

TIBET HEALTH SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAM

Australian Red Cross (ARC), in partnership with Macfarlane Burnet Institute for Medical Research's Centre for International Health (Burnet), is implementing the Tibet Health Sector Support Program (THSSP). The Program is a joint initiative of the Government of Australia and the Government of the People's Republic of China.

The THSSP commenced in March 2004 and will run for five years. There was a 12-month Inception Phase, and the four-year Implementation Phase is now in progress. It is funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the international development arm of the Australian government. The budget is \$17.3 million over five years.

Overview of the THSSP

Goal

The THSSP aims to improve the health of the people of the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR), particularly those who have the greatest need, through strengthening health services.

Purpose

To strengthen the health services of TAR

Objectives

The program has three components, each with its own objective:

- *Health system development*, improving the effectiveness of health systems in TAR at the strategic and operational levels
- *Primary health care support*, improving the effectiveness, quality of and access to integrated rural health services in four counties (Qushui, Linzhou, Damxung and Nimu)
- *HIV/AIDS support*, improving the effectiveness of Tibet's response to HIV/AIDS.

Strategies for implementation

The THSSP strategies support:

- TAR's priority health challenges: reducing infant, child and maternal mortality, and preventing an HIV epidemic
- TAR's health system reforms, which aim to improve the management, efficiency and affordability of health services.

The aims of THSSP are consistent with the principle of people-oriented development proposed by the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party and the State Council. Implementation of the THSSP will support the Government of the People's Republic of China (GOPRC) initiatives in rural health system restructuring and reform, as well as strengthening the disease control system in the country.

Program Principles

THSSP applies the following principles to all components, outputs and activities:

1. THSSP links to and supports GOPRC and Government of Tibet Autonomous Regions (GOTAR) policies and reform initiatives
2. There is ownership and leadership of THSSP activities by GOTAR partners
3. THSSP responds to current and emerging priority needs in TAR
4. THSSP takes an integrated approach to gender awareness and cultural sensitivity
5. THSSP outputs are designed to be sustainable in TAR
6. THSSP works within existing GOTAR information systems and plans wherever possible
7. Technical adviser inputs are used across components wherever possible, to create synergy and linkages between outputs
8. THSSP collaborates with other development projects, particularly those working in or near TAR.

THSSP also acts in accordance with AusAID principles on gender, environment, sustainability and poverty.

Capacity Building

The Program focuses on capacity building, based on a definition of capacity of an organisation as the ability to perform the core functions mandated to that organisation. It therefore aims to improve the implementation of systems and strengthen institutions by helping managers to reach their organisational objectives. To achieve that aim four modalities are being used:

- (i) advocacy to promote comprehensive implementation of GOPRC policies such as promotion of a multi-sectoral response to HIV and AIDS
- (ii) activities to improve the reach and quality of health services
- (iii) operational research and
- (iv) supply of essential equipment.

Management systems of THSSP and all activities respond to the program principles and integrate cross-cutting issues, including gender and other equity issues and health promotion. They also promote linkages between the health services and communities to both encourage communities to take ownership of their health and to increase the responsiveness of the health services to community needs.

Consistent with the THSSP principles and the capacity building strategy, GOTAR counterparts have identified priorities for THSSP to address in each component. The planning processes, however, allow priorities to change over the life of the THSSP.

Australian Red Cross contact:

Australian Red Cross National Office
155 Pelham Street
Carlton Vic 3053
ph: +61 3 9345 1867
email: natinfo@redcross.org.au