



ABOUT THE ACCESS PROJECT

The Access Project Mission

The Access Project improves the health of poor communities and health infrastructure by applying a business management approach to public health systems and increasing access to life-saving drugs and quality care. Access works in partnership with the Rwanda Ministry of Health (MOH) to improve the health of poor communities through three major initiatives:

Advancing Health Center Management

The Access Project team works with district and health center staff to improve management systems in eight management domains: human resources, infrastructure, finance, community health insurance, pharmacy, health information systems, planning and coordination, and information technology. The Access Project performs initial and follow-up assessments with a specially designed quantitative tool that also provides a road map to guide ongoing improvements. Health centers are provided intensive mentoring by district based advisors and specialized training by experts in each management domain.



Health information system Training, May 2009

Developing Health Infrastructure

The Access Project works to ensure that every health center in Rwanda has clean water, electricity, and other critical infrastructure needed to provide quality health services. Where infrastructure does not exist or is too dilapidated to be rehabilitated, the Access Project partners with the NGO Rwanda Works and other donors to mobilize support for health center construction. In 2009, new health centers were built in Gashora and Ngeruka Sectors, two sectors that are located in the impoverished district of Bugesera, a region that was particularly devastated by the 1994 genocide.



New Health Center in Gashora

Controlling Neglected Tropical Disease

In 2007, the Access Project partnered with the MOH to address endemic neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), including soil transmitted helminths, schistosomiasis and trachoma, to launch Rwanda's first NTD Control Program. The program's first activity was completing the most extensive mapping of NTDs ever undertaken in Rwanda. The mapping exercise guided the development of nation-wide interventions, including mass drug administration, local capacity building, which consists of trainings for teachers and community health workers, and behavior change communication. Through these interventions, the Access Project and its partners have improved the capacity of Rwanda's health system to dramatically reduce the burden of NTDs on the population.



Mass Drug Administration Campaign, March 2009

The Access Project Story

The Access Project was established by Columbia University's Earth Institute and the Glaser Progress Foundation in 2002. The goal of these organizations was to provide assistance to governments in Africa and the Caribbean seeking to attract and effectively deploy resources from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. Since its inception, the Access Project has worked to strengthen management systems at all levels of the Rwandan health sector.

In 2006, the Access Project provided increased technical support for its targeted management domains at the health center level in three districts. Adding three additional districts in 2008, the Access Project now implements management interventions in 79 health centers that provide care for 1.8 million Rwandans. In 2007, the Access Project formed the NTD Control Program and in 2008 it began partnering with the NGO Rwanda Works » to construct health centers in communities in dire need.

The Access Project Team

The Access Project team includes 33 full-time Rwandan staff members with diverse professional expertise, including clinical medicine, information technology, and epidemiology. District based advisors provide day-to-day mentoring and supportive supervision at health centers, while specialized experts provide intensive training and coaching to health center staff and district health authorities. The senior management team based in Kigali and New York provides strategic oversight and technical advice.

The Access Project receives financial support from the Glaser Progress Foundation, Columbia University's Earth Institute, the MAC AIDS Fund, Geneva Global, Rwanda Works, the MAIA Foundation, and the Schmidt Family Foundation. General Electric and Pfizer Pharmaceuticals provide in-kind support.

The Access Project Impact

Since 2006, Access Project interventions have led to improved quality of care and increased access to health services for Rwanda's population, including those who suffer from HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and NTDs. Selected metrics reflecting these improvements follow:



- The number of HIV tests logged within the three original Access Project intervention districts grew from 75,000 in 2006 to 382,633 in 2009 in the six districts where the Access Project now operates
- TB treatment success rates within the three original Access Project supported districts rose from 75% in 2006 to 91% by the end of 2008.
- Health center service utilization rates grew from 81% to 95% from the first quarter of 2008 to 2009 across all six districts in which the Access Project works

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