L'INITIATIVE
sida, tuberculose, paludisme

FINAL EVALUATION

COMMUNITY OBSERVATORY FOR PHARMACEUTICAL PRACTICES (OCOPP)

EVALUATOR: ROY WAKIM - TEAM
EVALUATION DATES: MARCH - SEPTEMBER 2023

COUNTRY:
BURKINA FASO,
CAMEROON

BUDGET :
€600,000

LEAD ORGANIZATIONS:
Centre Humanitaire
des Métiers de la
Pharmacie (CHMP)

PARTNERS:
Réseau Accès
aux Médicaments
Essentiels (RAME
network) and
Positive-Generation
(PG)

START DATE:
01/01/2020

END DATE:
30/12/2022

THE PROJECT

Background

Due to their fragile health systems, Burkina Faso and Cameroon face issues around poor drug supply chain management, falsified and out-of-date medicines in circulation, poor governance and lack of pharmaceutical transparency.

Project leads and implementation approach

The project - implemented by PG in Cameroon and RAME in Burkina Faso, with CHMP as the project lead - aimed at improving the efficiency of supply channels for medicines essential to treat the three diseases in health posts, health centers and hospitals. It also aimed at ameliorating the overall medicine governance in the two countries using a data collection system that provides alerts and shares community information, based on Treatment Access Watch (TAW) observatories in Cameroon, implemented by PG, and OCASS in Burkina Faso, implemented by RAME.

OBJECTIVES

Overall objective

Improve access to reliable information on pharmaceutical practices and strengthen the provision of pharmaceutical care at community level in pilot districts in Burkina Faso and Cameroon.

Specific objective 1

Improve and strengthen community-based supply management and dispensing of medicines through establishing or strengthening a minimum package of pharmaceutical interventions to combat malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in three sentinel districts in each country targeted by the OCoPP project.

Specific objective 2

Set up a monitoring and early warning system and a citizen platform to enable access to reliable information on pharmaceutical practices in the three pilot districts in each country targeted by the OCoPP project.

EVALUATION RESULTS

Relevance
The project is relevant in implementing countries due to weaknesses in health systems, including poor drug management and lack of reliable stock information. It strengthens pharmaceutical care, trains stakeholders involved in community care provision and improves data completeness and quality. The design of the project in partnership with organizations managing observatories is considered relevant, and the involvement of community outreach workers makes it possible to monitor health product availability. The project is aligned with international strategies and priorities set by national ministries of health.

Effectiveness
The project managed to achieve its objectives in terms of training, developing platforms and setting up a centralized platform for drug monitoring, despite delays and challenges. However, modifications and improvements are needed to overcome these difficulties, which include: delays in developing the monitoring tool, partnership issues, technical challenges related to hosting the platform and training local administrators, initial resistance of communities to adopt new practices, ARVs being excluded from the collection tool in Burkina Faso and limitations around gathering narrative feedback in Cameroon.

Efficiency
Project efficiency was hampered by changes in staffing, having to coordinate remotely due to the pandemic, and ambiguities around the terms of reference. However, the project was able to adaptby making changes to activities in response to the pandemic and decentralizing skills to the local level. The budget was limited and was allocated in large part to the CHMP, which created resource constraints for partners. The multi-country nature of the project fostered experience sharing, but differences between countries required a differentiated approach and additional resources.

Impact
The OCoPP project has had a positive impact by improving pharmaceutical care and influencing public health policies through training and a monitoring platform. This has directly benefited populations, although ongoing adjustments are needed. Indirect beneficiaries, such as laboratories and national programs, have strengthened their capacities and improved supply management. In addition, the project aligned itself with Global Fund grant objectives, but was not prioritized for funding due to the need to demonstrate its complementarity with other national interventions.

Sustainability
Sustainability of the OCoPP project is based on several factors. Capacity strengthening and integration into existing observatories promotes operational sustainability, but this can lead to interoperability issues between tools. However, financial sustainability is at risk due to lack of resources for hosting and maintaining the platform, requiring external funding that has not yet been approved, including being written into the funding request for the new Global Fund funding cycle. Political sustainability is also limited and is dependent on collaboration with the Ministry of Health and other donors.

Conclusions and **recommendations**

This project, which is considered to take an innovative approach to community-based pharmaceutical monitoring, was designed as a pilot project to improve the approach with a view to future geographic and sectoral scale up. It was aligned with international priorities on HIV and AIDS, TB and malaria, and ensured relevance to countries with fragile health systems.

Despite initial challenges, such as the COVID-19 pandemic and organizational issues, partners managed to complete the majority of planned activities. Concerning the long-term impact of the project, it remains difficult to assess, as partners were still in the adaptation phase when the project ended.

A second phase of the project is recommended, but an in-depth review should be undertaken first by partners to look at lessons learned, adaptation to national contexts and improving resource management.

Other recommendations provided by the consultant are to involve and communicate with local actors, strengthen monitoring systems, mobilize funding, adapt collection tools and capitalize on lessons learned.

Finally, it is recommended that L'Initiative should provide the necessary technical support beyond the lifetime of the project and should review the length of its projects to ensure greater ownership by those involved.