

MEMS NEWSLETTER

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A forum for sharing progress on the on-going MEMS activities and other related professional matters between MEMS and Participating Health Facilities
(Issued by the Mission for Essential Medical Supplies - MEMS)

Dear reader,

First and foremost, we do apologize for not issuing our newsletter on time. This is largely due to changes in staffing at MEMS, but as days pass by, we will try our level best to release the issues on time.

Our last issue was released in September 2004, since then a lot has happened within MEMS, PHF's and Prime Vendor.

Changes in MEMS Staff Members

In March 2005, two Pharmacists were recruited by MEMS. Roman Mallya who was working with MoH in Mtwara Zonal Training Centre and Peace Nyankoko who was working with a private pharmacy in Arusha. We welcome them on board.

Mavere Tukai, who was a Pharmaceutical Advisor for a year and a half, is no longer with MEMS since April 2005. We do send our sincere gratitude for his inputs and contributions and we wish him the very best in his career.

Enrolling of new 5 hospitals – 2nd Phase

We are very delighted to let you know that we have enrolled 5 new hospitals to the project and this shows how the project is progressing. The hospitals are: Matema (Kyela-Mbeya), Itete (Tukuyu-Mbeya), Ngoyoni (Rombo-Kilimanjaro), St.Raphael (Korogwe-Tanga) and Ndala (Nzega-Tabora). The needs assessment of drugs and supplies for these hospitals was conducted in Nov-Dec 2004. A two days workshop was conducted in March 2005 between the new hospitals and MEMS whereby different agenda were discussed including the signing of MoU.

MEMS involvement in different meetings

Various meetings were conducted between MEMS and their stakeholders to get to know the updates/progress of the project. In April 2005, ELCT/MEMS, MSH and CA had a 3-days meeting whereby the main agenda was to make a follow up and get to know how far the prime vendor has reached with the supplying system. In this meeting it was observed that the distribution system of drugs and

medical supplies using DHL was more reliable and it was possible for MEMS staff to track facility consignments.

A meeting with 'Traditional Partners' was held in June 2005; where by the main agenda was to have an overview of the projects under the Managed Health Care Program. Representatives from ELCT, ELCA, Dan Mission, DMCDD, and Church of Sweden Mission were present.

Computer Training

This training was organised by MEMS for the 2nd phase PHFs. Two staff members (pharmaceutical personnel and hospital administrator) attended a two-weeks course on basic computer skills and Internet/Email communication; Arion Computer Expertise Co. based in Arusha won the tender and was contracted to conduct the training in two batches of five (5) people each. At the end of the training, MEMS expect that the knowledge gained will be utilised extensively for day-to-day pharmaceutical activities including stock control and electronic ordering using VSAT communication.



Some staff members from the 2nd phase PHFs' attending computer training, to the extreme right is the Project Manager, Orgenes Lema.

Baseline Survey for Rational Drug Use conducted in April – May 2005

One of the MEMS' operational activities includes promoting rational drug use at the health facility levels. Baseline survey was carried out to assess the magnitude of the problem of irrational use of drugs in MEMS project sites. The survey was carried out by consultants from Muhimbili University College of Health Sciences (MUCHS) and the former Pharmaceutical Consultant of ELCT. The tools for the survey were prepared for the following indicators:

1. Health Facility Indicators
2. Prescribing Indicators
3. Patient Care Indicators
4. Financial Indicators
5. Adherence to Standard Treatment Guidelines

Pre-testing of tools were done in two hospitals near Arusha (Nkoaranga and St. Elizabeth) and thereafter, two teams were sent for data collection in 8 other hospitals. Preliminary results of the baseline survey were discussed during the annual meeting with facilities. A final report on the baseline survey is being prepared by the contracted consultants.

IT Consultancy

MEMS staff requested Danida to support consultancy to assess MEMS IT set up. This report was made in consideration of frequent breakdown of communication system established in the facilities by MEMS. The request was also made to examine modalities for data transfer between facilities, MEMS and the Prime Vendor. The Consultants were also requested to examine the management software currently being used at MEMS for tracking facility orders, deliveries from Prime Vendor and MEMS invoices to facilities.

SEAM Conference

Two MEMS staff participated in the Conference held in Accra Ghana on Strategies for Enhancing Access to Medicines (SEAM) from 20th – 22nd June 2005. MEMS staff made an oral presentation on the experiences gained while monitoring the performance of Prime Vendor from November 2004. During the Conference, MEMS staff also learnt from other countries which have implemented pool procurement strategy. One of the key findings from other countries indicate that pre-qualification of the vendor and pool procurement may contribute to prices reduction by up to 25%. The SEAM conference proceedings may be read from the website <http://www.msh.org/seam/conference>

Annual meeting

MEMS staff conducted a three-day annual meeting from 28th – 30th June 2005. Seventeen hospitals participating in MEMS project were represented. During the meeting MEMS project progress was discussed with facilities. The hospital staff also provided very useful feedback on MEMS strengths and weaknesses. Issues related with Prime Vendor performances were discussed. New prices were introduced to the participants. Preliminary results of the baseline survey on rational use of drugs were also presented and discussed.

New prices

MEMS contract with the Prime Vendor allows adjustment of prices of items once a year. Prices are likely to increase due to increase in fuel prices and dollar exchange rates. Negotiation between MEMS and the Prime Vendor on prices adjustments are still ongoing. MEMS staffs are doing their best to keep the Prime Vendor prices within reasonable level compared to MSD and private wholesalers in the country. Final prices for some items have not yet been agreed. New Price list shall be communicated once all items' prices have been finalized.

Donation of lab supplies

MEMS continue to develop from the original set up whereby lab reagents were stocked and sold (to facilities), to an intermediary organisation coordinating orders from facilities to the Prime Vendor. Some of the laboratory items that were stocked by MEMS were taken over by the Prime Vendor. Others were offered to the Church facilities at a reduced price. The remaining items were donated to MEMS project sites equitably based on the request of the facilities and rate of consumption.

Big thanks for your payments

We have been a key coordinator of all sorts of payments from drugs and medical supplies to monthly Internet subscription fees. Admitted it has not always been very smooth ride, all factors considered; but, together we have covered distances that we can now look back at and use a platform from which to make the next leap. We thank you all for your continued support.

MEMS products, Yes! They are the best! They always meet TFDA requirements. However, if not satisfied with our products, your money will be fully credited and detailed statement of account will be sent to you. Replacement of returned products will be made ASAP.

Cash as method of payment! No! Emphasize is on cheque or Telegraphic Transfer. We accept advance payment too. Coordination of Donors' fund is done with great care, kindly ask your donors to deposit funds for drugs with us. A statement of account will be issued to both of you.

Challenges Yes! – We are in a process of having a one year Business Plan that will see MEMS customers double before the end of year 2006. It means we need to double our efforts too. Let's be serious players, work as a team, and believe us! We will be the winners!!

Changes and Improvements Yes! – The year 2005 has been more challenging, you know why? - More hospitals have joined MEMS, and still we need to overcome all problems faced in our first ten (10) months of operation. We need to move fast and looking in many directions at once, today's world is no longer predictable and orderly as it was to be.

Please rest assured that, we would endeavour to maintain the most transparent accounting system with you all. Kindly let us hear from you yet again, particular on what you are going to receive from us. Be open and honest! We know that, you know, you can make a difference, join our ride and let's move beyond the future together!!

From the MEMS Calendar

Date/Month	Activity
September 2005	Training of MEMS staff on drug Quality Control testing using German Pharma Health Fund Minilab.
October 2005	Needs assessment of 8 new facilities. Support supervision to MEMS sites.
November 2005	Signing of MOU with the new facilities. VSAT installation to the new sites. Identify collection points.
December 2005	Finalization of new hospitals first order.

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