

IMPROVING THE SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT ENVIRONMENT: A LEADERSHIP AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT APPROACH



The public health supply chain faces human resources and training challenges at all levels. It is essential to address these challenges to avoid compounding the stress on existing staff and the supply chain. Challenges in forecasting and supply planning, if unchecked, will create difficulties in procurement, inventory control, warehousing, and transportation. Conversely, these difficulties depolarize and demotivate staff in accomplishing daily tasks.

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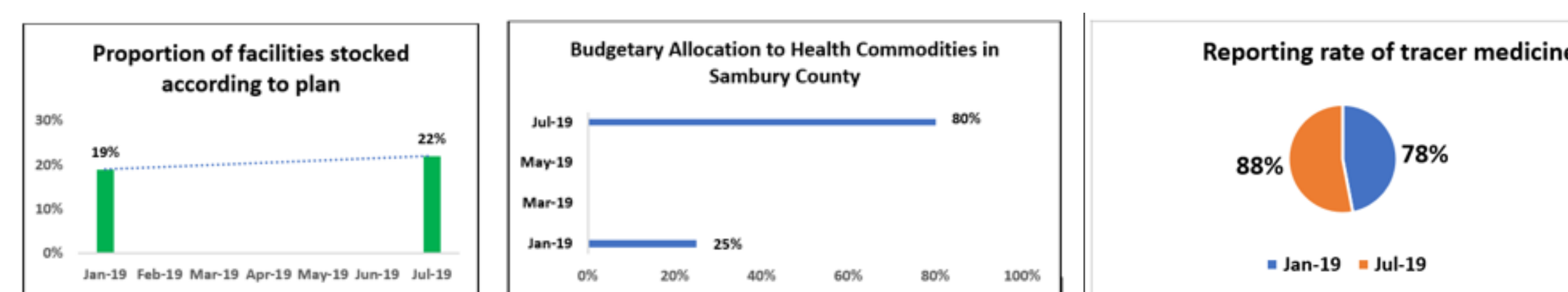
APPROACH

The USAID Global Health Supply Chain Program-Procurement and Supply Management (GHSC-PSM) project conducted a baseline assessment with supply chain managers at the same workplace and level who would identify common supply chain management (SCM) challenges. The project then conducted a change and leadership training and developed a work plan with clear targets to resolve the identified challenges. GHSC-PSM then assigned mentors to supply chain managers for biweekly meetings and monthly visits to work through defined activities in Rwanda (three months) and Kenya (five months).

After acquiring knowledge and information in a training session for one week, staff needed hands-on engagement on identified workplace challenges to develop further the skills gained to resolve them. Mentors and coaches guided staff out of their comfort zones to stimulate resilience and focus on solving a problem after setting a goal.

RESULTS FROM KENYA

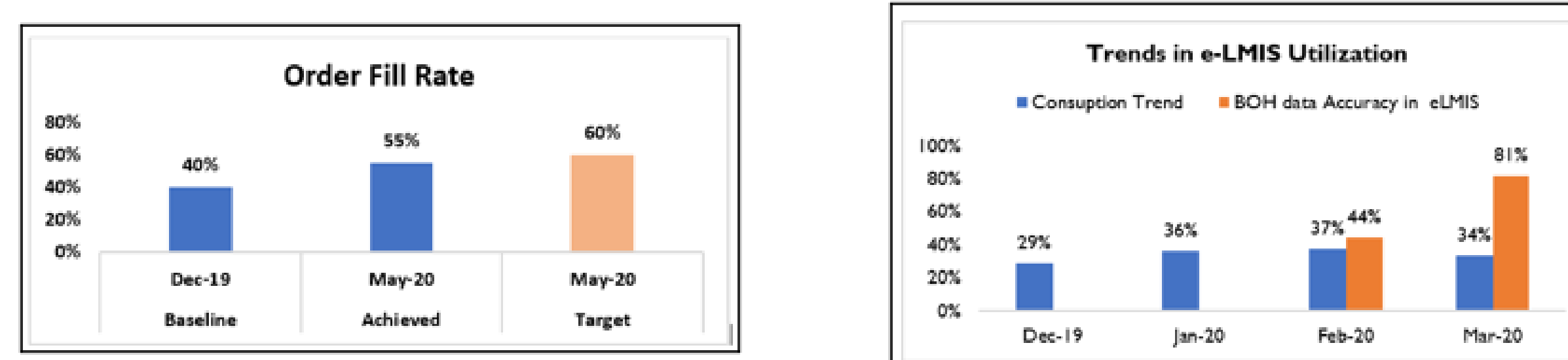
In Kenya, after five months, budgetary commitment for health commodities increased from 25% to 80% in Samburu County; the proportion of facilities stocked according to plan increased from 19% to 22% in the Bungoma sub-county, and reporting rates of essential tracer medicines increased from 78% to 88% in Siaya County.



The leadership experience increased participants' understanding of what they can do and influence to increase resilience and productivity in SCM workplaces.

RESULTS FROM RWANDA

In Rwanda, after three months, the order fulfillment rate for the Bureau des Formations Medicales Agrées du Rwanda (BUFMAR) warehouse increased from 40% to 55%, and the accuracy of reported consumption data for decision-making increased from 19% to 34% among health facilities supported by the BUFMAR warehouse.



WORKPLACE LESSONS LEARNED

- ✓ Assessing the baseline of identified challenges is vital to set measurable targets in both counties.
- ✓ Change management involves articulating solutions for identified challenges and focusing improvement efforts on set targets and a timeline.
- ✓ Regular meetings to brainstorm and articulate feasible solutions is a helpful mentoring mechanism to help staff take the initiative to own and implement change solutions in Kenya and Rwanda.
- ✓ It is valuable for course facilitators of change management to become mentors after the course, to appreciate and engage identified challenges from the beginning to the end of capstones in Kenya and Rwanda.
- ✓ Advocacy is essential to influencing decision-makers in all workplace.
- ✓ A multi-combined approach (training, workplace application, and field visit support) has contributed to observed changes in health facilities supported by BUFMAR, Rwanda.
- ✓ New initiatives take time to be embraced due to individuals' tendencies to resist change.
- ✓ The involvement and commitment of top leadership are vital for the success of any workplace application intervention.
- ✓ The importance of data for decision-making was a justifiable argument for the budget increase in Samburu County, Kenya.
- ✓ Health commodities tracking tool improves reporting rates and informs decisions around commodity management in Siaya County, Kenya.

STAFF DEMONSTRATE STANDOUT LEADERSHIP QUALITIES

- ✓ Trained staff have demonstrated improved communication skills — using positive language, receiving feedback from clients and other staff, and relating with other stakeholders.
- ✓ Pursuit of customer satisfaction and client collaboration.
- ✓ Effective and routine reporting to evaluate performance; and to monitor stock out and products at risk.
- ✓ Active follow-up of the management aided faster decision-making.
- ✓ Improvement in planning - attending to identified needs and pursuing success.
- ✓ Relying on team members and ability to resolve and manage conflict.