

Abstract

Sustainability of Thailand's Family Planning Program: A System Dynamics Perspective

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The Thai Family Planning Program is well recognized as one of the world's most successful. The contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) rose rapidly after the program was launched in 1970, and fertility fell dramatically. Others have shown how Thai government commitment, along with international assistance, and a supportive culture, played important roles in this success. This article takes the next step. Through 1980 international assistance provided about two-thirds or more of the program's budget. Beginning in 1981 the Thai government portion grew steadily. In 1991 international assistance ceased and the Thai government provided the entire budget, which continued to grow until the great economic shock of 1997/8. In this article we use systems dynamic modeling to show how the role of political support, organizational capacity, and international assistance, account for the program's success. Further, we show how feedback from the program, in economic benefits from lowered fertility, increased the political commitment of the government, essentially making the program "sustainable."