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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES (MAY - JUNE 2015)

- Enhancing Tonata's capacity for monitoring and evaluation towards sustained HIV epidemic control
- Strengthening Therapeutics Committees to conduct medicines use evaluations for improving quality of ART services
- Improving monitoring of pharmaceutical supplier performance to improve HIV/AIDS medicines availability
- Improving warehousing, inventory control, and distribution practices for ARVs and essential medicines
- Providing onsite technical support and monitoring implementation of new ART guidelines
- Analyzing trends in HIV drug resistance early warning indicators for the pediatric population
- Rolling out the mobile electronic dispensing tool and training to primary healthcare facilities in support of ART decentralization
- Enhancing NANASO's capacity to adapt and use BLC monitoring and evaluation and capacity assessment tools

Piloting Mobile Phone Messaging Services to Enhance Patient Adherence to Antiretroviral Treatment

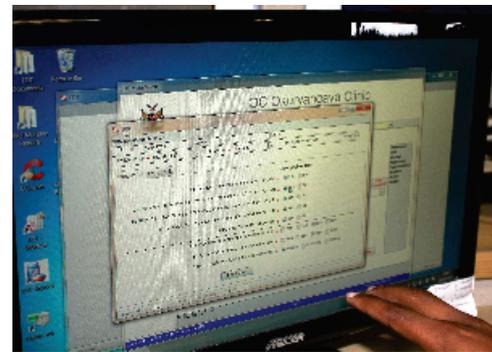
In collaboration with the National HIV Control Programme at the Directorate of Special Programmes (DSP) of the Namibian Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), the USAID-funded Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) project begun live-testing of the short message service (SMS) reminder application of the antiretroviral therapy electronic dispensing tool (EDT) at the Khomasdal and Okuryangava clinics in Windhoek.

The two sites are part of ten sites selected by DSP for prioritizing this adherence enhancing intervention because they have exhibited low adherence and retention rates. The testing is important in making the necessary system adjustments before rolling it out to other focal ART sites in the country.

Clients get enrolled from the EDT system, where their cellphone number, preferred language and messages are collected with their consent. Those unwilling to participate in the programme are not compelled to do so and their unwillingness does not interfere with the ART services they are offered by the site. Upon enrolment, the client receives a message from the SMS App to confirm enrolment.

The SMS App auto-configures the message and schedules it for sending shortly before or after the scheduled appointment date for collecting medicines from the pharmacy. Clients would receive SMS reminders after their scheduled appointment only if the client misses their appointment.

The original English language messages are being translated into the seven main local languages for clients who prefer to be notified in their vernacular languages.



Picture showing the SMS Reminder Module at Okuryangava Clinic.



A patient receives an acknowledgment SMS after enrolling into the programme.

Information on Antiretroviral and Other Medicines Registered in Namibia Now Available on a Web-based Platform

The USAID-funded SIAPS project provided technical assistance to the Namibia Medicines Regulatory Council (NMRC) of the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) to redesign its web-site to improve dissemination of pharmaceutical regulatory information to its clients and other stakeholders.

This intervention will ultimately achieve greater efficiency in the registration of medicines, including new antiretroviral formulations. The initiative will contribute to increasing transparency and accountability of the NMRC to its clients, the Namibian Government and other stakeholders. Through SIAPS support, the official list of all medicines registered in Namibia,

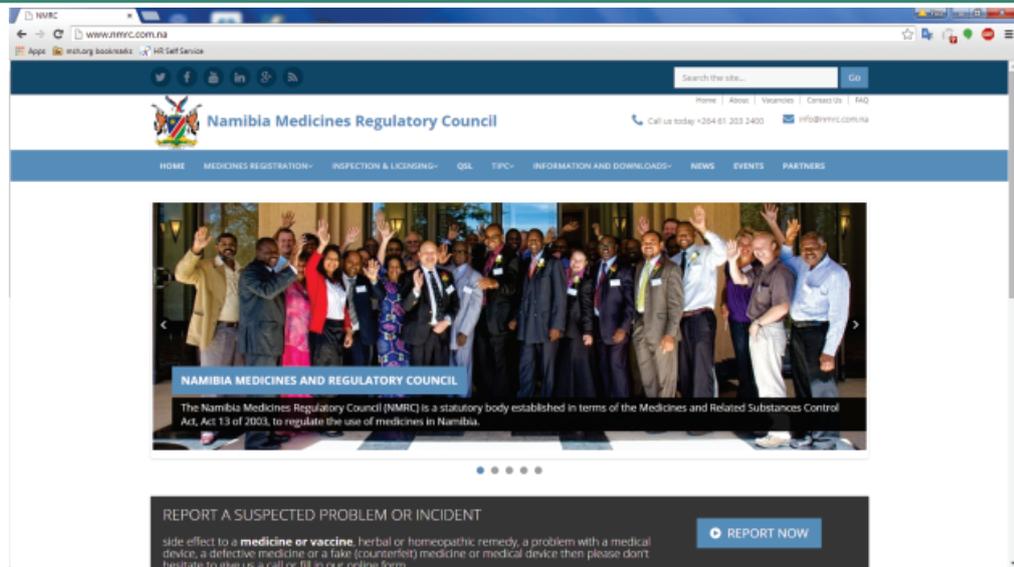
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Contributed by Greatjoy Mazibuko (Senior Technical Manager: SIAPS) and Samson Mwinga (Senior Technical Advisor: SIAPS)

which is generated by Pharmadex, a medicines registration software implemented with the support of SIAPS, is now readily available online with quick and dynamic search features as recommended by participants of the MoHSS pharmaceutical services retreat of 2013.

The NMRC is a statutory body responsible for licensing and regulating all pharmaceutical products used in Namibia. The NMRC Secretariat is situated at the sub-Division of Pharmaceutical Control and Inspection (PC&I) at the MoHSS.

NMRC's new website can be accessed at this URL: www.nmrc.com.na. We encourage our readers to review the website and provide us with feedback on how it can be made more user-



A screen grab of the NMRC website. (www.nmrc.com.na)

friendly, informative and functional. Prospective applicants for the registration of medicines in Namibia (pharmaceutical manufacturers and importers) are being contacted by

NMRC to test the website to ascertain that the online medicines registration portal is working well.

Contributed by Greatjoy Mazibuko (Senior Technical Manager: SIAPS) and Nasser Mbaziira (Senior Technical Advisor: SIAPS)

BLC Disburses a Capacity Development Grant to Tonata to Improve Service Delivery by the Network of PLHIV in Namibia

The USAID-funded Building Local Capacity (BLC) project is administering and providing related technical assistance for a US. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) capacity development grant for Tonata.

Tonata, which means "open your eyes" in the local Oshiwambo dialect, is the only active network organizations of People Living with HIV (PLHIV) in Namibia.

Launched in November 2008, the organisations is registered with the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) as a welfare organization implementing various advocacy programmes for its members in the four northern regions, namely, Ohangwena, Omusati, Oshana and Oshikoto. These regions have higher HIV prevalence rates than the national average of 13.1 percent.

Tonata, like other civil society networks, has limited financial, human resource, organizational management and leadership capacity to efficiently implement its programmes for PLHIV. In October 2014, Tonata conducted an Organizational Capacity Assessment (OCA), with BLC



US Ambassador to Namibia, Mr. Thomas Daughton (left) handing over signed grant agreement documents to Ms. Emilia Kamwandi (middle) Chairperson of Tonata, while Honorable Clemens Kashiupulwa (right) looks on. Photo by BLC staff.

technical support, that identified key strengths and gaps of the network organization. Based on the findings of the OCA, USAID provided a grant of US\$20,000 through BLC to Tonata to address key prioritized gaps.

The the US Ambassador to Namibia, Mr. Thomas Daughton officially handed over the signed agreement to Tonata on May 6, 2015 in Oshakati. The Oshana Regional Governor, Honorable Clemens Kashiupulwa officiated at the auspicious event.

The Board Chairperson of Tonata, Ms. Emilia Kamwandi reaffirmed Tonata's commitment to utilize the grant to strengthen the organization's capacity in leadership and governance, knowledge management and communication system, human resources, finance, planning and monitoring and evaluation policies.

The grant will strengthen Tonata's capacity to develop the required functional organizational systems and structures for its operations.

Contributed by: BLC Project Team

Synergy with UNAM's School of Medicine in Building Local Expertise for Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance

The USAID-funded SIAPS project has been influential in designing Namibia's approach to preventing the development of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) including HIV drug resistance (HIV-DR).

SIAPS' Strategic and sustained efforts aimed at creating awareness and building coalitions against AMR were used to initiate and subsequently institutionalize Namibia's AMR containment activities in a coordinated manner. The AMR coalition-based strategy identified key stakeholders such as the University of Namibia (UNAM) to play an integral role in pre- and in-service training of healthcare professionals to enhance the rational use of medicines (RUM) and to combat AMR in Namibia.

More recently, SIAPS supported the UNAM-School of Medicine to secure approximately USD165, 000 from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) through the German University of Bonn.

The funding is for infection prevention and control (IPC) activities including implementing practical strategies for reducing hospital acquired infections (HAI). This initiative will also include the development of a curriculum for medical students on IPC and HAI and promotion of operational research in antimicrobial resistance.

UNAM is considered an important partner for conducting, analyzing, disseminating, and coordinating operational research activities on RUM/AMR in Namibia. SIAPS will continue to work with the institution in implementing and revising strategies to combat the development of AMR including HIV-DR and drug-resistant TB.

In March 2015, SIAPS assisted in strengthening the institutional capacity of UNAM to deliver training on RUM/AMR.

Contributed by: Greatjoy Mazibuko, Bayobuya Phulu, and Samson Mwinga (Senior Technical Advisors (SIAPS))

First Class of Pharmacists Graduates from the SIAPS-supported School of Pharmacy in Namibia

The first group of 14 locally trained pharmacists graduated from Namibia's first and only School of Pharmacy at the University of Namibia (UNAM) on April 24, 2015.

The 14 new pharmacists will help to alleviate a severe shortage of pharmacists in Namibia, where a generalized HIV/AIDS epidemic creates great demand for antiretroviral services. To date, about 80 of the country's 200 licensed pharmacists are employed in the public sector.

The graduating pharmacists took oath on the eve of UNAM graduation, April 23, 2015. SIAPS, with the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) funding through USAID, provided technical assistance for establishing the school.

The assistance included the design of the Bachelor of Pharmacy curriculum, which was approved by the Pharmacy Council of the Health Professions Councils of Namibia (HPCNa) and accredited by the Namibia Qualifications Authority. USAID also provided the initial funding for two lecturers who were hired to establish the nascent Department of Pharmacy and to



Pharmacy class takes oath on eve of UNAM graduation, April 23, 2015. Photo by MSH Straff.

kick-start the training of pharmacists. Within two years of SIAPS support, UNAM took over funding for the two lecturers and elevated the department to a School of Pharmacy.

Before the pharmacy school was established, Namibia had no local institution for training pharmacists. UNAM anticipates that over the next four years an estimated 100 pharmacists will graduate from the new school.

Increasing the number of pharmacists is critical to the Government of Namibia's efforts to control the country's HIV epidemic and to provide HIV/AIDS treatment and prevention services to the nation.

Contributed by Evans Sagwa
(Project Director: SIAPS/ SCMS Namibia)

Inaugural Pharmacist Assistant Forum: A new platform for Disseminating Pharmaceutical Services Information for Decision-making in Namibia

The USAID-funded Supply Chain Management System (SCMS) and SIAPS projects provided technical assistance to the Division of Pharmaceutical Services of the MoHSS, in disseminating key information at an inaugural Pharmacist Assistant (PA) forum in March 2015.

The Pharmacist Assistant Forum, the first of its kind, convened PAs from all the 14 regions in Namibia, recognizing their role as the providers of pharmaceutical services in district constituencies where there are still no posts for pharmacists. The PA forum provides another platform for disseminating pharmaceutical service

information and to involve the PA cadre in important discussions and plans for improving pharmaceutical services delivery, including that of ART and TB patients. SIAPS in Namibia has supported the MoHSS to implement various tools to capture data on ART patient and ARV stock management. SIAPS has also supported the roll-out of the pharmaceutical management information system to primary healthcare facilities and in assessing prescriber's compliance with Namibia's standard treatment guidelines (STGs).

In 2014, SCMS supported the MoHSS to assess the pharmaceutical supply chain capacity and inventory management intervention

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implemented in selected PHC facilities. Both SIAPS and SCMS supported the MoHSS to conduct pharmaceutical support supervision visits (SSVs) throughout the country.

Feedback reports from these activities needed to be shared with PAs who have always been involved in the generation of these reports, yet without them getting an opportunity give input on strategies for improving the quality of pharmaceutical services.

SIAPS will support the MoHSS Division of Pharmaceutical Services to follow up on the implementation of agreed upon activities for improved health service delivery and health outcomes, particularly for HIV and AIDS and other preventable diseases.

Contributed by: Bayobuya Phulu
(Senior Technical Advisor, SIAPS) and
Alemayehu Wolde (Senior Technical Advisor, SCMS)

ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

The SIAPS/SCMS/BLC Namibia e-Newsletter is a bi-monthly newsletter that keeps you abreast of activities funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by MSH in Namibia.

Key focus areas are HIV /AIDS Management:

- Strengthening Health Systems
- Capacity Building
- Human Resource Development
- Service Delivery

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Your contribution and feedback to this valuable communication medium would be highly appreciated and can be e-mailed to esagwa@msb.org

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The opinions expressed herein are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development.



NANASO Sub-recipients during the Global Fund grant compliance training in Namibia in March 2015. Photo by BLC staff.

On March 27-28, 2015 BLC provided an induction and refresher training to six key Namibia Network of AIDS Service Organizations (NANASO) staff members who manage the Global Fund grant.

NANASO, a civil society organization stepped into a new role of managing the Global Fund grant as a principal recipient for the first time in 2010. NANASO needed support to effectively manage the grant. The training covered the key Global Fund structures and funding mechanisms, grant management and performance requirements, reporting requirements and templates, and provided an overview of key technical areas such as financial management, programs monitoring and evaluation.

The training also provided an opportunity for NANASO to seek guidance on some of the practical challenges experienced in grant implementation, namely, improving grant performance and management of key relationships with the Global Fund Secretariat, sub-recipients and the Local Fund Agent (LFA) Price Water House Copers (PWC).

In addition, BLC shared with NANASO materials for induction and refresher training that can be used for ongoing technical support to sub-recipients as a means to continuity of this capacity development. BLC also facilitated training for the Global Fund sub-recipients managed by NANASO on March 30-31, 2015. Twenty-one participants representing ten sub-recipients attended the training.

Many sub-recipients expressed their particular appreciation for the session that covered the sub-recipient grant agreement, as it highlighted the legally binding terms and conditions that they did not fully understand before the training. For example, sub-recipients have a legally bidding contract with NANASO and not with Global Fund as most of them assumed. The workshop also presented an opportunity for NANASO and its sub-recipients to update each other on challenges and concerns related to program implementation.

With the knowledge and skills gained from the USAID supported training, NANASO is equipped to efficiently manage the Global fund grant in Namibia, provide technical support to its sub recipients in addressing program implementation challenges to enhance quality of their services to especially people living with HIV/AIDS and key populations.

“I was pleasantly surprised that there were new things to learn in the terms and conditions of the grant signed between NANASO and my organization Catholic AIDS Action (CAA). The training has given me in-depth understanding of the grant obligations of CAA and a re-look at the special conditions governing the grant”, Chani Kundakwashe, CAA Director

“I thought the compliance training was not for me since I am a program person only responsible for implementation in the field. Now I understand that I also have to keep track of what I implement to ensure activities areas in line with the budget”, Oscar Shiweva, Positive Vibes Regional Coordinator

Contributed by: BLC Project Team