

Enabling Equitable Health Reforms Project in Albania (EEHR)

The USAID-funded Enabling Equitable Health Reform in Albania Project (EEHR) seeks to advance health reforms with improved governance, leading to increased access to patient-centered health services.

THE APPROACH

EEHR takes the following approach to strengthening health sector governance and reform implementation:

Develop Capacities to Implement Health Reforms

EEHR supports hospital-level improvements through hospital management-led project teams, which work with EEHR specialists to address key management, technical, and operational barriers to reform implementation. Working closely with hospital counterparts, EEHR develops and tests tools and mechanisms for improved management and administration at Lezha and Korca Regional Hospitals and Maternity Hospital #1 in Tirana.

Strengthen Health Reform Policy, Planning, and Oversight, including Engaging Civil Society

Support the Ministry of Health to establish a sustainable process for health planning, policy formulation, and reform implementation by enabling the integration of health system monitoring with health system policy making through technical and logistical support for national and regional level health policy groups. National level health institutions are informed of reform implementation results through the proceedings of the Health Reform Implementation Support Group (HRISG), an institutionalized mechanism advising the Minister of Health on a set of system-wide measures. Enhancing the engagement of civil society and communities in health sector reform process improves transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. EEHR supports institutionalizing mechanisms for their participation at the facility, regional, and national levels.

THE RESULTS

The EEHR project outcomes produced results in three areas of health reform implementation. A sample of the results achieved is listed below.

1. Improved health reform policy and planning

- The establishment of the Health Reform Implementation Support Group and its Secretariat as a mechanism for support to evidence-based decision making at the national level;
- Improved monitoring hospital and health system performance at the national level and the regions of Korca and Lezha; and
- Multi-institutional policy groups established at the regional levels to review sector performance and take decisions based on evidence.

EEHR Approach to Health Reform Implementation



2. Improved capacities to implement reforms

- Hospital level human resources management policies and skills developed at pilot hospitals;
- Strengthened hospital governance supporting operational autonomy and patient-centered care;
- Incident reporting policy introduced to improve hospital management and staff and patient safety;
- Establishing visitor control policies and procedures to improve patient and staff comfort and safety;
- Refurbished hospital entrance areas enabling integrated visitor, patient, and staff related functions;
- Effective outsourcing of non-clinical services at hospitals resulting in improved non-clinical services;
- Departmentalized hospital environmental services - an international infection control best practice;
- Enhanced understanding among managers of the impact of costs on hospital performance;
- Defined a package of hospital benefits for the health insured population as a way of introducing incentives, clear performance criteria, and objective monitoring of hospital performance;
- Supported improved hospital capabilities for pharmaceutical management;
- Supported the design of a new hospital payment system to drive improved hospital performance.

3. Enhanced civil society participation and oversight of health system performance

- Enhanced the capacity of media to play an effective role in health reforms through trainings and engagement at the regional and national levels;
- Built capability for internal and external communication (public relations) at pilot hospitals; and
- Improving patient satisfaction monitoring at pilot hospitals.

THE LEGACY

EEHR has supported increased access to health services for the poor by removing some of the barriers and constraints to reform implementation at the national and subnational levels, including strengthening health governance and financing. The project supported the MOH to narrow the health reform agenda to a feasible set of priority actions with national impact and produced, tested and institutionalized tools and mechanisms that enable the implementation and monitoring of national, regional and facility-level strategies. The project improved governance effectiveness at national, local and the institutional level by increasing the voice of communities and patients and strengthened health information systems, including better information to monitor provider performance - essential to support decisions on improved resource utilization. The project's impact is most visible in supporting improved hospital sector management and increased access to quality care through a number of proposed reforms. These reforms aimed to increase citizen participation and voice; improve national, regional, and hospital governance; develop capacity for facility, regional and national monitoring and evaluation and use of data for decision making; improve resource allocation; and develop service delivery management capacity. Most results may contribute to reduced informal payments (and thus increased access) made in secondary facilities. All project

About the Enabling Equitable Health Reforms Project (EEHR) in Albania (2010-2014)

EEHR is a USAID-funded project that seeks to advance the implementation of health sector reforms and strengthen health sector governance, thereby improving access to essential health services by the poor in Albania.

The EEHR project works collaboratively with Albanian health organizations and hospital facilities and is implemented by Abt Associates, Inc



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activities serve to inform health reform in Albania beyond the life of the project.