COUNTRY SNAPSHOT

Over the last several years, Sierra Leone has achieved significant gains in key health indicators by focusing on the improved delivery of essential health services. However, it remains challenged with coordinating and training its large and scattered workforce of Community Health Workers (CHWs). To address these challenges within the country’s resource and health worker constraints, Sierra Leone has recognized the importance of leadership & management in primary health care and has committed to strengthening those capabilities, notably through committing to expanding its national community health program, and extending the reach of its Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI).

- Population: ~7,500,000, 58% rural
- Life expectancy: 54/52, female/male
- Under-5 Mortality: 110 deaths per 1,000 live births
- Maternal Mortality: 857 deaths per 100,000 live births
- Community Health Worker to Population Ratio: 1:500
- Vaccination Coverage: 90% of children have received the Diptheria, Tetanus, and Pertussis (DTP3) vaccine

AMP HEALTH IN SIERRA LEONE

AMP Health works in partnership with the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation to strengthen leadership & management capacity in the Expanded Programme on Immunisation (EPI) and the Community Health Workers (CHW) Hub. The Ministry recognizes that strong leadership & management are critical to strengthening health care systems to realize Sierra Leone’s vision for Primary Health Care and Universal Health Coverage.

Community Health Worker Hub: AMP Health launched its partnership with the CHW Hub in October 2016. The 10-person team utilized more than 15 new leadership & management tools and practices to improve individual, team, and system effectiveness and accelerate achievement of the country’s community health goals. The team has completed its Foundation Phase of AMP Health support, and is dedicated to continue applying these skills towards its ongoing work.

Expanded Programme on Immunisation: The EPI team has grown tremendously since AMP Health began its partnership in October 2018, and is focusing on applying leadership & management tools to effectively manage this growth while working towards improving vaccine coverage and equity.
AMP Health officially launched its partnership with the Sierra Leone CHW Hub in October 2016. In the past several years, the CHW Hub has succeeded in training all 15,000 of its Community Health Workers (CHWs), as well as equipping them with job aids and reporting registers. CHWs were selected, trained, and tested on the scope of their work, including disease surveillance, integrated Community Case Management, and Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health. Its next goal is to ensure that they are all fully operational within their communities.

The Sierra Leone CHW Hub has been supported by its Management Partner in developing a human resource plan for the program, which included the design and facilitation of the interview, selection, and onboarding processes for the fully-funded, but initially unstaffed, positions of CHW Program National Coordinator and Operations Officer roles, both of which are crucial to the CHW program leadership.

The Management Partner supported the growth and work of the CHW Hub through one-on-one coaching of key country team personnel. The Management Partner purposefully shadowed each Team Lead during a typical day to help tackle problems and think through strategies for action. The Management Partner supported the leads of the focus workstreams to apply leadership & management skills and tools to increase efficiency, timeliness, and quality.

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Focus Workstreams are opportunities for the team to identify their highest priority work areas and immediately apply the newly-acquired leadership & management competencies to deliver on them. The team has chosen to prioritize cross-cutting pieces of work, such as supervision & reporting, to catalyze the operationalization of CHWs in their roles. After successfully training CHWs nationwide, the team has realized the importance of consistent supervision to reinforce training and ensure quality service provision.

Live Learning Day sessions were conducted on a monthly basis, including trainings led by the Management Partner and other leadership & management experts on topics specifically identified by the team as critical to its objectives. Topics covered during these sessions include deep dives into various leadership & management topics, such as effective communication, while also addressing the acquisition of essential skills, such as the use of Microsoft Office applications. Learning days have also been used to develop in-house tools, such as the team’s task and activity tracker, which is used to manage work and track the team’s progress in each workstream.
EXPANDED PROGRAMME ON IMMUNISATION

In October 2018, AMP Health officially began working in partnership with the EPI team, which sits under the Ministry of Health & Sanitation. Since then, the EPI team has grown tremendously and has focused on managing that growth through developing an annual work-planning and implementation tool with the support of the Management Partner. The team has also strengthened its data management skills in order to improve decision-making, meetings management, and effective follow-up on action points coming out of meetings. The team is currently working to develop program-specific roles and responsibilities for each staff member, and continues working towards the smooth introduction of the integrated measles-rubella vaccine throughout the country.

THE MANAGEMENT PARTNER provides strategic support to the program manager as well as one-on-one and collective team training on leadership & management tools, data management tools, and Microsoft Office tools to support the development and adoption of an annual work plan that guides program activities and workstreams.

FOCUS WORKSTREAMS are an opportunity for teams to identify their highest priority work areas and immediately apply the newly acquired leadership & management competencies to deliver on them. They have chosen to prioritize the development of management tools to support activity planning, reporting, and accountability. The program currently lists program coordination, planning, supportive supervision & reporting, and data management as its top priorities. They have chosen to prioritize teamwork; tasks, problems, and productivity; and communicating and engaging with team members in order to truly engage them in the problem-solving process.

IN-COUNTRY SESSIONS convene the entire team for several days of intensive leadership & management training tailored to the team’s needs. Most recently, the team focused on effectively managing team processes; communicating with & engaging with other team members and stakeholders; and deliberate problem-solving in their trainings.
The CHW Hub team and Management Partner have finished their third and final year of the initial Foundation Phase of the AMP Health partnership, in which they focused on reinforcing efficiencies and skill sets from previous years, as well as introduced more advanced approaches for team work and accelerated momentum across the entire Directorate of Primary Health Care.

The EPI team and Management Partner have just begun the second year of the Foundation Phase and are focusing on strengthening sub-national leadership & management capabilities to adopt and learn from best practices at the national level. This includes working on streamlining data collection and use, strengthening planning and coordination, and building out the human resources capacity of the program. The team’s goal is to achieve at least 95% coverage for fully immunized children, and 90% coverage for TT2+ in pregnant women, in order to reduce deaths attributable to vaccine-preventable diseases.

“AMP Health’s presence in Sierra Leone, through a resident Management Partner, has contributed to the successful training, deployment, and payment of incentives to 15,000 CHWs and strengthened the leadership & management skills required by the CHW Hub to scale a national-based community health program”

– Alpha Bangura, National Coordinator, CHW Hub

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