



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**DELIVER PROJECT**

## Success Story

# The Power of People: Training Course Fosters Logistics Champions in Malawi



USAID | DELIVER PROJECT 2006

By attending the project's supply chain management course in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Samuel Chirwa (left) inspired others to improve the supply chain in his native Malawi.

**“After the training, the first thing I successfully advocated for was to have a budget line for logistics interventions in the pharmaceutical budget.”**

**– Sam Chirwa, Senior Logistics Advisor**

### **FEBRUARY 2011**

This publication was produced for review by the U.S. Agency for International Development. It was prepared by the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, Task Order 4.

In Malawi, patients at public health facilities were often left without essential medicines because of persistent shortages. These stockouts spurred the Ministry of Health (MOH) to improve the supply chain for health commodities.

In 2005, the MOH asked the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT to sponsor two of their employees, Senior Logistics Officer Samuel Chirwa and Logistics Officer Dorica Salamba, to attend the project's three-week international flagship course, Supply Chain Management for Commodity Security, in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The course ignited a keen interest in Chirwa and Salamba to improve the availability of drugs and health supplies in Malawi's public health facilities. Chirwa noted, “After the training, the first thing I successfully advocated for was to have a budget line for logistics interventions in the pharmaceutical budget.”

Less than a year later, with support from the USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, Chirwa and Salamba organized a two-week supply chain management course for MOH program directors to explain the importance of logistics. A similar training was held in 2008 for additional program directors working with tuberculosis, family planning, diagnostics, and others; this led to a redesign of the supply chain system for laboratory diagnostic commodities, which improved diagnostic availability for patients in the entire country.

In 2010, when the MOH was faced with continued poor logistics reporting from the regional warehouses, Chirwa recommended supply chain management (SCM) training for the pharmacists who were still interns in the regions. Eight intern pharmacists working at the regional level of the MOH were trained. After the training, the MOH suggested integrating the SCM training into the education curriculum for pharmacists, which would ensure a sustainable source of qualified human resources to support the availability of lifesaving drugs and medical supplies.

In June 2010, Salamba, with three of the staff from the project, facilitated a training course for regional pharmacists. She took the opportunity to meet with the pharmacists to help them develop action plans and determine how the MOH could best support them in the future. Some of the pharmacists are now working at central hospitals where they have been instrumental in ensuring that logistics data reports are submitted to the central medical stores on time.

Salamba credits the trainings for increasing her professional growth: “The trainings I have co-facilitated have increased my in-depth understanding of public health logistics. I am fully equipped and can facilitate similar trainings anywhere in the world. Further to this, it has improved my understanding in managing medicines and medical supplies in my country.”

Since being trained in supply chain management in 2005, Chirwa and Salamba have made great strides in Malawi—building logistics capacity and bringing logistics issues to the attention of the MOH. As a result of their work, more than 700 health center staff members have been trained in supply chain management for the first time; the MOH has also established a national forecasting team to quantify the pharmaceutical requirements for the entire country, each year. Chirwa and Salamba still work as logisticians at the MOH in Malawi; starting in 2010, they plan to study supply chain management at the university level.

As logistics champions, Chirwa and Salamba showed that, for a relatively small investment—in this case a supply chain management course—motivated individuals with the right training can significantly boost awareness and capacity in supply chain management, increasing the sustainability of the public health systems.



Dorica Salamba takes inventory at the Thyolo district warehouse on one of her routine supervisory visits for the Ministry of Health.

*The USAID | DELIVER PROJECT, Task Order 4, is funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development, and implemented by John Snow, Inc. The project improves essential health commodity supply chains by strengthening logistics management information systems, streamlining distribution systems, identifying financial resources for procurement and supply chain operations, and enhancing forecasting and procurement planning. The project also encourages policymakers and donors to support logistics as a critical factor in the overall success of their health care mandates.*

---

The authors' views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the U.S. Agency for International Development or the United States Government.

## **USAID | DELIVER PROJECT**

John Snow, Inc.

1616 Fort Myer Drive, 11th Floor

Arlington, VA 22209 USA

Phone: 703-528-7474

Fax: 703-528-7480

Email: [askdeliver@jsi.com](mailto:askdeliver@jsi.com)

Internet: [deliver.jsi.com](http://deliver.jsi.com)