

Pharo Diagnostic and Clinical Services Centre

*Bringing Quality Diagnostics
to Benishangul-Gumuz*



The Pharo Diagnostic and Clinical Services Centre (PDCS) was established in 2022 in Assosa, the capital of Benishangul-Gumuz (BGRS), one of Ethiopia's most remote and underserved states. For the first time, residents gained access to reliable, high-quality diagnostic testing without the burden of travelling hundreds of kilometres to Addis Ababa.

In just three years, PDCS has grown into a sustainable business with a loyal and expanding patient base, while also helping to transform the local health landscape by setting new benchmarks for service delivery, efficiency, accountability, and transparency.

The Problem

Before PDCS, patients in BGRS faced serious barriers to diagnosis. Many patients were forced to travel to Addis Ababa for even basic tests, an expensive and time-consuming journey that few could afford. Others relied on local hospitals sending samples to the capital, often facing weeks of delay and the risk of samples being lost or spoiled.

These obstacles meant that treatment was frequently delayed, misdirected, or abandoned altogether, leaving health outcomes precarious and preventable complications common. Beyond the health impact, the region lost all economic value from diagnostics, as spending flowed entirely to the capital.

The lack of local diagnostic capacity also had profound economic and social consequences. Delayed or missed diagnoses not only placed patients at higher risk of serious complications but also resulted in prolonged absences from work, reducing household income and overall productivity. Healthcare workers, without access to advanced laboratory facilities, often struggled to make accurate clinical decisions, compounding the risk of mismanagement.



Our Response

PDCS changed this dynamic by establishing a modern laboratory offering a full suite of over 100 diagnostic tests—more than half of which were previously only available in Addis. Turnaround times that once stretched to over a month are now measured in hours, enabling earlier treatment and better outcomes. We have also introduced electronic medical records that cannot be tampered with, improving transparency and making PDCS the preferred partner of insurance providers.

Over time, PDCS has expanded its menu of services, increased the quality of local healthcare, and retained economic value within BGRS. By demonstrating that a well-run diagnostic centre can thrive even in a remote setting, PDCS has encouraged other providers to invest and raise their standards, stimulating healthy competition and improving patient choice.

Systemic Impact

Beyond direct services, PDCS has strengthened the local health system by ensuring a continuous supply of laboratory inputs—something neither government nor private providers had consistently achieved. Our presence has also encouraged greater screening for non-communicable diseases (NCDs), which we hope will contribute to healthier behaviours in the community over time.

Equally important, the knowledge and capacity we have gained from running PDCS in a remote state has sharpened our ambition. Building on this experience, Pharo Ventures is now planning a world-class, fully integrated diagnostic and consultation hub in Addis Ababa, designed to set new national standards for quality and accessibility.



Facts & Figures

- ▶ **31,029** patients served (10,300 per year)
- ▶ **178,576** diagnostic tests conducted (59,500 per year)



- ▶ **ETB 24 million** revenue collected (~ETB 8 million per year), equivalent to ~USD 145K annually at pre-devaluation rates or ~USD 57K post-devaluation.

Transforming Patient Journeys

Shortly after PDCS launched, a 25-year-old woman suspected of having hyperthyroidism came to the centre. Previously, her hospital had sent her samples to Addis Ababa, where they were lost after a month-long wait, leaving her without a diagnosis or treatment. At PDCS, a new sample was taken, tested, and confirmed within hours, allowing her to proceed quickly to the surgery she needed.