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HFG GUINEA

FINAL REPORT

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USAID's Health Finance and Governance (HFG) project helps to improve health in developing countries by expanding people's access to health care. Led by Abt Associates, the project team works with partner countries to increase their domestic resources for health, manage those precious resources more effectively, and make wise purchasing decisions.



ABOUT THE HEALTH FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE PROJECT 2012-2018

The Health Finance and Governance (HFG) Project works to address some of the greatest challenges facing health systems today. Drawing on the latest research, the project implements strategies to help countries increase their domestic resources for health, manage those precious resources more effectively, and make wise purchasing decisions. The project also assists countries in developing robust governance systems to ensure that financial investments for health achieve their intended results.

With activities in more than 40 countries, HFG collaborates with health stakeholders to protect families from catastrophic health care costs, expand access to priority services – such as maternal and child health care – and ensure equitable population coverage through:

- Improving financing by mobilizing domestic resources, reducing financial barriers, expanding health insurance, and implementing provider payment systems;
- Enhancing governance for better health system management and greater accountability and transparency;

- Improving management and operations systems to advance the delivery and effectiveness of health care, for example, through mobile money and public financial management; and
- Advancing techniques to measure progress in health systems performance, especially around universal health coverage.

The HFG project (2012-2018) is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and is led by Abt Associates in collaboration with Avenir Health, Broad Branch Associates, Development Alternatives Inc., the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Results for Development Institute, RTI International, and Training Resources Group, Inc.

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To learn more, visit www.hfgproject.org

RESTORING GUINEA'S HEALTH SYSTEM, IMPROVING HEALTH SERVICES



MAJOR CHALLENGES:



SHORTAGE OF HEALTH WORKERS



INSTITUTIONALLY WEAK MOH



MISTRUST OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH SYSTEM EXPOSED BY EBOLA EPIDEMIC



RESULTS ACHIEVED:



IMPROVED HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AND TRAINING CAPACITY FOR HEALTH



STRONGER CENTRAL MOH BETTER ABLE TO CARRY OUT CORE FUNCTIONS



IMPROVED CAPACITY IN GOVERNANCE OF THE HEALTH SECTOR

HFG OVERVIEW IN GUINEA



CHALLENGES

The Republic of Guinea boasts significant mineral and oil wealth and hydropower potential. Yet it remains one of the least developed countries in the world. The human development index in 2015 ranked Guinea 182 out of 188 countries (UNDP 2015). One major contributing factor is the political instability that plagued the country and handicapped its economy between 2009 and 2013.

The poor economic and political environments have had a devastating effect on the nation's health system. The Ebola epidemic, which spread through Guinea in 2014, was another blow. The epidemic exposed a genuine mistrust of the public health system in many areas as communities refused treatment in public health facilities, fearing that medical professionals were the source of the illness. For example, the hospital in Kissidougou, which normally admitted 200 to 250 patients a day, admitted only 12 to 15 patients per day at the end of September 2014 (Paye-Layle and Di Lorenzo, 2014).

The already inadequate number of health workers (one health worker per 10,000 inhabitants) (WHO 2009) declined further as a result of a large number of health worker deaths and desertion of work stations

by other health workers who feared contracting Ebola. The critical shortage of health workers impedes the country's ability to deliver vital health services. In addition, the Ministry of Health (MOH) has not had the infrastructure in place to manage human resources effectively and build the capacity of the country's health workforce.

In response to these challenges, the Government of Guinea developed a health system recovery plan (2015-2017). The plan, which has strong government commitment, aims to eliminate Ebola; improve the performance of the health system by providing quality health care; and improve the overall governance of the health sector.

Addressing the weak performance of the health system and improving the country's health status require tackling the root cause of poor health governance at all levels of the health system. At USAID's request, the Health Finance and Governance (HFG) Project focused on improving governance and strengthening the MOH at the national level to build a more transparent and efficient health system.



CHANGE

Since 2016, HFG has collaborated closely with the MOH and other partners in Guinea to address these pressing challenges. HFG strategies contributed to strengthening the health system and providing the foundation for improving critical health services for Guinean families and communities.

Drawing on best practices, HFG supported the country's efforts to build the institutional capabilities of the MOH, improve overall governance of the health sector, and strengthen human resources for health. HFG's efforts were critical to helping Guinea implement its health system recovery plan and were an integral part of USAID's post-Ebola recovery strategy for Guinea. Given the challenge of strengthening health governance and building institutional capacity within a two-year timeframe, HFG engaged with a wide range of local partners early in the project to ensure that the strategies and results described in this report will be sustained over the coming years.

HFG has assisted the MOH in developing key policies and strategies that are essential for its ongoing development. HFG's interventions have contributed to a noticeable improvement in the operations and management of the central MOH, with increased

focus on results-based management, performance, and accountability. As a result, the MOH has strengthened a number of critical core functions, including sector coordination, financial management, human resources for health, the general health inspectorate, strategic communication, and the capacity to use research results to inform policy.

While HFG's efforts covered only a short timeframe, significant change has occurred. This report describes the key finance and governance improvements designed to produce better health outcomes for families and communities across the country. HFG's key results over the past two years include:

- A stronger central MOH better able to carry out core functions
- Improved capacity in governance of the health sector
- Improved human resources management and training capacity for health

“...this workshop on leadership and management is the starting point for a major operation in the Ministry of Health: change. This is indeed the beginning of a process aimed at implementing a new management culture”

- Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo, Minister of Health

Dr. Abdourahmane Diallo, Minister of Health (center), and senior MOH officials at the training on leadership and management.

Abu Bakar Quisia, HFG Guinea



MAKING A DIFFERENCE



RESULT AREA I.

A stronger MOH better able to carry out core functions

Over the past two years, HFG was integral to building the institutional capacity of the MOH to fulfill its key functions and revitalize Guinea's post-Ebola health system. The MOH now has a stronger ability to enhance health systems, change health outcomes, and improve the lives of Guineans.

Built a foundation for improving the performance of the MOH

HFG supported MOH leaders, including a new Minister of Health, in their efforts to transform the MOH into an institution that operates efficiently and transparently and responds to the needs of Guineans. A key first step was conducting an institutional, organizational, and functional audit of the MOH. The audit, conducted in collaboration with the European Union, informed the restructuring of the Ministry. HFG and the EU provided a joint team of 10 multidisciplinary experts to assist the MOH in developing a roadmap that translated recommendations from the audit into a set of concrete activities. The MOH will implement the activities to improve the performance of the health system over the coming years.

The audit report and the roadmap have become important reference documents for all stakeholders, including other central ministries, along with technical and financial partners. For example, partners are using both documents to help align their interventions with the priorities of the MOH. The audit roadmap has also become the basis for the development of the MOH's Annual Operating Plan 2018.

Increased management capacity

HFG helped improve management capacity by organizing a series of leadership and management training workshops for 67 senior MOH executives and managers. The training aimed to support the change process at the MOH, initiate a new shared vision of its mission, and promote teamwork, while reiterating the need to generate results. The 67 trained senior staff members included cabinet members, program directors, national hospital directors, MOH support services managers, and regional directors of health.

To sustain the achievements of this training and to facilitate cascade training at the central and regional

levels, HFG developed a pool of 10 national trainers from the MOH. These trainers have so far trained 163 mid-level managers at the Ministry level. HFG expects the national trainers to support more cascade training at the regional level in 2018. As illustrated by the following quote, this shared understanding of leadership and management within the MOH is helping Guinea to manage its operations better and respond effectively to future public health threats.

Strengthened health sector coordination

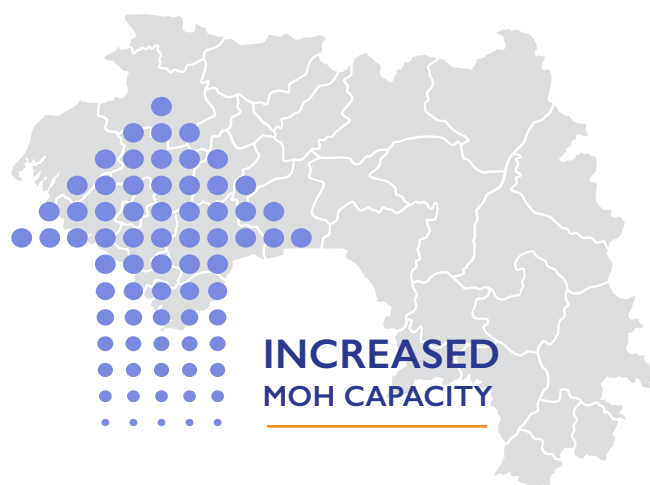
HFG supported the Technical Secretariat of the Health Sector Coordinating Committee by carrying out a situational analysis and a subsequent roadmap to make the secretariat more functional and efficient. HFG then developed a capacity-building plan for the Technical Secretariat to enable it to assume its functions. The project also supported the process of revitalizing the six thematic groups of the CCSS to foster synergy of partners' interventions and alignment with MOH strategic and operational plans.

Improved financial management

HFG contributed to strengthening the MOH's Financial Affairs Division to enable the MOH to use government resources more effectively and build trust among its partners. In collaboration with the *Projet d'Appui à la Santé (PASA)* project of the European Union, the project helped the MOH draft an action plan for improving the division's operations.

To improve management of public funds, HFG updated the MOH's Manual of Administrative, Financial, Accounting, Operational, and Internal Control Procedures. The manual was used during an orientation workshop of 30 new MOH officials in January 2018. More than 20 Financial Affairs Division staff also participated in a series of financial management training courses that will help them do their jobs better.

MOH OFFICES WITH IMPROVED CAPACITY



Bureau of Strategy and Development



General Inspectorate for Health



Directorate of Human Resources



National Service for Health Promotion



Directorate of Financial Affairs

Advanced the use of health research

Following the Ebola epidemic and as part of the revival of the health system, Guinea intends to prioritize research for health. To aid in this effort, HFG worked with the Research Unit in the MOH to update the National Health Research Policy and develop a strategic plan for research. HFG then provided training in the use of research results for 30 officials. As a result of HFG assistance, the MOH is equipped to make better use of research data for health policy development and strategic decision-making.

Enhancing collaboration with the private sector

In light of the increasing role of the private health sector, HFG sought to facilitate closer collaboration between the MOH and the private sector in Guinea. The MOH requested that HFG map all private health structures and pharmacies in the Conakry metropolitan area. The MOH will use the mapping data (including the number of private health structures, services provided, and challenges) to create a framework for including the private sector in staff training programs, public health campaigns, and health crisis management.

“We believe that the Members of Parliament who attended this training will be able individually to read, analyze and give a clear idea of the budget before voting”

- Honorable Michel KAMANO, Co-facilitator of Members of Parliament’s training

Dr Sékou Conde, MOH Secretary General (center), and other MOH officials participate in a meeting with the National Assembly’s Health Commission members.

Lancine Conde, HFG Guinea



RESULT AREA 2.

Improved capacity in governance of the health sector

With HFG’s support, Guinea has improved capacity in governance of the health sector—making reforms that are strengthening the health system so severely weakened by the Ebola epidemic. To promote good governance at all levels of the health system, HFG collaborated closely with the MOH and other partners to increase the accountability and transparency of the MOH.

Strengthened oversight of the health sector

HFG helped strengthen the capacity of the Health Commission of the National Assembly to play its role of overseeing government actions in the health sector and monitoring the performance of the MOH. In 2016, most members of the Health Commission were newly elected parliamentarians and had limited expertise in health. With improved capacity to carry out their role and functions in such areas as budget analysis, analysis of draft laws, and procurement, parliamentarians have a better understanding of the budget, especially for health.

In addition, members of the Health Commission are now more actively participating in budget and

inter-commission debates and engaging in advocacy for increases in health funding. As a result of their increased capacity, members of the commission were able to successfully advocate for a significant rise in health sector funding, which increased from 5.7 percent of the national budget in 2016 to 8.2 percent in 2017.

Before 2016, exchanges between members of the Health Commission and the MOH’s staff were limited to ordinary budget sessions, during which the Ministry presented its budget. With HFG’s support, since 2017, the relationship between the Commission and the Ministry has expanded and improved. For example, the two bodies now have periodic meetings to discuss key MOH activities, execution of the budget, progress on reforms, and other important topics.

With the support of HFG, the Health Commission also holds quarterly meetings with civil society organizations in the health sector, a very important player in the health system, which until now had no partnership with members of Parliament. These meetings are critical to strengthening health dialogue with Guineans.

Another first for the Health Commission: carrying out field visits to health facilities in the capital as well as the interior. HFG supported this effort to help the Health Commission better understand the country's health situation, infrastructure, equipment, personnel, and implementation of selected reforms.

In recognition of this work, the leadership of the National Assembly in 2017 ranked the Health Commission first among all National Assembly commissions.

Improved the functions of the General Health Inspectorate

HFG also helped strengthen the General Health Inspectorate (IGS), an important institution in efforts to improve accountability of the health system. Previously, the office was not fully operational, responding only to immediate problems and reporting on an ad hoc basis.

HFG supported the IGS in developing and implementing strategic documents such as the development of the vision and mission of the Inspectorate, the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, a manual of inspection procedures, and the development and implementation of a capacity-building plan. As part of this capacity-strengthening plan, IGS officials benefited from a training series that contributed significantly to increasing their knowledge of controls and inspections. Following the training, IGS officials conducted several inspections and made recommendations for improvements in health facilities and national health programs.

The introduction of systematic inspections will go a long way toward strengthening governance of health structures. As a result of HFG's activities, the MOH has demonstrated new momentum for strengthening the IGS and has provided additional resources to sustain IGS inspections.

Enhanced MOH strategic communications

Clear and transparent communication is essential to improving governance of the health sector. During the 2014 Ebola outbreak, the lack of effective communications on the risks related to the disease and inadequate information to encourage appropriate behavioral change gave way to rumors and citizens' mistrust of the health system. This situation contributed to the rapid spread of the disease across the country.

With the support of the HFG project, the MOH developed a three-year communication strategy (2017-2019) to contribute to the reduction of health risks in the country by effectively responding to global health emergencies and by building public confidence in the health system.

The communications strategy is already having a significant impact. HFG consultants have helped the ministry reactivate its website and launch a Facebook page and a monthly newsletter to inform the public of public health threats. In early February 2018, there were false rumors about the existence of Lassa fever in Guinea. The MOH was able to use the new communication channels to inform Guineans rapidly about the false rumors and to provide clear messages about the risks of the disease.

“What we hope to develop with this communication strategy is a coherent, responsive, and proactive communication system that links the Ministry of Health to all parts of Guinea and builds public confidence”

- Dr. Rafiou Diallo, Director, Health Promotion Department.



Simon Lazarre Badiane



RESULT AREA 3. Improved capacity in human resources management and training

Over the past two years, HFG has contributed to Guinea's considerable progress toward improving human resources for health. The project collaborated with a range of partners to support the MOH in better managing human resources and building the capacity of health training institutions. The MOH now has a stronger foundation to improve health workforce planning, development, and management.

Stronger human resources management

Working with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and other partners, HFG was integral to helping the MOH establish a human resources department. Previously, Guinea was the only country in the sub-region that did not have a human resources department within the MOH. This new structure will enable the MOH to manage all aspects of human resources, including health workforce planning, training, and management.

Given the multi-sectoral nature of human resources for health, HFG also supported the revitalization of the expanded Inter-sectoral Committee on Human Resources for Health, an inter-ministerial platform to

coordinate the actions of the ministries involved. HFG has also reactivated the Thematic Group on Human Resources under the health sector coordination mechanism to strengthen the synergy of actions and the consistency and the relevance of various interventions in human resources for health. The Thematic Group held its first meeting in February 2018 to discuss and transmit its contributions to the operational plan of the new Directorate of Human Resources for Health.

Guinea has also made significant improvements in managing data for human resources. Previously, outdated health worker data was a barrier to improving human resource management. With HFG's support, the country is now able to collect and capture reliable and current data on available health staffing in eight districts with plans to extend to the rest of the 38 districts. The project helped launch the MOH's new computerized management of human resources system in Conakry and strengthened the capacity of the MOH staff in managing, analyzing, and updating the system's data. An updated workforce profile report providing information on the size, distribution and skills mix of health

workers will be available later in 2018. This report will be a critical source of information for managing human resources in Guinea and will allow a rapid visualization of the gaps in terms of numbers and qualifications of the health workforce.

Improved capacity of health training institutions

HFG helped improve the governance and management of health training schools by helping 33 nursing and midwifery schools develop their own strategic plans, aligned with the National Health Development Plan and the Human Resources for Health Strategic Development Plan. In addition, HFG trained school leaders in leadership and management. Participants now understand financial, human resources, and logistical requirements for managing their training schools. The training schools have committed to setting up a national platform of schools of health, which will serve as a forum for exchange, training, and advocacy. HFG's support also resulted in better alignment of vision and closer collaboration between the MOH and the Ministry of Technical Education and Vocational Training.

HFG also assisted medical schools at Gamal Abdel Nasser Conakry (GANC) and Koffi Annan of Guinea (UKANG) universities in developing their strategic plans. In addition, HFG trained the deans and the heads of departments in leadership and management. This support is timely as it provides valuable tools for implementing ongoing reforms for higher education institutions.

Strengthening of continuing professional development

In addition, HFG helped increase the capacity of healthcare providers and improve the quality of priority services in health facilities by strengthening on-the-job training through clinical coaching. HFG promoted clinical coaching at university hospitals in priority services, based on good coaching practices HFG gathered from local diabetology and neonatology experiences. Thirty-six health professionals, including doctors and nurses, from various regions and the national hospitals of Donka and Ignace Deen, are now skilled coaches who will continue to provide on-the-job training to health workers.

Capitalizing on documentation of the diabetology and neonatology experiences and capacity building in coaching, HFG collaborated with the management of hospitals and hospital hygiene departments to facilitate the development of action plans for the decentralization of specialized services at the regional hospital level. As a result, the plans will make it possible to avoid the often difficult transfer of patients from the districts to the capital and will enable patients to receive vital health care sooner.

Additionally, HFG supported the MOH in development of a policy on continuing education in the health sector, accompanied by a multi-year workforce in-service development plan that will provide a normative framework for on-the-job training. This plan will be the responsibility of the newly formed Directorate of Human Resources to implement.



Dr. Naby Balde, Head of Diabetology at Donka National Referral Hospital, with a young patient.
Dr Sangare Gbato, HFG Guinea



Directors of medical schools trained on leadership and management.

Dr. Sangare Gbato, HFG Guinea

LOOKING FORWARD



SUSTAINABILITY

The improvements described in this report have had a significant impact on health systems in a relatively short time period. The MOH and other partners will continue to build on HFG's efforts to sustain the achievements. As a result of strong collaboration with partners, HFG was able to develop a transition plan that allows for a smooth transition of its work to various partners.

The MOH has taken ownership of the project's interventions. For example, the Ministry has demonstrated its adoption of good management practices by providing new managers with formal guidance on MOH objectives and their roles and responsibilities. In addition, the Ministry convened a stakeholder consultation workshop to discuss the

alignment of interventions for 2018 and more efficient use of available resources through better coordination and mapping of interventions and available funding.

Because institutional strengthening is a continuous process, HFG adopted a collaborative approach to make activities sustainable after the project. The partnership with the EU's PASA project was exemplary in both the implementation of the institutional audit and the strengthening of the financial management capacity of the MOH. Similarly, HFG conducted all activities related to human resources for health in collaboration with members of the Thematic Group on Human Resources for Health.



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Leadership is important to the success of institutional capacity building.** After the Ebola outbreak, the demand for institutional capacity building support came directly from the Minister of Health. The Minister's ownership of the effort was a critical success factor. Moreover, the leadership and management training of all senior staff early in the project proved to be effective in creating a senior leadership team operating under a common set of management principles.
- **Institutional capacity building requires strength in numbers.** While HFG collaborated closely with very committed MOH partners, the small number of MOH staff with decision making authority has been a major constraint. The few decision makers working in the MOH are involved in multiple activities, and they are pulled in different directions by the requests of multiple technical and financial partners. A larger MOH cadre of empowered staff is needed to continue building institutional capacity.
- **Strengthening national and sub-national structures is essential to improving health services.** Support for strengthening central, regional, and district-level structures in governance and institutional capacity building typically receives less emphasis than service delivery. The MOH receives substantial support from partners in the area of health service delivery improvement, but this support is oriented toward the operational level. Strengthening institutional capacity is critical for long-term service delivery improvements.
- **Implementing partners must coordinate to facilitate smooth project transitions.** From the start, HFG worked with other implementing partners, including the European Union, World Bank, and GIZ, in helping the MOH better perform its functions. Several of the partners will sustain HFG's activities and strategies after the project period. This was especially important given the two-year timeframe.
- **The project timeframe is an important factor.** Despite the relatively short two-year period of the project, HFG achieved important results in terms of strengthening the institutional capacity of the MOH and the governance of the health sector. A longer timeframe, of four to five years, is required to make a lasting impact on the institutional capacity of a large institution such as the MOH.

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