

Hatua Yetu



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PS Kenya Donates Water Purification During Emergency Floods Response



Dr. Margaret Njenga donating water purification products in Masinde Muliro Camp, Mathare.

Since late March 2024, Kenya has faced devastating floods, causing widespread destruction across 30 counties. The toll as of May 8, 2024, is devastating with 229 lives lost, 46,937 households displaced, impacting approximately 234,685 individuals. In response, 167 camps have been set up nationwide, providing essential aid and refuge in 19 counties that have been most affected.

In support of flood victims, Population Services Kenya (PS Kenya), alongside the Ministry of Health and the Nairobi County Government, visited the Masinde Muliro Camp in Mathare sub-county. During this visit, PS Kenya donated over 240,000 water purification products worth 2,000,000 Kenya Shillings through Hon. Mary Muthoni,

Principal Secretary, State Department for Public Health and Professional Standards. These supplies will be distributed nationwide, augmenting government efforts to mitigate flood impacts.

“Access to safe drinking water has been cited as one of the main challenges faced by households marooned by floods, as well as those forced into temporary shelters. As it stands, it is important for the health system to prepare for the aftermath of the floods which include among others an increase in the incidence of waterborne diseases,” stated Dr. Margaret Njenga, CEO of PS Kenya.

As floods persist, the risk of waterborne diseases grows. Contaminated water threatens public health, particularly in marginalized communities lacking sanitation and clean water access. Dr. Margaret Njenga, CEO of PS Kenya, emphasized the challenges faced by flood-affected households, stressing the need for health system preparedness.

Displaced individuals in overcrowded camps face heightened risks of waterborne illnesses like cholera due to inadequate sanitation. PS Kenya's water purification donation addresses immediate needs while aligning with sustainable development goals, aiming for a resilient and equitable future.

PS Kenya Signs a Memorandum of Understanding With Jacaranda Health

Population Services Kenya represented by the CEO, Dr. Margaret Njenga, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Jacaranda Health's Co-Executive Director, Cynthia Kahumbura. The MOU was aimed at providing a partnership and cooperation framework between the two organizations, fostering collaboration aimed at improving Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) outcomes in Kenya. The signing of the MOU rubber stamped not just PS Kenya's vision to be the leader in delivering sustainable health impact, but more so its mission to accelerate achievement of positive health outcomes for Kenyans through partnerships, technology and health expertise.

PS Kenya drives impact through five key models namely: Health Systems Strengthening: Through use of a human-centered design model in program design to better understand the underlying issues preventing a target group from adopting healthy behaviors and implementing targeted interventions to influence positive behavior change.

Social and Behavioral Change: PS Kenya uses an evidence-based social behavior change approach that allows for a deeper understanding of the underlying issues preventing a target group from adopting healthy behaviors.

Medical Detailing: Through provider behavior change, PS Kenya enhances the capacity of pharmacy providers to offer the right information, counselling and appropriate referrals.

Social Marketing: PS Kenya develops and markets


quality and affordable health products and services to reduce barriers to access and leverage the private sector distribution chain to reach those in need.

Service Delivery: PS Kenya works with private and public health facilities to strengthen the quality of care by building the capacity of HCWs to deliver reliable and high-quality services.

On the other hand, Jacaranda Health seeks to create solutions that drive impact in three areas namely:

Health Seeking: A third of maternal deaths in Kenya are due to delays in care seeking. Jacaranda Health's 'PROMPTS' platform empowers mothers with information to make informed decisions during and after pregnancy, and seek the right care at the right time and place. Mothers are supported to take up key services linked with better outcomes, such as pre and postnatal care check-ups, infant immunization appointments, and family planning services. Feedback from PROMPTS users is also shared with facilities and governments to make maternal health services more responsive to mothers' needs and experiences.

Quality of Care: Over half of Kenya's maternal deaths are caused by gaps in the quality of intrapartum care, and providers failing to act appropriately during emergencies. Jacaranda Health's MENTORS program builds the capacity of frontline government nurses and midwives to deliver timely, respectful emergency care through continuous, simulation-based training that takes



place in facilities. Data on provider performance is shared with the facility and health system managers, helping them track and address skills and knowledge gaps on a real-time basis.

Sustainability of Services: Jacaranda Health's vision is for their government partners to lead and sustainably finance cost-effective innovations in the public health system. This is achieved by helping them better budget for high impact solutions that improve the quality of maternal health solutions, while generating data that helps them spend limited resources smarter.

Through the MOU, the two organizations committed to cooperate in areas of mutual concern to enhance the effectiveness of their program implementation efforts. The expected outcome of the cooperation is increased access to and utilization of quality family planning, maternal, and neonatal health services, which is envisioned to ultimately lead to a reduction in maternal and neonatal mortality in Kenya.

The MOU is also set to inform the exploration of opportunities to jointly co-create and scale up innovative solutions within existing programs within the two organizations. This will include joint exploration of opportunities for implementation research, documentation and dissemination of best

practices for adoption. Key focus areas that will encompass the collaborative efforts include deployment of the Emergency Obstetric and Neonatal Care (EmONC) Mentorship in agreed counties to improve the skills of nurse midwives in Basic and comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care (B/EmONC). Additionally, enrollment of mothers into the Promoting Mothers in Pregnancy Through SMS (PROMPTs) platform will also be a major focus, especially in Arid and Semi-Arid Land (ASAL) counties. The platform provides support to women throughout their pregnancy journey, during the neonatal period and the first year postpartum. Finally, the two organizations through this partnership will collaboratively host webinars and provide CPD-accredited courses on key areas such as communication skills, ethics, leadership/management etc., all within the focus area of Reproductive Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH).

To mutually leverage each other's strengths, this strategic partnership also provides opportunities for development of joint proposals on areas of mutual interest, with the goal of achieving greater impact and positive health outcomes for Kenyans. Other highlighted areas in the partnership include partnering on other developmental programs and events as well as brand visibility.

PS Kenya Wraps Up another Successful Vaccination project in Nakuru County

After an 18-month journey of implementation, PS Kenya's Vaccination Action Network (VAN) project concluded its operations on April 25, 2024, in the Njoro and Rongai sub-counties of Nakuru County, leaving behind a legacy of success. What commenced as a targeted response to combat the COVID-19 pandemic swiftly evolved into integrated vaccination outreaches and impactful social behaviour change communication campaigns, carried out by the sub-county health management teams.

The project achieved a significant milestone by fully vaccinating over 15,000 individuals, with a notable 54% female participation compared to 46% male participation. This achievement not only reflects the project's effectiveness in reaching diverse segments of the population but also sheds light on broader societal dynamics, such as the prevalent hesitancy among men to seek out health services, a trend observed globally.

To address this hesitancy, the VAN project strategically leveraged the public address system and engaged Community-Owned Resource Persons (CORPs). Through targeted messaging delivered via the public address system, the project effectively disseminated accurate information on the importance and safety of vaccination, addressing concerns and misconceptions that may contribute to hesitancy. Additionally, the involvement of CORPs, trusted members of the community, played a pivotal role in engaging with men directly, providing reassurance, and dispelling myths surrounding vaccination.

Furthermore, the project demonstrated its commitment to comprehensive healthcare by integrating family planning services during vaccination outreaches. This decision resonated particularly well with women in the community, with injectables emerging as the most preferred method among the range of options offered. This strategic integration not only addressed multiple health needs within the community but also capitalised on the opportunity to reach women who may have been hesitant to access these services through traditional channels.

Recognising the importance of prevention and community awareness in combating infectious diseases, the project seized these outreach opportunities to educate and empower community members on cholera prevention and hygiene practices. By integrating this vital messaging alongside vaccination efforts, the project not only heightened awareness but also instilled practical measures to reduce the risk of cholera transmission within the community.

Despite meticulous planning and coordination efforts, intermittent disruptions in vaccine supply posed significant challenges to the project's smooth operation. These stock-outs not only hindered the timely delivery of vaccinations but also tested the project's resilience and ability to adapt to unforeseen circumstances. Nevertheless, through proactive communication and collaboration with health authorities at both sub-county and county levels, the project swiftly implemented strategies to address the issue and minimise disruptions to vaccination services.

To ensure the sustainability of project outcomes beyond their conclusion, concerted efforts were made to strengthen health systems and community engagement mechanisms. Recognising the importance of building local capacity, the VAN project focused on enhancing the skills and capabilities of healthcare workers in the two sub-counties through training and capacity-building initiatives. Through equipping them with the necessary knowledge and tools, the project aimed to empower local health systems to continue delivering quality healthcare

services long after the project's conclusion. As we reflect on the accomplishments of the VAN project, we are reminded of the transformative power of community-led initiatives and the profound impact they can have on improving the lives of individuals and families. Moving forward, PS Kenya remains steadfast in its pursuit of better health and well-being for all, guided by a shared vision of building healthier, more resilient communities where every individual has the opportunity to thrive.



VAN Project close-out meeting in Nakuru County held on April 25, 2024

DESIP Programme and UNFPA Deliver 450,000 Doses of Contraceptives to MoH



DESIP Programme family planning products handover at KEMSA

On May 16, 2024, the UK Government through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), procured and delivered 450,000 doses of DMPA-SC (Sayana Press) contraceptives worth KES. 57 million (£348,000) to Kenya's Ministry of Health. The handover ceremony took place at the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency (KEMSA), Embakasi Supply Chain Centre, marking a significant milestone in the Delivering Equitable and Sustainable Increases in Family Planning Programme (DESIP) in Kenya.

The event was attended by notable figures including Eduarda Mendonca-Gray, Deputy Development Director,

British High Commission, and Anders Thomson, UNFPA Country Representative. The prime partner in the DESIP programme, Dr. Margaret Njenga, CEO of PS Kenya, also participated in the ceremony.

DESIP aims to enhance greater and equitable access and utilization of family planning services across 12 counties with low (<45%) modern contraceptive prevalence rates (mCPR) majority of whom are in the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL). As part of the programme support, FCDO has invested significant amount of resources to close the FP commodity gaps through procurement of these commodities.

In February 2023, UK Government procured contraceptives worth KES. 500M consisting of injectable contraceptives, male and female condoms, hormonal IUDs, implants, and oral contraceptives through UNFPA and handed them over to KEMSA in a similar ceremony. In addition to widening the available contraceptive options, the current donation will benefit more than 400,000 women of reproductive age and avert 42,750 unintended pregnancies and 122 maternal deaths.

Speaking at the event, Ms. Eduarda Mendonca-Gray emphasized the UK Government's commitment to improve reproductive health in Kenya. "The UK Government is dedicated to promoting equitable and sustainable family planning solutions. This contribution is a testament to our ongoing partnership with Kenya in advancing public health."

Anders Thomson highlighted the importance of such collaborations in achieving broader health goals. "Ensuring that women have access to reliable contraceptives is crucial for their health and well-being. This initiative aligns with our mission to support Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights across the globe."

The DESIP programme is funded by the UK Government and implemented by PS Kenya among other partners, is a strategic initiative to address the disparities in family planning in Kenya. Since its inception, the programme has contributed to significant progress in the SRH indicators in Kenya. Nine (9) of the 12 counties of focus registered increases in their modern contraceptive prevalence rates as per KDHS 2022. The programme has averted 1.5 million unintended pregnancies, 3,900 maternal deaths and over 330,000 unsafe abortions. . The programme has also achieved 3.1 million couple years of protection and over 300,000 FP additional users. Through its' social marketing component, DESIP has distributed over 23 million condoms, 3.7 million pills, and 56,000 injectables. These efforts ensure that women and girls can safely plan their pregnancies and improve their SRHR, contributing to their overall health and empowerment.

This handover marked a pivotal step in enhancing reproductive health services and highlights the importance of international cooperation in addressing public health challenges.

Addressing the Unmet Need for Gender-Based Violence Shelters

In a significant step forward in the fight against gender-based violence (GBV), survivors in 13 counties—Baringo, Elgeyo Marakwet, Garissa, Homa Bay, Kajiado, Kilifi, Kwale, Mandera, Marsabit, Nairobi, Narok, Samburu, and West Pokot—will receive additional funding from the Embassy of Denmark in Kenya to enhance GBV shelters as safe spaces.

GBV shelters provide temporary refuge and comprehensive support services to survivors of gender-based violence. This development comes in response to alarming statistics in Kenya, revealing that one in three Kenyan women experience physical or sexual violence.

Kenya has an urgent need for GBV shelters and safe spaces, as highlighted by a recent status report from the Generation Equality Secretariat (June 2022). The report revealed that only 18 of Kenya's 47 counties currently have operational shelters and rescue centers. The existing shelters face several challenges, including financial constraints, limited space, and a lack of resources and human capital to effectively provide services. Many shelters are overcrowded and struggling to sustain operations without adequate support from state agencies, county, and national governments.

Amid these challenges, significant efforts are underway to address this pressing need. PS Kenya's Accelerate Project, funded by the Embassy of Denmark in Kenya, has a proven track record of reducing maternal mortality and morbidity, addressing the unmet need for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), including family planning, and reducing the prevalence of GBV.

The project is now expanding its safety net by spearheading the establishment of GBV shelters in the 13 counties where it is being implemented.

This initiative is a direct response to a promise made during the third anniversary celebrations of the International Conference on Population Development (ICPD 25), where the Embassy of Denmark committed to setting up shelters across the country to intensify the fight against GBV.

The implementation of this intervention will be carried out by the Gender Violence Recovery Centre, with Population Services International handling research on access to shelters and PS Kenya providing overall oversight of the consortium.

The significance of these shelters extends beyond physical protection. They will serve as a focal point for psychosocial support and raising community awareness on gender-based violence, which is essential for driving attitude and behavior change.

This will also provide an opportunity for survivors to promptly report incidents within the crucial 72-hour timeframe ensuring they receive the necessary care and support they need as well as for the vital collection of crucial evidence needed for legal proceedings.

Despite these efforts, this remains a drop in the ocean. Every stakeholder must take action to support this cause. Without access to safe and secure shelters, survivors of GBV may be unable to escape their abusers, exposing themselves to further violence.

PS Kenya's Pioneering Efforts at the 7th RHNK Annual Scientific Conference

The 7th RHNK Annual Scientific Conference, themed 'Priorities for Advancing Adolescents and Youth Sexual Reproductive Health Rights (AYSRHR) in Africa,' gathered leading organizations and professionals dedicated to enhancing the health and rights of young people across the continent. At the forefront of this pivotal event was PS Kenya, demonstrating its unwavering commitment to advancing reproductive health through innovative projects and interventions.

PS Kenya's presence at the conference was marked by a dynamic booth featuring its flagship reproductive health projects: DESIP (Delivering Equitable and Sustainable Increases in Family Planning), Binti Shupavu (A360) and Accelerate. These interventions are designed to address the diverse and pressing reproductive health needs of Kenya's adolescents and youth, drawing considerable attention and offering the conference attendees invaluable insights into PS Kenya's impactful nationwide efforts.

During the conference, PS Kenya had the privilege of showcasing some of their interventions, such as 'The Role of Religious Leaders in Influencing Fertility Behavior for the Successful Adoption of Family Planning Among Young Women.' This presentation highlighted how engaging religious leaders can be a game-changer in promoting family planning practices among young women, particularly in culturally sensitive regions like Mandera. By leveraging their platforms, religious leaders have the ability to dispel misconceptions, address fears, and promote accurate information about contraception. Their support not only helps bridge cultural barriers but also promotes an environment where young women are empowered to make informed choices about their reproductive health. This approach not only enhances the reach and effectiveness of family planning programs but also promotes healthier communities where individuals can thrive in accordance with their religious convictions.



PS Kenya's staff during the 7th Annual RHNK Conference in Mombasa County

Another key presentation, “Assessment of Contraceptive Use Patterns Among Adolescent Girls Aged 15-19 years in Kenya,” delved into the contraceptive behaviors of young Kenyan girls. This assessment provided valuable data on usage patterns, barriers to access, and the effectiveness of various contraceptive methods. The findings from this presentation are poised to drive significant advancements in reproductive health strategies, offering a roadmap for tailored interventions that address the unique needs of adolescents. The study highlights the urgency of bridging gaps in reproductive health services and ensuring that young women are empowered with the knowledge and resources to make informed decisions about their reproductive health.

In Narok and Baringo counties, PS Kenya has implemented a ‘Structured Mentorship Approach for Increasing Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC) Healthcare Service Delivery to Adolescents and Young Women.’ This approach effectively addresses the unique challenges faced in rural areas by improving healthcare provider skills, and empowering young women with better access to vital reproductive health services. This presentation highlighted PS Kenya’s commitment to advancing reproductive health and rights through sustainable and impactful interventions, showcasing our dedication to empowering communities and enhancing healthcare accessibility for adolescents and young women.

Recognizing the importance of media in shaping youth behavior and attitudes, PS Kenya took part in a panel discussion on the topic ‘The Evolving Media Ecosystem for the Youth: Implications for SRH Strategies.’ The

conversation explored how changes in media consumption among young people impact sexual and reproductive health strategies. By understanding these trends, PS Kenya and other stakeholders can craft more effective campaigns that resonate with the youth and promote healthy behaviors.

The ‘Manyatta Model’ was another highlight of PS Kenya’s participation. This transformative approach to community and household engagement focuses on creating supportive environments for adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health. By involving entire communities, the Manyatta Model ensures that young people receive comprehensive support and education, leading to better health outcomes. PS Kenya also showcased its efforts in ‘Embracing Digital Innovations to Increase Access to Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (AYSRH) Information through USSD Codes.’ This innovative use of technology allows young people to access vital reproductive health information quickly and discreetly, breaking down barriers to knowledge and services.

A significant moment for PS Kenya at the conference was leading the panel discussion on ‘Building Together: Adolescent and Youth-Centric Approaches to SRHR and Family Planning.’ This highlighted the importance of fostering partnerships and leveraging diverse perspectives to address the unique needs of the youth including those living with disabilities and from marginalized communities. PS Kenya’s active participation in the conference showed its strong commitment to promoting sexual and reproductive health rights for adolescents and youth in Africa. PS Kenya is leading the way towards a healthier and more informed generation with their innovative projects, impactful interventions, and influential leadership.

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