A conversation with Results for Development, April 21, 2021

Participants

- Yangzom Tshewang – Senior Program Officer, Results for Development (R4D)
- Cammie Lee – Senior Program Director, R4D
- Erin K. Fletcher – Economist, R4D
- Taylor Salisbury – Senior Program Officer, R4D
- Zara Ali – Program Officer, R4D
- Christina Synowiec – Senior Program Director, R4D
- Nelsha Haji – Senior Program Officer, R4D
- Natalie Crispin – Program Officer, GiveWell

Note: These notes were compiled by GiveWell and give an overview of the major points made by Ms. Tshewang, Ms. Lee, Dr. Fletcher, Mr. Salisbury, Ms. Ali, Ms. Synowiec, and Ms. Haji.

Summary call notes

GiveWell spoke with several R4D staff members to follow up on a [2019 GiveWell Incubation Grant](#) to support R4D's childhood pneumonia treatment program.

In brief, conversation topics included:

- High government staff turnover resulting from a recent government transition in Tanzania, and R4D's work to establish relationships with new senior government decision makers.
- R4D's continued support to the government of Tanzania for the financing, procurement, regulation, and quantification of the need for amoxicillin dispersible tablets (amox DT) to treat childhood pneumonia during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- R4D's near-term goals, including aligning childhood pneumonia guidelines in the private sector with existing guidelines in the public sector and working with the government to improve forecasts of the need for amox DT.
- Working with the government to find a sustainable way to finance amox DT in the longer term, including plans for the Tanzanian government to eventually take full ownership of amox DT financing and barriers to that goal.
- Filling short-term funding needs. As a result of immediate needs resulting from the pandemic, R4D committed to covering 100% of the need for amox DT in 2020 and 60% of the need in 2021. R4D and the government are exploring options to fill the remaining 40% of the need for 2021, including a) transitioning to funding amox DT using health facilities' budgets by the end of 2021, b) supporting government to raise funds from other donors, and c) if necessary, explore the option of using some of the 2019 GiveWell Incubation Grant funding to fill the emergency gap.
- The evolving processes R4D and the government have used in 2017-2020 to procure amox DT and ensure that it arrives when needed and that the inventory management and distribution go smoothly. Beginning in 2020, R4D's focus has been on supporting the government to implement strategic supply planning.

- Data from health facility surveys. Seven rounds of surveys have been conducted since 2017, and amox DT availability has increased over this time. Surveys in February and March 2021 found that 76% of facilities had amox DT available and 79% had pediatric amoxicillin (i.e. either amox DT or amox OS) available. These are higher levels of availability than surveys found at any point in 2017. Less than half of facilities reported stock outs of amox DT in the past 90 days, which is a lower level than reported during Phase I of R4D's program (which included survey rounds 1-3). Stock outs of amox DT have somewhat increased since early 2020, and R4D will be monitoring this measure of access in the upcoming rounds to determine if the increase is a statistically significant trend.
- The quality of the data in the health facility surveys. R4D shared a few reasons why it believes these data are high quality:
  - Consistent patterns across the two phases of data collection.
  - High response rates.
  - Tracking of respondents across rounds, which indicates that the surveys are being administered to similar respondents in each round.
  - The practice of calling respondents to let them know what information the survey will request, and then giving them time to do the necessary accounting before giving results during a follow-up call.
  - R4D works with a data enumeration firm that performs additional back checks and monitoring.

All GiveWell conversations are available at http://www.givewell.org/research/conversations