

Serving with a passion - Mwanasha Nyamawi's story

Mwanasha Nyamawi serves the people of Mwangulu Community Health Unit, Kwale County as a Community Health Volunteer. Working as a volunteer she says, keeps her motivated in serving and helping her people who have eventually learnt to come to her for their health needs and concerns.

Mwanasha's roles as a CHV includes visiting the assigned households and sensitizing community members on matters to do with health and sanitation. Mwanasha talks of how she helps in sensitizing people to dig pit latrines in order to improve their hygiene and reduce hygiene related diseases; and to achieve this, she encourages group work whereby community members come together to dig pit latrines for everyone in the group in turns.

"People here work better in groups as it makes them more motivated, thus digging these latrines together makes it easier and faster for the community members," stated Mwanasha.

Amref Health Africa has been putting efforts to curb the high rates of maternal and newborn deaths in Africa; CHVs like Mwanasha have therefore been trained in handling pregnant mothers and their newborns and the need to encourage them to get checked in health centers during and after pregnancy. Mwanasha insists to pregnant mothers to go for prenatal clinic visits to make sure that they do not get complications during birth and to detect problems that may occur during the pregnancy, some of which maybe preventable.



Though Mwanasha enjoys and loves her work, she faces challenges sometimes especially when she has to walk long distances to go visit her households which may be far apart. This makes it hard to visit all the households as sometimes dusk finds her on the road.

The problem of transport was however solved in February 2017 after the Global Fund TB, Malaria and AIDs through Amref Health Africa and in association with World bicycle foundation gave 501 bicycles to CHVs in the area. Another challenge as put forth by Mwanasha is that they do not get paid for the work they do but rather depend on allowances which they get from trainings and several projects, this is not enough to take care of the many responsibilities she has at home.

“We have children and families to take care of and this becomes hard when we don’t have a steady income to rely on,” she said.

Asked what she hopes for the future in her work as a CHV, Mwanasha said she hopes she will get a regular salary for her work and that community members will keep benefitting from her knowledge and efforts.