Supply Chain for Community Health Workers

Community Health Workers (CHWs) are the backbone of public health systems. Especially in countries like Liberia, where nearly 30 percent of the population lives in rural areas at least 5 km from the closest health facility. CHWs can dramatically expand access to health care in a cost-effective manner if they are equipped with the supplies they need to serve their communities.

However, the public health supply chain in Liberia is hindered by a lack of data for decision making, limited supply chain expertise and inconsistent delivery systems that lead to health facilities running out of life saving medicines and vaccines. To address these challenges VillageReach has partnered with the Liberian Ministry of Health (MoH) and Last Mile Health since 2019 to connect CHWs, known as Community Health Assistants (CHAs) in Liberia, to the country’s public health supply chain. This partnership led to the development of the Supply Chain for Community Health Workers (SC4CHWs) solution, part of a larger CHA program initiated and managed by the Government of Liberia.

The SC4CHWs solution has focused on getting health products to CHAs in three counties in Liberia — Rivercess, Grand Bassa and Grand Gedeh. Significant improvements in inventory management have been made within these counties, and for the first time CHAs were included in national forecasting for health products as part of the government’s COVID-19 response (including the provision of personal protective equipment for CHAs).
Now with new funding, we can utilize some of the lessons learned from SC4CHWs to launch a new project.

A New Approach in Liberia

A new $1.5 million investment from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria allows the Liberian MoH and VillageReach to launch a new project over the next two years in Bomi and Margibi counties.1

With this funding VillageReach will test new ways to connect CHAs to the public health supply chain in Liberia, furthering our mission to transform health care delivery to reach everyone. The new project will be stewarded by the government while we provide technical assistance to improve supply chain planning, transparency, accountability and service delivery through four main objectives.

1 VillageReach will also be working with several partners to implement this project including, Last Mile Health and Plan International.
The long-term goal of the MoH, and all stakeholders, is to scale this project nationally and to plan from the beginning to transition project operations to government.

Strengthening government capacity to sustain improvements in the CHA supply chain:
by providing supply chain training to County Health Teams, Community Health Services Supervisors and CHAs, as well as by using government platforms to align stakeholders and institutionalize the project.

Transforming how medicines and supplies get to CHAs:
by creating CHA kits tailored to their needs, and integrating the consistent delivery of those kits into the national supply chain.

Improving data quality and visibility needed to manage CHA supply chains:
by supplying CHAs with tablets and phones to record data, and developing an app for CHAs to record supply chain data in real-time. This will replace a paper-based system and will connect community level data to national logistics management information systems.

Sustainable Impact at Scale:
by building government capacity for long-term implementation and creating tools that will help absorb the project into the public sector in alignment with government priorities.

At VillageReach our approach is that once a solution has proven impactful, we scale the solution and transition ownership to government or other partners. We define transition as the process of integrating a solution into existing public health care systems. (Learn more: Transitioning Well Initiative)
Making an Impact

Through these activities we aim to achieve:

- **Increased data availability**
  
  Percent of health facilities reporting CHA supply status

- **Increased supply chain expertise**
  
  Difference between pre- and post training assessments

- **Increased use of data for supply chain decision making**
  
  % of counties holding quarterly supply chain meetings where data is used to create action items

- **Improve on-time delivery of products to CHAs**
  
  % of CHAs who received at least one resupply visit during the month

- **Improve supply availability for CHAs**
  
  % of CHAs with life-saving commodities in stock

These milestones will ultimately ensure CHAs are equipped to deliver essential health services extending the access of quality primary health care in Liberia.