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Project name: Initiative in Accessing ARV Adherence Services of Key Population, and Covid 19 Response by Communities and Key Population
Project implementor: Association of people living with HIV/AIDS (APL+)
Project period: August 2020 – March 2021
Project target group: PLHIV peer educators/ health receivers and health providers

Summary

Project information

Overall objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthen the capacity of communities on preparation for COVID-19 response targeting key populations and PLHW
Specific objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Contribute to government efforts for protection against COVID-19 among key population and PLHW in Lao PDR; - Increase the involvement of key population including MSM, TG, sex workers and PLWHs, in raising awareness on COVID-19 among key population; - Provide tele-health service to reduce the number of crowded patients at ART sites, including the cost of transportation and time to access services at health facilities.
Intended outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthened CSO cooperation with government counterparts, especially in 11 ARV sites, local health services and the COVID-19 taskforce. - Capacity of Lao CSOs built to manage emergency responses, especially COVID-19. - Increased involvement of Lao CSOs in COVID-19 raising awareness intervention (APL+, CHias) for key population and they can protect themselves. - 30% of PLHIV and key affected population accessed to health services through tele-health services with reduction in crowdedness at ARV sites and maintain the HIV testing rate among key population included sex workers.

Summary of accomplished (achievement November 2020 -March 2021)

The project has strengthened capacity building on telehealth services for community's health providers and HIV/AIDS counsellors. 56 people attended the telehealth services training (representative of MSM, and female sex workers), and took action to support their communities during COVID pandemic and lockdown.

Two telehealth service trainings were conducted for community's health service providers in the Northern (Bokeo province), and in the southern part (Savannaketh province). The key target populations are PLHIV, MSM and FSW. 102 peer counselors and community service providers on HIV prevention from 12 provinces in Lao PDR. The training focused on skills and techniques on delivery of telehealth services, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intervention reached 1594 people, including 768 FSW and 259 MSM.

Key Activities

During November 2020 – March 2021, APL+ we accomplished 6 key activities as the following name:

1. Conduct a workshop to introduce the guideline for community providers and healthcare facilitators (Activity No. 3)
2. Provide Tele-health services for PLHW and KPs by Community service providers (Activity No. 4)
3. Conduct training workshop for community mobilizers/service providers to disseminate COVID-19 and HIV information to key populations and PLWH (Activity No.6)
4. Conduct community outreach COVID19 education both offline and online (Activity No. 7)
5. Conduct monitors the implementation of COVID-19 and HIV intervention targeting key population (Activity No.8)
6. Conduct lesson learnt meeting among implementing partners and providers (Activity No.9)

Narrative Activities

To prepare the community in response to the COVID-19, telehealth services for key population and COVID-19 awareness for all people living with HIV/AIDS.

Activity: 1. (3) Guideline introduction workshop for community providers and healthcare facilitator were conducted 2 time, this activity we conducted 2 times in 2 different parts such as:

In the northern part, the training workshop for community service providers was conducted on 28-30th November 2020 at DaenLao's meeting room Borkeo province. The meeting was chairperson by Dr.khammun, vice PCCA director. The workshop participants were from 6 provinces who represent PLHIV- Borkeo, Laungprabang, Laungnamtha, Udomxay, Xayabuly, Houphan provinces. 26 participants attended the training workshop in the Northern provinces. They included 3 MSM, 6 health local service providers and 6 local provincial committee for the control of AIDS.



In the southern part, the workshop for community service providers was conducted on 14-16 December 2020 at the Department of Communicable Disease Control's meeting room, Savanaket province. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Phouthon Southaluck, Directors of CHAS which there 30 participants attended in the training workshop. The participants included doctors and nurses and peers living with HIV working in ART sites from 5 provinces- Vientiane Capital, Khammouane, Saravan, Savanaket, Champasak.



In the two training workshops, the telehealth guideline was introduced by UNAIDS consultant for to health service providers and PLHIV counselors who have worked at ART sites and self-help group leaders in 12 provinces. It was noted that the training workshop achieved its objective. Based on the posttest through using Kahoot Application found that the participants were able to give the right answer more than 70%. In addition, the participants were asked to do demonstration by using different scenarios. It was observed that the participants were able to provide counseling services via telephone.



2. (4): Provide Tele-health services for PLHW and KPs by Community service providers, the training capacity about telehealth services for Community service provider, by using the

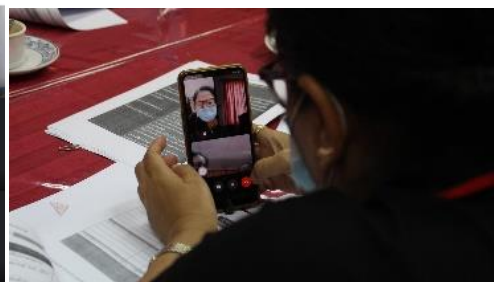
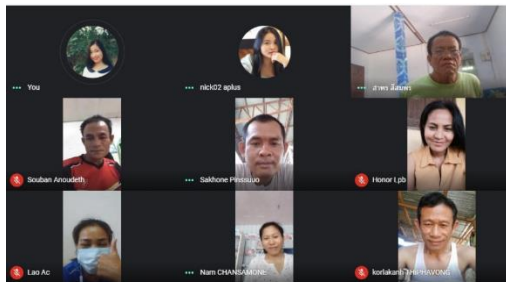
telehealth guideline, the training focusing on telehealth technical providing/services, telehealth counselling, and delivery of daily services for KP. The training was conducted both in the northern and the southern provinces total attendee 56 people that included peer educators, self-help group leaders and health care providers from 12 provinces. All the attendees increasing the telehealth services' skill and able to use the application platform for on line and telehealth services.

3. (6) Conduct training workshop for community mobilizers/service providers to disseminate COVID-19 and HIV information to key populations and PLWH.

The training mainly focused on COVID prevention measures and covid information and how to disseminate COVID information to key populations. the training aimed to capacity building for peer educators and self-help group leaders, to further provide the COVID information for key population in their provinces, and the training was conducted in the northern and in the southern the training focused peers/self-help groups in 12 provinces, there were 44 people (peer/group leaders)



4. (7) Conduct community outreach COVID19 education both offline and online, the



activities were conducted both on line and off line services by peer educators, for on line tools they used

WhatsApp, Facebook messenger platform, our peers in Laungprabang, Laungnamtha, Savanaketh and Bokeo conducted telehealth services 4 times, reached to 100 PLHIV who joined and telehealth services. The key subject of telehealth services was provided COVID -19 information and mental health supported for key population.



5. (8) Conduct monitors the implementation of COVID-19 and HIV intervention targeting key population, the

monitoring and supervision of project implementation sites, the monitoring was conducted at 3 ART sites name Bokeo, Laungnamtha and Savanaketh, the monitoring founded that peer educators are still difficult of using

telehealth because many of key population are not use smartphone. Peers called to KP one by one instance of using smartphones, The monitoring team met with the head of ART, health care providers and peers to discuss on the current of service delivery and roles of peer as the assistant for the ART sites.

During the monitoring and assessment, we set up WhatsApp and Messenger groups for peers , and added a KP's number and messenger for whom has a smartphone, to provide a telehealth services for KP.

Based on the observation and interview, the team found that peer had confidence to use tele-phone, WhatsApp and Messenger to discuss with KP especially in Savanaketh. However, because of new learning on tele-health services, peer still was not familiar with it. At the end of the monitoring and assessment session, the consultant provided feedback to peer on using tele-health services guideline as a main tool for telehealth services.

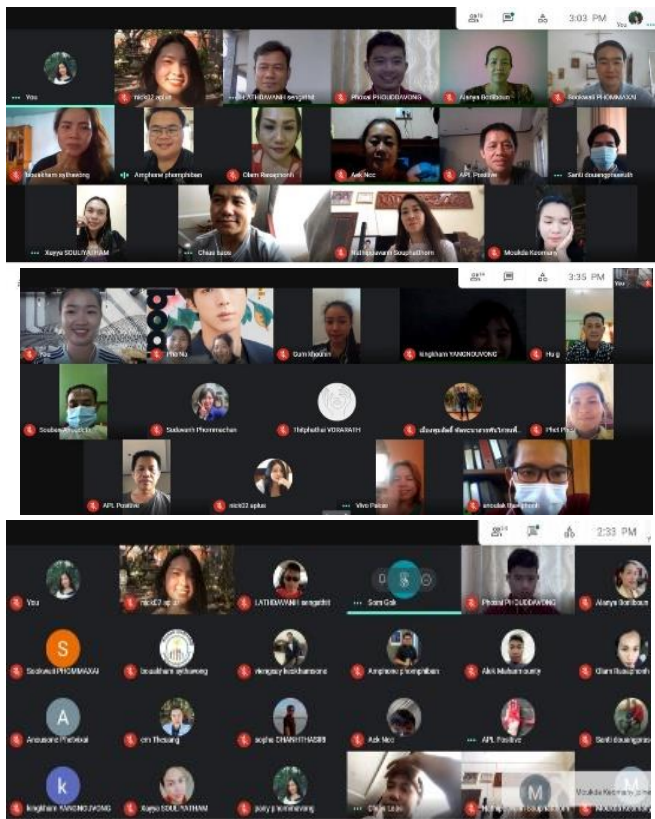
6. (9) Conduct lesson learnt meeting among implementing partners and providers, Project lesson learnt meeting among implementing partners and health providers

especially peer educators, the meeting was conducted 4 time via on line platform (ZOOM meeting)

- The first meeting was participated by CBS, outreach workers and peer educators total 20 people.

- The second meeting conducted through zoom meeting on 14th February 2021, the meeting was discussed and shared lessons on COVID-19 responses and ARV delivery, for self-help group leaders, members and peer educators.

- The third meeting conducted through google meeting was discussed about Vaccination for PLHIV, the meeting attendees by APL+ committee board members, and self-help group leaders from 12 provinces, to discussed the need of vaccination of PLHIV, on 26th February 2021.



- The fourth meeting conducted on 2nd March 2021, to shared lesson learns from telehealth



services by peer educators and health care providers, The lesson learned workshop we conducted both on line and off line, for off line section conducted at APL+ office only PLHIW in Vientiane capital. Total people joined the lesson learned meeting both on line and off line 97 people, including MSM, FSW, peer educators, self-help groups leaders, CBS, and PLHIV member joined telehealth services in

12 provinces.

Over all achievement of Project implementation

August 2020 – March 2021

The Telehealth services accomplished 9 activities for capacity building and supported a communities health providers and health care providers in 12 provinces, the activities started from developing the



community guideline on providing tele-health services and training to disseminate COVID-19 and HIV to key populations. The training was facilitated and technical support by Dr. Suphone Sayavong and APL+ team. 34 people received the telehealth skill. We also conducted 4 training: in 3

different areas (northern, Central and southern), as the following activities

3. workshop to introduce the guideline for community providers and healthcare facilitators

4. Provide Tele-health services for PLHW and KPs by Community service providers

6. Conduct training workshop for community mobilizers/service providers to disseminate

COVID-19 and HIV information to key populations and PLWH. These training workshop there were 102 people including all KP (PLHIV, MSM, FSW), and peer counselors in 13 provinces

they also accomplished the telehealth services for their communities reached 1594 people, Females and FSW 768 people, MSM 259 people

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cuc3TkppL_k&list=PLiQWBHKe70nlw1KOgbw1wSZhtZ8CPTHrH&index=34

Lessons learned from monitoring and observation

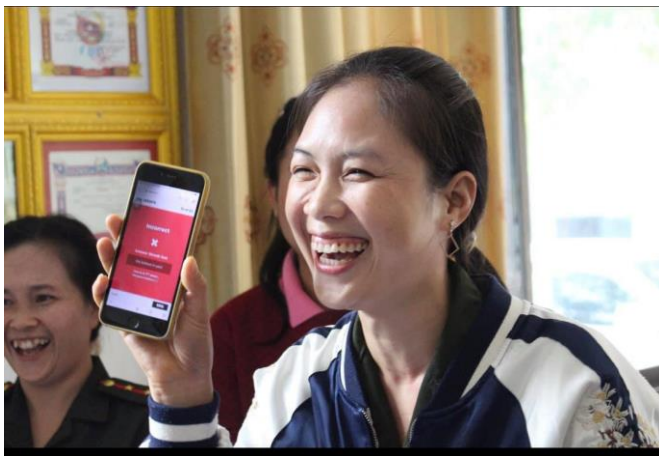
Before started project activities we didn't have enough information about mobiles phones, smartphone and skill of using social media platform of peers, yes, all most of them have smartphone but they are still low capacity on how to use the existing application apps inside a smartphone and others online platforms

The online platform for telehealth services we used **Google meet and zoom meeting**, these platform found a difficult for our peer educators because there have only English version, to address those issues that our team called to each peer one by one for an explanation, how to used Google meeting and zoom meeting platforms, while started the first meeting almost of them able to use meeting platforms but some time internet connection terrible, and some of smartphone hard to use Google meet and then we changed Google meet into Zoom meeting and its seems Zoom meeting application are more appropriated and convenience for them, however all of them are still lack of skill of using online application forms, APPS and on line meeting application.

Based on the observation and interview, the team found that peer had confidence to use telephone, WhatsApp and Messenger to discuss with PLHIV. However, because of new learning on tele-health services, peer still was not familiar with it.

Success Story from the field:

Telehealth services training workshop were mainly focused for PLHIV leaders, peer counselors



and representative of PLHIV of each community (PLHIV, FSW, MSM) who has been working at 11 ARV sites and self-help groups leaders from 12 provinces, the TOT also strengthen capacity building for PLHIV leaders and peer counsellors in TOT is selected 7 people who appropriated and suitable to be a trainer to trained and transfer the knowledge to their friends in communities,

The trainee actively participated in our training, group discussion, presentation, questions and answers for instance. Based on observation, they are interested in the training and enjoyable with the learning activity e.g. skill practice to provide COVID 19 information as a role play, taking a knowledge test of COVID 19, via

application called 'Kahoot' which the training team prepared, searching information from the website and links for instance. After completed the training they continues to provided telehealth services with their community's member and Dr. kamseng thidthasao, the director of Udomxay health care department. He used a Kahoot game as a key tool while conducted HIV campaign, and demonstration, it made more attractive for villagers said Dr.kamseng.

Key challenges

- Smartphone, note book and internet are still issues for all PLHIV (what they have in hand not enough for using for online meeting and telehealth services)
- The capacity of using online platform also issues for them because all application is English, which little hard to understand for them
- The skill of using telehealth services is still not familiars for all peers and outreach workers and the skill of using Kahoot program for HIV awareness campaign activities also need more skill on that.

Authorization

I declare that the information contained in this report is true and correct and confirm:

- Funds received were used only for the agreed purpose(s); and fully utilised for the intended purpose

PHANTHAMITH SEANGPANYA

Director

Full Name (in block capitals)

Title / Position



Signature

Date