Angola Community Health Digitalization Workshop Participants. Photo: PSI

Promoting the integration of community health data in DHIS2 in Angola

To advance community health digitalization efforts in Angola, the PMI DCHI's ecosystem assessment highlighted the need to evaluate the current governance structure for community health and identify areas for improvement. PMI DCHI, led in Angola by Digital Square's sub-awardee Population Services International (PSI), supported the Ministry of Health (known as MINSA) to develop a costed roadmap to improve the integration of community health data into Angola's health management information system, DHIS2. MINSA developed this roadmap in collaboration with government entities like the Ministry of Territorial Administration; building these bridges across sectors is important.

In May 2023, the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) and the National Directorate of Public Health co-hosted a workshop with more than 70 representatives from a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including MINSA departments, the Social Support Fund, the Armed Forces, private sector firms, national and international non-government organizations (NGOs), and donor organizations to develop the costed roadmap for community health digitalization. This workshop was spearheaded by an organizing committee comprising representatives from the NMCP, Primary Care Unit, Monitoring Department of the Public Health Directorate, PMI, Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), and PSI, who shaped the agenda and methodology, invited key stakeholders, and provided support during the workshop.

The workshop allowed participants to convene in plenary meetings and dialogue in round tables to discuss MINSA's vision of community health, management and regulation of digital community health, existing community health models, and integrating community information into DHIS2. Participants (organized into technical working groups [TWGs]) identified specific activities, resources required, timelines (from the second half of 2023 to 2025), and responsible entities for implementing these activities to improve community health data integration.

About this project

The U.S. President's Malaria Initiative (PMI) launched its Digital Community Health Initiative (DCHI) with a vision to strengthen quality health delivery at the community level. Led by USAID and co-implemented with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), this initiative aims to invest in the scale-up of digitally enabled community health platforms. DCHI is implemented by PATH's Digital Square initiative and its subawardees, including John Snow International, Last Mile Health, and Population Services International. Learn more about Digital Square and the DCHI Initiative.

Inside this issue

- Updates from Angola and Thailand
- Team Highlights

Promoting the integration of community health data in DHIS2 in Angola (Continued)

The TWGs did not agree to consolidate the integration of community data from all health areas into a single DHIS2 model. Instead, they opted to proceed with developing individual roadmaps for each health area, focusing on enhancing their existing models.

For instance, the TWG working on malaria devised a two-phase roadmap. The first phase involves digitization at the municipal (i.e., district) health level, where MINSA and PMI deploy community and health development agents (known as ADECOS) who collect malaria data (e.g., fever, if woman is pregnant, whether the person was tested with a rapid diagnostic test) in a paper-based notebook and provide aggregated information to a nearby health center (known as the Reference Health Unit).

The health center then submits a report to the Municipal Health Directorate for input into DHIS2, distinguishing between patients tested and/or treated by ADECOS in the community and those seen at the health center. This allows for better data-based decision-making, as it is now possible to distinguish between patients treated in health centers versus the community. Comparing malaria cases treated in the community versus those treated in the health units for specific municipalities shows that around 15% of malaria cases identified were from the community, which is quite significant.

Incorporating data collected from ADECOS into the health center for reporting is a significant advance because ADECOS used to be affiliated with the Ministry of Territorial Administration, not MINSA. The ADECOS previously collected data separately that had to be manually added to DHIS2. The new link between ADECOS and the health centers represents progress because it streamlines the information flow and allows for more granular data insertion.

Staff Highlights

Benjamin Niyitegeka, Digital Square's Technical Advisor in Rwanda, enjoying Lake Kivu at Cleo Hotel with his sister who was visiting from the US.

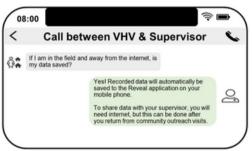## Enhancing Malaria Surveillance in Thailand with Digital Tools

Thailand, a candidate for malaria elimination, aims to become malaria-free by 2025, though it faces challenges such as the resurgence of malaria cases due to porous borders and political conflict in Myanmar. Digital tools have emerged as a promising solution to bolster malaria surveillance efforts. Thailand's Division of Vector-Borne Diseases (DVBD), the government entity responsible for all malaria surveillance and elimination activities, sought support from Digital Square to develop a community-level training program for the Reveal platform. DVBD first deployed Reveal (based on global good OpenSRP) in 2019 and then scaled it up nationally in 2020.

Currently, Reveal is only used at the health facility level by health facility workers and the national level by the Vector Borne Disease Control Unit. However, Digital Square provided technical assistance to support Thailand's plan to use Reveal at the community level. Digital Square interviewed Village Health Volunteers (VHVs) and learned that most are comfortable using digital tools and are open to using digital applications to support community outreach.

To expedite the adoption of Reveal among VHVs at the community level, DVBD intends to fold the use of this digital tool into its existing annual training for health facility workers and Vector Borne Disease Control Units on malaria foci and case investigations. The purpose of conducting case investigations is to assess the potential malaria transmission risk and Reveal can help VHVs when performing this task. Digital Square created materials to support VHV supervisors to provide post-training support and advance the uptake of Reveal among VHVs. Digital Square developed a concise companion job aid

An excerpt of the job aid on how to use Reveal to support community health

meant to complement the lengthy DVBD Reveal training that VHV supervisors can easily refer to and use in low-resource settings. The job aid provides supportive supervision templates and probing questions to gauge Reveal uptake and is also a quick guide to the Reveal portion of the mHealth manual. It also provides a step-by-step guide for VHV supervisors on using basic Reveal functionalities and some responses to Frequently Asked Questions by VHVs. FAQs are a helpful behavioral science mechanism widely used to reinforce positive behavior. VHV supervisors can use the job aid as a guide during in-person and virtual meetings with VHVs to effectively support them to deliver high-quality community services.

This job aid should help prevent common memory lapses that VHV supervisors might have when juggling their demanding jobs, especially when learning or applying a new skill, like advising a VHV on how to use Reveal. The PMI DCHI Thailand team brainstormed potential challenges (e.g., internet connectivity) and real-life scenarios VHVs may encounter performing routine tasks (e.g., performing rapid diagnostic test) and provide visual guides on how Reveal can effectively support them to navigate these.

Staff Highlights

Digital Square's Executive Director, Bilal Mateen's visit with the Senegal team. From left to right: Mamadou Mballo Diallo, Senior Regional MEL Officer; Madeleine Sarr, Technical Program Officer (Second photo); Bilal Mateen, Executive Director; Amadou Fall, Technical Advisor-HMIS; Fatou Fall, Regional Director-Francophone, Marie Josephine Diop, Project Administrator (First photo), Cedric Rufyikiri, Digital Health Officer; and Fatoumata Selle Diagne, Senior Project Administrator

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