

How MSH is Improving the Health of West Africans

Fact Sheet



With a population of more than 250 million, the West Africa region has the largest number of rebuilding and developing countries in the world. Every year in West Africa, complications from childbirth and pregnancy claim the lives of thousands of women and many infants. They die from limited prenatal, delivery, and postpartum services. Due to the lack of access to modern family planning methods, the region also has one of the world's highest population growth rates.

For more than three decades, Management Sciences for Health (MSH) has worked in all 21 of West Africa's diverse nations, and we currently have initiatives in a dozen. Our work strengthens health systems in five areas: HIV & AIDS; family planning and reproductive health; maternal, newborn, and child health; tuberculosis (TB); and other communicable diseases.

We Strengthen Health Service Delivery

MSH applies its 38 years of management experience to help governments, local organizations, and international agencies rebuild and scale-up comprehensive and integrated health services.

We Build Leadership, Management, and Governance Capacity

MSH fosters leadership, promotes good governance, and helps modernize health care management. Our proven approaches provide leaders with a clear path to identifying their challenges, motivating their teams, and achieving results.

We Work with Governments to Prepare the Health Workforce

The lack of trained professionals contributes to poor health in West Africa. MSH offers state-of-the-art approaches to empower managers and their teams, creating a work climate that supports staff retention and motivation and produces public health results.

We Support Well-Functioning Pharmaceutical and Laboratory Systems

MSH helps develop the capacity of both the public and private sectors to select, procure, and distribute quality medicines, laboratory supplies, and health commodities. We make sure that supplies reach those in need and are properly used.

We Provide Solutions for Health Care Financing

MSH brings 15 years of experience in performance-based financing, grant management, and costing to support the scale-up and quality improvement of health services. Our approach motivates progress and promotes innovation.

We Support Evidence-Based Decisions through Health Information

MSH works with partners to design practical health information systems. We help programs collect, analyze, and report accurate data needed for planning and decision-making.

Saving Mothers' and Children's Lives

Improving maternal, neonatal, and child health—In countries such as Niger, a woman's lifetime risk of dying in childbirth is one out of seven. MSH has been working to reduce these odds. From 2003 to 2008, through Action for West Africa Region-Reproductive Health (AWARE-RH) Program, funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), we worked in 21 countries to build expertise and leadership and management capacity in family planning, reproductive health, infectious disease, and child survival services. Among its many accomplishments, the project developed a community-to-facility model for emergency obstetric and prenatal care. The project supported the replication of this model in Cameroon, Niger, Togo, and Mauritania. USAID chose MSH to lead AWARE II in 2009. The MSH team continues to work closely with national programs and West African institutions to improve regional coordination and leadership in health.

Expanding immunization coverage—As a partner on the Community Participation for Action in the Social Sector (COMPASS) Project, MSH contributed to doubling immunization rates in targeted areas and decreasing polio cases by 78 percent in eight Nigerian states in one year.

Saving young lives with low-cost treatment for diarrhea—Every year, acute diarrhea causes more than 1.5 million deaths of children age five or younger. Working through the USAID-funded Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival (BASICS) Program, MSH helped introduce and expand the use of zinc and oral rehydration therapy at the community level and in health facilities in 10 countries.

MSH in Action: Scaling-up Integrated HIV & AIDS Services in Nigeria

In Nigeria, where MSH has worked since the 1980s, we manage four USAID-funded programs. Our approach to scaling-up high-quality, integrated HIV & AIDS services aims to rapidly expand access while building capacity for the long term. Here's how:

Empowering local people. The Capacity Building Project provides comprehensive capacity-building support to developing Nigerian civil society organizations. This support enables them to meet their HIV & AIDS prevention, care, and treatment targets. With MSH's support, these organizations develop their financial management capacity so they can accept US grants directly.

Improving service delivery. Through the HIV/AIDS Care and Treatment (ACT) Project, MSH strengthens the leadership skills and management capacity of national programs. Although ACT is primarily a service delivery project, the integration of leadership and management development into the program has been the key to its success in creating a more sustainable, efficient, locally run health system. As of July 2009, over 114,000 tests for HIV have been performed; more than 1,300 orphans and vulnerable children have received services; and 399 HIV-positive pregnant women have received treatment.



Highlights

People: Burkina Faso—With support from AWARE, MWANGAZA, a community mobilization NGO based in Burkina Faso, now provides technical assistance to Save the Children, the United Nations Fund for Population Activities, and Helen Keller International.

Medicines: Abidjan-Lagos Transport Corridor—The MSH-led Grant Management Solutions (GMS) project helped the Secretariat of the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor Organization improve the management of HIV & AIDS services, commodities, and drugs in 25 health facilities along the Abidjan-Lagos highway in five countries: Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, and Nigeria.

Information: Côte d'Ivoire—The Supply Chain Management System (SCMS), which collaborated with donors and partners to test reporting using PDAs and a secure website, supplies lifesaving medicines to HIV & AIDS programs and is led by MSH and JSI. The pilot program in 20 facilities resulted in a reporting rate of 95 percent. The expanded program is now in place and the first national HIV & AIDS report will be produced in 2009.

Infrastructure: Global—The Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems (SPS) Program works around the world to improve governance in the pharmaceutical sector, strengthen laboratory systems, and expand access to essential medicines and laboratory products. In West Africa, SPS has worked in Ghana, Mali, Senegal, and Liberia.

For additional information, go to www.msh.org, or contact Caroline Desrousseaux, Business and Resource Development, at +1.617.250.9347, or at cdesrousseaux@msh.org.