



## **African Contributions to Global Health**

### Video Transcript

#### **Addressing health financing in Africa**

DORIS: Welcome to week 2 of our course about African contributions to global health. In this week, we will explore the topic of health financing in Africa. You will be guided through this week by me and our expert, Professor Dr Guenther Fink.

GUENTHER: Hello! I am excited to address this subject together with you. As a professor of Household Economics, I am interested in developing new approaches to improving health systems globally.

DORIS: In the first part of this week, we will introduce Universal Health Coverage in Africa. We will discuss how health financing can help make progress towards Universal Health Coverage. According to the World Health Organization, "Universal Health Coverage means that all individuals and communities receive the health services they need without suffering financial hardship". We will come to that later in this course. First, we shall address the following questions: What is health financing? Why is it important, and particularly so in the African context?

GUENTHER: Briefly, health financing is how countries raise funds and purchase health services for their populations. Health financing is a critical component of the health system -- but in Africa, this is more important, where resources are limited.

DORIS: In recent decades, many countries in Africa have relied on external donors to fund their health systems. However, this strategy is neither reliable nor sustainable.

GUENTHER: Many international organisations such as the World Health Organization have recommended for countries to shift away from the reliance on external funding, as over time these funders have decreased their contributions to countries. In addition, although external funders contribute significant financial resources to the health systems, they often fund specific programmes such as HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria.

DORIS: Consequently, countries have to come up with alternative strategies to raise domestic resources to fund their health systems. This week, we will learn how one country, Zambia, is attempting to mobilise its own resources to fund its healthcare system.



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GUENTHER: Besides raising funds for health, one of the key aspects that health financing seeks to address is how to avoid the waste of limited health resources. This is defined in the health economics literature as 'efficiency'. There are two main types of efficiency: one, 'allocative efficiency', which essentially aims to maximise health gains, and two, 'technical efficiency', which focuses on how to best achieve these gains.

DORIS: During this week, Guenther will introduce one key strategy used in some African countries to improve efficiency in health facilities. We will also address Universal Health Coverage and discuss how health financing can help achieve Universal Health Coverage in the African context. Both of us look forward to your comments and discussions!