



BACKGROUND

In South Africa, staff entrusted with supply chain functions in the National Department of Health (NDoH) are typically pharmacists with little formal training in supply chain management. The NDoH needed to upskill its team on modern supply chain practices. The visibility and analytics network (VAN) introduced by the NDoH and its implementing partners, including the Africa Resource Centre (ARC), requires staff with appropriate supply chain skills. These staff can then interpret and analyse information to improve planning, optimise costs and ultimately improve medicine availability to patients.

ARC'S ROLE

ARC identified that the specialisation of roles, such as demand planning, requires the requisite skills to be available at the provincial and national levels. ARC supported the NDoH by mobilising the funding and resources to deliver a programme that would provide training in these skills.

The purpose of this initiative was for NDoH staff who work in the supply chain to develop their skills according to tiered training and receive accreditation for this training. The first step was a foundational course for a small cohort of 20 to 30 people, followed by an online assessment conducted by SAPICS to see what changes the training brought about in the workplace.

It consisted of two study blocks – a week in March 2019 and a week in June 2019. As this method fell outside any training approaches previously used by the NDoH, sponsorship was needed to prove the concept. ARC was responsible for sourcing the funding and securing complementary resources, which it did from the Heineken Foundation. Due to COVID-19 and the disproportionate impact on alcoholic beverage businesses in South Africa, the Heineken Foundation could not continue funding into 2020 or beyond.

The vision was to make this a multi-year pathway to continue advancing skills for key staff with the option to scale it to all nine provinces, and to other parts of the NDoH. Due to the funding constraints, ARC changed direction to facilitate funding for an implementation partner, People that Deliver, to carry out its Supply Chain Professionalisation Framework going forward.

OUTCOMES AND IMPACT

ARC's support to ministries of health focuses on strengthening six supply chain elements. The work on capability building with the NDoH strengthened three of these six areas: **governance, policies and research, and solutions proposals.**

SHARING SUPPLY CHAIN SOLUTIONS



Key element: governance

Delegates from the two top-performing provinces were invited to the November 2019 Provincial Heads of Pharmaceutical Services meeting to share their learnings and discuss their experience of the impact of the course on their workplaces. The presentations were very well received.

IMPACT

Sharing learnings across the sector and garnering buy-in from stakeholders will improve future supply chain management in South Africa.

INCREASING CAPABILITY FOR SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT



Key element: policies and research

The first intake of participants in the course responded well to the training and were able to take what they had learnt back to their workplaces and share it with colleagues to improve buy-in and uptake.

IMPACT

21 national and provincial staff members were enrolled in the course, with 15 candidates passing the training and 11 scoring >70%.

LEVERAGING PRIVATE SECTOR SUPPORT



Key element: solutions proposals

ARC mobilised sponsorship from the Heineken Foundation and, together with the University of the Witwatersrand and SAPICS, worked to develop and administer training for a foundational course in supply chain management at the NDoH.

IMPACT

ARC assisted the University of the Witwatersrand in the preparation of the course curriculum.