

A message from the partners of the Strategic Purchasing Africa Resource Center (SPARC)

Since 2018, The Strategic Purchasing Africa Resource Center (SPARC) has been a unique and significant force in supporting countries within Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) in crucial areas of strategic health purchasing (SHP), Healthcare Financing as they make progress towards the realization of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) goals. This initiative, a collaboration between Amref Health Africa and Results for Development (R4D), has made expertise in these areas more accessible and has been instrumental in the progress of the target countries. The initiative was designed to advance policy discussions and actions that strengthen the application of strategic health purchasing to strengthen African health systems and support countries as they address foundational reforms.

The initiative has:

- **Provided technical support to countries in health financing and SHP.** SPARC worked through learning and research institutions to support Ministries of Health (MoH) in providing technical assistance (TA) tailored to the country's identified needs. SPARC's supported countries to develop legal and policy frameworks to advance the implementation of SHP and health financing.
- **Increased availability of SHP knowledge products.** SPARC supported Africa researchers and policy makers to develop high quality evidence and knowledge products that have been shared widely in global, regional and national health policy forums. These products have been instrumental in shaping policy development in Africa and by extending globally as countries make effort to progress toward UHC.
- **Strengthened the use of innovative adaptive learning in capacity building approaches.** SPARC recognized the great need to develop and increase the number of experts on strategic health purchasing and healthcare financing used several cost effective and innovative approaches. E.g. coaching and mentoring, peer-to-peer learning, country pairing approaches, webinars to fast-track transfer of skills and knowledge, allow policy makers to share their experiences and help countries to respond to their own context and apply the relevant policy makers. This allowed us to adopt South-South learning approaches.

These initiatives were aimed at contributing to the effectiveness of health resource use for better health outcomes. This has been achieved during the two phases of the project implementation: Phase 1 2018 to -2021 and Phase II 2022 to 2025), an achievement that the partners hold with immense pride and gratitude. Through different iterations, partners, implementers, and stakeholders of SPARC are satisfied that the original intent has been achieved by providing multiple tools and frameworks that have been utilized to strengthen health systems in SSA. As we celebrate the achievements and build on the legacy of SPARC as a project, we are announcing the conclusion of SPARC at the end of 31st March 2025.

We appreciate that beyond the above date, the direct support from SPARC will cease, but the tools, publications, and lessons learned will still be available as public goods to governments and stakeholders. The partners and implementers of SPARC will continue to support SSA countries in their quest to progress towards the realization of UHC through support for areas of work such as Primary Health Care (PHC), Health Systems Strengthening (HSS), Health Financing and delivery of technical assistance.

We will continue advocating for the foundational reforms in the health systems in SSA to help improve political will, increase allocation, and effectively use available resources for health. Governments are encouraged to strengthen data governance, data use for decision-making, and effective use of available resources. Countries must remain committed to making progress towards the realization of UHC goals.

The conclusion of SPARC does not halt the policy conversations on SHP and health financing. Rather, the project's legacy will continue as we pursue strategic partnerships to strengthen the utilization of public goods (tools and publications) and the hosting of the SPARC website, which contains rich resources on SHP and health financing.

We express our utmost gratitude to the governments, implementing partners, and citizens of the SSA countries to whom our support was extended. You greatly motivated the application of SHP and health financing reforms. Your support has been invaluable and has helped the interventions supported by SPARC to contribute positively to strengthening health systems and improving health access.

The legacy of SPARC will be carried on by Amref Health Africa. Amref Health Africa will continue supporting the implementation of healthcare financing (*paying attention to the use of pre-payments, application of strategic health purchasing and reforms to promote the effective use of public finance management (PFM) systems to improve health systems delivery*), PHC, Reproductive Maternal Adolescent Child Health (RMNCAH) and Social Determinants of Health (SDoH) these priorities are anchored on our corporate strategy **Transform 2023-2030**.

For further inquiries and information, kindly contact info@sparc.africa