

CAPACITY STRENGTHENING JOURNEYS

NAVIGATING HUMANITARIAN HEALTH SUPPLY CHAINS TO FIND PATHS FOR ADVANCEMENT



Cover photo: International Medical Corps

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The Building Capacity to Improve Pharmaceutical and Medical Commodity (PMC) Management in Humanitarian and Disaster Settings Program helps staff from international organizations and local NGOs by equipping them with training, guidance, resources, and follow-up support. JSI manages this program, funded by USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

This document was made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI) and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID/BHA or the United States Government.

INTRODUCTION



Photo: EMERGENCY

Over a two-year period, 156 supply chain personnel from humanitarian organizations around the globe participated in online or in-person training courses to expand their knowledge of health supply chains. The courses strengthened participants' ability to manage pharmaceutical and medical commodities (PMCs) and respond to complex supply chain challenges during humanitarian crises.

Following the courses, 17 participants from seven organizations in 14 countries were invited to join a mentoring program to focus on specific supply chain challenges. With the guidance of a supply chain expert, mentees identified areas for advancement in PMC management within their organizations and led a variety of activities to make improvements. Here are some of their stories.



Action Against Hunger works in humanitarian and fragile settings globally to mitigate the causes and effects of hunger. Health and nutrition programs are central to treating malnutrition, the underlying cause of nearly half of all child deaths.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

DIDIER BAHATI BUJRIRI, MEDICAL SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGER

A native of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Didier Bahati Bujiriri graduated with a diploma in pharmacy from the Official University of Bukavu and is studying for a master's degree (MA) in business administration. He joined the humanitarian assistance world in 2018 and is now medical supply chain manager for Action Against Hunger in DRC. With a team of six people, he manages health supply chain operations and leads his organization's efforts to implement solutions for improving access to PMCs.

Mentorship Project

Vaccine loss in DRC was hindering the ability to vaccinate people, so Didier decided to focus his mentorship on vaccine management. He conducted a study on vaccine wastage and loss in 11 health facilities in Kinshasa during 2022, which pointed to multiple factors including lack of cold chain monitoring information, lack of equipment and equipment break downs, and limited support and supervision. By analyzing these causes of vaccine loss, he realized that improvements in pharmaceutical management could reduce wastage. Didier developed a plan to form a vaccine management team consisting of 20 health facility staff and provide them with training to follow up on cold chain challenges. The plan also includes tracking vaccine data in the logistics

management information system (LMIS) and DHIS2 to gain better visibility of the vaccine supply chain. By piloting the vaccine management team in Kinshasa, Didier hopes to have a model for instituting rational vaccine management in the rest of the country, which could mean better health outcomes as well as cost savings for the organization.



Photo: Action Against Hunger.

Didier Bahati Bujiriri

“ *This mentee development project was only possible because of the invaluable support and guidance I received from my mentor. I am grateful to be a part of this program and everything that has been invested in this project.*”

— Didier Bahati Bujiriri



Photo: Action Against Hunger

Didier Bahati Bujiriri with two of his team members.



EMERGENCY is an Italian NGO active in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Italy, Sudan, Iraq, Uganda, and the Mediterranean Sea. It provides high-quality surgical and medical treatment free of charge to victims of poverty and war.

SIERRA LEONE

JONÉ PIENAAR, PHARMACY MANAGER

Joné Pienaar graduated as pharmacist from Northwest University in South Africa and completed a master's of science in pharmacology. She joined EMERGENCY in Afghanistan in 2021 as part of a team providing surgical care to victims of war, an experience that equipped her professionally and shaped her personally. In April 2023, Joné took on a supervisory role for EMERGENCY's Sierra Leone pharmacy team of approximately seven staff.

Mentorship Project

Joné set out to improve pharmacy waste management practices. She created guidelines for waste classification, such as hazardous and non-hazardous, and developed standard operating procedures (SOPs) for recycling, treatment, and disposal of the various types of waste. Joné is adapting the SOPs for Afghanistan and Sierra Leone, taking into consideration that regulations and context in both countries are different. EMERGENCY plans to tailor these SOPs to reduce health supply chain environmental repercussions in each country in which it works. This initiative is helping Joné and her team to better manage pharmaceutical waste and reduce the environmental impact of their health supply chain.

Alongside her pharmacy waste management project, Joné decided to strengthen her supervisory and management skills through professional development focusing on time management, supervision, and team dependability and accountability. She assessed the training needs of the pharmacy team in both hard and soft skills, which led to an improved approach for using job descriptions as a supervision and performance improvement tool. This activity has helped Joné strengthen her capacity as supervisor, and gave her team insight into successes and challenges.

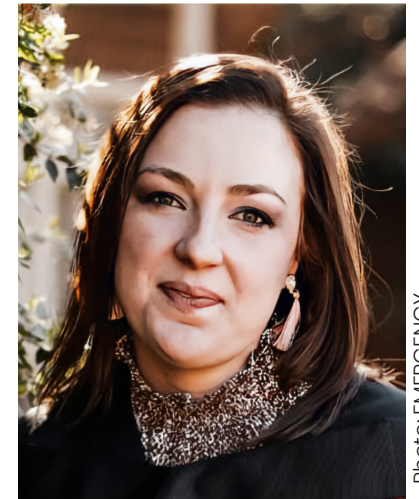


Photo: EMERGENCY

Joné Pienaar

“Endeavoring on this mentee development project was only made possible by the invaluable support and guidance I received from my mentor. I am grateful to be part of this program, and for all that has been invested into this project.”

— Joné Pienaar

The pharmacy team at EMERGENCY Surgical Center, Goderich, Sierra Leone. Back row from left: store keepers Musa Sowa, Mustapha Kallon, and Benjamin Koroma. Front row from left: pharmacy manager Joné Pienaar, pharmacy technician Christiana Kailie, pharmacy technician intern Hanah Sarah, and dispensing nurse Saio Koroma.



Photo: EMERGENCY



The International Medical Corps is a leading global first responder that provides humanitarian assistance to people affected by conflict, disaster, and disease. After an emergency, it helps train local staff to provide services that affected communities need for recovery, including health care, food, and water and sanitation support.

AFGHANISTAN

FARIDOON ZAMARY, PHARMACY OFFICER

Faridoon Zamary graduated as a medical doctor from Ariana Institute of Higher Education in Afghanistan and has a diploma in laboratory medical technology. Since 2014, he has worked in pharmacy management and is currently pharmacy officer with International Medical Corps in Kabul. He manages supply chain operations for PMCs to all International Medical Corps health facilities in Afghanistan and conducts supportive supervision for health facilities and field warehouses.

Mentorship Project

Faridoon undertook a project to improve the pharmacy department's management of supply chain data. After conducting a situational analysis of supply chain processes and key performance indicators (KPIs), he adapted LMIS forms and processes to make reporting from the provinces easier and more streamlined. By developing a data dashboard and linking it to the provincial data, his team is now able to monitor stock status and average monthly consumption. This new system provides a consolidated view of data from all provinces, which facilitates monitoring, supervision, and data-driven decision-making. The mentorship helped Faridoon and his team increase data visibility, making it easier to monitor and analyze KPIs to develop corrective actions that improve PMC management.



Photo: International Medical Corps.

Faridoon Zamary

“ I appreciate all the learning opportunities, this mentorship program, the blended learning course on pharmaceutical supply chain management, and the many technical discussions offered through the Humanitarian Commodities Logistics community.”

— Faridoon Zamary



Photo: International Medical Corps.

Faridoon checks stock cards during supportive supervision at the provincial warehouse.

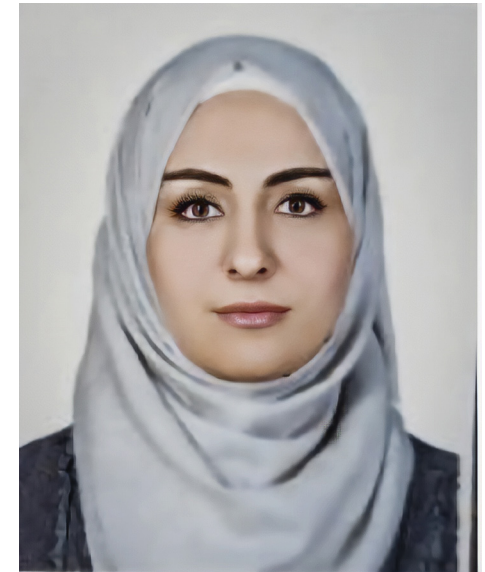
SYRIA

NIDA'A AL FATHI, SENIOR HEALTH OFFICER

Nida'a Al Fathi has a bachelor's degree (BA) in pharmacy from Syrian Privet University. After graduating in 2013, she joined the International Medical Corps, gaining first-hand experience with pharmaceutical management and health commodity quality control. With internal and external training, Nida'a grew professionally and contributed to International Medical Corps' health supply chain work, especially monitoring and evaluating pharmaceutical dispensing and consumption. In 2023, she was promoted to senior health officer and now manages all of International Medical Corps' health supply chains in Syria.

Mentorship Project

Working with her mentor, Nida'a formed a project to improve PMC warehousing. To ensure adequate space for medicines, she established a warehouse for the mobile medical team and hired a new warehouse assistant. To strengthen warehouse processes, she developed a set of SOPs that included separating items in the warehouse by project and improved reporting. Nida'a aligned staff job descriptions to these new procedures for a more effective workflow and conducted monitoring and evaluation visits. Alongside these organizational improvements, Nida'a used the mentorship to enhance her management and technical skills, including team management to support performance.



Photos: International Medical Corps.

Nida'a Al Fathi

“I am grateful to be part of this program, and for all that has been invested into this project. The training sessions have been incredibly informative and have helped me develop new skills in the technical field.”

— Nida'a Al Fathi



Photos: International Medical Corps.

As part of her project, Nida'a launched a pharmacy warehouse for the mobile medical team.



The International Rescue Committee (IRC) is a leading humanitarian and development agency that offers life-saving care and assistance to people forced to flee from war or disaster in over 40 countries. It supports refugees and displaced people to survive, recover, and regain control of their future.

KENYA

WILLY KABUGI, LABORATORY MANAGER

For over 10 years, Willy Kabugi has worked as laboratory in-charge for the IRC's health program in Hagadera Refugee Camp in Kenya, where the organization provides health services to over 145,000 people. The camp is part of the Dadaab complex with more than 300,000 Somali refugees displaced by conflict and starvation. With a BA in business management and training in laboratory sciences, Willy oversees all aspects of the program's laboratory services and manages 12 staff across Hagadera's three facilities. This includes supply chain support for procurement, verification, shipment, and storage of laboratory and other medical supplies.

Mentorship Project

As part of his mentoring project, Willy looked for ways to optimize the laboratory supply chain and identified an opportunity to automate part of the process. IRC's digital management information system tracks the organization's laboratory supplies from the central warehouse in Nairobi to the field warehouse in Dadaab, but not all the way to the end-user points. Willy developed SOPs to document and formalize the workflows. This included delivery and issuance of laboratory

supplies from the field warehouse to department mini-stores, and on to end-user units, such as the main hospital, satellite clinics, and patient wards. Willy has started training his colleagues from various departments and warehouses on the completed SOPs, which are an important step for establishing an automated inventory management system at the field warehouse.

Another part of Willy's mentorship involved IRC's ongoing initiative for rolling out an electronic medical record (EMR) system. Implementing this digital tool will improve operations and patient management, including supply management. Willy contributed by establishing parameters for the laboratory component of the EMR system to make sure it is well integrated with other medical units.

“ I found this mentoring project to be beneficial for life, not just for a specific project. The professional interaction led to expanded knowledge across areas and approaches, and it helped me build networks through the International Association of Public Health Logisticians and the Humanitarian Commodities Logistics subgroup.”

— Willy Kabugi



Photo: IRC

Willy Kabugi

YEMEN

ENAS ABOBAKR RADMAN, COUNTRY PHARMACIST

Enas Abobakr Radman graduated as a pharmacist from Aden University and has led IRC's pharmacy department in Yemen since 2017. She also has an MA in public health, which prepared her to work in crisis-response settings.

Mentorship Project

As the supervisor of four pharmacists and staff members who support IRC's pharmaceutical supply chain in six governorates, Enas wanted to use her mentorship project to optimize performance among the health logisticians she works with. The mentorship program expanded her knowledge and refined her skills in supportive supervision, and she began using constructive feedback, coaching, and mentoring to systematically enhance her team's performance. Through a self-assessment supervision checklist and other tools, Enas identified and mitigated performance barriers, guiding her team to uphold the highest quality standard for the organization's pharmaceutical and medical supplies. With guidance from her mentor, Enas tracked the progress of her staff and noted areas for improvement. Her strategic and hands-on approach not only nurtured a culture of excellence but showcased the relationship between supportive supervision and project success. With good communication and effective feedback, the team achieved up-to-date stock management and resolution of field challenges.



Photo: IRC

Enas Abobakr Radman

“I’m deeply grateful for the transformative mentorship. It empowered me to turn guidance into impactful action. With effective support and strategic leadership, I elevated our team’s performance, driving positive change aligned with project objectives.”

— Enas Abobakr Radman



Photo: IRC

Enas Abobakr Radman and supply chain manager Addis Aldhulimi at the main pharmaceutical warehouse in Aden.



Relief International works in 16 countries across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, partnering with communities affected by conflict, climate change, and disaster to save lives and build resilience.

SOUTH SUDAN

EMMANUELA JUWAN, PHARMACIST

Emmanuela Juwan graduated as a pharmacist from Al Neelain University in Sudan. With nine years of experience in the pharmaceutical sector, she has worked for both private companies and the Ministry of Health. Four years ago, she joined Relief International to work in humanitarian crisis settings. She also volunteers with the Pharmaceutical Society of South Sudan.

Mentorship Project

Working with her mentor, Emmanuela looked at how health supply chain processes could be optimized. She decided to focus her project on a set of changes that would improve inventory management for PMCs. By implementing an LMIS based on Excel sheets, she strengthened the processes for capturing essential supply chain data, and her team began using KPIs to monitor PMC flow. This project entailed updating the existing LMIS forms at all levels of the supply chain, from mobile medical units up to the Central Warehouse, to ensure that essential data could be captured efficiently. Using these data, Emmanuela designed a PMC dashboard that will enable her team to monitor KPIs easily and make evidence-based decisions. The dashboard will also help her share data with colleagues at other levels for better project management and corrective actions.



Photo: Relief International.

Emmanuela Juwan.

“It was a great learning experience, which resulted in better inventory management by having access to the needed information for timely decision-making.”

— Emmanuela Juwan



Photo: Nhial Jok/Relief International.

Emmanuela conducts on-the-job training on how to record medication using the dispensing register at a mobile medical unit.



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February 2024