VillageReach Democratic Republic of Congo

VillageReach’s story in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) began in 2015, when we started working with the Ministry of Public Health, Hygiene and Prevention (MoH) on an evaluation of the supply chain, which led to the design of the Next Generation of Supply Chain Initiative (Nouvelle Génération des Chaînes d’Approvisionnement, NGCA). Since 2017, when it was implemented in the Equateur province, the supply chain transformation has increased the availability of vaccines and other health products in hard-to-reach communities. In 2021, it extended into seven provinces. Through a radical collaboration with the MoH, VillageReach continues to strengthen the health system through new innovations.

Next Generation of Supply Chain (NGCA)
VillageReach designs and implements innovative, high-impact solutions that improve health care access for the most underserved populations, ensuring the availability of health products. NGCA is one of the solutions aimed at an optimized and integrated distribution of vaccines and other health products in order to improve their availability to health facilities at the last mile. It is based on strengthening the capacities of health workers through training and formative supervision, with a focus on improving the quality of data for decision-making.

Drones for Health
In 2019, VillageReach began supporting the MoH and the Congolese Aviation Agency by introducing drones into the supply chain during a first-ever demonstration within the region, making it possible to overcome geographical and natural barriers for the distribution of health products to the last mile. Now drones regularly transport vaccines, laboratory samples, contraceptives, and other health products in Equateur province. Between January and September of 2021, 1,600 flights were conducted completing 636 deliveries, covering over 68,000 km, and making it possible to vaccinate more than 18,500 children and 6,200 pregnant women. Transporting products by drone not only enables rapid delivery of health products, but also improves disease surveillance and management.

Supply Chain Investment Coordination and Advocacy (SCICA)
VillageReach is supporting the strengthening of national and sub-national government stewardship of donor and domestic supply chain investments to improve health care delivery. SCICA aims to equitably organize the intervention areas of the MoH and its partners to reduce disparities in the availability of health products. Through this work, the government and its partners collaborate to harmonize and prioritize supply chains for communities at the last mile.

Private Sector Engagement
To ensure that products reach people when and where they are needed, VillageReach is working to integrate private sector distributors as a sustainable part of the DRC’s national supply system for essential medicines in order to increase access to high-quality pharmaceutical products at the facility and consumer level.
VillageReach DRC has supported the MoH, which has led to the following results:

1. **Remote training of more than 6,000 health workers and community health workers** by mobile phone covering topics such as preventive measures and the management of misinformation to ensure continuity of health care services.

2. **Supply and distribution of personal protective equipment** to front-line health workers in the response, and those who vaccinated during mass polio campaigns in the context of COVID-19. Since 2020, VillageReach has made more than 9 million PPEs available, mainly surgical masks, non-surgical masks, visors, medical gowns and medical gloves.

3. **COVID-19 information line through WhatsApp (Health Alert)**. HealthAlert provides general information on COVID-19, including COVID-19 vaccination, to the Congolese WhatsApp users to ensure access to reliable information and encourage the adoption of preventive measures to limit the spread of COVID-19.

**Our Team of Experts**

More than 35 VillageReach DRC staff members live and work within the communities we serve, offering up their expertise in public health, technology and business to create systemic change and deliver on our mission.

“Ensuring that health products reach everywhere, wherever people are, for continued provision of health services through innovative solutions, by putting the government’s needs first and partnering with the private sector, is a priority for VillageReach, in order to contribute to universal health coverage in DRC.”

– FREDDY NKOSI
Country Director