



Qualitative analysis of health and community organization, Maroantsetra district

Magali Bouchon
January 2010





Médecins du Monde
2010

>Context

- The Maroantsetra district includes 7 municipalities that face a high risk of cyclones and floods involving 111 213 people spread over 47 villages (fokontany)
- Medecins du Monde began in October 2008 a program of Disaster Risk Reduction in this district with a first phase focused on strengthening the health system (epidemiological monitoring, management of malnutrition), first aid and development of a community dynamic
- A qualitative analysis has been proposed to support the launch of a new phase of the program

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde 2010

> Objectives of the study

- Analyse the community organization
- Understand the reasons for the poor attendance rates of the basic health centers (BHC)
- Understand the perceptions of diseases
- Analyse the healthcare pathways

> Methodology

Three-week study in 5 villages of the district that have different characteristics

Qualitative methods for data-collection: individual interview, observation and focus group

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.





Médecins du Monde
2010

> On healthcare pathways and the poor attendance rates of the BHC

Reasons put forth by the population to explain the poor attendance rates for the BHC and the hospital are :

- The poor quality of the care they receive there
« The doctor is careless, he is lazy while you had a 4-hour-transportation time to come »
- Health staff is often absent
« We don't go because the doctor is never there »
- The cost of the treatment
« When you're sick, it comes all of a sudden and you haven't set enough money aside to pay »

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> On healthcare pathways and the poor attendance rates of the BHC

Reasons put forth by the population to explain the poor attendance rates for the BHC and the hospital are :

- The distance and the lack of adequate transportation that make access to health centers very difficult, above all for isolated villages.

« Number one problem is that it's far and difficult to go there. So if it's an emergency, it's already too late »

This argument is all the more valid when combined with the first two ones : if people were sure they will find someone and receive quality care when going to a BHC, the distance would be a far less important problem.

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde 2010

> On healthcare pathways and the poor attendance rates of the BHC

- First reaction is self-medication, with plants or allopathic drugs
- Only when plants and drugs don't work, people will and see health professionals (medical staff in BHC or traditional healers)

The etiologies for traditional diseases determine the healthcare pathways and the resort to traditional healers but these are also consequences of the perceived weaknesses (quality issue, distance) of BHC.



WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde 2010

> On healthcare pathways and the poor attendance rates of the BHC

Health professionals in the Maroantsetra district :

- Health staff of the BHC and the hospitals for the « occidental » diseases
- Ombiasy (traditional healers) and pastors for the « supernatural » diseases (temperature with spasms), for the diseases having a social origin or even for occidental diseases when health staff of the BHC are seen as incompetent and/or disrespectful
- Midwives play a fundamental role in childbirth due to poor perceived quality of BHC
- Lifeguards and community health workers are not perceived as knowledge holders



WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> perceptions of diseases

Diseases that the population is most concerned about are :

- Diarrhea (*Arétin-Kibo*)
- Temperature (*Tazo*)



WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> perceptions of diseases

For diarrhea :

- The link between the disease and the use of unsafe water for washing food or drink as is relatively well known.
- The healthcare pathway is the same as for most diseases (self-medication and then health professionals if self-medication hasn't worked)

For temperature :

- Popular knowledge works without symptoms association and the fever is not seen as a symptom but a disease in itself
- The population does not distinguish between temperature caused by flu, a case of malaria, meningitis or infection
- Same etiology = same treatment
- Hence difficulties for the treatment

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> Community organization

Three relevant levels :



Relatives



The « carreau »: traditional level
of organization, regroups
several families



The village
(fokontany)

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> Community organization

Functioning: the village is lead by a president that works with carreau leaders to ensure that everything is fine and runs smoothly in the village.

Community solidarity (*fhavanana*) is very important, notably when a family faces hardships (death of a member for instance)

This solidarity takes place mostly at the carreau level, which seems to be the best place for people to express their opinion



WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.

A photograph of a traditional wooden stilt house built on a raised wooden platform over a body of brown, muddy water. The house has a corrugated metal roof and wooden walls. Several people, including children and adults, are sitting on the porch. On the porch, there are various items: a pink plastic basin, a blue plastic basin with green plants, a woven basket, and several yellow lemons. A red flag is visible in the background through an opening in the house. The scene suggests a rural, possibly flood-prone, community.

**Recommendations
resulting from the
findings of the study**



Médecins du Monde
2010

> Recommandations resulting from the findings of the study

Develop Health Education activities around temperature and diarrhea

- These are in fact diseases of most concern to the Malagasy and knowledge of their etiology is bad (especially for temperature)
- These are also the diseases whose incidence increases during floods that affect the area (malaria with the multiplication of mosquitoes, diminished use of bed nets, or their destruction, diarrhea due to the water quality and the deteriorated hygiene conditions)
- Work around the representation and the etiology of these diseases and, in a second time, on their treatment, how to respond to these diseases
- Target those able to spread the message: Presidents of village, carreau leaders, teachers, midwives, ombiasy, health staff, grocers

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> Recommandations resulting from the findings of the study

Develop Community health

- To enable communities to better cope with disasters and their health implications
- Complementary to the actions already taken to strengthen the basic health structures and that of the district
- Can be done by intervening at the carreau level, traditional structure effective and legitimate to the people
- Focus on strengthening health actors already accepted by the community and existing modes of association

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> Recommendations resulting from the findings of the study

Strengthening surveillance and control of BHC

- This is particularly important given the serious failures of BHC (staff often absent, disrespectful of the population, standards of hygiene not met)
- The COSAN established by the government (even when functional) does not seem quite legitimate in the eyes of the population to have a real impact on the functioning of the BHC
- This control could then be organized at the carreau level (structure effective and legitimate to the people)

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> Recommandations resulting from the findings of the study

Work around access to drugs

- It has been found that drugs are often purchased at the grocery store (the grocer is then often at the beginning of healthcare pathways) and can sometimes miss
- MDM role could thus be to set up community pharmacies in the villages and / or strengthen training for grocers as they play an advisory role in drug procurement



Improving access to drugs will delay the resort to health professionals, it must be taken into account

WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



Médecins du Monde
2010

> Recommandations resulting from the findings of the study

Sustain the implementation of emergency canoes

- It is an activity that has already begun and which enjoys strong public support
- These canoes can be mobilized during disasters for damage assessment and evacuation of wounded
- This is particularly important for isolated villages because patients die regularly because they could not get to health facilities on time due to lack of canoe



WE CARE FOR THOSE WHO THE WORLD
IS GRADUALLY FORGETTING.

Date :

NOUS SOIGNONS
CEUX QUE LE MONDE
OUBLIE PEU À PEU.



You can contact

Thierry Gontier

coordonateur.mdm@moov.mg

to have more information
or the full report of this
study