

Hospital bosses take first steps towards improved management



Dr Alphons Schnyder speaks at a workshop in Vientiane.

Phetphoxay Sengpaseuth

Lao health chiefs have been advised to improve the standard of healthcare through better hospital management, by emulating systems employed at private hospitals.

A workshop held on the topic on Wednesday was led by Dr Alphons Schnyder from the Swiss Laos Hospital Project and attended by the directors general of Mahosot, Friendship (150 bed), Sethathirath, Children's, and Mother and Newborn hospitals in Vientiane.

Introducing the workshop, Deputy Director General of the Healthcare and Rehabilitation Department, Ministry of Health, Dr Somchanh Thousvath said the training session on hospital management and leadership aimed to transfer practical know-how and skills in preparation for hospital autonomy.

This system would improve the quality of service for patients through a trial project in the management of hospital finance and patients.

The ultimate goal of the workshop was to build knowledge and competences in hospital management and to provide tools, checklists and guidelines for effective management.

Participants learned about leadership, human resources

management, financial management methods, and other important topics.

Dr Schnyder said the professional training of medical staff is a central concern of the Swiss Laos Hospital Project.

The government had been considering the issue of hospital autonomy for some years but the Covid pandemic prevented new systems from being introduced to achieve this, he said.

This was now a good time to expedite the rollout of hospital autonomy at the five main hospitals in Vientiane and carry out staff training, he added.

Hospitals in most countries use micro-steering and autonomous requisition and micro-management and because it has been proven that managers can get better results than with macro-management, Dr Schnyder said.

This has been demonstrated in hospitals in Thailand and Vietnam, he added. Micro-management yields better results and quality in services and for people, and allows resources to be managed more efficiently. It is now time for Laos to follow up and do the same, he said.

The Swiss Laos Hospital Project regularly organises one-week courses for hospital managers to share knowledge and skills in

hospital management. "We are developing initiatives to strengthen the management of Lao hospitals. This way, we want to contribute to better patient care and more efficient use of resources. Well-trained doctors and nurses can only fulfill their tasks optimally if they work in a well-functioning organisation," Dr Schnyder said.

A senior official from the Ministry of Health said although the government has been able to uphold people's right to healthcare in recent years and most people now have access to better quality health services, numerous challenges remain.

The improvement of hospital management and corresponding pilot projects in the central hospitals in Vientiane has been in progress since last year under the leadership of Dr Schnyder.

As part of people's right to healthcare, it is essential to make it easier for everyone to access affordable and efficient health services throughout Laos.

Hospital administrators need to raise awareness among doctors, nurses and other staff about the importance of delivering quality healthcare services to increase patients' faith in the system, he added.

There are still many lessons to be learned on the path to improving the quality of healthcare so that standards in Laos meet those of hospitals in neighbouring countries.



Teachers and students clean up around their campuses.

EU partners with schools to raise awareness of environmental degradation

Times Reporters

Around 900 students and teachers from vocational schools and colleges across 18 provinces got together for "Clean Up Laos Day", which was organised by the European Union Delegation to Laos and the Ministry of Education and Sports, and Vientiane City Office Management and Services, to raise awareness of environmental degradation.

This Clean up Laos event is part of a broader EU campaign to raise public awareness on the concept of One Health.

The One Health approach recognises that human health is closely connected to the health of animals and the environment, involving the public health, veterinary and environmental sectors.

Deputy Director General of the Technical and Vocational Education Department of the Ministry of Education and Sports, Dr Saysamone Ngamsy, and Chargé d'Affaires of the EU Delegation to Laos, Mr

Niall Leonard, presided over the event as part of the One Health Awareness Campaign, supported by the EU.

Dr Saysamone said "This event is a testament to the capacity and dutifulness of Laos' youth and it is especially wonderful to note that every province in the country is represented at this event, making this occasion truly nationwide."

Mr Leonard said "Climate change and environmental degradation are an existential threat to Europe and the world. The European Union is a strong advocate for clean-up days across the globe."

"Each time an event is held it brings the community together for a common cause, to reduce environmental degradation and to raise awareness about the importance of biodiversity in spaces that we all share. Fresh air, clean water, healthy soil and biodiversity benefit everyone and forms the foundation of our EU Green Deal strategy."

Participating students

cleaned a selected area of litter and learned about the impact of solid and aquatic waste on the environment, how microplastics can cause environmental pollution, and how stagnant water from waste can be the cause of vector-borne diseases, one of the main causes of malnutrition in Laos.

Through this activity, people were also encouraged to be mindful and dispose of garbage in designated places. Improper disposal can lead to water retention in some areas which can foster breeding grounds for mosquitoes that cause malaria.

Led by their teachers, students from participating schools cleaned the area around their campuses at the same time on September 30.

The entire activity was broadcast live through the Facebook pages of One Health Laos, European Union in Laos and participating Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools and colleges.

Lao services on display at Mekong Tourism Forum

Times Reporters

Travel services and local community products offered by Laos went on display at the Mekong Tourism Forum in Vietnam, with the aim of attracting more visitors to Laos.

Representatives of the state and business sectors displayed their products at an exhibition at the forum, under the theme 'Laos simply beautiful'.

The forum was seen as a good opportunity to share information and experiences with experts and professionals from other countries, so that Lao representatives can improve tourism services in Laos.

The forum took place on October 12 at Hoiana Resort and Golf in Quang Nam province, Vietnam, under the theme "Rebuild Tourism, Rebound with Resilience".

Private and public sector leaders from across the Greater Mekong Subregion discussed ways to rebuild tourism following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Vietnam's Ministry



Representatives of Mekong countries gather in Vietnam this week for the Mekong Tourism Forum.

of Culture, Sports and Tourism hosted the event in collaboration with the Mekong Tourism Coordinating Office (MTCO), with support from the Asian Development Bank.

The forum was preceded by the 50th Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion Tourism Working Group and the MTCO Board Meeting.

The annual forum aims to raise the profile of the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) as a unified tourist destination, provide an industry-wide platform for the public and private sectors to address sub-regional tourism issues, and expand marketing networks and opportunities to promote

the GMS while pooling collective resources to create intra-industry synergies.

Speaking at the forum, Chairman of the Vietnamese ministry's National Administration of Tourism, Mr Nguyen Trung Khanh, urged public and private stakeholders to rethink and reshape the tourism industry towards a more sustainable, inclusive and resilient future.

"Despite the positive trends underway in tourism recovery following the pandemic, the challenging economic environment created by high oil prices, inflation, and international supply chain disruptions has resulted in higher transport

and accommodation costs for the tourism sector," he said.

"This adds pressure to tourism businesses and traveller purchasing power, which could delay sub-regional tourism recovery."

Mr Nguyen Trung Khanh encouraged tourism stakeholders of all sizes to leverage digital tools to support the resilience and sustainability of the sector and to boost the tourism industry's capacity through reskilling and upskilling programmes.

First held in 1996, the Mekong Tourism Forum is an annual government-led event dedicated to the tourism industry in the Greater Mekong Subregion.

PM hails... FROM PAGE 1

women's empowerment at the national, regional and global levels in order for entire societies to move "from awareness to action."

The Vietnamese premier made a number of recommendations to inspire and unleash women's potential in business, stressing that it is crucial to enable female entrepreneurs to sustainably contribute to national growth by advancing a legal framework facilitating the development

of a gender-responsive business environment.

Asean leaders were urged to encourage women to gain access to and participate in law-policy making and enforcement.

The Asean Women Leaders' Summit was first hosted by Vietnam as the Asean Chair in 2020.

Asean groups Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.