Last Mile Supply Chain

Ensuring the availability of medical products at health facilities

Delivery trucks start their distribution schedules early in the morning from Quelimane to the districts across Zambézia. Photo Credit: Denis Onyodi

Program context

In 2013, the Mozambique Ministry of Health (MISAU) adopted the Pharmaceutical Logistics Strategic Plan (PELF) prompting several reforms to improve the distribution of critical health products to health facilities. It also expanded the use of electronic logistics management information systems (LMIS) to help ensure end-to-end visibility and quality of key logistic information throughout the supply chain.

VillageReach is also supporting MISAU in supply chain integration to combine the distribution of medicines and vaccines into a single supply chain under the management of Central Medicine Stores (CMAM). The Last Mile Supply Chain (LMSC) program proved in Zambézia that integrated distribution of all lifesaving products directly to health facilities can work at scale.

Program summary

In its efforts to provide quality health services to its citizens, the Government of Mozambique and USAID partnered with VillageReach to design and implement a streamlined, effective and integrated last mile supply chain system. The primary objective is to improve the availability of health products and diagnostics at the last mile. The LMSC program is aligned with long-term national strategies and efforts, while taking short-term steps to address chronic logistics and transport challenges at the sub-national level. The program began in Zambézia province covering two districts in October 2018. By the end of September 2019 the program was making monthly deliveries to all 22 districts and 235 health facilities in Zambézia. LMSC has also expanded to support monthly deliveries in all districts of Sofala, Tete, Inhambane and Nampula provinces covering a total of 949 health facilities.

Strategic public and private sector partnerships are core to the program, helping ensure effective implementation, results maximization and sustainability. The MISAU, CMAM, the Provincial Health Directorate (DPS) and the Provincial Warehouse (DPM) in each province are central to the work. Other technical partners include Project Last Mile and private sector companies like Bolloré Transport & Logistics and Agility.

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Program approach

The technical approach to LMSC is based on five key principles to address current challenges. They include:

1 Strengthened stakeholder and technical management

LMSC is helping to establish a provincial logistics technical working group (TWG) composed of DPS and key supply chain transport partners to support planning, accountability and recommendations of continuous system improvements.

2 Improved data collection and systems for end-to-end visibility and accountability

The use of reliable and accessible data for decision-making and accountability is a cornerstone to LMSC. The program embeds a Visibility and Analytics Advisor to integrate distribution and stock management data.

3 Capacity building to support logistics and management

LMSC focuses on improving long-term logistics capabilities at the sub-national level. Extensive training for the DPS staff supports management of the 4PL and data analytics, and ongoing training is conducted for transport providers as well as health center and warehouse staff.

4 Use of innovation to reliably reach all facilities

VillageReach is exploring innovative ways to ensure reliable distribution to even the most remote facilities. This could include moving products through unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or by involving independent transporters in a ride-sharing service.

5 Transfer to government

The LMSC program prioritizes documentation of processes, tools and best practices, and the provision of associated training and technical support to ensure CMAM and provincial government stakeholders can operate autonomously. LMSC is developing a Transport Services Solutions Toolkit as an easily accessible resource for all stakeholders engaged in supporting outsourced distribution for CMAM.

Pharmacy assistants are reviewing orders for shipment to health facilities in Zambézia province. Photo Credit: Denis Onyodi

Expected results

The primary goal of the LMSC program is to improve the availability of health products where they are needed for testing and treatment. LMSC expected outcomes include:

Supply chain information is used to strengthen accountability and planning in the supply chain between the provincial level and the health facility level.

Transportation and logistics execution are improved.

Appropriate control mechanisms are in place for distribution of health products throughout the province.

Proven transportation and related logistic processes and tools are transferred to government.

About VillageReach

VillageReach transforms health care delivery to reach everyone, so that each person has the health care needed to thrive. We develop solutions that improve equity and access to primary health care. This includes making sure products are available when and where they are needed and primary health care services are delivered to the most under-reached. Radical collaboration with governments, the private sector and other partners strengthen our ability to scale and sustain these solutions. Our work increases access to quality health care for 43 million people in sub-Saharan Africa.

VillageReach in Mozambique

VillageReach has worked in Mozambique since 2000. VillageReach's earliest work focused on improving the immunization supply chain in northern Mozambique. The work introduced an approach to supply chain design resulting in significant increases in fully vaccinated children, dramatic reduction in stock-outs and reduced costs. Since then, VillageReach has continued to work in close partnership with MISAU to implement supply chain improvement strategies on a national scale.