The secret for low and middle-income countries supply chain systems journey towards self-reliance: roles of the supply chain professional associations and federations

By

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Authors Bios

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Certified Lean Supply Chain Leader and Health Systems Strengthening Specialist, Ricardo has seventeen years of experience in many different fields of management, procurement, logistics and supply chain management and governance with ten years have been spent in health supply chain and logistics and research management; and five years in managing different health and governance projects. Ricardo has extensive experience managing different key building blocks of Health System Strengthening (HSS) projects. Expert in pharmaceuticals economics and policies analysis, he will be soon the author of the Book: "Logistics for development: contribution to the acceleration of the SDGs achievement". Founder and Executive Director of Beninese Professional Logisticians Association (AsLoB) for ten years, he represents AsLoB in the International Public Health Logisticians Association (IAPHL) Advisory Committee. He is a key observer for People that Deliver (Ptd) board, and one of the key Francophone African leaders and experts in the strategic supply chain organizational development and human resources capacity building. He has recently been elected the President of African Logisticians Associations Federation (ALAF) for the coming three years.

Herman Bonou – Business Developer & Analyst

Herman is a young administrator that has accumulated more than five (05) year in the business environment. From Marketing Management to Supply Chain Management experiences, he participated to Project Design and Research Design activities as well as Business Analytics intended to provide insight and pathways to competitive advantage, using Enterprise Resource Planning or other Information System tools. He is presently a contractor for the Platform of Private Sanitary Sector jointly with Ministry of Health of Benin on the Young Logisticians Professional Program which is designed in Benin to enhance Supply Chain visibility through a better LMIS capacity development and governance from community level upwards. He has been elected in 2018 to be the Deputy Executive Director of AsLoB, a position from which he is constantly collaborating with stakeholders and donors in the Health Supply Chain, especially the MoH and others partners at national and international levels. Being the Lead for Project Development & Training, he also moderate the IAPHL Benin Country Chapter.
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Abstract

Development in any sector at country or community level depends on quantity and quality of interventions in that sector. However, sustainable interventions can only be achieved where there is a strong commitment, good governance and capacity to achieve the commitment. In low and middle-income countries, sustainability and self-reliance have always been considerable issues as countries still strongly depend on foreign assistance. In the health sector, health supply chain that provides lifesaving commodities to the communities is critical for the success of the health programs. Efficient supply chain by eliminating waste and producing results can reduce this dependence and create sustainability. For this purpose, government and the private sector including civil society / professional association need to collaborate to establish efficient supply chain to make f commodities available at grass root level on a sustained basis. They can work together to promote, good governance and strengthen human resource capacity especially by engaging youth. This paper discusses how the Association of Beninese Logisticians (AsLoB) represents such a model and is being replicated at national and international levels.

In Benin, since more than ten years, AsLoB has been helping improve the supply chain. The organizational structure of AsLoB as well as its overall strategy promotes a dynamic governance and human resources capacity building approaches that are proven to be effective. One of the most innovative approach is the Young Logisticians Professional Program (YLPP). The Young Professionals Program (YPP) is a new paradigm that helps enable the youth, especially the young graduates to contribute to their respective communities. This new way of connecting the youth to different professions proved to be effective and has been adopted by different international organizations. In addition, AsLoB has developed and used innovative nonprofit organizational management structure as well as ten years strategic plan that is based different strategies for motivating various target groups and monitoring of task and performances. AsLoB’s business model has helped overcome a number of challenges faced by any non-profit organization. Thus, and the association has become key board member of the Health Private Sector Federation (PSSP) at country level and for PtD and International Association of the
Public Health Logisticians (IAPHL) at international level. In addition AsLoB is today the President of both West Africa Logisticians Associations Federation (WALAF) and African Logisticians Associations Federation (ALAF). This model is expected to impact other countries through the new strong theory of change 3E (Engage national and regional professional association / federation with the private sector platforms / federation in every vital sector at both national and regional levels to improve supply chain performance through network and capacity building – Engage Public sector with the private sector platform in every industry to promote together qualified, accredited, connected supply chain professional by both government and professional association – Engage International organizations to support south to south experiences exchanges through the supply chain professional associations / federations network and partnership with the north ones) and different management tools that were developed.
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABMS</td>
<td>Association Béninoise pour le Marketing Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABPF</td>
<td>Association Béninoise pour la Planification Familiale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACPB</td>
<td>Association des Cliniques Privées du Bénin</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGSM</td>
<td>Espace Géographique et Société Marocaine</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALAF</td>
<td>African Logisticians Associations Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASA</td>
<td>Association des Sociétés d’Assurance du Bénin</td>
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<tr>
<td>AsLoB</td>
<td>Association des Logisticiens Béninois (« Association of Beninese Logisticians »)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAME</td>
<td>Centrale d’Achat des Médicaments Essentiels et Génériques du Bénin</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHMP</td>
<td>Centre Humanitaire des Métiers Pharmaceutiques</td>
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<tr>
<td>DSME</td>
<td>Direction de la Sante de la Mere et de l’Enfant</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPPF</td>
<td>International Planned Parenthood Federation</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRSP</td>
<td>Institut Régional de Santé Public (« Regional Institut of Public Health »)</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMIS</td>
<td>Logistics Management Information System</td>
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<td>PNLP</td>
<td>Programme Nationale de Lutte contre le Paludisme</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPP</td>
<td>Public-Private Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSI</td>
<td>Population Services International</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSSP</td>
<td>Health Private Sector Federation of Benin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PtD</td>
<td>People That Deliver</td>
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<tr>
<td>PSA</td>
<td>Pharmaceutical Services Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>MoH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC</td>
<td>Supply Chain</td>
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<tr>
<td>SCM</td>
<td>Supply Chain Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWEDD</td>
<td>Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>The United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund</td>
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</table>
UNFPA  United Nations Population Fund
USAID  U.S. Agency for International Development
WALAF  West African Logisticians Associations Federation
YLPP   Young Logisticians Professional Program
**Background**

AsLoB envisions “... a world where populations have access to vital products (goods and/or services) of quality, delivered by effective and durable supply chains which are managed by qualified, engaged and connected professionals.” This vision is supported by the Government through the Ministry of Health (MoH) and by the private sector represented by the Health Private Sector Federation (PSSP) as shown by the *Figure 1*. This chart describes a model of different institutions working together to realize the vision of AsLoB in Benin. In fact PSSP is a federation of all type of private institutions that works and advocate towards health, including AsLoB, assurance companies association (ASA), social marketing organizations affiliated to IPPF (ABPF) and PSI (ABMS), private clinics association (ACPB), medical equipment and supplies companies association, pharmacists association, physicians association, nurses association, faith-based hospitals association,... that work and advocate towards health. A Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement between PSSP and the MoH has been signed and both commit to work together in order to contribute to solving health issues including supply chain system. So PSSP uses AsLoB capacity and governance structure to work toward the fulfilment of its commitments related to supply chain issues solving along with the MOH representatives such as pharmaceutical regulatory department, health programs,...by influencing as well their capacity and governance to work towards the commitments made by the MoH.
Governance and capacity building interact in a reinforcing loop in such a way that good governance provides a good environment for capacity development, especially when consideration structural regulations in the health supply chain (including how different parties collaborate at national level and also operational processes and procedures) and interventions to improve capacity. While capacity improves downwards, governance improves as well upwards, that is from community levels to central level and national level. To be able to develop the appropriate capacity to fulfil the PSSP commitment, since 10 years, AsLoB has developed a theory of sustainable change (Figure 2) centered on human resources for supply chain (HR4SC) capacity in leadership and management as well as supply chain system governance that guide both its organizational culture and interventions. The importance of HR4SC has been acknowledged by many international organizations and initiatives. The most known is PtD in which AsLoB
participate as Board of Directors member. PtD works with key stakeholders and organizations in the industry and has set a universal and stepped approach for HR4SCM.

![Supply Chain system strengthening ToC by AsLoB](image)

*Figure 2: Supply Chain system strengthening ToC by AsLoB*
Likewise, according to the system strengthening approach by UNICEF, people are in the center of the six building blocks of health systems.

![Figure 3: UNICEF: Building blocks of the Health System](image)

To this end, AsLoB has developed a range of tools to drive both its internal organization and external interventions. These tools were the results of a learning process since the creation of the association and through its experiences and challenges.

The following sections describe the organizational structure and strategy of AsLoB, its accomplishment and highlights its innovative Young Logisticians Professional Program (YLPP).
1. Logistics Professional Association Contributing to sustainability and self-reliance in Benin: A business model for Africa?

AsLoB has a high integrated organizational structure that evolves bottom up. As mentioned before, this section gives the organizational structures and strategies of AsLoB.

1.1. Organization

It describes the organizational structure of AsLoB.

1.1.1. Structure

AsLoB organization structure is described in its constitution and rules. This shows how each entity within the organization operates and is ruled, and how different blocks work together. Generally there are five (05) Directions that work under the Executive Direction and the Board of Directors. The General assembly is the supreme and strategic decision entity and monitors the whole organization through the Auditing Council. Thematic commissions are opened to members to join, and bear the association’s vision in its main sectors: health, agriculture, environment, education and transportation. It is important to highlight the innovation and the importance of integration in managing these different sectors at country or global level to contribute accelerating the achievement of the SDGs. In fact, each of the vital sectors generates flows and impact each other in a dynamic way and so supply chains in these sectors need to be managed with a holistic view in order to drive sustainability and reinforce self-reliance at country or global level in order to accelerate achievement of the SDG.
1.1.2. Constitution and Rules

Useful links

STANDARD CONSTITUTION & RULES OF LOGISTICIANS
PROFESSIONNAL ASSOCIATION (French)

ALAF Constitution and Rules (English version)
The constitution and rules are complemented by standard operating procedures that can be accessed through the below link:

SOPs OF AsLoB, 2011 (French)

The Constitution and Rules of AsLoB is a document that describe how each entity within the organization operates and is ruled, and how different blocks work together. The document is composed of two parts. The first part sets out the constitution dispositions which consist of four components as follow:

- The organization establishment provisions
- The membership and loss of membership quality provisions
- The Organization and functioning provisions
- The patrimony provisions

The second part outlines the detailed rules that foster the constitutions provisions implementation and compliance. It is composed of five components such as:

- Generalities provisions
- Membership and loss of membership quality provisions
- Organization structure functioning provisions
- Resources and means provisions
- Final provisions

AsLoB’s Procedures Manual for Program Implementation is the result of teamwork. It is a tool adapted to the organization, truly operational, exploitable by all concerned agents and easy updating. It takes into account the following main orientations:

- Increased efficiency in the execution of tasks
In modern organizations, the formalization of procedures is proving to be one of the main axes of the quality approach. It allows the use of a single framework for relations with all stakeholders, allows comparison and continuous refinement of AsLoB actions and stakeholders. Thus, it allows the gradual elimination of recurring weaknesses and is a factor of permanence in the regularity of treatment of transactions;

- Guarantee of continuity in the smooth running of AsLoB

The SOPs represents a capitalization of technical know-how and implementation experiences, for both organizational and didactic purposes. True memory of the organization, it stands out as the best tool for rapid training and, as such, provides a guarantee of continuity during staff changes;

- Management tool

The procedures are part of the institution's information and management system. As such, they make it possible to communicate, in the form of accessible documents, the rules and methods applicable in the association. The division of roles and the relationships between services are clarified. The arbitration actions expected of the management are therefore fewer;

- Essential control instrument:

The absence of written procedures makes internal control difficult, non-transparent and random. The procedures therefore appear as a common commitment, and form a basis of control acceptable to all;

- Training of employees
The procedures serve as a starting point for training staff in the integration phase. They simplify the task of management by establishing dialogue assistance within the Association.

It is the reference tool for each AsLoB agent in the performance of his duties, particularly as regards the implementation of programs.

The purpose of the Program Implementation Procedures Manual is to formalize the main principles and rules that govern the implementation of programs in AsLoB’s areas of competence. It describes the system of execution of the programs, through the definition of the different procedures.

In summary, the implementation of the administrative, accounting and financial procedures meets the following objectives:

- describe in detail the respective tasks to be performed at administrative, accounting and financial levels;

- ensure the fluidity, reliability and control of administrative, accounting, financial and technical operations;

- ensure compliance with the rules and procedures in force;

- make reliable the information produced by the association;

- improve agents' productivity by providing them with a reference document;

- improve the management of human, material and financial resources;

- improve the internal control system.
1.2. The strategic plan

Useful links

**STRATEGIC PLAN OF AsLoB 2010-2020 (French)**

The strategic plan document takes into account the internal values, result framework / theory of change, strategic objectives and activities, targeted populations and priority vital sectors, all linked to AsLoB vision and missions. In order to achieve its vision, AsLoB has defined four (04) different target groups and related impacts as following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target group</th>
<th>Targeted Impact</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target group 1:</strong> Businesses and public and private administrations</td>
<td><strong>Targeted Impact 1:</strong> Businesses and public and private administrations are well informed about AsLoB and refer to AsLoB for its expertise. They recruit trained human resources in Supply Chain &amp; Logistics and job roles/positions related to Logistics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target group 2:</strong> Organizations (Training centers/institutions, Donors, research centers, other organizations)</td>
<td><strong>Targeted Impact 2:</strong> Donors provide sustainable financial support. Logistics training centers improve the quality of their curriculum and have a good collaboration with AsLoB. Research centers include AsLoB in research activities related to Logistics. Other organizations partner with AsLoB.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target group 3:</strong> Students in Supply Chain &amp; Logistics</td>
<td><strong>Targeted Impact 3:</strong> Students massively participate in trainings initiated by AsLoB. They also adhere to the association and its networks.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Target group 4: Researchers and Professionals in Supply Chain & Logistics

Targeted impact 4: Researchers and professionals win other members to the network and regularly participate in the activities of the network and the association. They actively work to consolidate the network. The network also contributes to the improvement of logistics techniques within organizations.

Table 1: AsLoB’s focus groups and desired impacts

Consequently, focus strategies are developed and implemented for each group. Considering the Target group 3 for instance which is composed of students in Supply Chain & Logistics, couple of strategies are designed to promote professional insertion, experience acquisition and academic success. The details can be seen on the Figure 5 as well as in the YLPP section below.

Figure 5: AsLoB’s Strategy toward Students in SCM
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The benefits and dynamic relationship of the target groups are show below.

![Diagram showing dynamics between AsLoB’s focus groups](image)

*Figure 6: Dynamics between AsLoB’s focus groups*

As mentioned before, a set of tools exist in the association and are implemented strategically or operationally along the organization’s structure to impact positively different target groups. These tools describe the way the organization operates in order to promote governance and capacity building in supply chains and in a sustainable fashion.
1.2.1. The task and performance matrix

Useful links

**USER GUIDE FOR THE TASK AND PERFORMANCE MATRIX (French)**

**TEMPLATE OF TASK MATRIX (French)**

**PERFORMANCE MONITORING TOOL (French)**

The first tool called task and performance matrix is the tool that serves to implement the second motivation plan tool and ensure transparency, motivation and accountability within the organization that are critical for self-reliance. The task and performance matrix is composed of tasks that are assigned to the Executive Direction and the Operational team, and by a performance chart. Tasks are assigned weekly and performance as well is check weekly. Performance is based on four (04) components / indicators:

- Weekly tasks fulfilled rate (assessed using Boolean matrix process, one if all task successfully completed otherwise zero);
- Communication responsiveness (all communication received should be replied within 24 hours);
- Attendance to meetings on time;
- Membership fees and financial contribution to the activity budget.

The Executive Direction reviews weekly, monthly and annually and the General Assembly would decide on that basis if member’s leadership roles will be extended.
or not. A mark of 80 % is required. Same assessment periods and grade for members in the Operational team, but the Executive Direction is the one authorized to maintain or not any member of the team. However, the task and performance matrix is more an opportunity to members than any instrument of pressure. Indeed, the matrix is designed to serve as a basis to motivate best members.

1.2.2. The motivation plan

Useful links

AsLoB’s MOTIVATION PLAN (French)

The motivation ensures advantages and opportunities to members depending on the membership status. The issue is: which member should benefit from opportunities that come to the association in term of Jobs, Scholarships, Consultation, Conference participation etc… People are selected using the performance matrix. Thus, the task and performance matrix enables the motivation plan for members and constitutes rather a source of motivation than a source of pressure. Furthermore, members are strongly motivated to actively seek for opportunities for the association in order to participate in the management team and also be rewarded.
2. Accomplishments of AsLoB in health sector: outcomes from the organizational model

AsLoB’s organization structure focus on vital sectors as highlighted above (Figure 4). As far as health is concerned, the Association of Beninese Logisticians (AsLoB) has accomplished much progress and alongside the Ministry of Health and the private sector has raised the need of professionalizing health supply chain workers at national level and is contributing to strengthen the Benin health system.

- The association has more than 500 members mainly from Benin but also from many other countries in Africa and outside Africa.
- It has been solicited along many stakeholders to be involved in assessment and supervision activities as well as strategic decisions toward the health system in order to contribute in supply chain policy amendment, development to ensure commodity availability. In 2017, AsLoB has lead as one of the representative of the private sector alongside the MoH, USAID and other key partners the first conjoint review of the health supply chain in Benin.
- The association has organized the following year the Board of Directors Meeting of People That Deliver (PtD) in Benin and will also organize in Benin alongside the PSSP the West Africa symposium of the Private Sector Health federations in 2019. With the aim to make progress on the professionalization of Logisticians in Benin and in Africa, one of the outcomes of the PtD Boards of Directors meeting is the creation of the African Logisticians Associations Federation (ALAF) that is already operational and is supported by AsLoB. The vice-presidency is hold by Morocco national
association which represents North Africa, the Secretariat duties are assigned to Congo Brazzaville which represents Central Africa and the Assistant Secretariat to East Africa. The Treasury is managed by South Africa (SAPICS) which represents the Southern Africa.

Also, the Presidency of the West African Logistician Association Federation (WALAF) is directed by Benin, the Vice-presidency by Togo, the Secretariat by Burkina Faso and the Assistant Secretariat by Nigeria, and the Treasury by the Ivory Coast. The headquarters of ALAF and WALAF will be set up in Benin including an African Laboratory of Research and innovation in Logistics (LARILog). As regards to this, Benin should provide as soon as possible a land and be committed to contribute to constructing and equipping these institutions. Several partners are already available to support this project.

-Through ALAF, AsLoB provided support to the national logisticians association in Niger which was launched in 2018.

- ALAF has published in “Espace Géographique et Société Marocaine” (AGSM) its theory for change and is member of scientist committee of the Logistica event in France by July 2019.

As per PtD:

- Benin was appointed among the 5 priority countries of People That Deliver: The ultimate consequence of this is that actions will be made for the improvement of the availability of human resources in good quantity and quality, through financial and technical supports intended to strengthen commodity supply chain systems.
• As well as AsLoB, the Direction of pharmaceutical regulatory (DPMED) at the Ministry of Health in Benin become member of the Board of directors of PtD, which makes Benin the first and only French-speaking country to have two seats out of 24 in the Board. This is a unique and exceptional performance.

Several partnerships have also been concluded:
• The meeting also provided opportunities to sign educational and training agreements. Thus, in partnership with AsLoB, the Regional Institute of Public health (IRSP) as well as the LOGIVAC Center and the international university Empower Health will launch for their next academic year an English Master of Health Supply Chain, Leadership Management and Governance.
• Through AsLoB, Benin has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the international university Empower Health. Other agreements are ongoing for the design of short online or in-person management courses related to Health Supply Chain, Agricultural Supply chain, Educational Logistics and Environmental Logistics. These courses would be designed both in English and French.
• Another agreement has been signed with Empower Health to launch online courses for practical skills in Supply Chain Management and Logistics in order to facilitate employability of graduated students and professionals as well. Additionally, trainings will be designed in self-employment and professional development. Therefore, training, coaching and mentoring programs will be launched online.
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- Benin has signed through AsLoB two (02) agreements, respectively with the “Centre Humanitaire des Métiers Pharmaceutiques” (CHMP) which has its headquarters in Clermont Ferrand in France, and with the institute Pharmaceutical Services in Africa (PSA), in order to support Benin in system strengthening, politics improvement, regulations and pharmaceutical strategies improvement, and thus contribute to fighting illegal medicine supply in Benin and Africa.

In Benin, AsLoB has partnered with the Regional Institute for Public Health (IRSP) to promote Supply Chain and Logistics training and get students registered.

All these achievements have built AsLoB’s institutional capacity and nurtured its relationship with different stakeholders which are its targeted groups highlighted above in the strategy document. These are: International organizations, research firms, health and decentralized administrative authorities, professional and students, private sectors organizations. This real impact enhanced the development of the Young Logician Professional Program (YLPP) through a unique and innovative partnership model which brings together international organizations, private sector organizations, MoH and local government authorities like mayors and regions governors.
3. The Young Logisticians Professional Program (YLPP): a self-reliance based approach to solve supply chain problems in Benin

At the beginning AsLoB was managed only by professionals who usually can’t find time to devote to the organization management, development and its missions implementation. After having failed over many years, AsLoB initiated an operational team by embedding young people under the management team. Therefore new members start by entering the Operational Team and/or one of the thematic commissions. This strategy was designed to actively captivate new and young members and get them involved as they encounter reality about the Supply Chain sector in the country and have practical tasks according to ongoing projects or daily operations. This represents genuine professional experience. The operational team is particularly an opportunity for students or recent graduates to learn and have professional experience. The team is composed of members from different directions and work along with a weekly tasks matrix. Outstanding members from the Operational team are likely to become heads of the Directions or leaders. AsLoB believes that building the capacity of the young supply chain graduates or professionals from learning by practicing is the best way to make good leaders for supply chains in Benin and Africa as they would work in real environment and would be accustomed to reality and challenges from the field. They would also deeply learn how the health system is designed and how different actors and stakeholders cooperate within the country and at a global level. So AsLoB’s members’ capacity and leadership is strengthened with almost no cost. As these members become next leaders, whether within or outside the association, they are well prepared to manage the health supply chain with the very best
governance practices that would have a positive impact even at country level. How do we distinguish outstanding members? The task and performance matrix is the tool that serves to that end to ensure transparency, motivation and accountability within the organization that are critical for self-reliance.

In the same perspective and to continue helping PSSP to fulfil its commitments in effective way, AsLoB has initiated and developed YLPP.

The YLPP is an innovative and disruptive program managed by PSSP alongside the MoH and supported by the USAID and UNFPA. It aims to enhance Logisticians’ roles and ensure the availability of health commodities by mitigating stockouts and wastes. The program approach is focused in the implication and accountability of decentralized institutions and the systematic management of the Logistics Management Information System (LMIS) which means available quality data.

The Young Professionals Program (YPP) is a new paradigm that helps enable the youth, especially the young graduates to contribute to their respective communities. This new way of connecting the youth to different professions proved to be effective and has been adopted by different organizations, inter alia: UN in general, UNESCO, World Bank, African Development Bank, MSH (Management Sciences for Health) and it was successful in various countries like Rwanda where the development success and social changes were driven by young professionals. In Rwanda, this model was vulgarized in different sectors: governance, corporate finance, banking, IT (Information Technology), health and supply chain.

The Young Logisticians have the following duties:

1. Support the health facilities report the logistic related data
2. Support the health facilities in store management and planning
3. Assist health facilities in quantification of needs on a regular basis and in a very proactive manner.
4. Enhance the LMIS initiatives and help implement tools that will help regular reporting of supply chain data.
5. Serve as logistics guardians and troubleshoot any issue that is anticipated (stock out or expiries) related to tracer commodities
6. Be part of a functional network exchanging experiences and information via social media (restricted) on supply chain issues in Benin.
7. Help coordinate planned supplies and distributions collaborating with community health workers.
8. Collect any sensitive information on introduction of pharmaceutical counterfeits out of the formal channel (CAME or private sector) and report it.
9. Prepare and follow up the dashboard of supply chain key performance indicators (KPIs) on tracer commodities, and report on them on a monthly basis.
10. Report on monthly and quarterly basis on the status of activities, levels of stocks to the project coordinator and local leaders.

*Where is sustainability and self-reliance?*

The YLPP were designed by AsLoB but lead by PSSP because AsLoB is a member organization of PSSP and PSSP has a direct agreement with the MoH of Benin. Indeed, it is an important consideration and a success for Benin to have both MoH
and the private sector institutions work together to address health issues, especially health supply chain issues. The recruited young Logisticians are thus member of PSSP, especially member of AsLoB which is the logistician’s professional organization. The fact that these young people are recruited from a national association is a sustainable way to enhance SC professionalization. Furthermore, as per the motivation plan that was discussed earlier, the young logisticians would contribute to the association through opportunities that they would encounter on the field because the association is the one through which they have that job. This would strengthen the association and allow him to initiate other development actions. As far as the young logistician’s position in the health organization is concerned, they are not to replace health workers, or inventory keepers, or any person whose work is related to logistics. They would rather provide support and assistance to those persons so that stockouts and other supply chain issues are solved. While supporting people within the health Supply Chain, they would regularly present Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to authorities at decentralized level, especially communal / district administration, so that they can take actions because these authorities are accountable for the lives of their citizens whether it concerns health or environmental issues, agriculture or education etc.

The beautiful aspect about this innovation is that it comes as a gravitational axis for the supply chain both for the country and the development partners improving the collaborative supply chain, boosting health governance, leveraging financial resources and aiming at smart investments while being a game changer of supply chain landscape in Benin. It is doubtless that the relevance of this innovation comes at the right time where the health sector is being reformed and local
government authorities are being responsibilized for the performance of the quality healthcare provisions to their population which is not possible if health supply chain is performant, yet the Government of Benin will need to commit to continue this initiative in order to ensure the scalability, sustainability and long-terms social dividends.

However two sustainable economic models have been anticipated with respectively the new grant of Global Funds (GF) on the Health System Strengthening (HSS) and *The Sahel Women Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD)* Program funded by the World Bank (WB) recently launched in Benin. With GF, it is planned that the Government of Benin will launch a national recruitment of 34 logisticians to be put under the 34 districts and paid by the grant for 2 - 3 years. But they will become automatically public health agent after the grant and continue to be paid by the Government budget.

With Project SWEDD, the PPP agreement model between PSSP and MOH described above will continue to be applied. AsLoB, member of the PSSP, will establish departmental / District offices. This offices will organize in cooperative young logisticians (YL) recruited by the PSSP and allocated to every district. This cooperative of YL will supply logistics services to the health facilities and the district such as transportation from district warehouse to the health facilities to ensure commodity availability and quality healthcare. The cooperative will have as revenue services fees paid by the health facilities and district health coordination team under the MoH.
In summary these last two models will be complementary to the YLPP to ensure supply chain and logistics systems strengthening and then enhance health systems resilient toward to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

Although this program implementation is in its start up, we are excited to share in the future article the impacts on the different national health supply chain KPIs in Benin.
Conclusion

The internal structure of AsLoB is a high integrated one which creates a reinforcing loop with people, learning and capacity building processes, and different vital sectors. This structure has been built throughout years of experience in a context of constant search for self-reliance principles:

- Complete health supply chain commitments though good governance, use of the public private partnership to reduce waste and mobilize domestic resources to ensure health commodity availability where and when needed to save more lives. Through AsLoB, this commitment is shared, experimented and accepted by the Benin Ministry of Health and with the PSSP. A proof of the fruitfulness of this sustainable collaboration is the design and execution of the Young Logisticians Professional Program (YLPP) that would:

- Build government and local government entities and leaders health supply chain workers capacity. This will enhance then supply chain good governance and related human resource performance, visibility and promote a systematic management of the supply chains, leverage accountability at decentralized/community level and solve supply chain issues.

The implementation of the AsLoB strategy has also provided important partnerships at national and international level and builds its institutional capacity to influence commitments completeness towards national supply chain self-reliance. It is noted that AsLoB is member of the People that Deliver Initiative’s Board of Directors alongside the MoH of Benin. It has also partnerships with renowned institutions worldwide. The aim of AsLoB by supporting the establishment of the African Logisticians Associations Federation
(ALAF) is to share and implement this structure and the theory of change developed and experimented in Africa developing countries. Authors believe that the country journey towards self-reliance in supply chain can draw lessons from AsLoB business organization model and the following principles learnt over the last ten years of experiences:

- Donors should use current foreign funding to support the national and sub-regional supply chain professional association and federation to enable its capacity and ability to work with the government, civil society, and the private sector, to plan, finance, and implement solutions to solve its own supply chains challenges,

- Donors should build on the existing supply chain professional organization initiative experiences to quickly accelerate country journey toward self-reliance and avoid duplication,

- National association and sub-regional federation should comply with the local and group constitutions, rules, group practices to ensure South to South collaboration in partnership with the North organizations and initiatives. This will enhance them to play its critical roles to impact country commitments parameters (good governance, use of the Public-Private partnership to mobilize domestic resources) to procure health commodity and strengthen supply chain systems.

However AsLoB and ALAF are wondering if it’s possible to achieve self-reliance objectives in supply chain by focusing only on a vital sector (health) or using an
integrated approach to cover all vital sectors (health, education, agriculture, environment) and related cross cutting domains like: transports and energy.

While strengthening supply chains in each sector according to the framework shown in Figure 2, integration considerations should be included because achieving performance or not in one sector would have impact on other sectors.
Key Bibliography


