



In Focus - SE Changemakers | Tokelo Mpatsiea

Supplies Officer - Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association (LPPA)

Supplies Officer of the Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association (LPPA) shares insight into how the organization transformed its business model into a more dynamic one and planned expansion to their social enterprise.



Tell us a bit about yourself? What inspires you to do this job?

I was born and raised in Lesotho, 25 years of age and currently working at LPPA as Supplies Officer and Project Manager of the organization's Social Enterprise (SE) initiative. I am an affiliate of the Association of Certified Chartered Accountants (ACCA) and a member of

Lesotho Institute of Accountants (LIA). I have always had a passion for accounting since back in high school and have obtained the following qualifications; Certified Accounting Technician (CAT), General Accounting (GA) and Chartered Accounting (CA).

Being a member of the Association's Resource Mobilization Team, commercialization of our pharmacy was one of the ideas that emerged while brainstorming SE initiatives and it became part of our 2021 Business Plan. As the Project Coordinator/Manager, this opportunity has given me practical experience in project management, analyzing project resources, defining resource requirements, and implementing the SE business plan to ensure that the project achieves its desired objectives. What inspires me the most is how the SE initiative supports the achievement of overall organizational goals.

Briefly tell us about a career or professional achievement which you are most proud about.

I started working as Assistant Supplies Officer, and because of hard work and dedication, I was promoted to the Supplies Officer position. Thereafter, Senior Management recognized my efforts and gave me the SE Project Manager role after our proposal was successful. I was involved in project proposal development, business plan drafting and budgeting. The progress is good and we recognize steady growth. Special thanks to the SE Hub team for the consistent support and willingness to help the Lesotho team take our SE initiative to the next level.

What is your MA's social enterprise idea or project? What are the social problems you're trying to address?

Our business model is a commercial pharmacy registered under the Ministry of Trade and the Ministry of Health as a private entity, complying with national tax obligations as per the Income Tax Act. LPPA clients and the general population access different pharmaceutical drugs, commodities and supplements. The target is to expand the idea from retail to being a national drugs distributor in the country through re-investments of profits generated by the pharmacy, since profitability is one of the key objectives of the model.

The SE contributes to expanding SRH Services to vulnerable populations.

In the absence of SRH Services, the following social problems are experienced: unplanned pregnancies among women and young girls, child marriages, exposure to HIV infection and other STIs. Situations like this cause or aggravate poverty and children may also become street kids and face many dangers.

What are your specific responsibilities with regard to your Social Enterprise(s)?

As Project Coordinator of our SE, I am responsible for the following activities/roles to ensure that the project achieves its goals and objectives and grows steadily to fund other planned SE initiatives:

- Monitoring of project budget performance and variance analysis.
- Preparation of sales analysis reports and performance of each product.
- Coordinating brainstorming sessions so that the team comes up with new ideas to ensure that the project meets set key performance indicators.
- Develop quarterly project reports.
- Organize monthly meetings for the Resource Mobilization Team and provide the Management with updates on the project and key information for informed decision making where necessary.
- Management of the project cash flow requirements.

We are also looking to on-board onto the SE Hub's online store ('planet361.com'). My duties in relation to this centre around:

- Ensuring implementation of the online store project activities as per the budget.
- Measuring value added by the online store to the social enterprise.
- Creating a strong brand image and managing the online transaction system.
- Developing a dedicated e-commerce strategy to meet the company's sales objectives.

Establishing a viable SE takes research and planning. Explain to us, in brief, the process you/your team followed.

We conducted a mini survey of clients through questionnaires relevant to expanding our pharmacy to a commercial one. All responses were positive and highlighted products they

expect to be sold. We also found that the expansion of pharmaceutical services was related to favourable patient health outcomes which included overall quality of care and patient prescription knowledge. This creates client loyalty and is part of our Customer Relationship Management Strategy.

The following factors were considered:

Environmental considerations: external factors to our SE initiative include legal and economic factors and suppliers' reliability.

Competitive advantage: Enables our pharmacy to try and perform better than our competitors. It has helped us to pursue a better cost leadership strategy (*i.e. increasing profits by reducing cost, increasing market share by charging lower prices*). Since our SE is formed under the strong brand of the Association, it has contributed to a sustainable competitive edge.

Market research: Understanding our target audience helped us to identify market opportunities and attract a loyal customer base. All of this contributed to robust marketing strategies and positively impacted our SE market growth.

What were your key learnings from the SE Hub's 2021 Internship and how has it benefitted your work?

The Internship played a key role in preparing myself and other colleagues through knowledge sharing to properly implement our SE initiative. The following key learning points also contributed positively:

Financial decision making

Recognizing how to manage and deal with unforeseen financial events is essential for every business. We learned about key elements of financial decision making; investment decisions, profitability margins and choice between equity and debt fund. This has helped us make beneficial financial decisions such as reinvesting profits back into the business, monitoring, controlling the progress and making changes where necessary, developing a variance report, and reallocating favorable cost variances to fund value-adding activities for the progress of the SE.

Performance analysis

We learned how to assess project performance and position using appropriate performance management techniques, key performance indicators (KPIs) and ratios. Also, benchmarking provides a target for action, to improve competitive position.

We have a set of KPIs linked to critical success factors, which have had a positive impact on the performance e.g., Competitiveness - Sales growth by product. This has also helped decide which areas to measure and set a target against relevant KPIs.

E-commerce

We are about to implement an E-commerce platform (on 'planet361.com') with the support of the SE Hub. The pandemic and evolving consumer needs boost e-commerce in pharmacies. It is becoming increasingly digital. Our target customers will fill out their prescriptions, over the counter medications and supplements online and get medicines delivered to their doorsteps. The platform will have the following benefits to our SE initiative: cost reduction, increased revenues, facilitate e-marketing and market penetration.

Any recent videos, books, blogs or podcasts that inspired you or have been a contributor to your success?

Reading ACCA articles and students' articles

Strategic Business Leader Text Book - Kaplan Publishing

Advance Performance Management Text Book - BPP learning Media

Social Enterprise Internship workshop (2021) learning slides

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