

SCMS

IN BRIEF



In Zambia: Building sustainable capacity through pre-service supply chain training

SCMS's intervention on training pre-service trainers has helped provide graduating biomedical students with supply chain skills and reduce long term in-service training costs.

Zambia's Ministry of Health (MOH), with support from SCMS, designed a national logistics system in October 2007. In response to the national ART program scale up, the new logistics system was created to manage laboratory commodities in the supply chain. MOH piloted and tested the system for almost a year before its official implementation in December 2009. The current system now operates using an approved inventory control system (ICS), standard operating procedures (SOPs) and a list of 185 essential laboratory commodities. Efficient management of the supply chain depends on a network of staff that extends its reach to all 240 health facilities with laboratories.

SCMS has worked since pre-pilot stages to build the logistic system's sustainability and cost-effective capacity. Early on, SCMS spotted a major challenge to the success of Zambia's supply chain management (SCM): laboratory staff and managers received no SCM training before they entered the workforce and required a continued cost-investment in quality training.

Pre-trained students build capacity:

SCMS worked with the University of Zambia and its three affiliated colleges – Ndola School of Biomedical Sciences, Evelyn Hone College and Chikankata College of Biomed-

ical Sciences – on incorporating supply chain training into biomedical science curricula. This capacity building initiative institutionalized professionalization in pre-service training to improve the laboratory commodity supply chain.

Integrating training — steps towards standardization:

During a University of Zambia (UNZA) curriculum review meeting in 2008, SCMS proposed including pre-service laboratory commodity SCM training in biomedical scientist school curriculum. SCMS advocated for pre-service training as a required university course, which would standardize biomedical professional skill sets, cut down on training costs and build the capacity of the national laboratory commodity supply chain. The proposed end goal was to ensure all UNZA graduates be trained in the MOH National Laboratory Commodities Logistics System. UNZA lectur-



SCMS worked with the University of Zambia to institutionalize pre-service laboratory commodity SCM training in biomedical scientist school curriculum.

ers approved SCMS's initiative to lead training of trainers (TOT) courses, and agreed to include laboratory commodity supply chain in biomedical scientist school curricula.

SCMS launched two training of trainers (TOT) courses, in 2009 and 2010, which certified 34 pre-service supply chain trainers. After certification, lecturers piloted pre-service training, teaching logistics and supply chain management as add-on courses within UNZA. Given the existing biomedical course requirements, SCM was gradually incorporated into the standard curriculum. SCMS provided quality checks on all courses conducted by certified lecturers. Since the first TOT, all UNZA biomedical science graduates have taken the course.

To date, 272 students have completed the pre-service training course – of which an estimated 80 percent find post-graduate work as biomedical scientists within MOH facilities. SCMS's pre-service training initiative has contributed to a 62 percent reduction in service training costs (mostly on venues and accommodation), for an average of 30 participants.

After three years of add-on courses, the School of Biomedical Sciences, University of Zambia (UNZA) fully integrated the pre-service supply chain management curriculum in August 2011. SCMS supported this milestone rollout with logistics handbooks, trainers' manuals and laminated posters for 120 students. Over the next year, SCMS will phase out its supervision of trainers. All colleges and universities in Zambia are now expected to train biomedical students on laboratory supply chain management in the final year of curricula.

Key Takeaways:

Pre-service training programs and HIV/AIDS programs should bear in mind the following:

Learning from success:

- **Strategy presentation at curriculum development meetings:** Planning ahead facilitated bringing new courses into the academic year.
- **Mandatory course requirement:** By making SCM courses mandatory for graduation, biomedical students have standardized knowledge of logistics and supply chain management. Since SCMS's first TOT, all UNZA biomedical science graduates have taken the course.
- **Lecturer ownership of the initiative:** Since the curriculum was adopted, capable lecturers can conduct trainings without SCMS support. As a result, students

are graduating with greater supply chain skills, thus reducing in-service training costs.

Rising to the challenge:

- **Part-time lecturers:** With varying schedules of part-time lecturers, SCMS had to adapt to facilitate training of trainers. To reach a broader scope of lecturers, SCMS held two trainings.
- **Pre-set curriculum:** Although the supply chain curriculum could not be immediately integrated, due to the existing set curriculum, SCMS kept the initiative moving. Instead of holding on the start date, SCMS helped install the course as an add-on for the first three years, and the integrated curriculum is now being taught to students just beginning their studies.

Higher-education pre-service trainings significantly reduce the need for in-service training, as new professionals enter the workforce already equipped to manage laboratory commodity logistics systems. Eighty percent of Zambia's biomedical students graduate to find jobs within MOH facilities. Thanks to SCMS's support, they are now able to implement the MOH National Laboratory Commodity Logistics System on their first day of work.

In July 2011, the Biomedical Society of Zambia/MOH recognized SCMS with an award of excellence in contributing to the country's laboratory commodities logistics system and improving commodity availability.

ABOUT SCMS

The Supply Chain Management System (SCMS) was established to collaborate within country and global partners to ensure a reliable, cost-effective and secure supply of high quality medicines and health products for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment. SCMS is funded as part of the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Visit us at www.scms.pfscm.org.

The author's views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the US Agency for International Development or the United States government.

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