



# Improving the Preservation of Medicines through Coaching

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The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is a vast country facing multiple logistical challenges, notably in the supply chain, storage, and preservation of pharmaceutical commodities. The health district of Kolwezi in Katanga is no exception; it also faces this dual challenge to store and preserve medicines in optimal conditions. Commodities are generally stored in a warehouse, but in conditions that often fail to ensure the best quality.

The Centrale de Distribution des Médicaments Essentiels de Kolwezi (CDMEK; Central Warehouse for Distribution of Essential Medicines in Kolwezi) is one of the largest pharmaceutical warehouses in the city, with a capacity of 700.64 cubic meters. Serving a population of 813,839, it covers eight health zones in the Kolwezi Health District.

Funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program in the DRC supported the Kolwezi health district through the CDMEK to improve storage conditions to ensure better medicine quality. This support has consisted of building the capacities of the warehouse management team through regular coaching on the minimum conditions for storing medicines, based on standards for best practices for storage, as well as a financial management approach with the creation of a budget line item drawn from operating costs of storage services provided by the Integrated Health Project (IHP).

To overcome the lack of financial resources, the CDMEK managers used funds, generated by medicine storage and management fees charged to IHP for USAID medicines transiting through this warehouse, to upgrade the warehouse conditions, particularly refreshing and plastering of walls, repairing the ceiling, rewiring of the electrical circuit, adding shelves and pallets, and providing the warehouse with a recording thermometer and monitoring sheets.

All this work has improved temperature, hygiene, and humidity conditions inside the CDMEK warehouse and has thus led to improvements in the quality of medicines provided to the community.

*“With our own resources and technical support from the Katanga SIAPS Provincial Representative, we have improved conditions for medicine storage and preservation; this has also enabled us to recruit three new staff members for effective management of the warehouse, for which we are grateful,”* stated **Tridon Ngoy, CDMEK Director**.

The SIAPS Program is funded by USAID, whose technical approach emphasizes the principles of the global health initiative, notably improving indicators, monitoring and evaluation, capacity building for governments and local organizations, and increasing local ownership by countries. The program aims to support the Ministry of Health through 80 health zones targeted by IHP in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.



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December 2013