



STRATEGIC PURCHASING FOR PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

SP4PHC

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ABOUT SP4PHC

The Strategic Purchasing for Primary Health Care (SP4PHC) project aims to improve how governments purchase primary health care (PHC) services. The project is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and is implemented by ThinkWell in collaboration with government institutions and local research partners in six countries: Burkina Faso, Indonesia, Kenya, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Uganda. 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 subnational 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.

OUR APPROACH

- We implement strategies tailored to the country context.
- We have country-based teams in each of the six 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 health care 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.



Burkina Faso

We are working with the Ministry of Health to support their financing reforms and improve the availability and quality of health services, particularly family planning and maternal, newborn, and child health services, through their Gratuité policy. This includes enabling greater availability and use of data for performance management and decision-making at all levels of the system and facilitating greater alignment around tariffs for key services.

Indonesia

We are supporting BPJSK, the implementing agency for the national health insurance scheme, JKN, and the Ministry of Health (MOH) to improve how the scheme purchases primary health care (PHC) services. We are also supporting the MOH to design and implement its Integrated Primary Health Care (ILP) reform. To that end, we are coordinating a catalytic learning platform, called a PHC Consortium, on a range of ILP-related activities, including assessing and optimizing how funds flow through districts and can be used by PHC facilities and using available data for improved resource allocation and performance at the subnational level.

Kenya

We are supporting the Kenyan government to improve the financing and performance of primary health care services, particularly in light of the recent Primary Health Care Bill. We are strengthening how county governments—the main purchasers of PHC services—allocate resources to health facilities and manage their performance. We use this county-level experience to inform national policy development.

Pakistan

We are in the initial stages of our journey in Pakistan and focused on foundational efforts to enhance PHC systems. Through close partnerships with local organizations, we aim to improve PHC purchasing in the provinces of Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Punjab. Our approach includes refining purchasing strategies, expanding the role and sustainability of Lady Health Workers in PHC service delivery, and facilitating the sustainable rollout of an essential benefits package of PHC services tailored to the national context. In addition, we are exploring ways to streamline the outsourcing of health facility management and expand access to family planning services through public-private partnerships.

Philippines

We previously supported PhilHealth and the Department of Health to implement the Universal Health Care Law, which included providing technical support on policy development and directly working with two pilot Universal Health Care integration sites. We also collaborated with PhilHealth and the Commission on Population and Development to encourage private providers to offer quality FP services.

Uganda

We are supporting the Ministry of Health to develop and implement a more coherent approach to purchasing that draws from the lessons of ongoing results-based financing and voucher programs and leads to harmonization of disparate schemes. We are also facilitating multi-stakeholder dialogues on leveraging the full range of public and private health facilities from the national to municipal level.

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