



Hatua Yetu

Q2 | April - June 2023

HEALTH IMPACT



10,597,179

Condoms Distributed



620,541

Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs)



504,228

Couple Years of Protection (CYPs)



283,734

Beneficiaries reached with Family Planning Services



158,068

Beneficiaries treated for Malaria



8,613

HIV Self-Testing Kits Distributed



5,920

Children < 5 treated for Diarrhoea and Pneumonia



5,711

Skilled Birth Deliveries

PS Kenya Promotes Inclusivity in Reproductive Health in Kenya

Population Services Kenya attended the official launch of the 'Women News Review' at the New Era Women's Convention held on May 3rd, 2023. The Convention whose theme was *Women Empowerment in Advancing Governance & Achieving Economic & Social Justice* leveraged on different strengths of Women to achieve their vision in the different sectors they present. The Women News Review is a publication that will highlight the various aspects of women, ranging from health, entrepreneurship, finance, civil society, and much more, with its main being to promote gender inclusion and diversity in the country.

The New Era Women's Convention is a forum for women to come together to discuss issues related to women's rights, gender equality, and social justice. The Women leaders have been drawn from Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), Kenya National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KNCCI), National Gender & Equality Commission, major Women Groups in Kenya, Women Captains managing corporates and institutions in both public and private sectors, Women Entrepreneurs from various sectors of the economy, Women Representatives from the Senate, National Assembly (MPs) and the County Assemblies (MCAs), aspiring Young Women leaders, among others. The Women News Review therefore provides the most comprehensive Network of Women in Kenya covering all recognized Categories and Groups of Women in the country. This Network has been created to support any public and private corporate or individual get organized access to Women in Kenya.

One of PS Kenya's strategic pillars is to work with and through others to achieve impact at scale, and the New Era Women's Convention provided a good opportunity

to learn from and advocate for activism on issues that affect women and girls in Kenya. The convention covers a wide range of topics related to women's rights and empowerment, including gender-based violence and abuse, access to reproductive healthcare, teen pregnancies, single motherhood, inclusivity, and economic empowerment. PS Kenya has three projects under our reproductive health program that focus on providing access to sexual reproductive health products and services to women and young girls.

"PS Kenya is very passionate about women's and girls' health, and we support them throughout their life course in accessing quality healthcare services." "We do this by giving them information in health areas such as family planning, HIV, maternal health, and gender-based violence (GBV)," stated Sylvia Wamuhu, PS Kenya's acting Chief Operating Officer.

Under PS Kenya's DESIP program, we aim to increase the uptake of family planning among rural women, adolescents, youth, and persons with disabilities. The program is active in 12 counties and works through different stakeholders, such as religious and cultural leaders, to improve the knowledge and attitudes of their

communities on the uptake of family planning. The Accelerate project strives to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity and the unmet need for sexual reproductive health, as well as contribute to a reduction in the prevalence of GBV and other harmful practices such as female genital mutilation. The project is currently being implemented in 13 marginalized, underserved, and hard-to-reach areas. Its most recent campaign, dubbed 'Ahadi Yangu,' increased the demand for sexual reproductive health and GBV medical, psychosocial, and legal services.

Finally, PS Kenya's Binti Shupavu project focuses on adolescent girls aged 15–19 and is active in four counties. The project created a model that the young girls would be able to relate to while educating them on their sexual and reproductive health needs and empowering them with skills that they can use to financially support themselves.

PS Kenya is focused on achieving a more inclusive and equitable society by promoting functional and sustainable systems that will ensure that women from all backgrounds and experiences are able to achieve their desired goals. PS Kenya's DESIP Program, funded by UKAID aims to increase family planning uptake among poor rural women, adolescents, youth and people with disabilities in Kenya.



FCDO Donor Visit in Narok and Homabay County

DESIP is the largest family planning program in Kenya which is implemented in 12 counties. The program has reviews which happen every year and this year they were in Narok and Homabay counties.

DESIP program is in its fifth year of implementation and throughout the four years that the program has been running it has been of great impact in the community. The DESIP program targets counties whose modern contraceptive prevalence rate (MCRPR) ranges from 2% to 45%. We visited four facilities in Narok which were: Olchoro Health facility, Fountain Based Health Center, Narok Sub County Hospital and Mulot. These facilities were picked because they are not government facilities which means people are able to access services without pay. Mulot stood out because it was one facility that showcased male involvement in family planning.

Homabay County is one of the counties of focus for the DESIP program and among the counties of interest due to high number of unplanned pregnancies among young people, including those with disabilities and poor rural women among them women with disabilities. In Homabay, the FCDO and PS Kenya team visited several facilities in the County which included; Homabay Referral Hospital, Rangwe Sub-County Hospital and St Teresa Nagoya which is a faith-based organization. In St. Teresa Nagoya Hospital the DESIP program conducted support supervision and advised on some structural adjustments which included building of wheel chair ramps and permanent and movable ramps. This makes it easy to get around with a wheel chair and access all facility departments. With the inception of the DESIP program, there has been an effort to work towards eradicating negative perceptions among both health care providers



FCDO Donor visit in Homabay Sub-County Hospital.

and the community at large to enable inclusion of persons with disabilities to ensure they can access and use sexual and reproductive health services including family planning.

Each facility that the FCDO and PS Kenya team visited was grateful for the implementation of the program in their facility. Since through the program they were able to help manage teenage pregnancies, help people with disabilities and even assist people who have been assaulted. They were able to achieve some of these things by having a toll-free number which GBV victims can easily access. The community health volunteers also played a major role in educating young girls about the benefits of using family planning methods. However, despite the success stories they also experienced some challenges which included:

commodity stockouts, shortage of skilled work force and inadequate family planning equipment.

As DESIP is in its fifth and final year it aims to collaborate with other existing partners in the county for Technical Working Groups (TWGs) and commodity redistribution e.g. A360 and Accelerate project. It also looks forward to uphold ethical practice and data protection in all health facilities. The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) is a department of the Government of the United Kingdom. As one of the key Donors in Kenya and equivalent to other countries' ministries of foreign affairs, FCDO was created on 2nd September 2020 through the merger of the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) and the Department for International Development (DFID).

Narok County Embraces Male Engagement in Family Planning



Joseph Sirikwa, a male Community Health Promoter, taking men through a male involvement in Family Planning dialogue session.

In the heart of Narok County, amidst its tranquil nature and greenery that stretches as far as the eye can see, lives Joseph Sirikwa, a hardworking father of four who has taken up the responsibility of educating his community members on the importance of family planning. The Maasai community is known for its belief in siring children as a sign of wealth, and yet for Joseph and his wife, the decision to stop at four was a no-brainer after they were enlightened on the benefits of family planning.

“My wife and I have aimed to set a good example in our community by practicing family planning. We spaced each of our children by two years after learning about the benefits and doing away with all the myths and misconceptions that surround the topic.”

Working as a Family Planning Male Champion

A typical day for Joseph starts with taking his cows out to graze, where he meets up with his fellow men and, among

other topics, makes sure to inform them of an upcoming family planning dialogue session. Motivated by the need to empower fellow men to make decisions that would have a positive impact not only at the individual level but for the community as a whole, Joseph would then go back home and collect his information, education, and communication (IEC) materials from his wife and, with her blessing, head out to perform what he has taken up as his calling. Waiting in a field near his homestead was a diverse group of men representing different age groups and perspectives, but all very eager to learn and have an open conversation about family planning, contraceptives, and reproductive health as a whole. Joseph targets both the young and the old men, stating that in his community even the old men require family planning as they get married to young women and have children.

“Those who have no knowledge about family planning think it is harmful; however, I am here to tell you that it is very important. It not only helps you to space out

your children but also enables you to provide enough resources to cater to each of their needs,” stated Joseph.

Armed with the DESIP program family planning training kit, Joseph then proceeded to take out the different contraceptive methods, that is, both female and male condoms, the coil, oral contraceptives, or the pill, and the DEPO injection. One by one, Joseph took the group of men through each method and went into the details of how each worked, proving how empowered he was as a male community health volunteer.

“We were trained on family planning for one and a half months, shown how to administer some of the methods, and taught how to write referral notes for the methods that require doctors. This training from the DESIP program has empowered us to go into the villages and teach the youth, middle-aged men, and elderly men about family planning,” says Joseph.

Advisory to Men

Joseph stressed the need for husbands to support their wives and take a more active role in their family planning journey. He advised them on the importance of taking it on as a shared responsibility, as it would lead to a healthier relationship with better informed decisions and improve their general well-being. For Joseph, spreading the word on family planning in a community that still considers the topic taboo comes with its challenges, with some men accusing him of encouraging infidelity within their marriages. However, he remains relentless in his pursuit of a well-informed community and with the backing of PS Kenya’s DESIP program, he pledges to ensure that the men of Narok County take the right steps and make family planning initiatives more inclusive.

Dissemination of Findings from the Accelerate Project Research and Learning Agenda

Did you know that in the year 2023, some women have to hide the fact that they use contraceptives from their husbands? This is one of the findings that was disseminated by Population Services Kenya (PS Kenya) under their Accelerate Project on May 26th, 2023, during the National Dissemination of Accelerate's Research and Learning Agenda. In attendance were key external stakeholders such as Dr. Edward Serem from the Ministry of Health, Dr. Mohamed Sheikh from the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), and Thomas Hansen, Head of Programs at the Danish Embassy and Halima Zaid, Programme Manager / Gender And Sexual Reproductive Health And Rights (SRHR).

This study will shed light on whether women and men know their rights when it comes to family planning, reproductive health, and gender-based violence. Whether the community will speak up and report cases of gender-based violence and whether institutions are properly equipped to handle reproductive health and GBV cases once they are reported," Dr. Margaret Njenga, Chief Executive Officer, PS Kenya.

The Accelerate Project is funded by DANIDA and implemented in a consortium led by PS Kenya in partnership with the Gender Violence Recovery Center (GVRC) in 13 counties across the country. The project aims to contribute towards the ICPD25 promise of zero unmet need for contraception, zero preventable maternal deaths, and zero Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs).

"The Division of Reproductive and Maternal Health appreciates the Accelerate Project as it continues to assist the Ministry of Health in achieving ICPD25's three zeros. We look forward to completely meeting our objectives with the Accelerate Project across the counties," Hellen Mutsi, Project Officer at the Division of Reproductive and Maternal Health.



PS Kenya, Danish Embassy and National Government stakeholders at the Accelerate Dissemination.

The study, which was conducted in Narok, Kwale, West Pokot, and Garissa, focused on three main objectives: to explore effective strategies for engaging local structures, duty bearers, and males around the Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and gender-based violence agendas. To explore strategies for improving the delivery of quality and integrated SRHR and GBV services in health facilities and to track trajectories over time in social norms related to respect for women's and girls' rights, sexual and reproductive health, and autonomy.

The Accelerate Project team held Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) in the four learning counties with an audience that spanned across the youthful and elderly, health facility providers, community health volunteers, community-based organizations, and different duty bearers. Across the four counties, participants confirmed that they had knowledge of the use of different contraceptives such as pills, condoms, coils, and injectables. However, some women reported that they preferred to use implants because it was easier to hide the method from their husbands, who are against family planning. It was reported that in some facilities in Garissa County, a doctor would send a woman back home to ask

for permission on whether to get family planning from her husband. This finding brought to light the importance of educating men on their involvement in family planning and its benefits to individuals, couples, and the community as a whole.

Another key emerging theme from the study was that of gender-based violence, with participants admitting to being aware of the different forms of GBV and their occurrences in the community, with one of the causes of the violence circling back to the women secretly acquiring family planning methods. In West Pokot and Narok counties, young girls still undergo female genital mutilation due to the belief that this makes them more desirable for marriage. The discussions revealed that the community members are aware of the reporting pathways but choose what occurrences to report based on their judgment. Cases that they deem 'small' go unreported and are instead handled by 'Kangaroo Courts," where justice is rarely served and is usually at the expense of the survivors.

At the institution level, the participants reported a stockout of necessary medication and the callous handling of victims both by health care providers and the legal system in some areas. The lack of proper transportation systems also acts as a hindrance to the reporting of some cases.

The key takeaway from the findings of this research and learning agenda is that while the community is somewhat empowered on their sexual reproductive health rights and about GBV, more has to be done to ensure that they have a safe space to run to and the proper pathways to report to. PS Kenya remains committed to the fight against gender-based violence and other harmful traditional practices to empowering communities in their family planning choices. We invite other stakeholders to join us in creating a safe and empowered environment for all.

Taking Back Your Power through HIV Self-Testing



In today's fast-paced world, deliberately taking time off to reflect and tend to yourself is becoming increasingly difficult. With the constant pressures of work, relationships, and personal responsibilities, it's easy to neglect one's own well-being. So, the question remains: how do we take back our power? And the simple answer is through self-care.

On June 2, 2023, PS Kenya's Strengthening HIV Self-testing in the Private Sector (SHIPS) project held a self-care dialogue day in Kisumu County, whose main objective

was to create a safe space to discuss appropriate and sustainable self-care practices. In attendance were youth from different backgrounds, a key demographic not only for the project's implementation but also for the country as a whole. When posed with the question of what self-care meant to them, the unanimous answer was spending quality time doing something that they loved, either by themselves, with their friends, or with significant others.

In regards to social behavior change communication in the fight against HIV/AIDS, encouraging self-care has emerged as a powerful tool in promoting awareness, prevention, and early detection. HIV Self-testing as a means of self-care has become a cutting-edge strategy that empowers people to take charge of their own health and well-being.

"HIV self-testing gives the user a chance to learn their status from the comfort of their home or any private location. This increases privacy and confidentiality and eliminates HIV-related stigma and prejudice from service providers," stated Wendy Adamba, Learning Advisor, SHIPS Project, PS Kenya.

At PS Kenya, we understand that in some instances, it is essential to reinvent the wheel in order to get the message across, and promoting HIV self-testing as a means to self-care. In order to be successful in this campaign, the SHIPS project embarked on both a digital and on-ground demand creation campaign dubbed 'Confirm Unajijua' that provided information on the benefits, process, and availability of self-testing kits. The campaign also saw the project collaborate with both physical and online pharmacies, such as 'MYDAWA', for easy access to the kits, condoms, and pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis. The campaign incorporated the use of a WhatsApp chatbot that not only offered answers to frequently asked

questions on self-testing but also risk assessment and follow-up services.

One of the target audiences of PS Kenya's SHIPS project is males and females aged 18–34 years. This demographic is made up of university students, recent graduates, and young professionals. The other target audience is males aged 35 and above, due to the fact that there is an increase in extramarital affairs.

In a recent survey conducted by the SHIPS project, it was found that in a sample size of 10 people, the average number of sexual partners attached to one person ranged from two to four, a clear indication that there is a need for a conversation on HIV self-testing, condoms, safe sex, and the use of pre- and post-exposure prophylaxis.

Post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is administered at public health facilities upon assessment of need, i.e., for at-risk populations such as members who engage in transactional sex. However, recurrent use of PEP is discouraged as your body can acquire resistance to the drug, thereby making it less effective. Most public health facilities have also designated certain days or sections of the hospitals for youth-friendly services in order to encourage visitation and reduce stigma in the community. Health facilities have also resorted to the use of peer champions, who act as community health volunteers whose main role is to advocate for and empower the youth on matters of sexual education.

By accepting self-testing as an important component of self-care, society can actively monitor its members' status and make better decisions about individual sexual health. The integration of self-testing into the healthcare system has given the target audience an opportunity to cultivate a culture of self-care, eliminate stigma, and eventually lessen the effects of HIV/AIDS on people and society as a whole.

A Community Health Promoter's Charge Against Malaria in Busia County

Nestled near the border of Kenya and Uganda is Busia County, one of the smallest in the country with a population of about 900,000 people, but also one of the biggest malaria-endemic areas with a prevalence of 39%. The warm temperatures and high humidity create favorable conditions for mosquito breeding, especially during the rainy seasons when stagnant water accumulates. This leads to a high burden of illness and mortality, the effects of which are mostly felt by the vulnerable in the community, that is, children under five years of age and pregnant women.

The disease places a significant strain on the local healthcare system, with factors such as distance to the healthcare facilities that often pose a challenge, but that is where Community Health Promoters (CHPs) such as Jonathan Mwanga come in. Jonathan has 13 years of experience as a CHP, with eight of them in Community Case Management of Malaria (CCMM) after he underwent training by Population Services Kenya in 2016. He covers 174 households in Mundembu village, Nambale sub-county, which has a population of 964 people. Community health promoters like Jonathan have been trained to recognize the symptoms of Malaria and conduct rapid diagnostic tests.

"Sometimes I visit a household and find that everyone is sick and unable to visit the facility, which is 5 kilometers away. Out of the 10 households that I visit on a monthly basis, I will find at least eight positive cases of Malaria."

A typical day for Jonathan starts in Mundembu Dispensary, where he collects his treatment and testing commodities. This is after he got a call from two households that there was an ailing seven-year-old boy and a 54-year-old woman in his area of coverage. Through the winding roads of Nambale sub-county, Jonathan pointed out each

household in which he has saved a life, acknowledging that he does face challenges in his quest for better healthcare.

"You need to understand that we are deep in the village; some people still believe that they fall sick due to being given the evil eye by their neighbor and that the only way to get better is by visiting a witch doctor to reverse the effects of the evil eye."

True to his word, on getting to the first household of the 54-year-old woman who required his services, we were informed that she had opted to visit the traditional doctor instead to 'get bones thrown at her stomach, as they believed that this was where the ailment was. Deeply disappointed, Jonathan led us to the second household, hoping for a better result.

On getting to the second household, we found a seven-year-old boy who had been feeling unwell since the previous morning and was therefore unable to go to school. The boy presented with headaches, chills, and a fever and tested positive for Malaria. Jonathan administered the treatment and advised the boy's mother on the timing and required dosage.

Jonathan's role in his community is to educate members about the transmission of Malaria, its symptoms, and its methods of prevention. He conducts regular community health talks and organizes community awareness campaigns to promote the use of insecticide-treated bed nets, proper sanitation, and the importance of seeking early diagnosis and treatment. One of the biggest challenges he faces in creating awareness about the use of mosquito nets is that some members of the community prefer to use them in the creation of a 'kitchen garden', forgetting that it is one of the best methods of prevention against Malaria. After diagnosis, Jonathan takes it

upon himself to ensure that his patients complete their prescribed dosage by conducting follow-up visits during which he addresses any concerns or complications that may arise. His final task is to ensure that he collects and presents data on the Malaria cases in his community to the health authorities for proper surveillance and monitoring of Malaria trends.

PS Kenya is a proud partner in the fight against Malaria in Busia County funded by The Global Fund. The organization works closely with the local health authorities to support the strengthening of community case management of malaria through the use of CHPs such as Jonathan. The CHPs ensure that there is timely response and proper intervention strategies to combat the disease. In the year 2022 alone, the CHPs tested 186,480 cases and treated 151,276 individuals. Together, we can make significant strides towards a malaria-free future where communities are protected against the burden of this disease.



Jonathan Mwanga, a Community Health Promoter testing for Malaria.

Photo Gallery

CIFF Donor Visit to Kilifi County



FCDO Donor to Homabay County



DANIDA Donor Visit to Kwale County



M-mama Launch by Safaricom



DESIP Media Breakfast



6th RHNK Annual Scientific Conference



Engage with PS Kenya

Email: info@pskenya.org | Website: www.pskenya.org
Tel: +254 271 4346/54 | +254 020 271 5104 | +254 271 5096/98
Cell: +254 722203199 | +254 733363630

Jumuia Place, Wing B, 3rd Floor, Lenana Road P. O. Box 22591 - 00400 Nairobi, Kenya

