The Changemakers of Health Care Delivery

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2019

Mission
VillageReach transforms health care to reach everyone.
A Message from the President to You

Almost twenty years ago, VillageReach was founded to make sure that vaccines reached every rural health center in northern Mozambique. From that original demonstration work, a movement was born. In 2019, in collaboration with partners across the globe, our solutions have improved access to health care for 43 million people across 10 countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Transforming health care delivery and systems for the most under-reached requires tremendous collaboration, collective action and partnerships. As I look back at 2019, one thing is clear - behind every success and every solution, there are changemakers. Changemakers champion transformative change in health care delivery in their communities. They work tirelessly every day to advocate for a world where each person has the health care needed to thrive.

Today, we highlight some of the incredible milestones of 2019, and the changemakers who influenced them.

- **Malawi**: The handover of Chipatala cha pa Foni – or Health Center by Phone – to the Ministry of Health and Population represents a major milestone for the commitment to Universal Health Coverage in Malawi. In this report, you will meet Patience Tchwonge, a changemaker whose contributions helped make this possible.

- **Mozambique**: In Zambézia province, health centers would often run low on medicines and supplies. By partnering with the private sector, we made tremendous progress in supporting the government’s vision of a reliable, integrated supply chain that reaches every health center in 2019. In this report, you will meet Chaido Francisco Nomeado, a changemaker who is responsible for getting medical supplies regularly and safely to remote health centers.

- **The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**: It was a historic moment for a rural health center in Equateur province when the community gathered in August 2019 to watch the first children receive vaccines delivered by drones. In hard-to-reach communities, drones can provide a reliable and cost-efficient way to ensure health workers have access to life-saving vaccines and essential medicines for their patients. In this report, we will introduce you to Emmanuel Bosala, the changemaker who was there for the first delivery and vaccinated the first ten families.

In 2019, world leaders ratified a bold agenda for Universal Health Coverage. To reach these goals, we need to accelerate the pace of change. Gaps and inequities in health services are still leaving people behind, and targeted, cost-effective solutions are required to close these gaps.

We know that this change – both big and small – will require changemakers. Changemakers like Patience, Emmanuel and Chaido motivate us every day and remind us that people make health systems strong. Together, we will meet the challenges ahead.

Warm regards,
Emily Bancroft, President
In 2019

43 million people benefited from increased access to quality health care

2,000 health centers across sub-Saharan Africa have improved availability of medicines

12,000 health workers have access to data systems that provide the information they need to make critical decisions

1,300 health workers have greater capacity to manage health commodities, expand the scope of their services and deliver quality care
A Health Center is Only One Call Away for Expecting Mothers

Patience Tchongwe always knew she would be ready to answer the call when it came to public service. When she joined Malawi’s Chipatala cha pa Foni (CCPF), or health center by phone in Chichewa, her desire to make a difference was realized.

In 2015, Patience became a part of the hotline as a nurse midwife specializing in nutrition and food science. At that time, CCPF was only operating in two districts with three volunteers behind the phones offering advice about maternal and child health. But even in its early stages, the Ministry of Health and Population (MoHP) and Patience’s team could see the value the hotline was bringing to Malawians.

“We were changing the lives of many people, and the Minister of Health saw that. He decided to hire more nurses with appropriate diplomas and qualifications,” Patience said.

From then on, Patience would spend long hours and late nights developing the critical health information and the necessary tools for her hotline workers, so that they could properly inform callers and bring them the health care they deserved. Her hard work paid off. She became a key liaison between the MoHP and VillageReach as CCPF transformed into a nationwide offering with an average of 3,000 calls per month.

“CCPF went from maternal health advice to covering questions about all health topics,” Patience said. Now standard health areas—including nutrition, water, sanitation and hygiene, infectious diseases, and sexual and reproduction health for young people—can be discussed with Malawians.

But through the program’s expansion and success, Patience never forgot CCPF’s initial roots as a resource for mothers and their children’s health. As the senior hotline supervisor, she worked diligently to talk with expectant mothers and leave messages for them on what to expect during their pregnancy and how to practice proper prenatal care. She wanted, more than anything, for women to understand the value and life-saving capabilities of having their child in a health facility.
In 2018, Patience began offering advice to Ellena from Chibwana, who was expecting and had reached out to CCPF for their expertise. Like many women in her village, Ellena had her first two children at home, but with her third child on the way, she wanted to heed the advice of a community health worker and take advantage of the hotline.

“We predicted her due date for her, so she would know when would be the best time to go to the health center for the baby’s delivery, which was important for her since the center was 14 kilometers away from where she lived,” Patience relayed. Thanks to the hotline, Ellena became the first woman to give birth in the Kwitanda Health Center rather than at home - a milestone for mothers in Ellena’s remote community.

The CCPF team had also projected Ellena’s due date perfectly, with her daughter Eliza born just one day before the hotline’s estimation.

Patience saw the health care progress she had dreamed of come to life. Women were gaining health care knowledge and utilizing its transformative power for themselves and their children. The impact of her work had reached new heights, and there was no going back, only forward.

Several weeks after the birth of Eliza, Patience journeyed to Ellena’s village to visit the newborn child and ask Ellena if she would encourage others in her community to use CCPF. “She volunteered to be an advocate for CCPF,” Patience stated with enthusiasm. “We also kept sending her messages and she continued to go to the center for her baby’s wellness visits. Other mothers will be calling CCPF and coming to the center now to deliver their babies because of her story.”

Incredible CCPF experiences like these are becoming the norm, and because of this, Patience was recognized for her dedication and meticulous work. In 2020, the State President of Malawi presented Patience and VillageReach Country Director Dr. Alinafe Kasiya with a prominent award recognizing CCPF as a Transformative Initiative for Malawi. The government of Malawi has complete confidence in CCPF’s power to bring health care information to its communities. In March, Malawi’s MoHP completely took over operations for the health hotline. Twenty new hotline staff members received their first paycheck, which is demonstrative of the government’s commitment to CCPF. As she reflects back on the last five years, Patience said, “There’s nothing better than seeing CCPF give Malawians the ability to make informed decisions about their health and greater autonomy over their future.”

“We’ve empowered Malawians like Ellena to take control of their health and imparted them with the knowledge they need, bringing about a great change in our public health care. Hospitals are even telling us how informed the CCPF people are and how they are asking for services.”

Changemakers like Patience Tchongwe are transforming health care for everyone.
In 2019, the Last Mile Supply Chain program made 1,577 deliveries of essential medicines and supplies to health centers in Mozambique, impacting the health and wellbeing of over 5 million people.

A mother rests in front of a health center on the first day of a vaccine campaign. Credit: Denis Onyodi

A Change of Wheels to Get Medicines to Health Centers

In Mozambique, getting medicines to provincial warehouses is only one step in the supply chain journey. From there, changemakers like Chaido Francisco Nomeado ensure those medicines get to remote health centers. Chaido is a dispatch clerk responsible for delivering medicines to six health centers in the hardest-to-reach district in Zambézia province, Chinde. His journey requires several days, a “change of wheels” for a six-hour sailboat ride across the Zambezi River and a lot of discomfort navigating rough roads and battling mosquitoes. But to him, being a dispatch clerk is not just a job, it is a mission.

“In the beginning you almost want to give up after your first distribution, but when you go there the second time and you feel the love health workers and people have for you, you don’t think on the difficulties anymore,” Chaido said. “You are only thinking how to save those people and that inspires you.”

VillageReach collaborated with Bolloré Transport and Logistics to outsource medical supply delivery directly to health facilities as part of the government’s commitment to improve transportation and logistics.

Although Chaido’s trips can be long and challenging, the gratitude he receives from Chinde health workers and the community keep him coming back, ensuring everyone everywhere has access to life-saving medicines.

The Last Mile Supply Chain program is managed in partnership with the Government of Mozambique and Bolloré Transport and Logistics, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).
In August 2019, 50 demonstration drone flights brought over 25 kilograms of health products to five health centers in the province of Equateur, DRC.

Among his many health care duties, Emmanuel is responsible for the routine vaccination of 260 infants. Many families have been bringing their children for routine visits to him over the years. These families often travel long distances on foot seeking health care. When Emmanuel has to make his monthly 16-hour journey for vaccine supplies on challenging roads and waterways, he is not available to help his patients who must return another day for treatment.

**VillageReach, in partnership with the DRC Ministry of Health, the national civil aviation authority and Swoop Aero, set out to test the capability of vaccine delivery via drone.**

Twenty minutes after the first demonstration flight took off, Emmanuel’s health center had its first vaccine delivery via drone. And after five days of demonstration flights, his health center had a three-month vaccine supply. Drone delivery in rural regions like Bikoro Territory can benefit everyone in the health district. When Emmanuel is able to stay at his health center, he can focus on what matters most—providing life-saving vaccines and health services to all.
A scale at the health center where weight is a measure of health. Zambézia Province, Mozambique. Credit: Denis Onyodi.

Revenue and Expenses for FY2019
(10/1/2018 – 9/30/2019)

**REVENUE**

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* VillageReach received a large multiyear grant in 2016; expenditures relating to the grant occurred in FY19.
Mothers and infants wait during a vaccination session; keeping to an immunization schedule helps babies stay happy and healthy. Niassa, Mozambique
Credit: Denis Onyodi

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