

Kartong

community pharmacy

functional commerce to create a sponsor independent sustainability in drug availability

Follow up May 2009

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Aim of the visit

The purpose of this visit is to start the 2 new planned community pharmacies in the clinics in Nyofelleh and Berending, 2 villages close to Kartong.

Another goal of this visit is to guide the administrator in his work of making monthly financial reports for the clinic in Kartong as well as the pharmacies in Kartong, Berending en Nyofelleh.

Berending and Nyofelleh

To supply the 2 new pharmacies an order was placed at the IDA foundation. The shipment of the drugs did arrive in the end of April and would have been collected by the time we arrived in the Gambia. But because the Jammeh Foundation did not receive a "bill of lading" they were not able to collect the shipment in the harbour. We arranged a copy of this "bill of lading" and after our arrival in the Gambia we went with Lamin of the FOFDHIK and Sulayman of the Jammeh Foundation to the harbour to collect the shipment. There we found out that the drugs had already been collected by the Jammeh hospital. After a lot of talking between Lamin, Sulayman and Keba the head of the Jammeh foundation and the director of the hospital, it was clear that it all had gone wrong because of a mistake of the IDA foundation and a lot of misunderstanding. The IDA foundation had send the bill of lading to the wrong address, the Jammeh hospital instead of the Jameh foundation. Due to a misunderstanding between the Jammeh hospital and the Jammeh foundation, the hospital had collected the shipment and about 2/3 part had already been used for the patients of the hospital.

We were surprised that in a few weeks so many drugs of the shipment had already been used. We wanted to be sure that there was no other place in the hospital where part of the shipment was stored and wanted to know if the drug had really been used by the hospital. We talked to the Cuban doctors at the hospital and they made clear that there had been a lot of patients the last weeks and they told us that a lot of drugs had been used. The director of the hospital showed us around and we have seen all the supplies of the different yards and the hospital pharmacy. We saw remaining parts of the shipment, but only small quantities of opened packages. We decided to leave this small quantities in the hospital and to take all the remaining boxes of our shipment from the store room to Kartong. After counting and comparing with the list of the complete content of the shipment, it was transported to Kartong.

Everyone involved was very disappointed by the fact that a large part of the shipment was gone. Because we did not want to delay the opening of the 2 new pharmacies again, and it would take months for a new shipment to arrive, we decided to start in Berending and Nyofelleh with a limited stock with only the most essential drugs.

Untill the moment the drug supplies in both clinics had been very limited and partly hardly usable (expired, homeopathic, too small quantities of a drug), so starting with a limited stock of essential drugs will be much better than delaying the start. And in this way it will be easier for Sarjo and Fatou, the people in charge of the pharmacies, to get used to the work and the system. And it will give us time in which they

can show they are capable of doing the job and we get an idea of the number of prescriptions, before sending the next shipment of drugs. Then we also have a better idea of the drugs needed at the next shipment.

Together with Ousman, the shopkeeper of the pharmacy in Kartong, we examined the remaining shipment and we used this shipment and part of the stock of the pharmacy in Kartong to create a starting supply for both Berending and Nyofelleh. The starting supply of the 2 new pharmacies consisted of: amoxicilline syrup and capsules, paracetamol sups and tablets, condoms, bisacodyl, atenolol, chlorphenamine, cotrimoxazol tabs and suspension, omeprazol, procaine penicillin injections, salbutamol aerosol, erythromycin, chloroquine susp., metronidazol, Postinor, vit B complex and needles and syringes.

Before the starting supply was brought to the 2 new pharmacies we visited the places to make sure all necessary preparations had been made and to find out if the persons who would be in charge of the pharmacies were trained and ready to start. As an experienced shopkeeper of the pharmacy in Kartong Ousman will coach the 2 new shopkeepers. He will visit the pharmacies in Berending and Nyofelleh regularly to see how they are doing and is available for all kind of questions and will help them in the beginning with the administration.

Nyofelleh

After our last visit in March the storeroom of the clinic has been transformed to a room suitable for a pharmacy. A bared window is created to hand over the drugs to the patients waiting outside.

Sarjo Sambou, who used to work as a nurse in the clinic will be in charge of the pharmacy. In the past few months he has spend 2 weeks with Ousman in the pharmacy in Kartong to learn the procedures and administration to manage a pharmacy in the Kartong way. After the training period Ousman was convinced that Sarjo would be capable of doing the job. Sarjo is a serious man and is eager to start the job.

The next day we bring the starting supply and we go with a delegation (Lamin, Ousman, Alhagie, Richard and Linda) to the clinic in Nyofelleh. We hand over the drugs to Sarjo together with the guidelines and some writing blocks for the administration and a T-shirt and cap with the logo of Farmacie Mondiaal. Ousman explains to Sarjo how he can adjust the supply in the stock administration. For Alhagie it is the first time he sees the clinic and meets Sarjo. As an administrator Alhagie will visit the pharmacy regularly to collect the money and to collect data for his monthly reports and do some checks in the administration. Sarjo is happy to start the pharmacy and as soon as we leave he starts storing the drugs and adjusting the stock administration.

Berending

In the clinic in Berending also a former store room is transformed into a room suitable for a pharmacy. The room can be closed properly and a bared window can be used to dispense the drugs to the patients. A veranda has been created, sponsored by the NOVA (Dutch Organization of Female Pharmacists), outside so people can wait sitting in the shade.

Unfortunately Fatou is not around as we visit the clinic. But Yaya the head nurse who is in charge of the clinic welcomes us and shows us around. The room which will be the pharmacy is still full with other equipment and things. We agree to come back the next day with the drug supply. Fatou will be around then and the room will be emptied and there will be a cupboard to store the drugs.

Unfortunately the next day the situation hasn't changed. Fatou is nowhere to be found and Yaya comes straight out of bed. A serious discussion occurs between Lamin and Yaya. Finally, and on Lamins advice, it is decided that despite the bad start the pharmacy will start. Some employees of the clinic help emptying the room and storing the drugs in the placed cupboard. Fatou is for training in Brikama. It is agreed that Fatou will come to the lodge the same afternoon to meet us for a talk. The drugs and the guidelines and writing blocks are handed over to Yaya. Ousman, Lamin and Alhagie explain him about the guidelines and the administration.

When we meet Fatou in the afternoon she is very quiet and she hardly responses to our questions and is looking down most of the time. Lamin and Ousman explain that she is very shy especially with white people. Lamin, Ousman and Alhagie are also present at the meeting, Lamin explains some more about the project. Alhagie tells Fatou about his role as an administrator. And Ousman explains that he will become her coach. Because Fatou was only partly trained by Ousman (she did not show up after the first day) it is agreed that she will come 2 full days to the pharmacy in Kartong so she can experience the work

and Ousman can teach her the administration and other aspects of the work. At the end of the meeting we have some serious doubts if she will be capable of doing the job. Let's hope for the best.

Back in the Netherlands Richard has contacted IDA and has arranged that the value of the lost part of the shipment will be replaced by IDA because of the mistake made by IDA.

A new order for a new drug shipment has been prepared and is ready to be send to the Gambia. The shipment has to be addressed to an organization or person who can get it through customs easily, without the risk that it will be collected and used by another organization. As soon as Lamin, the coordinator of the FOFDHIK, will come with an address we can use for the shipment, the shipment will be send to Banjul.

Financial administration

In February Alhagie was employed as the administrator of the clinic and the pharmacy. His task is to check the financial administration of the doctor, the pharmacy and the cashier. He is also responsible for the monthly financial reports.

When Linda visited Kartong in March it was not really clear to him what was supposed to be included in the monthly report. The first report he wrote (February) was very limited and did not contain the information needed to have a good view on the results of the pharmacy. In March Linda had a meeting with Alhagie to discuss about his tasks and the contains of the monthly report.

Alhagie explains that he checks the administration of the doctor and Ousman on a weekly basis and the administration of the cashier every day. Alhagie will make a format in Excel for the monthly report. We agree that this report should contain the number of patients, the number of prescriptions, the payments (fees and products) and the expenses. As part of the monthly report Alhagie will write a short report about his findings in the checkings of the different administrations. Also the list of expired products and the stock changes per product will be part of the report. For these last 2 subjects Alhagie can get the information needed from Ousman.

Between March and May the monthly reports have improved, but we are still not really satisfied. Some data are missing like the expenditures, the stock administration and the reports did not reach us in time. During our visit in May we talk with Alhagie and explain the purpose of the reports for good financial management of the clinic and the pharmacies. He seems cooperative and understanding is willing to improve the reports.

Beside the monthly financial report on the Kartong pharmacy, Alhagie will from now on also write a monthly report on the clinic (dentist and lab) and the 2 pharmacies in Nyofelleh and Berending. We discuss the contents of these reports. Together with Alhagie we work on an Excell format which Alhagie can easily use to process the data needed for these monthly reports. It is agreed that Alhagie will email us the reports before the 15th of the next month.

Bank account

There used to be a bank account at the local bank in Kartong for the money collected with the selling of the drugs in the pharmacy. But suddenly this bank closed and the account was blocked. Lamin will arrange that the money that was on the account will be available again (about 12000 Dalasis).

The nearest bank is now at Brikama. But because there was not yet an account opened, in the mean time the money from the pharmacy is collected by the doctor and kept in his house. (period Dec-May amount about 50.000 Dalasis).

In May we went to Brikama to open a new bank account for the pharmacy. Ousman, Alhagie and Lamin are responsible for this account and will be able to access this account. From the 18th of May all the income of the pharmacy is collected by Alhagie and has been put on this account.

Alhagie will calculate the amount of money from the pharmacy that is still with Dr Jassy. Dr Jassy has to give this to Alhagie so he can put it on the bank account.

In February the system of the payment of drugs was changed. The doctor writes the prescriptions and also calculates the prices. The patient goes with the prescription to the cashier to pay this price. After the stamp of the cashier he goes to the pharmacy to collect the prescribed drug.

Because the doctor makes mistakes in calculating the prices of the drugs and the fees, the prices the people have to pay are often too high. We decide to make a small logical change in the system. From now on the doctor only makes the prescription, but does not do the calculation. The patient goes with the prescription to the pharmacy where Ousman does the calculation. The patient then goes to the cashier to pay and in the mean time Ousman prepares the drug(s). After the payment (stamp from the cashier on the prescription) the drug is ready to be collected at the pharmacy.

Kartong pharmacy

Barbara has left the pharmacy to start her nurse education. Her father has asked Farmacie Mondial for sponsoring. Barbara is a serious and intelligent young woman (24 years old). She has worked in the pharmacy for the last 8 months to help Ousman. It was on her own initiative to spend the time waiting for her nurse education in a meaningful way. Because of her qualities she used to get a sort of salary of 30 euro a month. Because Barbara is willing to go to work in the pharmacy of Kartong after her education we decide to sponsor her education (500 euro).

In December the Minister of Health has paid a visit to the Kartong clinic. She intended to improve the level of education of the people working at the clinic and the pharmacy.

Ousman is willing to do some more education. He likes to get some training at the Victoria Training Hospital (VTH) in Banjul. At this hospital they organize courses to become a qualified pharmacy assistant, but this is a fulltime course of 2 years with a lot of training periods. Because Ousman already has a lot of working experience, the distance to Banjul is quite large and we can not miss him for a long time in the pharmacy we like him to do a more compact course mainly about pharmacotherapy. Ousman and Richard will get in contact with the pharmacists at the VTH to see what is possible.

Because Barbara has left and because Ousman is planning to do education a new assistant is welcome. Ousman will look around to find a suitable person for the job.

Financial

	prescriptions	total income	product	fees	expenditures (salaries)	balance
2008						
<i>january</i>	398	4470	2726	1744		
<i>february</i>	402	4221	2685	1536		
<i>march</i>	778	7199	4398	2801		
<i>april</i>	509	5961	3839	2122		
<i>may</i>	475	6054	3664	2390		
<i>june</i>	451	5872	3665	2217		
<i>july</i>	710	7592	4536	3056		
<i>august</i>	1008	9105	6172	2933		
<i>sept</i>	564	5966	3464	2502		
<i>oct</i>	497	4646	2438	2208		
<i>nov</i>						
<i>dec</i>	532	5374	3444	1930		
2009						
<i>january</i>	729	9205	5739	3212		
<i>february</i>	846	10748	7020	3728	4500	6248
<i>mrt</i>	773	11062	7384	3680	4500	6565
<i>april</i>	634	8888	5420	3468	4500	4388
<i>may</i>	539	7786	4338	3448	3700	4085

The number of the prescriptions as well as the fees have increased after Dr Jassy has started working in the clinic. During 2009 the fees are quite stable every month. The fees are still not enough to pay the salaries of the pharmacy staff. This means that the project is not yet completely sustainable and the pharmacy can not run without financial support yet. Because the product prices are the retail prices, to be self sufficient, the fees should not only cover the salaries of the pharmacy staff but also the other expenditures (like medicine bags, transport costs etc..) and the losses of drugs due to expiration.

Conclusions

Both the pharmacies in Nyofelleh and Berending have started in May. But because part of the drug shipment, meant as a starting supply, got lost, both pharmacies started with a limited amount of 18 essential drugs.

Ousman, as an experienced shopkeeper of the pharmacy in Kartong will be a coach for Sarjo and Fatou, the 2 new shopkeepers of Nyofelleh and Berending.

Alhagie has improved his work as an administrator and the monthly reports, but we are still not fully satisfied. He probably needs some more guidance during the coming months for further improvement.

A bank account was opened for the money of the pharmacies. Ousman, Alhagie and Lamin have access to this account. From now on the pharmacy money will be stored on this account. The pharmacy money still with the doctor will be collected and be put on the account as well.

Critical success factors for the project for the coming period:

- The qualities of Alhagie as an financial administrator for the clinic and the pharmacies.
- The capability of Fatou and Sarjo as shopkeepers of the pharmacies in Berending and Nyofelleh.