIS. SP4PHC will then facilitate informed policy dialogue on options for making purchasing more strategic.

SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENT TO EFFECTIVELY PURCHASE PHC SERVICES FROM PRIVATE PROVIDERS

In many urban settings, public sector infrastructure is limited and there is an abundance of largely disconnected private providers. The Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) aims to bring together and leverage these private providers to make PHC and RBF purchasing more strategic. The SP4PHC team is facilitating dialogue between the MoH, KCCA and other key stakeholders to formalize existing initiatives through a hybrid network in order to more efficiently purchase PHC services, with a focus on MCH and FP.

For more information, visit <https://thinkwell.global/projects/sp4phc/> or write to SP4PHC@thinkwell.global.

ThinkWell is a health systems development organization with experience designing, implementing, evaluating, and diffusing new solutions to persistent health system challenges. Using tailored strategies that meet context-specific needs, we have supported health financing and governance reforms in over 30 countries. www.ThinkWell.global