

LNCT 2019 Network-wide Meeting Practitioner Perspectives Interviews: São Tomé

Solange Correia Gomes:

Well, the members participating in the network [which] is formed by the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Finance and specifically the Director of Health Care, the PAV Coordinator, a member of the Ministry of Finance responsible for the Budget and the Administrative and Financial Director of the Ministry of Health.

Cristiana Toscano:

Thank you. When was the Committee formed? What changes occurred during this period?

Solange:

The group was formed in December 2017 at the second meeting of the LNCT network to which the country was invited. It went through some changes for this year, 2019, because there were position changes and people were... those responsible were replaced and some members of the network needed to be changed as well.

Cristiana:

And Carlos Alberto da Costa, who is here with us, is the representative of the Ministry of Finance...

Solange:

Yes, yes.

Cristiana:

Could you also clarify how the formation and expression of this group facilitated the discussion and involvement of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Health in these transitional discussions?

Solange:

I'll hand over to him.

Cristiana:

Of course.

Solange:

Okay.

Carlos Alberto da Costa:

Well, given the issue of the vaccination program, financial resources should be involved and the Government itself should participate in this campaign. There was also a need to involve the Ministry of Finance, especially the planning area, which in this case is the budget, so that we can also include... have information about the vaccination campaign. This is also because... I also see this as an advantage because... Because even for us, in terms of planning in the general state budget, we also questioned the amounts that were being destined to the budget and simply wondering where these amounts came from. But as I'd already been part of the group several times, and one of those times was at the training on the planning of vaccines, I had the knowledge of how the vaccines were quantified, how the campaign was conducted and all this useful information that should be included in the general state budget. And through all of this, it is easier to raise awareness of the need, not only among the higher authorities, of the foreseeable value in the budget because we take into account the departure of associates and the Government having to assume the whole vaccination campaign by 2023, so it is extremely important to have this knowledge and added value.

Cristiana:

What are the main subjects that you address, that you bring to the discussions?

Solange:

Well, the main subject that we addressed during the... in this group... is related to the transition, the period, the transition that the country is going through right now, which started in 2018. We are already in the second year of the transition, but a transition that's gaining pace, in which the country will have to take over the vaccine bills, so the most discussed issues are really about the transition.

Cristiana:

And how do you currently think that... what are the possible changes or activities that you can do to facilitate this process?

Solange:

One of the changes we have to make now is... before, we had the CCIA which was the Committee Group... It was the Intersectoral Coordination Committee where we discussed GAVI-related issues, which has now been merged with the CCM, which is the Multisectoral Coordination Committee. Today, we will have to inform this Committee of all the procedures related to the transition so that they are in the know. And another change is that we are interacting more with the network and have a quarterly meeting of Group members to discuss the issues related to the transition in more detail.

Cristiana:

And for the other countries that are now structuring their groups and starting to organise themselves, what is the Group's recommendation for a successful, well-structured Group, for those countries?

Solange:

One of the recommendations is to be united. Be united. Meet, have regular meetings to discuss transition issues and interact! Have frequent interaction with the network to exchange ideas with other members who are also part of the transition network. Yes, and Alberto would like to add something...

Carlos:

Yes, yes. What I would like to add is that, regarding the transition, it has several phases. Some countries are in the early stages, some are already in the interim stage and some have already taken on the transition. Everything is important, to exchange experiences, and to know what the problems are through, during or after the transition. And in the case of Sao Tome, we are in an accelerated transition, we have... How can I put it? We are still gaining experience from some countries that have already... gone through this phase. And that are already taking over their...

Solange:

Independence.

Carlos:

... the buying of their vaccines. Everything is important and we have been learning a lot from exchanging experiences with other countries and so we're also calling on others to follow this example of learning from others, which facilitates this transition further.