

BOTSWANA

# Strengthening and Sustaining Supply Chain Management Training in Botswana through Partnership with the Peace Corps

Since 2007, the Supply Chain Management System (SCMS), a project under PEPFAR administered by USAID, has been providing technical assistance to Botswana’s Ministry of Health (MOH) on design and implementation of the Botswana Health Commodities Logistics System in all districts and service delivery points (SDPs).

Through this support, significant achievements have been realized in supply chain logistics capacity building, including developing curriculum and establishing supply chain pre-service training for pharmacy and laboratory students at the Institute of Health Sciences; providing in-service training to 794 health care personnel across the country, 97% of whom were deemed competent based on post-training testing; and providing on-the-job training to 905 health care personnel.

Still, challenges persisted in establishing dedicated supply chain professionals in health facilities. Few MOH professionals were trained in health commodities logistics systems, and the responsibility was often perceived as tangential to their other responsibilities. The local capacity challenges, associated with weak national supply chain management, led to stockouts of vital, essential, and necessary drugs, as well as wastage through expired products.

***"This workshop was innovative, [an] eye opener. I have learned a lot and plan on passing the information I got here to my colleagues when I get back to my facility."***  
**— Trainee feedback**



PCV Edgar Calderon facilitates “Reporting and Requisition” to PCVs and local counterparts in Tlokweng, Botswana.

## An Opportunity to Build Capacity through Local Partnership

In 2014, SCMS learned of an opportunity to help further build supply chain management capacity in Botswana and ensure sustainability beyond the project’s presence by leveraging Peace Corps volunteers (PCVs).

Peace Corps (PC) Botswana had 27 volunteers assigned to the MOH to assist with the HIV response. SCMS proposed including supply chain activities as part of the Peace Corps’ support to the health districts and facilities where PCVs were attached. Together, SCMS and PC Botswana successfully developed a proposal for MOH approval.



Facilitators and participants after finishing a five-day Supply Chain Management workshop in Tlokweng, Botswana.

## Training Peace Corps Volunteers and MOH Counterparts

To capacitate PCVs to assume this role, SCMS trained three volunteers during a two-week logistics system training of trainers (TOT) for MOH personnel in November 2014. The trained PCVs established a PCV supply chain committee — the Committee for Supply Chain Management of Peace Corps Botswana (CSCM) — and trained two additional PCVs as trainers.

PCVs also worked with the MOH and District Health Management Team (DHMT) managers to facilitate health commodities logistics system training for DHMT and SDP district staff in districts.

To date, the CSCM — which has now grown to eight PCVs — has facilitated two logistics system trainings in collaboration with MOH professionals trained as trainers, training 30 PCVs and 24 MOH counterparts (pharmacy personnel, laboratory personnel, nurses, and health care auxiliary staff).

## Expanding the Program to Reach More Providers

By the end of 2015, all supply chain-focused PCVs and their local counterparts were trained on facility-level supply chain management.

In feedback provided during and after these workshops, participants requested that CSCM provide additional training to more health care providers, regardless of whether they worked directly with PCVs. As a result, CSCM's scope expanded to training health care workers without PCV participants.

In August 2016, the CSCM trained 19 more MOH pharmacy, nursing, and auxiliary staff, and began receiving requests for additional workshops from the MOH and the Central Medical Stores.

## Positive Feedback

In anonymous feedback forms, trained personnel have given the training positive feedback. One participant stated, “This workshop was innovative, [an] eye opener. I have learned a lot and plan on passing the information I got here to my colleagues when I get back to my facility. And also changing some systems present at the facility for the better. THANK YOU!!!”

***“This intersect between the need for supply-chain trained providers and the need for impactful volunteer work provides us with a unique opportunity.”***

***— Camille Jones,  
CSCM Chairperson***

Another noted, “I recommend all clinic staff to be trained — at least one nurse and auxiliary as in charge of drug chain management to avoid waste, expiries, and out of stocks. All the trainers are up to the standard. Please keep it up as you train others. If possible, support visits to other clinics are needed.”

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## Sustaining the Initiative through Ongoing Training

To sustain this initiative, each year new PCVs coming into the country are trained on the Botswana Health Commodities Logistics System, and additional volunteers are trained as trainers to take over from those finishing PCV service.

CSCM Chairperson Camille Jones spoke to the “win-win” nature of this ongoing initiative, stating: “This intersect between the need for supply-chain trained providers and the need for impactful volunteer work provides us with a unique opportunity — Peace Corps volunteers crave sustained and measurable collaboration, and they spend two-year cycles fostering relationships with local counterparts. Their support is welcomed in the resource-short health facilities.”

The success of this collaboration and its sustainability demonstrate how SCMS, through partnership with local organizations, works to ensure its initiatives are sustained beyond the life of the project.