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Improved rural health care using smart technology

Background

Health care in Cunene, a province in the southwest of Angola confronts many challenges, from poor roads to limited access to public health services. Since 2012, Cunene has been continuously hit by drought, wiping out crops and cattle, leading to food insecurity, a persistent problem resulting from water shortages. This has led to increased cases of health problems for children, particularly malnutrition. Vaccinations for the prevention of major diseases are not fully administered, compounding the sanitation problem. Furthermore, rural communities in Cunene province have the highest HIV infection rates in Angola.

Project focus

This project seeks to improve access to primary health care in Ombandja municipality in Cunene. Its 235 000 residents are served by Chiulo hospital, co-managed by the Ministry of Health, the Catholic Church and SIPA's implementing partner Médicos com África (CUAMM). Chiulo hospital is equipped with 200 beds, a basic surgery room, and a laboratory. Its health staff comprises four doctors and 50 nurses. The hospital's network includes four rural health centres, 50 community health workers and 70 traditional birth attendants.

Purpose

The project aims to increase and improve the quality of health care services in the following areas:

- Surgery and obstetric emergency services
- Frequency of pre-natal visits and number of births at a health facility
- Pediatric services for malaria, HIV, Tuberculosis (TB), malnutrition, acute diarrhea and respiratory diseases
- TB diagnostics using the cutting edge device GeneXpert MTB/RIF. This enables, for the first time, diagnosis of multi-drug resistant TB cases in southern Angola, potentially increasing the number of patients that successfully undergo TB treatment
- Improve local data on morbidity, mortality and health needs.



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Activities

The project is driven by the following activities:

- Training of local staff and upgrading of surgical equipment
- Introduction of smart technology for hospital management in the rural communities of Angola; hospital software, solar panels for health points, and solar fridges for vaccine blood storage
- Employing community health workers to conduct child nutrition surveillance, refer suspected cases of TB and promote prevention of common diseases.

Location and target group

The project is located in Chiulo, Ombandja municipality in the province of Cunene. It targets 235 000 people, also serving communities from other municipalities and provinces who use Chiulo's TB and ophthalmology services. There are 200 doctors, midwives and nurses at Chiulo hospital and surrounding rural health centers.

Duration

The project was established in March 2015 and will run until March 2017.

Implementing partner

SIPA's implementing partner is Médicos com África (CUAMM).