Cameroon Public Health Data Analysis Capacity Building

Context

Cameroon is affected by three simultaneous crises, the Lake Chad Basin crisis affecting the Far North, the Anglophone crisis affecting North-West and South-West, and refugees from the Central African Republic affecting the eastern parts of the country. The 2022 HNO estimates that 3.9 million people are in need, of which 57% are children, with the highest severity reported in the Far North, North-West and South-West.

Cameroon has experienced significant improvements in health and human development in recent decades. Since 1990, life expectancy at birth has increased by 5.9 years and its human development index (HDI) has increased by 25.7 percent, from 0.448 to 0.563, placing Cameroon in the lower end of the “medium development category”. In terms of reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) and family planning (FP), the situation has steadily improved, and significant progress has been made since 2000. As an example, between 2000 and 2018, the maternal mortality rate dropped from 886 to 529 and the under-five mortality rate was halved from 143.9 to 72.2.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a significant deterioration in economic activity and consumption and has reversed some of the gains made. It is estimated that the crisis increased the extreme poverty rate from 24.5% in 2019 to 25.3% in 2021, while public services, including health services, were also severely affected. While Cameroon was among the first countries in Africa to receive vaccines in April 2021, it had one of the worst COVID-19 vaccination coverage rates in Africa (ranking 43rd of 46th). Throughout the pandemic, the use of family planning and prenatal care services fell by 37% and 18%, respectively. This compounded the existing challenges in RMNCH/FP. As an example, each year there are an estimated 389,000 unintended pregnancies, partially owing to a modern contraceptive prevalence rate of 18.7% (2017). Of the almost 900,000 births each year, 360,000 women make fewer than 4 antenatal care (ANC) visits and 340,000 do not deliver in a facility.

iMMAP Cameroon

iMMAP has been operating in Cameroon since July 2021, when the organization began operations under a USAID BHA grant. The project established an Information Management (IM) unit based in Yaoundé and deployed IM officers (IMOs) to the Southwest and Northwest regions of the country to provide support to UN agencies, government ministries and NGOs. The project responded to requests from more than 141 different organizations for information management support.

Better Data, Better Decisions, Better Outcomes
Objectives of the Project

In September 2022, iMMAP initiated its health system strengthening project entitled “Capacity Building for Public Health Data Analysis in Cameroon,” supported by the German government via Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH. The project aims to improve the capacity of Ministry of Health officials at the district and regional levels in the Littoral, Adamawa, West, Northwest and Southwest regions of Cameroon.

The capacity building sessions for Ministry of Health staff at the regional and district levels will ensure quality, analysis and visualization of data, including those related to sexual and reproductive health, family planning and COVID-19 vaccination. This project is part of a GIZ health system strengthening program called “Family Planning and Health System Support for Resilience Project”, which aims to improve sexual and reproductive health and family planning indicator results in Cameroon.

iMMAP will work at the regional and district levels to improve the skills of more than 200 key actors, including the integration and analysis of actual data from the national DHIS2 system, which is the public health information system software used in the country. By empowering national decision-makers to critically assess, analyze, and visualize data, iMMAP is helping to strengthen decision-making for equitable, efficient, and quality health services for all Cameroonian.

Key Activities

iMMAP will provide training of trainers (ToT) for at least 25 members of the five selected MoH regional delegations on data analysis, visualization, and evidence-based decision making. The trained MoH regional staff will then help facilitate the training sessions at the district level.

A total of nine four-day training sessions is planned for district and tertiary hospital staff.

A final five-day training on in-depth data analysis and advanced software use will also be conducted for the 25 members of the MoH regional delegations.