Eradicating leprosy through primary health care integration

Background

Leprosy, or Hansen's is a chronic infectious disease caused by a bacteria, transmitted through close contact. It is curable. If treated early, it does not lead to physical impairment. Left untreated, leprosy can cause permanent damage to the skin, nerves, limbs and eyes.

After Mozambique and Madagascar, Angola is home to one of Africa’s highest incidences of leprosy with over 1 000 cases detected each year. Preventing disabilities and further transmission requires early diagnosis and treatment with multi-drug antibiotic therapy (MDT) and reducing treatment drop-outs through regular follow up.

The Ministry of Health’s leprosy plan seeks to expand detection, better integrate leprosy into primary health care and map pockets of the disease.

Project focus

SIPA is partnering with Solidariedade Evangélica (SOLE) in national efforts to eliminate leprosy. The project aims to detect and treat new cases early, educate communities and eliminate the stigma attached to leprosy. The project also aims to reach 6 000 school pupils with information every year.

Purpose

The purpose of this project is to improve the quality of leprosy care in peri-urban health facilities, help ensure drug availability to patients, and work closely with provincial health departments and the Ministry of Health.

Key activities

Key project activities include training with follow up to reduce stigma and increase prevention and treatment knowledge in communities through:

- Improved prevention of leprosy through innovative and integrated approaches
- Provide better support around detection systems and case tracking through SMS updated databases.

Location and target audience

The project targets people with leprosy, their families and communities in high endemic areas in Cabinda, Kwanza Norte, Lunda Norte and Uíge provinces. There are a minimum of 40 nurses and 28 community health agents working on this project.

Duration

The project was established in October 2014 and ended in April 2017.

Implementing partners and stakeholders

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Sector 1A - Bloco 8  
Luanda  
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Zürich  
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Implementing partners and stakeholders include Solidariedade Evangélica (SOLE), working closely with the Association for the Reintegration of People Affected by Leprosy (ARPAL) and the Ministry of Health.