

STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEM FOUNDATIONS *for* BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES



Photo Credit Sarah Nasser

MANAGEMENT SCIENCES *for* HEALTH (MSH)

is a mission-driven, global nonprofit advisory organization that provides governments, health organizations, and the private sector with the strategies, tools, and management support to deliver high-functioning health systems effectively and efficiently. For more than 50 years, we have focused on the people at the heart of the health system—from health ministries to communities, private sector to civil society—serving as trusted advisors to make foundational changes that support the whole health system.



MSH strengthens health systems as a means of addressing key health challenges, achieving universal health coverage, and improving population health. We improve health system functions through policy and practice changes that increase access, coverage, quality, and efficiency of health services, leading to better health outcomes in the countries where we work. Our people-centered approach ensures that those with whom we work are the drivers of progress and will lead their own way to optimal, equitable, and quality health systems.

PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

For more than 30 years, MSH has been a global leader in pharmaceutical and supply chain systems strengthening, supporting countries to work sustainably through good governance, resource efficiency, country leadership, and developing local technical expertise and self-sufficiency.

MSH is one of five large organizations designated by USAID as winners of the **Global Health Supply Chain NextGen Comprehensive Technical Assistance** (NextGen Comprehensive TA; 2024-2035) contract. MSH and its consortium partners will partner with USAID to provide countries with technical assistance on their health supply chain needs for the next 10 years and develop the capacity of local systems, networks, institutions, and individuals to sustainably manage supply chains and strengthen local pharmaceutical systems. MSH will also advise governments as they shift from providing supply chain and pharmaceutical services themselves to overseeing private-sector innovations and efficiencies. The award signifies MSH's critical role within NextGen Comprehensive TA, marking a significant step forward in global health advancement.

DEVELOPING GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES *in* PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING THROUGH MTaPS

Since 2018, MTaPS has made the following advances in improving global pharmaceutical systems:

- ✓ Assisted in the revision of a 1995 National Drug Policy in **Nepal** to include updates to the essential medicines list and increases in funding for free essential medicines.
- ✓ Developed and tested a Health Technology Assessment (HTA) roadmap complete with guidance to set up an HTA agency to institutionalize HTA in **Ethiopia**.
- ✓ Strengthened national-level capacities to identify gaps in tracking pharmaceutical expenditures and improve value in purchasing in **Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Philippines**.
- ✓ Developed and launched a web-based platform to improve pharmacovigilance systems in the **West Africa** region, in collaboration with the West African Health Organization and the 15 members of the Economic Community of West African States.
- ✓ Developed a list of minimum common standards for regulatory information management system tools in lower-middle-income countries, a guidance document for standards adoption, and an advocacy brief making the case for standards adoption.



Photo credit: MSH staff

USAID's flagship global pharmaceutical program, the **Medicines, Technologies, and Pharmaceutical Services** (MTaPS; 2018-2025) program, helps low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) take a systems approach to ensuring sustainable access to and appropriate use of safe, effective, quality-assured, and affordable essential medical products and pharmaceutical services. MTaPS works to develop evidence-based approaches and tools and identify best practices in pharmaceutical systems strengthening, which contribute to addressing emerging health problems.

The **Safe, Affordable, and Effective Medicines for Ukrainians** (SAFEMed; 2017-2025) project works to improve transparency and cost-efficiency of pharmaceutical public procurement that will foster increased access to safe, affordable, and quality medicines in Ukraine. SAFEMed recognizes that the ongoing issues with ensuring a sufficient supply of quality

HIV and TB medicines over time are multifactorial and involve diverse actors at multiple levels within the system. SafeMed has won global awards for its innovations in the State Medicines Reimbursement Program and for its supply chain innovation in delivering HIV and TB medicines. The project has also pivoted to supporting humanitarian supply chain during the war, integrating the humanitarian aid into the overall health system of Ukraine.

The USAID-funded **Uganda Strengthening Supply Chain Systems** (SSCS; 2020-2025) is reinforcing Uganda's efforts to strengthen its health supply chain and increase access to safe, quality-assured medicines and health supplies in public and private nonprofit health facilities. SSCS has supported the Ministry of Health in establishing a real-time National Stock Status Dashboard, which equips health facilities with knowledge on stock status at the district, regional, and national levels. Digitalizing medical stock reports helps to minimize stock status errors, shrink comprehensive reporting timelines, and prevent drugs stockouts and overstocks before they happen.

RESOURCE OPTIMIZATION

Ensuring adequate health care financing—and its effective distribution across individuals, population groups, geographical areas, levels of care, and services—is essential to a strong, resilient health system and advancing progress toward universal health coverage. MSH supports national governments around the globe to mobilize previously untapped sources of health care financing; prioritize available funding for health care through health technology assessments, economic analysis, and strategic purchasing; and to protect people from the financial consequences of paying for health services out of their own pockets.

The Health Systems for Tuberculosis (HS4TB; 2020-2025) project seeks to transform the way leaders and managers understand and work toward TB control and elimination in India, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Kenya. In Bangladesh, HS4TB has completed an assessment of the legal, regulatory, and policy environment for introducing outsourcing and social contracting of health services for TB and developed a roadmap to guide a phased approach to outsourcing. To support countries in achieving greater sustainability for TB programs and services, HS4TB is developing a Sustainability Index that tracks progress toward domestic financing of TB programs, adequate use of domestic systems, and the financial consequences of gradual leveraging of health system processes and procedures that bring efficiencies and are domestically financed and

operated. HS4TB has also engaged Former Ministers of Finance in a series of high-level dialogues on what drives decision-making related to public financing for the health sector to develop key recommendations for strengthening health financing, including TB and other infectious diseases.

In Cameroon, the **Reaching Impact, Saturation, and Epidemic Control** (RISE; 2019-2024) project supports the government in their efforts toward HIV user fee elimination, sustainable financing, and universal health coverage. In collaboration with the MOPH, RISE developed nursing and medical protocols for 185 UHC interventions. These protocols will improve national-level planning for resources and training that will make basic services, including HIV testing and treatment, more accessible and affordable.

COUNTRY-LED SERVICE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

MSH supports actors at all levels of the health system to design and deliver people-centered care models with integrated packages of health services.

Indonesia has the second highest TB burden in the world and **USAID Bersama Menuju Eliminasi dan Bebas dari TB** (USAID BEBAS-TB; 2023-2028) is working with national and international stakeholders to support the Government of Indonesia in achieving its goal to eliminate TB by 2030. With our consortium partners, we provide strategic leadership, mentorship, and technical support to address gaps in Indonesia's National TB Program and to establish a resilient, decentralized health care system, built in collaboration with the communities we serve.

The **Assistance for Families and Indigent Afghans to Thrive** (AFIAT; 2020-2025) project applies an evidence-based, human-centered, systems thinking approach to improve health outcomes in Afghanistan. Before AFIAT started, many service providers and health facility managers were not receiving the training needed to deliver high-impact interventions. AFIAT uses the Harmonized Quality Improvement Program, a participatory, evidence-based management approach that enable managers to identify quality gaps and develop customized performance improvement plans to strengthen service delivery. Despite the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan, the program continues to adapt and grow in the new environment to support its target audience of women of child-bearing age and under-5s in the country.

In Madagascar, the **Accessible Continuum of Care and Essential Services Sustained** (ACCESS; 2018-2024) activity applies a systems thinking approach to expand access to, quality, and uptake of primary health care services. ACCESS's participatory, capacity-strengthening initiatives, the Leadership Development Program Plus and Program for Organizational Growth, Resilience, and Sustainability, are improving the performance of health facilities and enabling district health teams

IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES *in* RWANDA

Through **USAID Ireme** (2023-2028), MSH is helping to improve cost efficiency, build management and governance skills, and strengthen workforce optimization across Rwanda's health system.

The Rwandan Ministry of Health (MOH), in partnership with USAID Rwanda through USAID Ireme, recently launched a midwifery scholarship program to train and empower 500 midwives in line with the Ministry's strategy to quadruple the number health care workers in the next four years. Recognizing the pivotal role of strengthening and addressing gaps in human resources for health as a cornerstone of strong health systems, USAID Ireme pledged to contribute to the increase of midwives to boost health care workforce capacity and improve health outcomes, particularly in maternal and newborn health.

The MOH spearheaded the effort, collaborating with USAID Ireme, the High Education Council, and the National Nursing and Midwifery regulatory body to ensure seamless planning and execution. The midwifery scholarship program will include tuition, a monthly living allowance, and the establishment of bank accounts, fostering financial inclusion for future health care leaders.



Photo credit: USAID Ireme/MSH

to manage the health system and service delivery within their districts. The majority of service delivery points that completed these programs are performing at more than 80% of their measurable results and achieving more than 70% of their action plans. Better planning at the district level has contributed to fewer stockouts and increases in service availability. For example, after four years of ACCESS contraceptive stockouts at family planning delivery points decreased from 41% to 7% and 42% more women received a uterotonic at birth.

MOBILIZING AGAINST MALARIA IN MADAGASCAR



Photo credit: Samy Rakotoniaina

Tsiraiiky Abotono has never taken a vacation. Day after day, for 15 years, he has kept watch over his village, Andravindahy, in southwest Madagascar. Abotono, 56, is one of the thousands of community health volunteers who provide basic health care services to the country's rural areas. To reach a health center, people must walk for two hours across cactus fields under a burning sun. "It can be a challenge when I'm busy with personal duties and have to leave the village. The population relies on me entirely for health matters," Abotono says.

Despite its remote location, Abotono's village is on the cutting edge of mobile health technology. In 2016, MSH, USAID and the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative helped Madagascar's Ministry of Public Health develop and roll out an app to improve the quality of community health services. The CommCare app is particularly effective for the detection and treatment of malaria. It allows health workers and volunteers to more easily and effectively identify and report cases of malaria to public health officials. This is a critical advantage for Abotono.

Malaria is a main cause of death in Madagascar, especially among young children in remote areas. In Abotono's village, more than 80% of the 300 children he saw in the past eight months tested positive for malaria. With help

from the app, he ensured each of them received the proper treatment and follow-up to beat it. Through the app, Abotono receives step-by-step instructions on using rapid diagnostic tests.



"When somebody brings a child with fever to me, the app walks me through the process. It tells me to check the child's overall health status and prompts me to do a rapid diagnostic test for malaria," Abotono explains. "If the test result is positive, the app indicates the treatment that I should provide."

Community health volunteers can also access digital forms via the app that feed into the national health reporting system, quickly relaying information to public health officials and simultaneously informing the distribution of essential supplies to prevent shortages.

Shrewd health system investments, like placing the CommCare mobile health app into the hands of trained local health leaders and workers, can improve health services in remote areas. The use of the CommCare app has helped keep malaria services accessible and reliable, despite the COVID-19 health crisis. Since April 2020, no complex cases of malaria have been recorded in Andravindahy, in part thanks to the prevention and timely detection and treatment of mild cases.

More than 3,970 community health volunteers and 350 health workers currently use the CommCare application in 10 regions of Madagascar. As part of the USAID-funded ACCESS program, MSH and partner Dimagi have supported the rollout and transfer of the application to the Ministry of Public Health in efforts to strengthen Madagascar's community health system.