

Malawi German Health Programme

Partnerships with non-state actors

Background

If Malawi is to develop in a sustainable and equitable manner, investment is required not just in industry, but also in social and public services to ensure that adequate human resources and regulatory and legal structures are in place.

Malawi's Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Act offers non-state actors the opportunity to engage in the delivery of health care. The Malawi German Health Programme works with both the public and private sectors to promote understanding of the principals behind and opportunities presented by the PPP Act, and to further dialogue with both sectors on the potentials arising from PPPs.

Objectives

In its work to foster public-private partnerships, the Malawi German Health Programme's overall objective is to increase the engagement of non-state actors in the delivery of health services and the development of the health sector.

Approach

In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the programme is working with companies in identified priority sectors to develop models of PPP, and then to assess these models' viability for replication. The programme is also working with the main non-state provider of health services, the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM), to strengthen their ability to provide better quality health care services.

The programme is primarily supporting:

- the development of public-private partnership models that engage the public and private sectors in providing health care services (for example, one PPP approach initiated with Illovo Sugar Malawi Ltd aims to improve the health situation of people living near Nchalo, Chikwawa and focuses on improving health education, the quality of health services and the availability of potable water);
- the development of 'clustered' PPP approaches that allow small and medium-sized health care providers to improve health and social service provision in collaboration with the Government of Malawi and other service providers;
- the establishment of mechanisms to promote dialogue between private industry and the public sector, so that both sectors can better understand each other's needs and development priorities
- the CHAM secretariat by strengthening management structures and thereby improving the quality of service delivery;
- the Ministry of Health PPP Unit in its work to institutionalise PPP approaches.

Technical support

The Malawi German Health Programme is working with a number of partners to support the development of PPPs. In addition to working with the Ministry of Health, the programme is collaborating with the African Institute of Corporate Citizenship (AICC) on the development of cluster approaches and dialogue platforms with the private sector. Through AICC, direct dialogue has been initiated with selected companies and also with the Malawi Confederation of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (MCCCI), which represents the private sector in Malawi. The programme

A senior nurse helps a patient and a junior colleague understand the hospital's rights and responsibilities charter.





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has entered into a direct PPP agreement for improving health care with Illovo Sugar Malawi, one of the largest agricultural producers in the country. The programme is working closely with Illovo and also with the decentralised agencies in Chikwawa, such as the local water board, to facilitate the introduction of potable water schemes. The programme is also working with AICC to identify other potential partners in the tea and coffee sectors. The programme's role in these PPPs focuses heavily on bringing together the private and public sectors, and facilitating the development of collaborative approaches.

Lessons learned

In Malawi, public-private partnerships are a new concept. As such, it takes time for all parties to fully understand the benefits and opportunities that PPP approaches present. Traditionally in Malawi, and as is often the case elsewhere, cultural and philosophical divides exist between the public and private sectors. For this reason, it is vital to maintain the dialogue process if the benefits of collaboration are to be realised. This is important both

for the long-term welfare of the country and for the continued development of business.

Conclusion

PPPs are regarded as an excellent mechanism for engaging the private sector in the challenge to meet the public's health care demands, address service constraints and increase provision. PPPs are attractive and effective for all parties – for example, by promoting a healthier and thus more productive workforce, PPPs can engender long-term cost savings for the private sector. Moreover, by engaging in health service provision, companies foster both economic prosperity and social equity. In a resource-constrained setting like Malawi, there is a need to consider how best to improve both the efficiency of health care delivery and social protection mechanisms for the workforce and communities. By deepening its engagement with the private sector, Malawi will be in a stronger position to tackle these issues.

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