



*Transforming the African Union
to drive the Africa We Want*



Case study 9:

A Continuous Improvement Journey to Build the Africa We Want



CONTENT



5 KEY FIGURES	6 FROM GOOD TO GREAT	7 A GREATER SERVICE QUALITY FOR A GREATER UNION
8 THE JOURNEY TOWARDS A GREATER IMPACT	16 AFRICAN PEOPLE MATTER	



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EDITORIAL

As the main African regional organization in charge of economic development, peacekeeping and political integration of the continent, the African Union should be renowned for its citizens. However, the reality on the ground does not always reflect this ambition. The organization remains poorly known and not always well perceived.

To tackle this issue in our endeavour to build the Africa We Want, initiatives to transform the African Union so that it can better serve the continent's citizen have been launched in recent years. Among other things, in 2009, the organization embarked on a process of continuous improvement, better known as "Kaizen". The methodology involves challenging the work system, habits and structure to identify potential areas for improvement. Subsequently concrete, simple and inexpensive actions are taken to effect the transformation.

To date, palpable results can be felt in the Directorates providing Services in the African Union. Through the adoption of this methodology, some expenses have been reduced, time spent on certain activities has been shortened and the services provided are increasingly appreciated.

This publication has been edited to inform us, allow us to appreciate and encourage us in our efforts to build the Africa We Want. Our main message is to recognize that, yes, the African Union must improve to adapt its actions to the real need of the African citizen. And we have already initiated this transformation and felt its results.



The duration of several departments providing services within the African Union procedures

**may be reduced
to less than
50%**



The African Union travel total cost

**can be reduced by more
than 20%**



The African Union Health Services satisfaction rate

**is over
80%**

FROM GOOD TO GREAT



Eight years ago, the African Union decided to experiment the Kaizen methodology to ensure its continuous improvement. At this time, the organization’s leadership was aware of the expansion and rapid

diversification of the institution’s activities. With this growth, quality had to be ensured as well. Having taken cognizance of the methodology, and seeing it as

adapted to the context of the organization, the management team of the African Union decides to implement it. The figure below shows the main steps in its implementation:

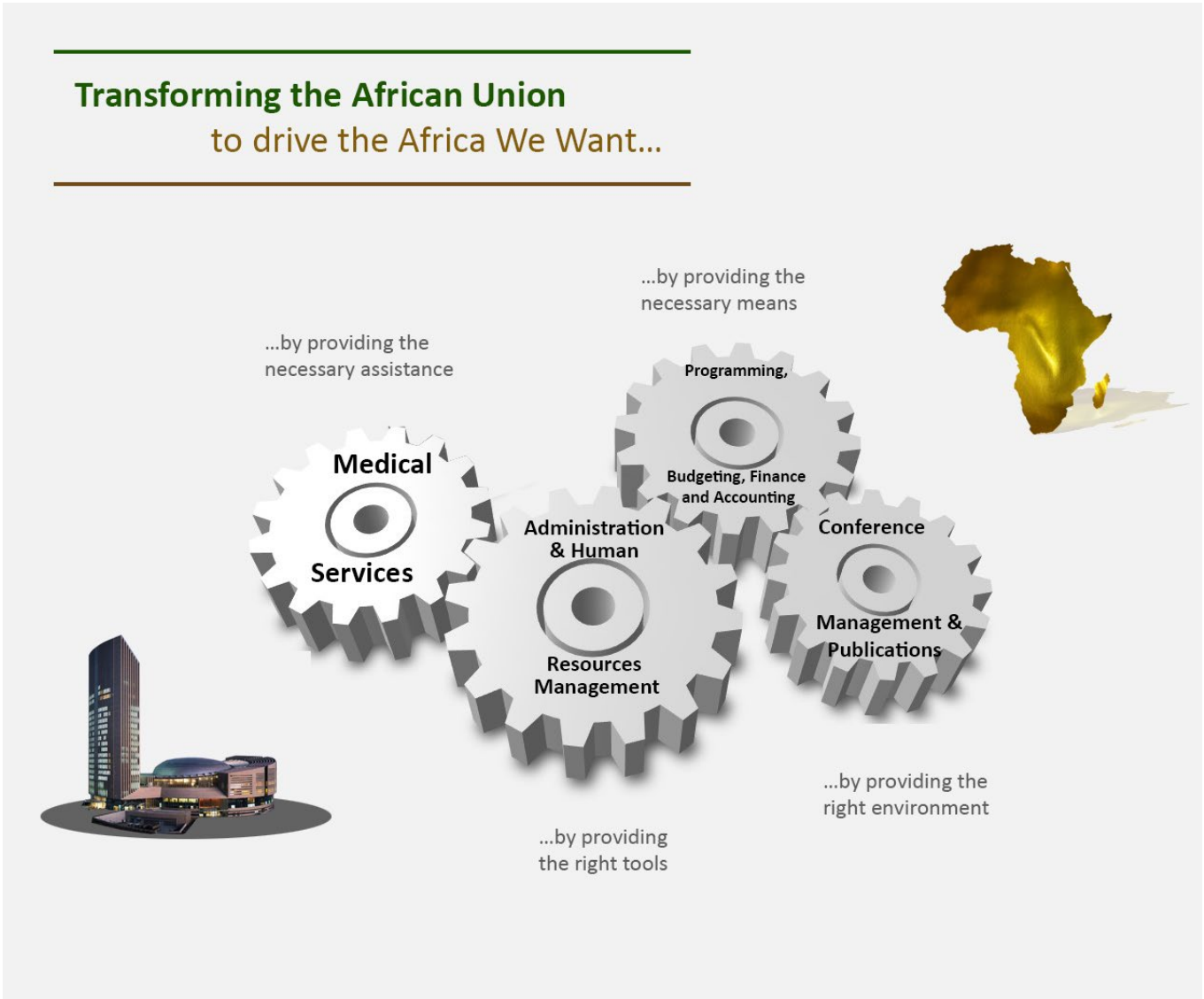


A GREATER SERVICE QUALITY FOR A GREATER UNION

In its journey to build the Africa We Want, the African Union is aware that the work must begin internally. It is essential that the African Union has the right tools, the necessary assistance and resources as well as the adequate environment to serve the African citizen properly.

The approach proposed by Kaizen has thus been applied primarily to the Directorates providing services within the African Union:

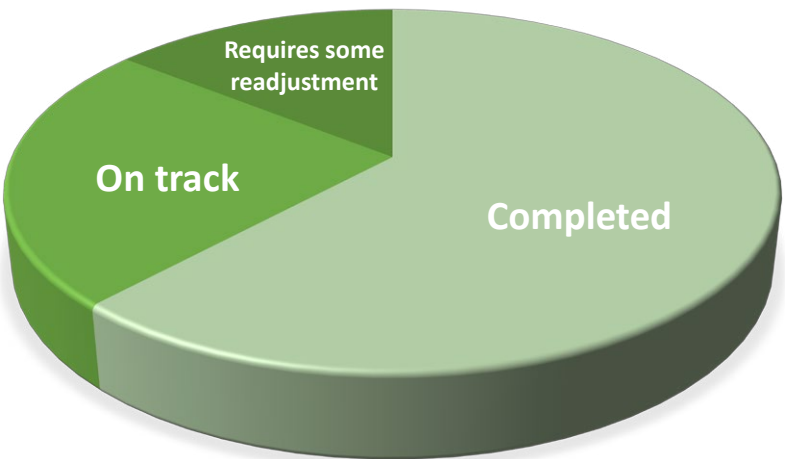
- **Administration and Human Resources Management Directorate (AHRMD)** to provide human resources, ICT services, efficient purchasing services...
- **Medical Services Directorate (MSD)** to Provide Medical Assistance for Employees and their families' Wellbeing and Health
- **Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting Directorate (PBFAD)** for the proper management of resources within the organization
- **Conference Management and Publications Directorate (CMPD)** to create an environment conducive to trade



THE JOURNEY TOWARDS A GREATER IMPACT

The African Union has identified 21 areas in which the Kaizen team should be involved. These actions are intended to bring about rapid changes for greater efficiency.

While the project is about two third (2/3) of its course, of the twenty one (21) activities carried out, thirteen (13) have been completed, five (5) are on track and three (3) requires some readjustment. As a whole, the project is exceeding expectations.



Kaizen project status

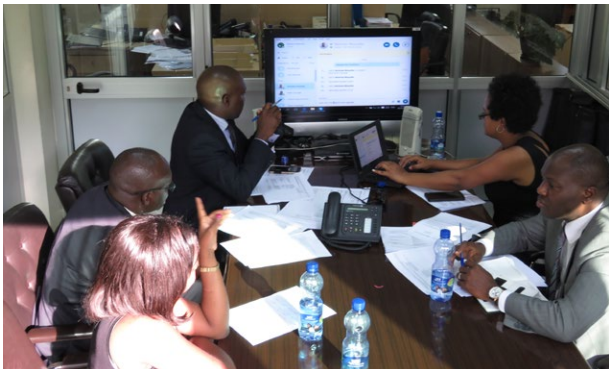
TIME SAVING ACTIVITIES

Did you know that...



Recruiting and onboarding an employee

for a regular position has taken an average of **18 months** within the African Union. Currently the process takes an average of only **8 months** and will shortly be reduced to **5 months**



A faster recruitment

- **Activity:** Streamlining the whole recruitment process and preparing the end-to-end process maps
- **Result:** Lead time of the entire recruitment process reduced

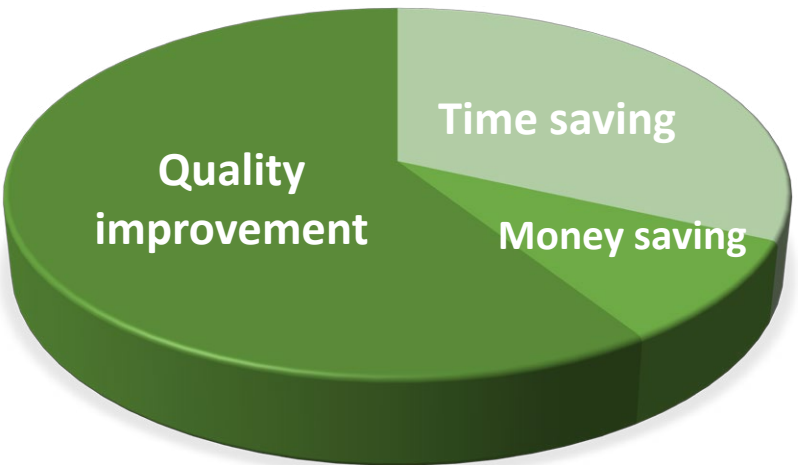
A faster medical clearance

- **Activity:** Establish a proper workflow and follow-up system between HRMD and MSD
- **Result:** Medical clearances are promptly issued and delivered to the new AUC staff



Speed up store service delivery

- **Activity:** Training on 5S and 3 Mu elimination and develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- **Result:** Accelerate store average delivery time



Kaizen project types of activity

In the process of improvement, the Kaizen team focused on three main objectives:

- **Saving time:** spend less time to get the same result
- **Saving money:** Spend less money to get the same result
- **Quality improvement:** improving results

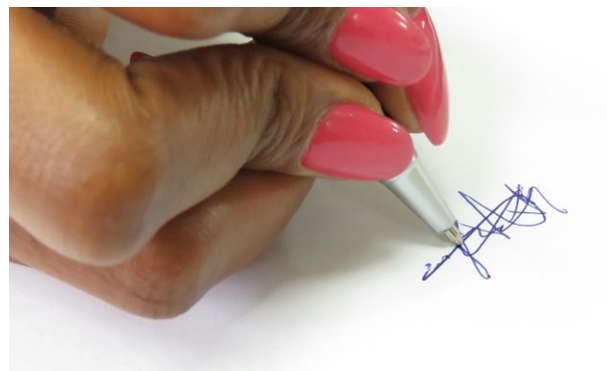
A better visitor reception service

- **Activity:** Automation of visitors' registration system
- **Result:** Average waiting time of incoming pedestrians and process time within the reception shorten



Speed up ID and car passes issuance process

- **Activity:** Automation of the ID and Car pass issuance request system
- **Result:** ID and car passes speed up the process



A faster approval process

- **Activity:** Introduction of electronic signature
- **Result:** Activity still ongoing



Acceleration of payment to freelances

- **Activity:** Develop an online template for freelances payment
- **Result:** Activity still ongoing. Template ready. The payment process can be reduced from 10 to 2 days

FOCUS ON THE SECURITY AND SAFETY SERVICES REFORMS

Interview of Mr Henok Abate Security Supervisor

Thank you for having us for this interview. Can you kindly take us through the activities of the SSSD with the Kaizen Unit?

Working closely with us, the Kaizen team asked us which part of our unit requires improvement. Accordingly we responded and requested for them to automate the gate reception system and provided a guided requirements to automate the system in collaboration with the Management and Information system (MIS) team of the AU.

Prior to this initiative, traditionally staff members were using the email/telephone calls to send out request for their visitors to the gate reception. And the process was indeed very difficult and not systematic because most of the staff members do not follow the guided requirements for the visits. But when the system was automated the SSSD service desk was put in place, the system has assisted in the smooth running of the visits and improved the work flow within the AU security system. In addition, the process increased the speed services provided from the gate reception to the visitors.

Furthermore, we also requested the Kaizen team to automate our warden system because SSSD provides warden to staff members, who are new and joining the commission during the process of settling down to identify secured and conducive environment to rent houses and hiring of domestic help. In that regards, the new staff are given appropriate advice on the security and safety issues of the country and are advised to take proper precaution during that period.



Also when staff experience any form of accidents like car or road accidents and theft, staff usually ask for assistance from the SSSD. Hence, it is important also to automate the system to further facilitate the work flow of all the activities of SSSD. The Kaizen and MIS team are working towards the automation of the warden system, if the system is automated this will create a smooth running of all the safety activities within the AU.

The other part is the automation of Car pass and ID insurance, this is also on the process. These three projects have been there since two years now, out of the three projects one which is the automation of the gate reception is now completed and 100% implemented. The other two projects are also in the process.

What are the feedbacks that you are getting from the visitors and AU Staff in terms of service satisfaction?

Most of the staff have positive feedback on the kaizen process, however, there are still a little percentage of staff members that have not yet embraced the automated system but they are encouraged to do so because it is more effective and efficient for both services providers and users.

The new process has made life simply easy, the staff members expecting visitors only need to fill the online form, which generates an automatic reservation number, the number is shared within the visitor. Upon arrival of the visitor he/she is asked to provide the reservation number



The new process has indeed eradicated about 99% of conflict between the AU staff members and the security as well as visitors who visit the premises.

and within less than two minutes, they are provided with an access ID to go through. The visitors also are pleased and show positive vibes to the reception services.

The new process has indeed eradicated about 99% of conflict between the AU staff members and the security as well as visitors who visit the premises. As earlier stated, the system is continues improvement, we expect even better and improved reception services.

What is the way forward?

The Warden, ID and car pass insurance to be completed.

SSSD staff feedback on the process?

The kaizen methodology has immensely improved the work flow and also boosted the morale's of the workers within the SSSD. The staff are more confident and have good interactions with the visitors and other colleagues from the AU.

The process indeed has reduced the time used to process gate passes to visitors, leading to uncomfortable waiting and misunderstanding.

The security requirement for visitors are well defined on the system, therefore when the system is filled, it captures everything and makes the process smooth without any deal given to the visitors. Prior to the system been operationalized the process in the gate reception can take 10-20 minutes and sometimes without adequate information the visitor is not permitted in.

Any final Words?

The Kaizen Unit Process has indeed supported us and improved the reception at the gate and we look forward to the other two activities to also be implemented.

MONEY SAVING ACTIVITIES

Did you know that...



For the African Union Commission only

600,000 to 1000,000 USD
can be saved
per year if travels are better planned

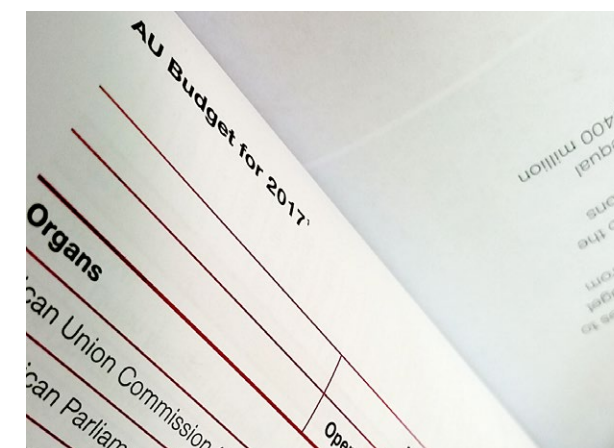


Reduction of expenses in ticket purchases

- **Activity:** Analysis of amount of money wasted due to the last minute travel
- **Result:** Amount of money wasted due to the last minute travel requests reduced and Travel Unit relieved from the burden of responding to the last minute travel requests

A more accurate African Union budget

- **Activity:** Internal budget process reform
- **Result:** Activity still ongoing



FOCUS ON THE MEDICAL SERVICES REFORMS

Interview of Dr Kalifa Manneh
Laboratory Technologist

Thank you Dr. Manneh Kalifah for this opportunity. As an introduction, could you give us a brief overview of what the implementation of the Kaizen methodology within the Laboratory is about?

Thank you for coming.

The Medical and Health Services Directorate had a plan process of re-modernizing the Laboratory. The Kaizen team helped us by accelerating the process. It has given us the opportunity to make an action plan on how we want the lab to look like. For instance, in the process we took some pictures of the different areas we want to improve.

Kaizen is all about continuous work improvement and the main essence for us in the laboratory is to improve the quality of work and services. This we can achieve best by improving the work flow.

The work carried out has improved the service offered to the patient as well as the environment of the employees.

What has improved for the patients?

While giving our services to patients it is vital that they are able to locate the AUC laboratory with ease and comfort. Hence we set up a reception as the first point of entry for our patient. We ensure that when they come, they are comfortable, well received, and they are directed to where the samples will be collected depending on what the doctor wants to know. We also designed and placed arrows from the entrance all the way to various sections of the laboratory. In addition to the comfort, we worked



to be more efficient. We reduced by half the waiting time for results. This was achieved, among other things, by reviewing and developing our workflow.

Kaizen is all about continuous work improvement and the main essence for us in the laboratory is to improve the quality of work and services.

Finally we ensured the quality of our result. As Laboratory work is very sensitive and delicate, quality work is utmost priority. Before we do any work we have internal and external quality control processes. The internal quality control processes comes with the TestKits we receive from our partner companies with controls. When we test specimens, we consider test for control, however, the external quality control we register with a body outside.

Kaizen process also included the labelling of all the lockers, cupboards and fridges with specific labels on all specimens to avoid mistakes. Furthermore, it ensured the calibrations of each machines. For each machine, a record of the dates of calibrations and the technician who calibrated is created to guarantee the quality and productivity of the machines during the period. In addition the process ensures accountability within the Laboratory.



And what has changed for the Laboratory Staff?

The employee has a better work environment. With the labelling the staff of the laboratory should be able to locate tools, equipment and materials with ease to avoid time consumption and lab accidents. Furthermore, the workflow we developed, is helping the team to know who has to do what and when he/she is supposed to do it.

Can we say that the image of the laboratory has been improved?

Yes, absolutely. Currently, we get more patients because their confidence has increased. Moreover, the MSHD has secured more partnerships, who are not from the African embassies. For example we are in partnership with Kuwait as a new partner from the United Arab Emirates. They have seen the services here and they were impressed. Most of the big machines

equipment is from the Kuwait funds because of the confidence they have in us .They partnered with us to buy more sophisticated equipment to enable the lab technicians to accelerate results.



Currently, we get more patients because their confidence has increased. Moreover, the MSHD has secured more partnerships.



From a personal point of view, what did you find really interesting with the Kaizen methodology?

The actions we have taken are simple, inexpensive and have not been too much time consuming. And yet we see important changes and improvements. This is to say that the small improvements that we make on a daily basis can have an important impact in transforming the African Union to drive the Africa We Want.

(...) the small improvements that we make on a daily basis can have an important impact in transforming the African Union to drive the Africa We Want.

What are the next steps?

Kaizen is all about continuous work improvement. The next improvement will be to connect our machines with the entire medical system. The test requests and the sending of the results will therefore be done electronically between the doctor and the laboratory.



QUALITY IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES

Did you know that...

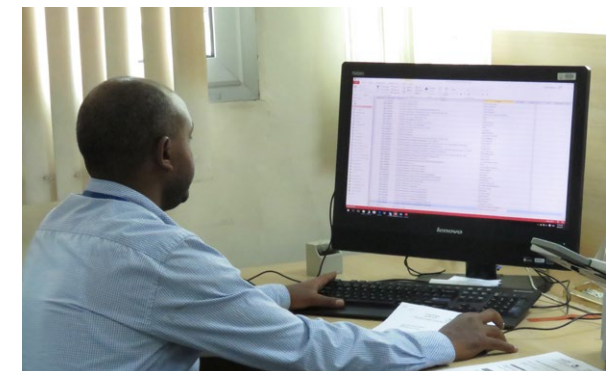


Medical Services' patients gave a

score between

3.2 to 3.6 out of 4

to the various units services of the Directorate.



A better service for managing and tracking Human Resources related inquiries

- **Activity:** Automation of Human Resource Registry
- **Result:** Zero incoming hard copy documents and reduced the number of inquiries at the HR Registry through the introduction of the Service Desk Tool.

Shorter processes for travel requests and for the payment to airline companies

- **Activity:** Automation and re-engineering of the travel process
- **Result:** Time for travel requests and the payment to airline companies reduced

Travel Claim Submission Form

Telephone Ext. _____
SAP PF No. _____

Plant: _____
Country/City) _____

Shop/Medical Evacuation/Work: Technical Assistance to MS/ Bridge Training

Member States ☐ Partner Fund ☐
Full DSA ☐ Half DSA ☐

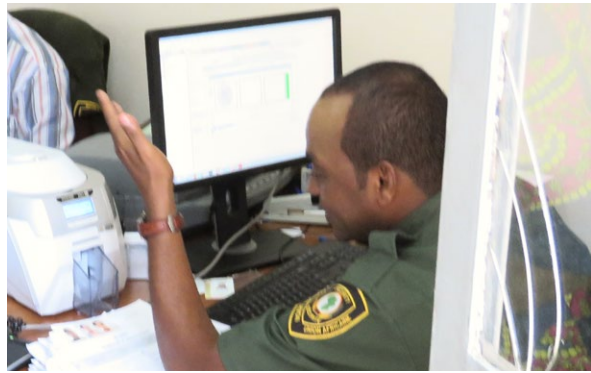
paid _____
ion or DSA was paid (Covered by) _____

By: AUC Regional Office ☐ Advance was no

Clearer and faster processes in Procurement

- **Activity:** Establishing of SOPs and Standard Routines
- **Result:** 6 SOPs and 22 standard routines developed





Better incident recording system for the Security and Safety Services Division

- **Activity:** Automation of the incidents recording system
- **Result:** Efficient and quick production of weekly reports



Increased efficiency in laboratory

- **Activity:** Introduction of 5S in Laboratory
- **Result:** Efficiency is increased in the laboratory



Increased efficiency in radiology

- **Activity:** Introduction of 5S in radiology
- **Result:** Efficiency is increased in the radiology



Various nonpayment incidents prevented

- **Activity:** Investigation and countermeasures proposals
- **Result:** Backlog of CIGNA unpaid premiums, get refunding, and a system that prevents the recurrence of CIGNA incident established



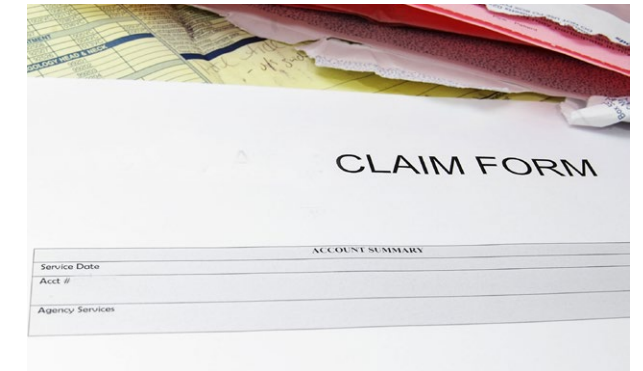
Customer satisfaction enhanced

- **Activity:** Elaborated, tested and finalized the questionnaire for measuring customer satisfaction
- **Result:** Measures toward the improvement of the Clinic's services identified and implemented



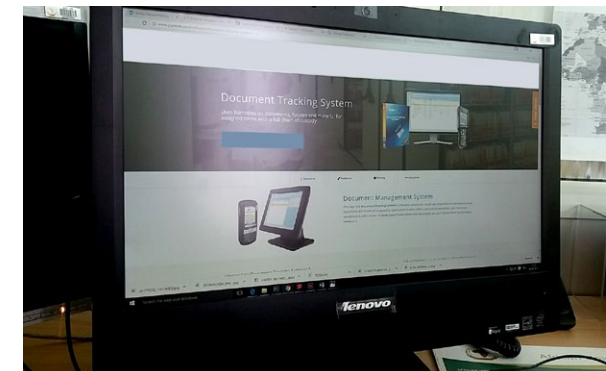
Improvement of inventory management in the Pharmacy

- **Activity:** Introduce an inventory management system, a component of IMRS, to AU Clinic Pharmacy
- **Result:** Stock-out of medical supplies prevented



Payment process for medical claims and education benefits expedited

- **Activity:** Automating the payment processes for medical claims and education benefits
- **Result:** Activity still ongoing



An efficient document follow-up and tracking within the Protocol Unit

- **Activity:** Introduction of a document tracking system in the Protocol Unit
- **Result:** Activity on-going



A better conference's quality

- **Activity:** Analysis of the lead time for conferences and recommendations
- **Result:** Reduced last minute requests for conferences



Aude Lucie Ayo-Adibet
Chief of Recruitment, HRMD

" Since May 2016, the Recruitment Unit has worked in close collaboration with the Kaizen Unit to improve the efficiency of the end-to-end recruitment process. This is still an on-going process as the aim is continuous improvement. The three main projects are:

1- Rationalizing and automating the end-to-end recruitment process

With the use of SAP- E – Recruitment system, the aim is to know the status of any position, at any one time. Retrieving information on the status of the position will become easy with accurate information about the position and the candidate.

Another aim is to improve the usability of the system for all users, whether it be HR Specialists in performing shortlisting and interview exercises, or User Department focal persons. The system will be user-friendly and straight-forward.

2- Generic job descriptions

The aim of the second project is to create attractive Job advertisements that will seduce talent, including internal staff. Generic JD using the framework level competency will reduce the time to create the appropriate JD for any one profile. Those JDs will be AU branded, standardized and target-oriented. Thanks to Kaizen and the support of MIS, the recruitment Team will have a flexible tool to customize JDs with specificities when needed.

3- Communication with candidates

One of the changes, the HRM, especially the Recruitment Unit would like to bring is the communication with its candidates. With the new SAP E-recruitment system, all candidates will receive an update on the status of their application to a position at every stage of the recruitment process. This continuous communication develops trust in the system, and can attract talents, including internal candidates. "



Madalitso Muuso Lowole
Senior Finance Officer, PBFA

" We have come a long way as African Union (AU)". The Directorate of Programming, Budgeting, Finance and Accounting (PBFA) of the African Union Commission has improved on payment systems of suppliers and all the vendors we work with. Now the first aspect of Kaizen has been to look at all the layers of payment to the end process where cheques is collected. Overtime, the directorate noted that on a larger scale the system was insufficient, it takes the staff not less than 3 weeks to process payments. Worse case it took us 38 days to process one cheque.

Now Kaizen came and did a review, analyzed and picked up through the problem statement what was significant alone. Based on their recommendation together, we were able to cut down the process to 5 days. From that moment the Directorate has been working towards improving the time of processes, and today we are pleased to report that we have significantly reduced our payment time to about 10 days from 35, and we are moving towards making it 3 to 5 days maximum.

Future recommendation is 3 days, so this is a work in progress and we are anticipate for even better finance process through the Kaizen methodology. To ensure efficiency is harness in the work process. The coming in of Kaizen has been quite impactful in terms of systems, time reduction of work flow. At the same time we have seen the satisfaction of clienteles that we support, we are very satisfied and fulfilled in terms of all Kaizen has done in PFBA. "



Dr Kilenga Naftal
Head of Medical Services, MSHD

" The Kaizen implementation process within the Medical and Health services Directorate (MSHD) encompasses the entire divisions and units. The Laboratory, Radiology and Pharmacy all were significantly improved. In general the MSHD is working towards a paperless system by the new Integrated Medical Recording System (IMRS). The process has adequately reduced time, use of papers and drugs stock management in the pharmacy.

The need to revamp the IMRS, in December 2016, the MSHD started to utilize the IMRS after negotiating with the partner company, today the process is approximately 80% implemented and integrated into the MSHD system.

Another major aspect that was improved was stock management of drugs in the pharmacy and stores. Previously there was a lot of complain on delay on the procurement process but with the IMRS system the stock management has significantly improved.

Also with regards to the staff medical welfare, AU short term staff are insured by CIGNA. In the past there was delay in the process of enrolling new staff to the medical insurance and also lost of document from HR to Medical. However, the process has through the IMRS has taken care of all the aspect of enrolling and detecting new staff automatically from the system directly.

In addition, the AU Pharmacy has experienced a total change through the Kaizen methodology. The storage and shelves where all the medications are stored are welled labelled. The team ordered new cabinets for temporal storage of medication. Each cabinet is defined with specific medication, which helps to know how much is available and if they is a shortage it can be purchased and stored. In the store also, there are new labelled shelves which were installed to further facilitate the work flow and improve the presentation/ storage of drugs in the pharmacy. "



Kalkidan Amare Desta
Travel Officer, PTSD

" Kaizen Unit supports our business process improvement activities by bringing in fresh, neutral view of our processes, helping us break down the complexities of large tasks into small, manageable activities which makes problem solving much easier. They are also immensely helpful at facilitating communication between departments regarding cross-functional processes, helping those involved focus on problem areas that are linking/ affecting everyone. In the current project that I am engaged with them, we're making the AU Mission approval process entirely paperless, and also improving travel processing to make it simpler. As part of the project team, they help by coordinating between Travel Unit, PBFA and MIS, working with us to ensure a continued and well documented progress towards project completion. The experience and knowledge in process improvement and problem solving has, for my part, been enriching."





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