

**AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH SERVICES
AND RESOURCE ALLOCATION**

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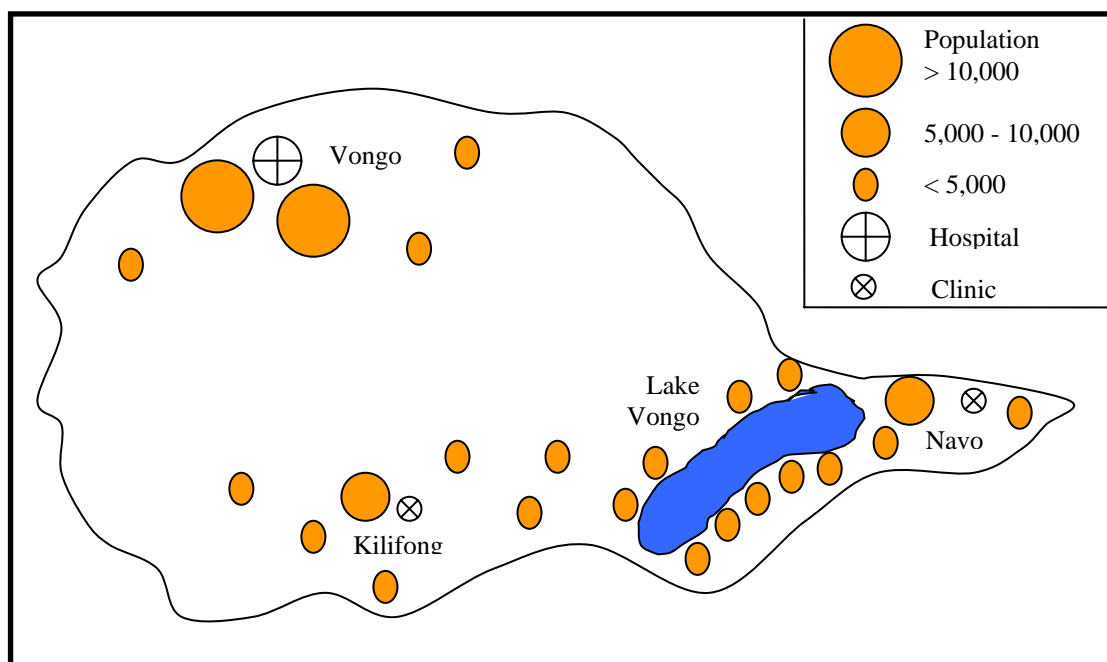
Availability of health services and resource allocation

Objectives of case study:

- To develop an understanding of the various factors that together constitute the availability dimension of access; and
- To develop an understanding of how resource allocation processes can contribute to improved health service access.

Background to the Vongo district

The Vongo district includes a large town (Vongo) and two smaller towns (Kilifong and Navo). The town of Vongo was established when gold was discovered and it grew rapidly as mines were set up. At this time, a 100 bed hospital was built in the town. However, all of the mines have closed as the gold has been extracted completely and the population of the town has decreased rapidly. It still survives as the only town within the district with banks, small-scale engineering and other services. The rest of the district is rural, with a heavy concentration of people living around Lake Vongo, where the main economic activity is fishing. Most of the rest of the district population is engaged in subsistence agriculture, clustered largely around the towns of Kilifong and Navo. Each of these small towns has a clinic. The map below indicates the location of the towns within the district and the distribution and of the population. During the period of high rainfall, the settlements on the east side of Lake Vongo and the town of Navo are frequently isolated from the rest of the district due to flooding.



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The tables below provide an overview of the demographic and health status of the population, and an overview of health service resources and utilisation patterns.

Demographic and health indicators for Vongo District

	Vongo	Kilifong	Navo
Population	34,235	62,579	45,084
<i>Age distribution:</i>			
% <15 years	28	42	48
% 60+ years	20	8	3
Births in previous year	616	2,378	2,029
Infant mortality rate	21	84	128
Under five mortality rate	25	149	201
Maternal mortality rate	55	180	326
<i>Main causes of outpatient visits:</i>			
Malaria	5%	25%	39%
Diarrhoea	11%	28%	29%
Acute respiratory infection	12%	22%	24%
HIV/AIDS	28%	18%	5%
Circulatory system	30%	2%	1%
Other	14%	5%	2%

Health service information for Vongo District

	Vongo Hospital	Kilifong Clinic	Navo Clinic
Opening hours	24 hours 7 days a week	8 hours 5 days a week (midwife on call)	8 hours 5 days a week
<i>Staffing:</i>			
Midwives	6	2	0
Other nurses	33 (17 for outpatients 16 for inpatients)	12	5
Doctors	4	1	0
Pharmacists	2	0	0
Laboratory technicians	5	0	0
Microscopes	3	1	0
Number of beds (4 wards of 12 beds)	48	2 delivery beds	--
Outpatient visits (excl. deliveries)	75,317	112,642	54,100
Inpatient days (excl. deliveries)	10,358	--	--
<i>Drug supply (days out of stock):</i>			
Anti-malarials	10	45	120
Antibiotics	5	30	98
Antiretrovirals	20	62	180
Anti-hypertensives & related drugs	12	212	None at facility (nurse not allowed to prescribe)

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Task

Working in groups, and using the information provided above, you should:

- Critically assess the availability of health services to the communities located around Vongo, Kilifong and Navo (particularly identifying health service availability problems facing each community) [**Tip:** You may wish to do some calculations to assist in this assessment].
- Develop a plan for addressing the key availability problems, including assessing whether any resource redistribution can be undertaken.