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MOZAMBIQUE

SUCCESS STORY

Bringing the Money Where it is Most Needed – and Empowering District Health Teams in the Process



Photo: Abilio Cossa

A health professional transports lab samples on a motorcycle procured with USAID support and fuel funded through district sub-agreements, in Nhamatanda, Sofala.

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to strengthen the Mozambican health system so that all districts are able to locally manage health programs, including direct funding from donors

In the Mozambique health system, District Health Teams are ultimately responsible for delivering health services to the population. However, they face many obstacles to effectively fulfill this task. Overall, priorities are planned, managed and financed at the provincial and central levels, and districts historically had no control over the resources available to implement activities. The lack of experience of District Health Teams in handling funding leads to problems such as delays or failure to disburse funds to support essential services. This limitation, coupled with insufficient health funding available to cover most districts' essential needs, results in severely poor health services.

In 2013, USAID launched an initiative to provide direct funding to districts, while also improving the District Health Team's capacity to plan for, use, and manage the funds. This initiative is providing sub-grants to all 36 districts in the Sofala, Manica and Tete provinces. Districts are required to develop plans for use of funds, focusing on priority activities including transport of medical supplies and laboratory samples for processing, training of staff, community health programs, coordination, planning and data analysis meetings, and integrated supervision and technical assistance visits to health facilities. Sub-grant funds are disbursed in tranches, based on district achievement of set milestones. This mechanism delivers funding directly to where it is most needed, while also strengthening the District Health Teams' capacity to manage resources.

Nhamatanda District in Sofala province is one of the 36 recipient districts. Nine months since the launch of the initiative, Nhamatanda has improved. According to the District Medical Chief, Dr. Prescila Felimone, the USAID-supported initiative has helped boost the district activity implementation pace, as well as improve the staffs' management skills.

"The district sub-agreements brought about a positive impact as we no longer depend on the provincial level to transport drugs. Collection of laboratory samples and delivery of results to peripheral health centers is prompt. Patients now get their test results within four days while before it took more than one week to deliver results," says the District Chief Medical Officer. The district has also reduced the time it takes to deliver drugs to all health facilities.

"We are a cohesive and motivated team because we know that we have resources locally to plan and implement activities. Now we can conduct supervision and technical assistance visits more timely," says Dr. Prescila Felimone.

Telling Our Story

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