

Financing project takes affordable medicine to rural pharmacies

For many people, especially in remote areas, pharmacies are the first point of contact for primary healthcare. However in many instances, poor business skills or lack of capital can keep them from meeting the needs of the local community.

So the public and private sector have put their heads together to come up with a financing model that will strengthen independent, community pharmacies in under-served areas, and provide access to quality, life-saving medicines to those who need it most.



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Lulama is a comprehensive and sustainable community pharmacy development project that combines the skills, systems and processes of the private sector, with the development support of the public sector. It is supported by Absa Bank, Aspen Pharmacare, GlaxoSmithKline (GSK), Imperial Health Sciences, Pfizer and the US Agency for International Development (USAID)

A pilot project for Lulama was launched in South Africa in September with 30 pharmacies shortlisted to participate in the initial phase.

"Ensuring access to quality medicines in under-served areas has been one of the most difficult bottlenecks to overcome in global health", says Ariel Pablos-Mendez, assistant administrator for Global Health at USAID. "This innovative financing

partnership offers us the chance to overcome this barrier using a sustainable, market-based approach, and demonstrate that the public and private sectors can effectively work together to achieve social impact."

By providing pharmacies with working capital, access to an affordable product bundle of high quality medicines and consumer goods, as well as training in business and logistics management, Lulama will encourage the development and improve the sustainability of small pharmacies in under-served areas to improve health outcomes.

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