Strengthen Health Systems Response to Health Emergencies in Colombia

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Context

Colombia entered its first case of COVID-19 on March 13, 2020. By April, the government declared a state of emergency and allocated financial, policy, and social measures to support the implementation of a national strategy to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the spread of COVID-19, the Ministry of Health (MOH) requested technical support and funding from the Local Health System Sustainability (LHSS) Project, a USAID-funded initiative of the Colombian government in Colombia, to support the Colombian government’s response to COVID-19 by engaging in health systems strengthening and cross-sectional implementation and coordination. At the community level, policy decision makers received documentation and data analysis on communicable disease surveillance and operational action plans on COVID-19 and other serious acute respiratory infections. LHSS Colombia supported the design and implementation of rapid response teams (RRTs) and the development of the strategic and operational plans for COVID-19-related activities. The RRTs were conceptualized at Colombia’s national health system level for implementation at the sub-national level and focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The RRTs were conceived at Colombia’s national health system level for implementation at the sub-national level and focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. The RRTs were developed to provide technical assistance, quality assurance, and human resource training to develop capabilities at an individual- and community-level. By engaging in health systems strengthening and cross-sectional implementation and coordination, LHSS Colombia provided technical and financial support to the Colombian health system to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activity Description

LHSS Colombia, in June 2020, began supporting the country’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Its major activity was to strengthen health systems to respond to and improve health outcomes, including the COVID-19 pandemic by training and resourcing stakeholders in Colombia. LHSS Colombia supported the design and implementation of the RRTs to provide technical assistance, quality assurance, and human resource training to develop capabilities at an individual- and community-level. By engaging in health systems strengthening and cross-sectional implementation and coordination, LHSS Colombia provided technical and financial support to the Colombian health system to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Activity Impact

Development of the RRTs in Colombia was critical to build the national capacity to manage the COVID-19 pandemic, which required a coordinated and interdisciplinary approach involving stakeholders across the health sector. LHSS Colombia supported the MOH by providing technical assistance, quality assurance, and human resource training to develop capabilities at an individual- and community-level. By engaging in health systems strengthening and cross-sectional implementation and coordination, LHSS Colombia provided technical and financial support to the Colombian health system to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Evidence

The work led to a total of 103 activities completed by LHSS Colombia, resulting in the strengthening of health systems, including the development of the RRTs. The RRTs were developed to provide technical assistance, quality assurance, and human resource training to develop capabilities at an individual- and community-level. By engaging in health systems strengthening and cross-sectional implementation and coordination, LHSS Colombia provided technical and financial support to the Colombian health system to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Facilitators

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Lessons Learned

The deployment of RRT 1.0 and 2.0 has been one of the most significant learning opportunities, if not the most, for LHSS Colombia. This experience and the specific technical and training modules on how to effectively allocate and use human resources, efficiently organize and coordinate data activities, and adapt and scale the RRTs to reach underserved populations are important for the future of health systems in Colombia and other countries. The RRTs were developed to provide technical assistance, quality assurance, and human resource training to develop capabilities at an individual- and community-level. By engaging in health systems strengthening and cross-sectional implementation and coordination, LHSS Colombia provided technical and financial support to the Colombian health system to strengthen its response to the COVID-19 pandemic.