

Global Fund Grant for Strengthening Health Systems in South Sudan: Round 9 (SSD-910-G13-S) GFATM/UNDP

End of Project Evaluation Report

Executive summary

The evaluation of Global Fund (GF) Round 9 Health System Strengthening (R9 HSS) project for South Sudan (grant SSD-910-G13-S) was conducted to provide the Global Fund (GF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) South Sudan – the Principle Recipient, with an independent assessment of the achievement and contribution of project to the health system in South Sudan. The HSS grant was aiming at increasing the capabilities of the South Sudan Health sector to train health work force; to establish systems for health commodity supply chain management; establish health information system; and to improve access to quality of health services. The evaluation covered the period 2012 – 2015, and looked at all the aspects of the HSS project, Specific objectives of the end of project evaluation were to assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, identify best practices, lessons learned, and provide actionable recommendations for future projects.

A systematic two stage stratified sampling technique was used to ensure interrogation of major (high capital) components of the project and inclusion of a representative sample of other lower capital components. Additionally, systematic purposive selection was used to include activities and sights that performed exceptionally well and those that had serious challenges. An inception report was prepared and approved by the HSS Technical Working Group (TWG). Evaluation data collected through document review, interviews with stakeholders, health facility visits and participatory observation was triangulated and analysed to produce a draft report that was presented to the HSS TWG members and other stakeholders for feedback. Inputs from the stakeholders were incorporated in the final report.

Results of the evaluation indicate that Round 9 GF HSS grant made significant contribution in strengthening the South Sudan health systems despite the civil strife that the country experienced during the implementation period.

Capacity building for HSS including health workforce

Through the GF support, the rehabilitation of Juba Midwifery and Nursing Schools, Wau Midwifery School, Malakal Health institute, Wau Midwifery and Nursing school dormitory and Juba Midwifery and Nursing school dormitory were completed. This increased student enrolment to 180 and graduated 118 nurses and midwives. The evaluation found that the provision of furniture, equipment, teaching aids, and deployment of eight international tutors to the teaching institutions which improved quality of training.

Strengthening of the drug supply management

Renovation and expansion of the central medical store was completed and capacity has expanded to accommodate 2000 different types of drugs. The constructions of six incinerators was completed but were not commissioned at the time of the evaluation. As part of capacity building, the HSS grant provided technical assistance, trained 116 MOH staff and conducted supervisory field visit on pharmaceutical management.

Strengthen Health Information System

The evaluation also found that the deployment of monitoring and evaluation staff, and training of national counterparts facilitated the development of Health Management Information System (HMIS), standardisation of the recording and reporting tools and the eventual production of monthly HMIS bulletins. These efforts contributed to the improvement in report completeness and timelines from 47% (2012) to 85% (2015).

The challenges faced during implementation of the R9 HSS grant implementation were lack of national standard specifications for medical equipment and designs of civil works; delay in construction of civil works due to insecurity, constrained access to project site due to impassable and poor road network especially during the wet season; and limited local capacity for preventive maintenance of medical equipment. Key recommendations for the Ministry of Health are: assign staff to work with GF staff for skills transfer especially in supplies management, biomedical technology resource persons and implementation of closeout plan; train biomedical engineer or technician to maintain medical equipment locally; procurement medical equipment and civil works early enough for timely completion and utilization of health facilities; continue to build the capacity of health workers on different health topics at all levels to sustain the project's gains.

Key recommendation for the CCM are: recognize the mandate of the PR as the grant manager and engage constructively to enhance project quality, efficiency and effectiveness; be actively involved in the procurement by being part of the Global Fund tender board.

Key recommendations for the Ministry of Health are: increase ownership of HSS project activities as the ministry's for sustainability; subnational health authorities should mobilize local resources as well as work with their development partners to ensure sustainability of systems established through HSS grant.