

SUSTAINABLE DRUG SELLER INITIATIVES

Tanzania



The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation provided Management Sciences for Health a three-year grant to continue its efforts to involve private drug sellers in enhancing access to essential medicines in Tanzania and Uganda and to launch the initiative in Liberia. As the accredited drug dispensing outlet (ADDO) program in Tanzania has matured and expanded to encompass the entire country, the challenge now is to facilitate long-term maintenance of the initiative while ensuring the quality of ADDOs' products and services. We have designed the activities under the SDSI grant to address these issues.

Specific Tanzania activities to promote sustainability include—

- Developing a central-level database and mobile technology applications to collect and report data from ADDOs and pharmacies (self-report and inspection-based) and facilitate monetary transactions.
- Promoting participation of owner and dispenser associations at the district and regional levels to strengthen private sector participation in the process.
- Working with stakeholders to review and update ADDO regulations
- Reviewing and updating existing ADDO training materials and capacitating educational institutions to carry out owner and dispenser training

SDSI designed the activities, particularly those related to mobile technology, to be adapted for use in other countries with drug seller programs. For example, SDSI is working with the National Drug Authority in Uganda to develop an information technology strategy based on the Tanzania work.

In a separate element of the program in Tanzania, SDSI is collaborating with partners including Muhimbili University of Health and Science, the Tanzania Consumer Advocacy Society, and Harvard University Medical School to conduct a holistic assessment of health care-seeking behavior, medicines availability and use, and stakeholder perceptions of medicines and antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The goal is for decision-makers to be able to use this data in developing public health policy, regulatory standards, and treatment guidelines.

Specific components of the cross-sectional assessment include—

- Medicines prescribing, availability, and use in health facilities, pharmacies, and ADDOs
- Household survey on medicines access, use, and AMR knowledge
- ADDO dispensers and stakeholders' perceptions and knowledge regarding ADDOs, medicines access/use, insurance, and AMR
- Quality testing of products from ADDOs and pharmacies

The AMR research combined with information on prescribing, dispensing, and product use and quality will create useful signals that may point to the need for additional research or targeted interventions. The full set of data will provide robust evidence for policy making and for targeting effective interventions to improve medicines use—and therefore health—in the community.

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