

# Swiss to carry on improving maternal and child health

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The Swiss-Laos Hospital Project will carry on improving maternal and child health in the country for as long as possible.

President of the project, Dr Urs Lauper, said this week that since the project began in 2000, many Lao women and children have benefited by medical equipment contributed by the Swiss project through provincial and district hospitals nationwide.

“Throughout 14 years of the project, in addition to providing equipment, the project has also offered training, renovations, construction and buildings for different hospitals in Laos,” he said.

Every year, equipment worth more than US\$1 million, such as ultrasound machines, incubators, infant warmers, bilirubin lamps, plus laboratory equipment and facilities for hygiene have been provided to hospitals throughout the country.



**Dr Urs Lauper.**

In addition, the project spends about US\$40,000 each year to support the Prevention Mother to Child Transmission from HIV programme and other initiatives targeting sexually transmitted diseases.

The project also assists the prevention of deadly umbilical cord infections such as newborn tetanus by providing delivery kits for poor families in villages far away from hospital. One

kit consists of sterile gloves, sterile knife and blue triple dye with the project spending about US\$100,000 each year providing the free kits.

Dr Lauper said that the project would continue to improve maternal and child health, as way to support the Ministry of Health’s target on reducing the death rate of mothers and children.

According to the Lao Social Indicator Survey, the death rate of birthing mothers is 357 out of every 100,000 births. The death rate of children under one year of age is 68 out of every 1,000 live births, and for children under five it is 79 out of every 1,000 live births.

The Swiss-Lao Hospital Project is an initiative by Swiss doctors, midwives, nurses and association members who have lobbied for an improvement in the medical care available to mothers and children in Laos since 2000.