

# Assessing the Contribution of Civil Society in Advocacy and Social Accountability for Sustainable Community Health Programs: Learnings from Guinea

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## CONTEXT

Launched in 2018, **Guinea's National Community Health Policy** aims to improve community health outcomes through services covering malaria, maternal and child health, and family planning.

In Guinea, the Accelerator's technical assistance package prioritized **strengthening leadership, governance and planning, securing financing, and employing adaptive learning for decision-making**.

The Accelerator focused on **supporting existing health strategies** while emphasizing the incorporation of Community Health Workers (CHWs) into Guinea's public service.

## OBJECTIVES

**Purpose:** This learning activity aims to assess the influence of strengthening civil society's capacity in advocacy and accountability on sustainable community health programming in Guinea.

**Assumption:** The underlying assumption is that by enhancing civil society's role in advocating for improved community health policies and holding stakeholders accountable, the foundations will be laid for a stronger and more efficient community health system.

**Outcome:** Key learnings from this assessment should inform future interventions and policies to improve community health in Guinea and similar contexts.

## METHODS

**Data Collection:** We conducted qualitative, semi-structured key informant interviews. A total of fifteen interviews were conducted to gather diverse perspectives from stakeholders (central-level and local administrative authorities and civil society organizations [CSOs]) within the Guinean health system.

**Data Analysis:** The qualitative data was analyzed through thematic analysis. We used an inductive approach to identify recurring patterns and themes that emerged from the interviews.

## LEARNINGS

### Learning 1: Advocacy process catalyzed CSO empowerment and unity

The Accelerator project unified Guinean CSOs to strengthen their advocacy efforts for integrating (recruitment and payment) CHWs as civil servants. Through stakeholder engagement, capacity building, and technical guidance, the project empowered CSOs to lobby for legislative change, adopting Law L0017 effectively.

### Learning 2: CSOs played a crucial role in helping different stakeholders understand and accept their roles and responsibilities in community health

The adoption of Law L0017, integrating CHWs as civil servants in Guinea, was driven by CSOs' proactive engagement and advocacy. With the Accelerator's support, CSOs convinced critical stakeholders of their essential role in advancing community health. This led to widespread backing for the law and a sustainable financing mechanism.

### Learning 3: Civil society advocacy improved good governance through better coordination (DNSCMT & MATD)

Through CSOs' advocacy efforts, central-level entities like Direction Nationale de la Santé Communautaire et de la Médecine Traditionnelle (Directorate of Community Health and Traditional Medicine [DNSCMT]) and Ministère de l'Administration du Territoire et de la Décentralisation (Ministry of Territories and Decentralization [MATD]) now collaborate closely, exemplified by regular strategic meetings. This shift, driven by Accelerator-trained CSOs, redefined community health governance in Guinea, fostering a collaborative approach to health initiatives.

### Learning 4: The success of advocacy efforts has strengthened trust and collaboration between civil society and government

CSOs' advocacy has transformed their perception from state opposition to indispensable allies in Guinea's community health governance. Their successful initiatives, recognized by government officials, have fostered trust and collaboration, exemplified by their inclusion in the financial mechanism committee for Law L0017. CSOs are now considered integral partners in policy development and implementation in Guinea's community health sphere.

## NEXT STEPS

### Coordinate civil society efforts for the following sustainable financing outcomes

- ASC/RECO salaries are covered by domestic sources
- Transfer state funds allocated to financing community health to local authorities
- Strengthen the capacity of local authorities to mobilize domestic resources from the private sector
- One Plan, One M&E, One Budget: Harmonize partner and donor community health financing