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DELIVER PROJECT

Success Story

Collaboration with the West African Health Organization (WAHO) to Improve Contraceptive Security



The West African Health Organization, 2014

The central medical store of Benin receives contraceptives transferred from Burkina Faso.

“WAHO has been an invaluable partner in enabling the CARhs group to effectively address supply crises in a region that experiences significant contraceptive security challenges.” - Ellen T. Tompsett, CARhs administrator, RHSC

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Contraceptive security exists when every person is able to choose, obtain, and use quality contraceptives whenever s/he needs them. Improving contraceptive security in West and Central Africa requires strong collaboration among the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, regional institutions, and partners. One such partner is the West African Health Organization (WAHO), whose mission is to attain the highest possible standard and protection of health for the people of the 15 countries of the Economic Community of West African States.

With funding from the USAID West Africa Regional Health Office, the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT (the project) developed a strategic partnership with WAHO to create synergies with WAHO's regional reproductive health and HIV prevention program funded by the German Financial Cooperation (through KfW, the German development bank). Key achievements as a result of this partnership include WAHO's membership in and contributions to the Coordinated Assistance for Reproductive Health Supplies (CARhs) donor group, increased collaboration on the implementation of technical activities in the region and leveraging of investments to further support contraceptive security.

In late 2012, WAHO joined the CARhs group, which includes representatives from UNFPA, USAID, and the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC). The CARhs group is a key part of the early warning system (EWS) for contraceptives that the project is currently implementing in the region. The EWS allows countries to report their contraceptive stock levels via the Procurement Planning and Monitoring Report (PPMR). CARhs uses these data to mitigate critical stock imbalances, including resolving or avoiding stockouts and overstocks.

WAHO's participation in the CARhs group has allowed it to monitor stock levels in the region more closely, form strategic partnerships, and share and receive procurement information.

Ellen T. Tompsett, the CARhs administrator with RHSC noted that, “WAHO has been an invaluable partner in enabling the CARhs group to effectively address supply crises in a region that experiences significant contraceptive security challenges.”

One concrete result of WAHO’s participation in the CARhs was in late 2013, when the Ministry of Health in Burkina Faso asked CARhs for assistance transferring stock of Noristerat, an injectable contraceptive, to another country in the region so that the product could be used before it expired. The CARhs group identified the Ministry of Health of Benin as the recipient country, as it needed Noristerat. Through the regional reproductive health and HIV program, WAHO led and funded the transfer of more than 192,000 vials of Noristerat from Burkina Faso to Benin, saving donors approximately \$250,000 in product procurement costs.

To help build capacity in supply chain management in the region, WAHO hired two regional training institutions, the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) and Bioforce, to conduct trainings in logistics and quantification. WAHO’s investment was made possible by the project’s previous financial and technical support¹ of these two regional training institutes, which gave these institutions the capacity to provide these courses. To date, WAHO has supported the training of 62 people; 38 from the government Ministries of Health (MOH), and 24 from social marketing organizations, International Planned Parenthood Member Associations, and central medical stores in the region in these key technical areas.

In addition, the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT collaborated with the MOH in Niger and WAHO to conduct a contraceptive security assessment in September 2013. The findings of the assessment were used by the project, WAHO and other partners to identify key supply chain interventions. WAHO found the assessment results to be so valuable that it plans to expand the assessment to other countries in West Africa.

In a region with many supply chain challenges, collaboration is critical. The USAID | DELIVER PROJECT’s lasting partnership with WAHO has fostered a regional approach to improving contraceptive security.

¹ The financial and technical support to ESAMI was provided using the project’s core funds. The financial and technical support to Bioforce was provided using the project’s core funds and USAID West Africa Regional Health Office funds.

The USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, Task Order 4, is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, and implemented by John Snow, Inc. The project improves essential health commodity supply chains by strengthening logistics management information systems, streamlining distribution systems, identifying financial resources for procurement and supply chain operations, and enhancing forecasting and procurement planning. The project also encourages policymakers and donors to support logistics as a critical factor in the overall success of their health care mandates.

The authors’ views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

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