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FACULTE DES SCIENCES ECONOMIQUES  
ET DE GESTION

# **Health economics and policy in Senegal**

## **CONCEPT NOTE**

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## 1. Background

The right to health for the entire population, without socio-economic or administrative distinction, is guaranteed by the Senegalese constitution in its article 8. This political will is expressed in the “*Plan Senegal Emergent*” (PSE) which constitutes the reference in terms of economic and social development policy, particularly in its Axis 2 called *Human Capital, Social Protection and Sustainable Development*. This vision fits perfectly with the objective of the UHC, which would like all people to have access to the quality health care they need without being exposed to financial difficulties (WHO, 2010). Thus, in the perspective of increasing wealth, public authorities intend to promote a significant improvement in the living conditions of populations, a more sustained fight against social inequalities and effective social protection.

These objectives are operationalized in the *Health and Social National Development Plan / “Plan National de Développement Sanitaire et Social”* (PNDSS 2019 – 2028) which is based on three major axes: (i) governance and financing of the sector; (ii) provision of health and social services and (iii) social protection in the sector. The PNDSS aims to accelerate the progress toward UHC. The issue of financing led to establishment of National Strategy Health Funding (SNFS) which is monitored by the Health Economics Unit (HEU) of Ministry of Health and Social Action (MoHSA).

The analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the health sector carried out during the development of the PNDSS highlighted constraints related to governance, leadership, financing, service delivery, human resource production, the information system and operational research (MoHSA, 2019). Ideally, health policies should be evidence-based. However, in Senegal, there is a significant gap in the scientific literature in the area of health research despite the existence of several potential facilities such as the Ministry of Health and Social Action (MoHSA) Health Economics Unit, Institute of Health and Development, and the Cheikh Anta Diop University (UCAD) Health Economics Department.

## 2. Mission, role and perspectives of institutions in research-to-policy

### 2.1. MoHSA Health Economics Unit

Created by ministerial order n°115898 of July 11, 2017, the Health Economics Unit (HEU) has as mission to coordinate all economic activities through the use of economic techniques in the health sector. Health Economics Unit is in charge of:

- producing health accounts;
- building advocacy arguments to mobilize resources, mainly domestic resources;
- coordinating the implementation of the health financing strategy;
- evaluating the effectiveness of the various financing mechanisms;
- monitoring progress towards universal health coverage;
- ensuring the coordination of all evaluations of interventions (effectiveness, efficiency and impact);
- evaluating public policies related to health;

- conducting studies and analyses on the costs of services.
- conducting studies on the affordability of health care;
- assessing the risks and economic constraints in the implementation of health interventions and flagship achievements;
- analyzing the costs of health interventions.

In carrying out its entrusted missions, HEU performs advocacy and capacity building activities with health sector authorities and actors.

Among HEU's ongoing studies, the following are particularly interesting considering their expected contribution to a better understanding of the health system, to health policies evaluation and to evidence-based strategies development:

- 2017-2019 Health Accounts production;
- the assessment of resources mobilized and expenditure in the response to COVID-19;
- resources mapping for the National Health and Social Development Plan (PNDSS);
- study on household's catastrophic health spending.

To consolidate its position, HEU intends to:

- create a platform for the National Strategy Health Funding monitoring;
- strengthen its staff capacities in domestic resource mobilization, economic analysis, economic evaluation of health strategy;
- increase and deepen health economics researches;
- intensify the partnership with universities, schools and research.

The HEU carries out quality interventions which are giving it a growing position in health policies and strategies making. Many prospects are emerging in terms of increased responsibilities in evidences production, implementation of interventions with high impact on health determinants, advocacy for a greater and more systematic use of economic techniques in the health sector.

## **2.2. Institute of Health and Development (ISED)**

The Institute of Health and Development (ISED) was created by presidential decree n°87 - 178 of February 16, 1987, at the joint request of the Ministries of Health and Higher Education. ISED's mission is to build and strengthen capacities of human resources involved in the activities of health and development, to promote health research and to carry out missions for expertise and technical assistance.

It offers specialized training leading to Masters, Doctorate (PhD) and Specialized Study Diploma (DES) in public health sciences. The DES is intended for District Chief Doctors for whom ISED is responsible for specializing in public health. During the DES in public health, there is a module devoted to health economics with a dissertation at the end of the course.

For the master's degree in public health, the first year is a common core while the second is specialized. Our doctoral students also have the opportunity to choose the health economics option but it is planned to launch an option in health economics ([www.ised.sn](http://www.ised.sn)).

ISED's research areas focus on:

- communicable diseases: ISED is a WHO reference center for tropical diseases linked to poverty);
- non-communicable diseases;
- health system strengthening;
- sexual and reproductive health;
- social inequality, equity and gender Universal health coverage Health financing.

### **2.3. Health Economics Department of UCAD**

The Faculty of Economics and Management of UCAD has the following three departments: (i) economic analysis and policy, (ii) business management and (iii) decision mathematics.

In the field of health, the faculty offers a Bachelor's degree and a Master's degree in management of health institutions. The faculty does not currently offer a program in health economics. This option is only available in the framework of a master's program, called the Postgraduate International Program (PTCI), which is common to about fifteen French-speaking universities in Africa south of the Sahara.

Even if there is no current program offer in health economic, public health research is conducted through the Laboratory of Economic and Social Policies (LAPES).

This laboratory is directed by professors specialized in health economics. They supervise Master and PhD students in health economics. The students work on health topics such as: health financing, governance of the health system and institutions, access to care issues, catastrophic spending, risks, drugs and private health structures, evaluation of public health policies, impact studies, epidemic management.

LAPES partners include the Ministry of Health and Social Action, the Canadian Cooperation through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the West African Health Organization (WAHO).

LAPES is in discussion with its partners to open a master's degree in health economics at the Faculty. It is the only laboratory that currently offers students the possibility of doing a PHD in health economics.

### **3. Partnership for strengthening research-to-policy in Senegal**

#### **3.1. Between institutions**

The TLO-A program is an opportunity to create synergies between the Ministry of Health and other structures responsible for health training and research. Curricula and research programs will be better formulated and oriented towards the needs and priorities set by the economic and social development programs.

In the field of research, multidisciplinary programs bringing together, for example, economists, epidemiologists, sociologists and anthropologists, will be defined to deal with complex problems such as the evaluation of the impact of Covid-19 at the microeconomic, macroeconomic and social levels, etc.

Institutions should collaborate while doing activities around scientific animation, writing of grant, student exchange, co-supervision of theses, co-animation of courses, development of short-term training modules.

#### **3.2. With TLO-A**

The TLO-A program will thus be able to contribute to increasing the supply of training in health economics by opening a master's program and a PhD program in public health. In addition, it will also allow the development of a customized short-term training program to build the capacity of a wide audience of MoHSA officials, local authorities and non-governmental organizations.

The TLO-A program will make a significant contribution to the training of a critical mass of public health experts. It will thus make UCAD the main training center in public health in Senegal and in the sub-region. With the support of the TLO-A program, LAPES will be able to carry out relevant research programs agreed upon with the MoHSA to improve the efficiency of the Senegalese health system and improve its resilience in a post-Covid-19 context.

To sum up, the TLO-A program could contribute in:

- Exchange platform;
- Research funding;
- Access to scientific documentation (scientific journal subscription);
- Partnership in synergy of institutions for the capacity building of actors;
- Capitalization of knowledge and publications.

#### **4. Conclusion & Recommendations**

The TLO-A program provides an opportunity to build capacity in health economics, pool resources in research, and strengthen linkages between the university and health authorities.

##### **Recommendations:**

- Coordinate health economics research;
- Define research programs based on MoHSA priorities;
- Establishment of scientific journal ;
- Assess training needs in relation to the MoHSA;
- Support the Ministry of Health in monitoring health policies.