



Synergos Consulting Services

Case Study: Government: Healthcare Industry Sector

Region: *Namibia*; Sector: *Public Health*

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Social and Government Challenge: Strengthening the Maternal Healthcare Systems

In late 2006, the Government of Namibia witnessed a deepening public health crisis with life expectancy steadily dropping in the country, slipping from 60 to 49 years over the course of ten years, largely due to HIV/AIDS. Health industry leaders also faced rising maternal mortality with the rate of women dying from childbirth-related causes doubling from 271 per 100,000 to 449 by 2006. Meanwhile, infant mortality remained at an alarming rate of 46 per 1,000.

In comparison to other countries in Africa, Namibia has extraordinary natural resources, an excellent infrastructure, educated populace and stable government. With a per capita income of more than \$7,000 per year, the country ranks as a middle-income country – despite wealth intensively concentrated and more than half the population living under \$2 a day. Despite the formation of committees and strategies, the situation did not improve and Namibia was well-positioned to address the critical health challenges. The Ministry of Health and Social Services needed to adopt a transformative approach towards combating maternal and infant mortality.

Scope of Services

By invitation of the Namibian Prime Minister, Synergos supported an aggressive program to strengthen the Namibian public health system and reduce the alarming rate of maternal mortality. The project, called the African Public Health Leadership and Systems Innovation Initiative, was financially supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Synergos implemented the following stages of work:

- **Market Analysis & Experiential Learning:** Synergos led a thorough diagnostic of the Namibian health system to identify obstacles and key enablers for positive change. The diagnostic included a detailed analysis of the health system performance and experiential immersion exercises for senior leaders of the Ministry of Health and Social Services.

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Program Design and Implementation: Utilizing the diagnostic analysis, Synergos worked with senior political and health system leaders to develop and implement a plan focused on three areas; alignment and leadership of the Ministry of Health's senior team; design and creation of "Regional Delivery Units" to drive better performance; and, a series of community level pilots to improve demand, access, and quality of maternal health care services.

Results

The African Public Health Leadership and Systems Innovation Initiative has generated significant results since its launch in 2008. A performance evaluation, completed by Macro International, reported that the senior leadership team of the Ministry of Health demonstrated improved abilities in key areas including strategic roles and priorities, resource allocation, collaboration and communications. The "Regional Delivery Units" has proven to be an effective means of driving better performance in the health system. Field-level programs have increased demand for maternal health-care (e.g. via community radio), access to maternal health services (e.g. via improved transportation and community-based care), and quality of services (e.g. via nurse training and improved patient management).

The program is currently being scaled nationwide across Namibia and several neighboring countries have requested support replicating the approach; program details are available online at www.africanhealthleadership.org.

About Synergos Consulting Services

Synergos Consulting Services partners with global corporations to build sustainable businesses and create social impact in the emerging markets of Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East.



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