

Policy and Human Resources Development Fund

NEWS & UPDATES

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Highlights

7 activities in the UHC country program activated since April 2025

2 activities in the UHC country program approaching closure

April to October 2025

Dear partners and colleagues,

Welcome to the Fall 2025 issue of the Policy and Human Resources Development Fund (PHRD) News and Updates. In this newsletter, we provide the latest updates on the program.

LATEST NEWS

GLOBAL SOUTH PILLAR

The Global South pillar was established under the PHRD technical assistance program to support initiatives that address critical development challenges in the Global South. As developing countries confront multidimensional crises, the World Bank and the Government of Japan have established this new pillar in PHRD to respond flexibly and promptly to unforeseen areas of demand for technical assistance and financing.

The first call for proposals under PHRD's new Global South pillar was conducted between April and June 2025, focusing on addressing critical food and nutrition security challenges in Africa. These efforts are aligned with the strategic priorities of the government of Japan and the principles of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) 9, which emphasize sustainable development, peace, and security in Africa.

Thirty eight proposals were awarded under the initial round (totaling \$30 million), which encourages direct collaboration



Photo by the World Bank

with JICA's [Coalition for African Rice Development \(CARD\)](#) initiative, and supports projects aligned with the priorities of the World Bank's [Global Challenge Program on Food and Nutrition Security](#). These projects are currently beginning preparation and will enter implementation in the coming months.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

HEALTH FINANCING AND SERVICE DELIVERY STRENGTHENING FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

TUNISIA, 2022–2025

This activity aimed to provide rigorous technical evidence and actionable policy options to help build a more efficient and resilient health system and achieve universal health coverage in Tunisia.

Key results include:

- **Development of policy options** to guide a sector-wide prevention strategy, promoting multisectoral approaches in three priority areas: infectious diseases and potential health shocks such as COVID-19, child malnutrition, and chronic health conditions.
- **Assessment of health system performance** at each stage of the care cascade for hypertension and diabetes, evaluating quality and efficiency, and identifying barriers faced by both patients and providers.
- **Costing of health services**, providing evidence to inform updates to the essential services package across levels of care and support a harmonized approach across insurance schemes, as well as to guide revisions to provider payment methods.
- **Analysis of inefficiencies in health expenditures** on both the demand and the supply side of the system.
- **Review of sustainable essential medicines financing.**

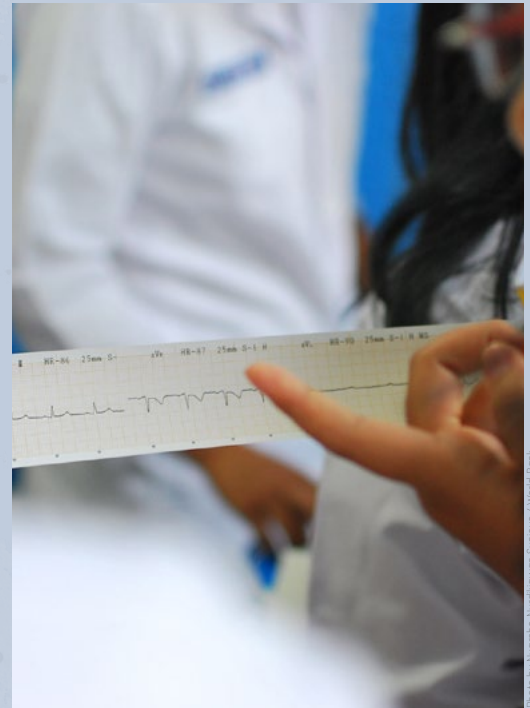


Photo by Nagata Nardawon Surpoye / World Bank

UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE (UHC) COUNTRY PROGRAM

Since March 2025 four activities were activated under the UHC country program Phase III, for a total amount of \$2.26 million:

- Supporting the implementation of the Universal Health Insurance System in Egypt
- Philippines Health System Strengthening for Universal Health
- Policy Advisory Services to Promote UHC in four Eastern and Southern African Countries (Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar, and Comoros)
- Developing long-term care for the rapidly aging population in Sri Lanka

- Knowledge and capacity building
- Pandemic preparedness and response
- Priority policy work such as aging & long-term care and climate-health

Three activities under Phase IV country program were activated during the period, in Mexico, the Caribbean, and Latin America regionally. More activities are under preparation and are slated for review and approval.

Building on the implementation progress of Phase III and continued support from the Government of Japan, Phase IV will further strengthen the global and country movements towards UHC through:

- The World Bank-Japan Joint UHC Initiative
- Health financing



LOOKING AHEAD

KEY UPCOMING EVENTS

**28-30 October 2025****Global Development Awards Conference 2025**

The Global Development Awards Conference is an innovative award scheme administered by the Global Development Network (GDN), funded under the PHRD, and generously supported by the Ministry of Finance, Government of Japan. The awardees from the 2025 edition of the competition will be announced at the conference, in collaboration with the JICA Ogata Institute and the World Bank. The theme of the 2025 competition is Digital Transformation for Universal Health Coverage.

PROJECTS SET TO CLOSE IN THE NEXT SIX MONTHS

- Reforms to strengthen universal health coverage in Indonesia
- PHRD-UHC Dominican Republic – Digital health information system roadmap
- PHRD Grant for the Enhancing Sierra Leone Energy Access Project
- Foundations for Robust Growth in the Face of Shocks
- Climate change and aging

Photo by A.Melody Lee / World Bank

CONTACT US

Questions? Comments? Please tell us what you like or missed in this issue. We will be delighted to hear from you. Reach out to the PHRD Team at phrdgrants@worldbank.org.

For more information, please visit the [Policy and Human Resources Development Fund](https://www.worldbank.org/policy-and-human-resources-development-fund) website.

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