

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY IN KHAMMOUANE

A Quarterly Newsletter by
Health Poverty Action & Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo



KEY PROJECT ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2019 & QUARTER 1, 2020

- 100 Farmers' Clubs established
- Fortnightly training cycle for 5,000 farmers commenced
- 102 Village Veterinary Workers trained & equipped
- 5,537 Children Under 5 screened
- 100 Village Development Committees, 32 Women's Groups, and 32 Youth Groups established and trained
- 337 Village Nutrition Volunteers trained

Nutrition for resilient communities

Since the beginning of 2019, the project partners **Health Poverty Action (HPA)**, **Humana Fundación Pueblo para Pueblo (Humana FPP)** and **Khammouane Province Health Office (PHO)** have been implementing a food and nutrition security project in 100 villages, 6 districts of Khammouane: **Bualapha, Mahaxay, Thakek, Nhommalath, Xaybuathong and Khounkham**. The project is funded by the European Union. Khammouane Province has higher child mortality rates than the national average, and high maternal and infant malnutrition. Approximately 30% of Children Under 5 are stunted, 22% are wasted and 22% are underweight. Especially remote and ethnic minority communities struggle to access health care. The project aims to increase the availability of and access to **nutritious food**, create an **environment that is conducive to improved nutrition**, and **strengthen authorities' capacities** on food and nutrition security.



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The project in a nutshell

Duration: 39 months until December 2020

Beneficiaries: 100 villages in 6 districts

Output 1: The project seeks to increase the availability of and access to food with sufficient and essential nutrients.

Beneficiaries are supported by Humana FPP to increase their productivity, diversify their crops, and improve their access to markets. Thus, families' own nutrition as well as their income generation opportunities are strengthened.

Output 2: HPA aims to create an environment that is conducive to improved nutrition, targeting children, women, village authorities and health volunteers. Activities further community actors' knowledge and understanding of underlying causes of malnutrition.

Output 3: All implementing partners cooperate to strengthen Province and District Nutrition Committees' (PNC, DNC), Health Offices' (PHO, DHO) and Agriculture and Forestry Offices' (PAFO, DAFO) capacities on food and nutrition security, nutrition-sensitive interventions, multi-sector work plans, budgeting, and management information systems.



Climate-smart agriculture



Humana FPP is responsible for the agricultural component of the project. To that end, the organisation works with its **Farmers' Clubs (FC) approach**. FCs are a concept developed and applied by Humana People to People all over the world. The approach organises smallholder farmers in groups of around 50 members with their own elected management committee. FC members attend regular training sessions together, jointly discuss and solve problems, and share knowledge and resources. The FC structure is underpinned by a strong, farmer-led **monitoring mechanism** which trains beneficiaries to track their own progress and report it to field staff who in turn feed the data into the larger project monitoring framework.

Throughout 2019 and the first quarter of 2020, FCs have participated in fortnightly training sessions on **climate-smart agriculture production systems** such as conservation agriculture with minimum soil disturbance and tillage, mulching and minimal burning of crop residues, mixing and rotating crops and efficient use of inputs. Farmers are trained in integrated pest management to reduce the usage of chemical means. A strong focus also lies on **diversifying** their production in order to make farmers more resilient towards crop failures. At the end of the project, every farmer will cultivate 3 to 4 different crops. Every FC is establishing their own demonstration fields where they will trial new production technologies and conduct training sessions.

*Crop diversification,
efficient use of
sustainable inputs
and minimum soil
disturbance*



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SPOTLIGHT: VETERINARY TRAININGS FOR SUSTAINABLE ANIMAL HUSBANDRY

Besides supporting crop cultivation, the project has an **animal husbandry** component. In total, 4,000 chickens and 4,000 ducks as well as 100 pigs and 150 goats are being handed out to FC members. Participating farmers commit to giving the young from their animals' first litters to other families in their communities who, in turn, will do the same. Prior to handing out livestock, **Humana FPP trained every village's voluntary veterinary worker** in basic animal care; 102 people in total. Veterinary workers also received kits with equipment. Mr Khampheng from Khounkham District reports: "Now I feel much more confident to vaccinate animals. I can now also see that many farmers in my village would like to learn more about how to take good care of their animals. They come to me and ask for advice."



Fostering inclusive behaviour change

Establishing village nutrition networks, building capacity and raising awareness

HPA is promoting **nutrition awareness** and **water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)** in the target villages. At the heart of both intervention areas lies to support villagers to change their behaviours in a context-sensitive and appropriate manner. Some harmful practices with regards to nutrition stem from traditional beliefs, and the project takes an **inclusive approach** to overcoming these challenges. Village networks have been established, including **Village Nutrition Volunteers, Women's and Youth Groups, and Village**

Development Committees. These nutrition ambassadors lead activities, raise awareness and relay their peers' feedback to the project. Nutrition-sensitive activities conducted include measuring Children Under 5's weight, height and mid-upper arm circumference. Village volunteers and the project team have also conducted cooking demonstrations and awareness trainings, and provided nutritional supplements to families with severely malnourished children. In addition, HPA is addressing needs in **primary schools** by providing toilets and hand-washing facilities as well as conducting awareness raising of personal hygiene practices. In this way, children can take this knowledge home with them and become nutrition ambassadors themselves by educating their families and friends.



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Village Nutrition Volunteers have been equipped with materials for cooking demonstrations, measurements and books for the awareness campaign. In order to foster **sustainability**, project staff and their government counterparts conducted joint trainings for community nutrition leaders. Now, community volunteers are working with the project team to further their knowledge in practice. By the end of the program, they will be confident to lead and implement nutrition-sensitive activities.



SPOTLIGHT: SCREENINGS FOR CHILDREN UNDER 5

HPA has conducted first and second screenings of malnourished children in all target villages with a **successful 19% reduction of the number of affected children**. The first screening reached 5,537 Children Under 5. They were measured for height, weight and mid-upper arm circumference. In total, 3,430 of them were found to be malnourished, i.e. either stunted, wasted and/or underweight. For all these children, **HPA provided nutritional supplements and conducted cooking demonstrations** with their parents. Additionally, the families benefited from all other nutrition-sensitive activities within the program. With success: At the second screening, half a year after the first, HPA found only 2,584 children to be malnourished. Two more screenings are planned before completion of the project at the end of 2020.



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