

USAID GLOBAL HEALTH SUPPLY CHAIN PROGRAM

Procurement and Supply Management

IN CAMEROON, BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE STOCK MANAGEMENT PRACTICES AT HEALTH FACILITIES IN THE NORTH AND FAR NORTH REGIONS



In Cameroon, the pharmacist ratio per capita is low, 0.006 per 10,000 population, with unequal distribution between rural and urban areas. With the re-orientation of primary health care policy, local-level recruiters employ pharmacy attendants from the community who require basic training to perform medicines management duties.



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CHALLENGES

Supervision visits and other assessments such as data quality audits (DQA) and end use verification (EUV) identified challenges, including:

- ➔ No clear documentation on the tasks expected to be performed by pharmacy attendants at the time of recruitment.
- ➔ Noncompliance with good storage guidelines at the health-facility level.
- ➔ No or poor filling of stock management tools such as registers and stock cards.
- ➔ Poor logistics data quality reported to the system (mismatch between reported data and source documents).
- ➔ Poor quality control of data reported to the system.



Storage condition at some facilities as seen during supervision. Photo credit: GHSC-PSM

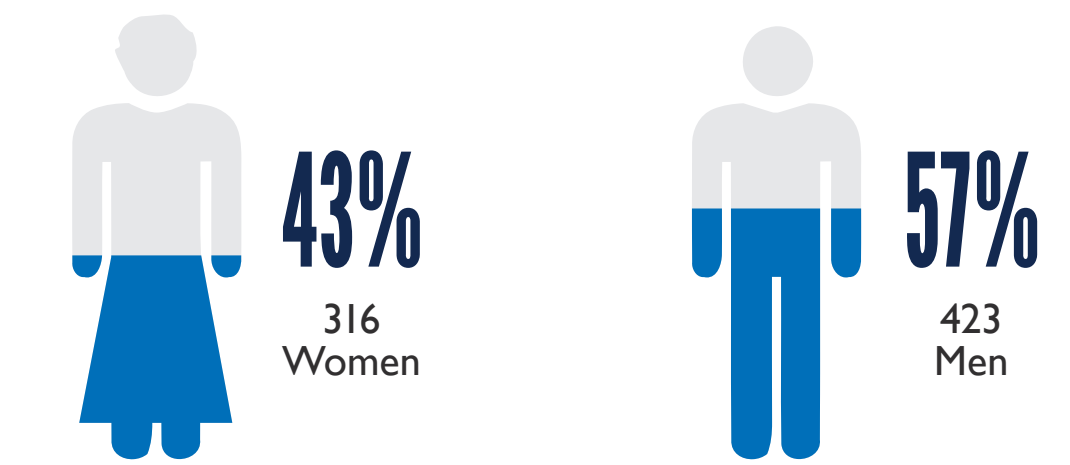
ACTIVITIES AND APPROACH

With funding from the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI), GHSC-PSM trained at least one person from the 700+ health facilities in the North and Far North regions. Under the leadership of the regional delegation of public health, the project:

- ➔ Developed training material covering the fundamentals of reception receipt, storage, inventory management, dispensing, and reporting of health commodities.
- ➔ Organized several two-day training sessions, with presentations, role plays, exercises, and plenary discussions.
- ➔ Used the local language, Fulfulde to explain difficult concepts.

RESULTS

- ➔ Since March 2021 till date, 739 pharmacy attendants trained since March 2021.



- ➔ EUV survey showed an increase in the number of facilities updating stock cards for Artemether-lumefantrine (AL) formulations, from 61-66 percent in April 2021 to 63-73 percent of facilities in April 2022.
- ➔ In knowledge tests, average scores increased from 36 percent pre-training test to 57 percent post-training test.

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“There has been a noticeable change in the pharmacy since one of my pharmacy attendants returned from the training. She’s always saying that during training, they told us not to do this or that this is how we were supposed to do it. This training couldn’t have come at a better time, and we hope to see more of it in the future.”

— Dr. Assanatou, Pharmacist Regional Hospital Garoua in Cameroon.

LESSONS LEARNED

- ➔ Given the importance of pharmacy attendants in the health system, the candidate profile and tasks must be communicated to dialogue structures that conduct recruitment.
- ➔ Language barriers must be taken into consideration when training supply chain workers. Participants were able to engage and answer questions in the Fulfulde language satisfactorily.
- ➔ Pharmacy attendants are often on the lookout for better opportunities. To reduce high turnover, develop a legal framework for the position of pharmacy attendant and harmonize pay structures.