Where you can access more information:

- Oxfam has produced a number of reports on private health sector growth, such as:

Introduction

Who is promoting the growth of the private for-profit health sector in East and Southern Africa?

- What type of private for-profit health sector growth is happening in East and Southern Africa?
- In 2009 the IFC, the African Development Bank and other development organisations such as the Gates Foundation, and various non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were involved in promoting the growth of the private for-profit health sector in Africa. This was done in order to attract investment to the private health sector. In particular, African governments are promoting this type of growth to encourage greater use of medical services.

Where do we mean by the private-for-profit health sector in East and Southern Africa?

- In 2009 the IFC stated that it is impossible to avoid the growth of the private for-profit health sector in Africa. This is because there is a need for greater use of medical services, which is driving the growth of the private health sector.

What type of private-for-profit health sector growth is happening in East and Southern Africa?

- The private health sector includes health service providers and organisations that help fund health services (such as insurance schemes) but also want to generate a profit.

Where should civil society organisations do?

- What are the consequences of growth in the private for-profit health sector?
- What is the private for-profit health sector in East and Southern Africa?
- Africa?

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THE GROWTH OF THE PRIVATE FOR-PROFIT HEALTH SECTOR IN EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

What is the private for-profit health sector?
The sector includes health service providers and organisations that help fund health services that are not part of government structures. These providers want to cover the costs of providing a service (or running an insurance scheme) and generate a profit.

Key concerns with private sector growth?
- Only the very rich benefit from private for-profit services.
- Limited tax money is used to support private for-profit health care providers and insurance, rather than funding public sector services to benefit all.
- When the private sector grows, there are fewer doctors and other health professionals working in the public sector.

Who is promoting the growth of this sector in Africa?
The main groups pushing for the growth of private for-profit health care providers and private insurance schemes in Africa are the International Finance Corporation of the World Bank and Dutch companies supported by the Dutch government.

How is this investment spent?
Most of the investment is going into companies to produce drugs and private hospitals, particularly hospitals to serve the richest citizens, expatriates and tourists. Quite a lot of the investment is coming from South African companies. There are also efforts to increase private health insurance, which helps to pay for services from private health care providers.

What should civil society organisations do?
Contribute to monitoring efforts:
- Find out if any activities in your country are being funded or promoted by the Africa Health Fund, PharmAccess, the Investment Fund for Health in Africa, or African Medical Investments.

Call on government:
- Not to use tax funds to support the development of the private for-profit sector.
- To assess the impact of any proposed for-profit activities on the overall health sector before allowing it to proceed, and to make this impact assessment report publicly available.
- To put in place adequate regulations and to collect accurate information on private sector health services.

For more information: Visit www.equinetafrica.org or find further resources at http://heu-uct.org.za/research/publications/ or http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications

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