

The Capacity Project in Tanzania

As with many other sub-Saharan African countries, Tanzania is experiencing a serious shortage of health workers. The Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW) has publicly described the country's human resources for health (HRH) situation as an emergency. The Capacity Project and partner organizations are working as a team to respond to the needs of the MOHSW in creating a strategy for dealing with this crisis, as well as taking on leading roles in the resulting intervention areas.

Tanzania's lack of health workers is especially troubling in light of the urgent challenges the country faces. The HIV/AIDS epidemic is considered to be the main threat to Tanzania's economic and human development; prevalence is estimated at 7% of the population over age 15, and the number of orphans from HIV/AIDS may be more than two million. Malaria and diarrhea are also pressing concerns, along with access to clean water.

To meet these challenges, the Capacity Project seeks to increase Tanzania's ability to carry out long-term planning to recruit, retain and effectively utilize health workers. The mainland and the island of Zanzibar have separate ministries of health, both of which are receiving assistance from the Project.

The Project's strategy for the mainland includes a significant role in implementing short-term emergency HRH activities designed to build the MOHSW's capacity to assess, predict and manage the health workforce; accelerate recruitment and retention for expansion of service delivery in underserved areas; and increase productivity levels to more effectively use existing workers.

On Zanzibar, the Project is assisting the MOHSW to implement its five-year strategic plan for HRH. Current assistance is focused on strengthening HRH, developing a human resources information system (HRIS), improving quality of care and designing strategies to increase productivity and retention.

Activities in Brief

Assisting the Ministry of Health with Human Resources Management

In 2006, the Project supported the facilitation of two human resources management assessments with the mainland's HR Development Directorate and the Directorate of Administration and Personnel. Each directorate identified management and leadership strengths and weaknesses, developed action plans to improve internal capacity and created strategies to enhance collaboration between the two directorates.

More recently, the Project also conducted a series of Leadership Development Program (LDP) workshops for senior officers from the MOHSW, Muhimbili National Hospital and the Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC). The Project has previously employed the LDP in Kenya and Uganda, with great success in effort to support leadership and management training. In Tanzania, the implementation of the LDP is an important first step in equipping the MOHSW with the leadership and management skills necessary to mobilize a wide range of collaborators and coordinate HR interventions so that health workers can reach the rural communities that desperately need their services.

On Zanzibar, the Project supported the MOHSW to conduct a human resources management needs assessment and to develop a strategy for improvement.

The Project also worked with the MOHSW on mainland Tanzania to draft and finalize a strategic plan for HRH spanning 2007-2012.

The plan will assist the health sector in planning, developing, managing and utilizing human resources, and Capacity Project staff are supporting the MOHSW in the implementation process.

In addition, the Project conducted a series of workshops regarding the LDP for senior officers from the MOHSW, Muhimbili National Hospital and the Christian Social Services Commission.

Improving Productivity of Health Workers

The Project worked with the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR) to develop a protocol for a productivity improvement project. The mainland and Zanzibar teams collaborated to ensure consistency in indicators, data-gathering methods and instruments and training procedures for data collectors.

The mainland study of health worker time usage and productivity included observations of 158 health workers in 38 health facilities in two districts. Project staff provided assistance in the data analysis. On Zanzibar, the Project worked closely with the MOHSW to plan for and finalize all aspects of the productivity baseline study. A Project team interviewed and observed more than 75 health workers in 30 facilities to understand how they use their time on the job and what challenges decrease their productivity.



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The findings from both studies were used to inform the development of interventions to increase the productivity of existing health workers.

Reinforcing Evidence-Based HR Planning



On Zanzibar, a Project team led a stakeholders' meeting to gain insight into existing data systems, data use and prospective future data needs of the MOHSW, with the goal of facilitating evidence-based planning and decision-making. At a follow-up workshop, Project staff facilitated participants through a process to identify strengthening opportunities.

The Project subsequently conducted a series of workshops and training sessions on mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar aimed at strengthening the HRIS capabilities of the ministries of health and the CSSC. Project staff installed a version of the Project's iHRIS Manage software at Zanzibar's MOHSW and have trained staff members to use the system, which will assist in the design and management of a comprehensive human resources strategy.

Strengthening Zanzibar's Tertiary Care Hospital

The Project recruited a participant in the Pfizer Global Health Fellows Program and a senior administrator from Rush University Medical Center in Chicago to assist the Mnazi Mmoja Hospital with a strategic planning process.

The resulting plan responds to one of Zanzibar's five-year HRH development goals: to create a functional semi-autonomous referral hospital. The objectives of the plan are to establish the Mnazi Mmoja Hospital as an independent arm of the MOHSW by creating a management framework

that addresses all aspects of the business, and to improve its financial stability so that increased provision of medical supplies and equipment and a stronger infrastructure can be realized.

Providing Support for an Emergency Hiring Program

One key challenge for the mainland MOHSW is to establish an effective system to attract, prepare, place and support health workers. To address this challenge, the MOHSW and partners are implementing a fast-track initiative. As part of the groundwork, the Project assisted in conducting a labor market analysis that confirmed a ready pool of unemployed health workers who are willing to serve rural communities. The Project is currently working with the MOHSW to strengthen HRH management at the district level in an effort to improve efficiency in the recruitment, deployment, productivity and retention of these health workers. In addition, the Project has partnered with the Aga Khan Foundation to facilitate and provide continuing education and distance learning programs to improve the registered status of nurses in rural districts. Working with relevant partners, the Project will continue to address various other bottlenecks and barriers to hiring.

Strengthening Support for the Provision of Social Welfare Services for Children

In 2006, the Project completed an assessment of staffing needs for the provision of care to Most Vulnerable Children (MVC). From those findings, a pilot program was designed to address the most pressing challenges in MVC at the village level, and led to the creation of a new cadre of para-social worker trainee to provide basic quality social welfare services. Through the pilot program, the Project continues to work with local government to create roles that will oversee and support this growing new cadre of health worker.



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The Capacity Project Partnership

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Additional Partners in Tanzania

Mainland

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW)
National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR)
Christian Social Services Commission (CSSC)
Prime Minister's Office/Regional and Local Government (PMO-RALG)
Benjamin Mkapa HIV/AIDS Foundation
Aga Khan Foundation

AIDS Business Coalition of Tanzania
American International Health Alliance (AIHA)
The Institute for Social Work (ISW)

Zanzibar

Ministry of Health and Social Welfare (MOHSW)
National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR)
World Health Organization (WHO)
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