

ADVOCACY Bulletin

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Amref to play key role in Universal Health Coverage




Amref Health Africa Group CEO, Dr Githinji Gitahi.

Amref Health Africa has outlined proposals to help accelerate the attainment of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

The health institution has partnered with Kenya's National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) to accelerate the scale-up of UHC by using Community Health Workers (CHWs) as agents for NHIF registration at community level.

Speaking during the UHC Financing Forum in Washington in April, Amref Health Africa Group CEO Dr Githinji Gitahi said that the organisation has already aligned its programmes in readiness for the roll-out.

"Borrowing from our corporate strategy, we target to increase financial protection for communities by working with CHWs to educate them on the importance of getting medical cover," he said. "We also target to mobilise donor resources for health subsidies. We want to use the donor money to catalyse UHC."

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WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR

Amref Health Africa has crystallised its key advocacy focus areas. Top on the list is Community Health Worker (CHW) advocacy. The main focus here is the integration of CHWs into formal health systems so that they are recognised, supported and remunerated appropriately for the work they do. Amref believes that this is the only way to retain and hold CHWs accountable for their role in achieving primary health care targets.

The second area of advocacy is the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.

The third and final area of advocacy is Universal Health Coverage (UHC). The UHC movement has taken up with a storm across the world and Amref is at the centre of it.

Amref Health Africa Group CEO Dr Githinji Gitahi is a co-chair for the UHC 2030. Further, projects are being aligned across countries to take up the UHC agenda. The momentum created so far in influencing policy and implementation of various projects, means that Amref is destined to realise its vision of lasting health change.

 Dr Joachim Osur

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The main principal of UHC is that everyone is able to access basic health services without financial hitches. In many countries of sub-Saharan Africa, where out-of-pocket expenditure pushes large numbers of households into extreme poverty, financial protection is particularly necessary, yet non-existent.

Dr Gitahi said that Amref has offered to act as an implementer for governments, giving them an avenue to channel funds to various programmes.

“Since we are strong in training, we will continue to build capacities of health workers and institutions,” he said.

“We want citizens to be proactive. We want them to ask hard questions, such as ‘where did our money go?’ With this, there will be some sort of accountability,”

Amref has been advocating for the recognition and remuneration of CHWs, and their integration into the formal health workforce in African countries as they are pivotal to achieving UHC.

Dr Gitahi noted that capacity building for citizens is a priority as it will go a long way in creating social accountability. He said that citizens should be involved in the budget making processes, designing health programmes and demanding for their rights.

“We want citizens to be proactive. We want them to ask hard questions, such as ‘where did our money go?’ With this, there will be some sort of accountability,” he said.

Dr Gitahi was recently appointed co-chair of the UHC2030 Steering Committee, a global responsibility he will undertake even as he continues to head Amref’s day-to-day operations. The UHC2030 is a World Bank and World Health Organisation forum for achievement of UHC by 2030 and has membership across countries, private sector and civil society organisations.

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Compiled by Hezron Owuor & Dennis Ochiel



Amref Health Africa Group CEO, Dr Githinji Gitahi

Sing 4 Change

Using songs to spice up advocacy in Uganda



The songs were anchored on seven thematic areas including HIV/AIDS, TB, Nutrition, Malaria, Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning, and Non-communicable diseases and the general health workers' social welfare.



A group of renowned Ugandan musicians are using the power of music to inspire advocacy, thanks to a partnership between Health Systems Advocacy Partnership (HSAP) project, PATH and the artists.

The group made up of 13 local singers are bringing an exotic flavour to the local music scene with a mix of advocacy messages with blended – gospel, local, lingala and reggae hits.

Dubbed Sing4Change, the hits integrate messages of health education, community empowerment and health systems strengthening.

The songs were unveiled to the public in a live band music performance by the six artists

under a campaign dubbed "Sing4Change" on April 13 at Serena Kampala Hotel.

The launch which attracted more than 400 people also saw senior government officials including the Speaker of the National Assembly attend.

The fanfare show got off to a thrilling start with Wilson Bugembe, a renowned gospel singer taking to the stage with his newest hits in town.

Other artists included Rema Namakula a youthful musician, Joanita Kawalya a great musician for the older generation, Ziza Bafana with a big

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Rastafarian crowd, Mesach Semakula and Dr Hilderman who are loved by the local crowds.

The songs were anchored on seven thematic areas including HIV/AIDS, TB, Nutrition, Malaria, Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning, and Non-communicable diseases and the general health workers' social welfare.

They also include messages on citizen rights, responsibilities and social accountability.

During the event, the Deputy Country Director Dr Patrick Kagurusi used the occasion to lobby the government to implement a raft of proposals including implementation of the National Health Insurance Scheme.

Others included increase investment in health care in line with Abuja declaration of 15 percent of GDP, train health workers as well as recognise and remunerate Community Health Workers.

He further requested the government to ensure affordable and accessible reproductive healthy commodities especially family planning, eliminate all forms of violence against girls and regulate the migration of health workers from Uganda.

The music concert started with a blood donation exercise and HIV testing services in which more than 400 people turned up to donate blood and others undertook HIV testing.



The HSAP programme has partnered with six popular Ugandan celebrity artists to compose and produce 13 songs in both audio and video.

For more details about the songs please visit here:

<https://path.box.com/s/uj3zbpdltnyv0ch8g5xsdpkwadhcxj>

Compiled by Lilian Kimanzi

Amref discusses Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) at the UN

Amref Health Africa hosted a special panel discussion during the 62nd session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) to discuss different interventions that have succeeded in the fight against FGM/C.

The event which took place at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from March 12 to 23 emphasised on the need to embrace community-led approaches in the fight against the cut.

One of the key game-changing interventions pitched included empowering women to protect them from violence as well as to entrench gender equality.

Nice Leng'ete, Amref's anti-FGM activist who was recently named in TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in the world this year, shared her story on how she escaped the harmful practice and embraced Alternative Rites of Passage.

The meeting which was graced by three panelists Yasmeeen Hassan (Equality Now), Arianna DeLorenzi (Women Deliver) and Nathalie Nkoume (IPPF African Region) was attended by the Dutch government delegation.

Carol Jenkins (journalist and board member of Amref USA) was the moderator of the session.

This year's theme was 'Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls'.



Nice Leng'ete and other partners during 62nd session of CSW.

Nice Leng'ete, Amref's anti-FGM activist who was recently named in TIME magazine's 100 most influential people in the world this year, shared her story on how she escaped the harmful practice and embraced Alternative Rites of Passage.

Meanwhile, Amref Netherlands, a member of the Dutch NGO CSW consultation network, participated in the Dutch consultation process prior to the CSW.

The New York event provided an opportunity for a joint meeting between Amref USA ArtBall Donor and Nice.



CSW session in progress at the United Nations Headquarters

Compiled by Dona Anyona (HQ) and Bertine Pries (Amref Netherlands)



Media Network learns 'spitfire' advocacy

HSA partners and AMNH members posing for a group photo soon after the spitfire advocacy orientation workshop.

In April 2018, Amref Health Africa in Tanzania held a four day workshop to orient the Health Systems Advocacy Partnership (HSAP) partners on the spitfire advocacy strategy.

Spitfire is a tool for helping organisations develop high impact and effective persuasive communication.

The unique strategy is crucial in helping organisations as well as individuals who are change agents to make decisions that will produce high result.

The spitfire training is one of the activities that

seeks to ensure a dynamic and operational HSAP, an immediate outcome of the HSAP Theory of Change.

The workshop saw the attendance of ACHEST and HAI through their local partners (SIKIKA and UMATI consecutively) and the Tanzanian chapter of Africa Media Network on Health (AMNH).

"We use our pens to demand accountability but knowing how to advocate beyond the scope of the media is an added advantage. The media too can use the spitfire approach to develop specific, compelling, memorable and clear messages to our audiences. We thank you so much," said Kenneth Simbaya, the chairman of AMNH Tanzania.

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Compiled by Josiah Otege

Kajiado county steps up campaign to tame bulging population

Kajiado County Government leaders are stepping up campaign with calls on locals to embrace family planning to tame surging population in the region.

Speaking during the launch of Costed Implementation Plan in March, Kajiado county leaders led by Health CEC Esther Somoire challenged locals to use method mix contraception to tackle high population growth in the region. The Health Systems Advocacy Partnership (HSAP) project has remained on the forefront in supporting the county tame its bulging population.

The programme has supported the county in drafting policy tools, mobilising other partners

to form a technical working group as well as speeding the implementation of FP2020.

Kenya signed the FP2020 commitment at the London Summit on Family Planning on July 11, 2012, to increase married women contraceptive.

Costed Implementation Plan is a broad-based planning and management tool that include cost estimates for multiyear action plans.

The county is banking on increasing budget allocation for family planning and involving the Community Health Workers (CHWs) in fixing its growing populations

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Compiled by Beatrice Oluoch

Five counties signs accord to boost reproductive health indicators

A group of Members of County Assembly (MCAs) from Homa Bay, Kisumu, Siaya, Migori and Kisii have signed an accord to boost region's reproductive health indicators. Under an umbrella movement South West Kenya inter-county Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), the legislators have vowed to lobby for increased health care facilities providing comprehensive adolescent and youth-friendly services.



Beatrice Oluoch giving a presentation

The lawmakers in partnership with the Health Systems Advocacy Partnership (HSAP) project are cognisant of the challenges facing young people including rising teenage pregnancy.

The accord seeks to address the following;

- Incorporate inclusive programme-based budgeting and increase budgetary allocation for reproductive health.
- Ensure adoption and domestication of existing national policies on SRHR at the county level and strengthen community dialogues among all stakeholders on teenage pregnancy, female genital mutilation and early marriages.
- Collaborate with state and non-state actors in the dissemination of relevant policies and actions by county's Health Committee.
- Lobby for the recognition and remuneration of CHWs.
- Tackle teenage pregnancies.
- Tackle maternal, child and infant mortality

The Champions committed to;

- Establish and equip at least one youth-friendly service facility in every sub-county.

- Integrate youth-friendly services in the county's Sexual and Reproductive Health Bill.
- Work on the Community Health Service Bill to ensure CHWs are recognised and remunerated.
- Collaborate with Ministry of Education to strengthen comprehensive sex educations.
- Champion for increased budgetary allocation to health and strengthen collaboration with state and non-state actors.



Participants of South Western and Nyanza county

So far the HSAP project has played a key role in influencing Homa Bay county to pass a number of laws including the community health services and family planning policy.

Compiled by Beatrice Oluoch

Amref launches 2018 AMNH Excellence in Health Journalism Awards



Amref Health Africa through Health Systems Advocacy Partnership project is proud to launch 2018 Africa Media Network on Health (AMNH) Excellence in Health Journalism Awards.

The inaugural AMNH Excellence in Health Journalism Awards are designed to recognise and reward journalists who have demonstrated outstanding merit in health reporting.

The health and well-being of most sub-Saharan Africa remain plagued by a relentless burden of inadequate human resources to provide care for a growing population, persisting social disparities and infectious and non-communicable diseases.

While African countries have signed up to global, regional and local commitments aimed at promoting expansion of their health systems, many of these pledges have not been fulfilled.

Without political goodwill, cash commitments or accountability of leaders, such declarations will remain just that – declarations.

When African leaders made a pronouncement in Abuja in 2001 to allocate at least 15 percent of their annual budgets to the health sector, there was a high expectation that the continent would finally be able to provide quality health care services for its people.

More than a decade later, health systems remain poorly funded with a dire lack of basic equipment and commodities, medical staff and supporting infrastructure.

The AMNH will seek to hold African leaders accountable to their commitments and to ensure transparency in health expenditure.

The ceremony itself will be hosted at Safari Park Hotel in Nairobi Kenya on 5th October 2018.

The Director Regional Programmes at Amref Health Africa Dr Joachim Osur said: “We are very excited to launch the AMNH Excellence in Health Journalism Awards in Nairobi for the first time.”

“It provides an excellent opportunity for journalists to advocate for the strengthening of health systems to provide affordable, safe and high quality care in line with Universal Health Coverage (UHC).”

Dr Osur noted that the media plays an important role in pushing the political agenda by holding leaders accountable and thus creating enabling environment to increase allocation and utilisation of funds.

The benefits of entering this awards includes opportunity to win a scholarship to train in health journalism at Amref International University as well as winning cash prizes.

Compiled by Hezron Owuor

World Health Worker Week: // //

■ Group CEO sees work of CHWs first-hand

During World Health Worker Week in April, Amref Health Africa's Group CEO, Dr Githinji Gitahi got a first-hand view of the vital health care that Community Health Workers (CHWs) provide in Kenya. He followed CHWs as they visited families to check up on the health of newborn babies, pregnant women, and elderly people. He watched as CHWs held community-wide



Amref Health Africa Group CEO, Dr Githinji Gitahi with CHWs as they visited families

meetings to screen people for hypertension, provide information on how

help attain Universal Health Coverage by 2030.

Want to learn more about Amref Health Africa's campaign on CHWs? Read Dr Gitahi's statement for World Health Day: Community Health Workers not Volunteers for Universal Health Coverage in sub-Saharan Africa.



<https://amref.org/news/world-health-day-chws-universal-health-coverage-sub-saharan-africa/>

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Compiled by Jennifer Foulds

Research on CHWs kicks off

The Health Systems Advocacy Partnership project has embarked on conducting research on Community Health workers (CHWs) to generate evidence-based data in advocating for recognition of CHWs.

The two year study which was started this year is being conducted across the five HSAP countries. A meeting was held in Lusaka Zambia between March 13 and 14 where the teams jointly developed research topics.

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Compiled by Rehema Chengo

Amref's corporate advocacy strategy 2018-2022

Amref Health Africa's contribution to lasting health change is only possible when its health programmes, innovations, community knowledge and research results are translated into policies. Therefore, Amref has elevated advocacy as a cross-cutting theme in its corporate strategy. The health institution will leverage its influence, expertise, reach, and trusted role with communities and governments across Africa to advocate for development and implementation of policies to advance the three pillars of its strategy.

In March 2018 the corporate advocacy strategy was developed which will strengthen and steer our efforts to reach lasting health change in Africa.

Community Health workers (CHWs) and midwives fill a critical gap in access to health services by community members, particularly those who are most marginalised and hard to reach. They are the two cadres of frontline health workers that create the greatest impact on health at community level, especially on women and children's health. As such, CHWs and midwives are central to effective primary healthcare and necessary components to the achievement of universal health coverage. Amref has a strong history of leadership in capacity strengthening and advocacy for CHWs and midwives, which it is ready to bring to a new level of influence and impact through the new corporate strategy.



Corporate advocacy goal:

Governments in Africa implement policies to reach universal health coverage by ensuring access to primary health care through frontline health workers, with a primary focus on community health workers and midwives.

Advocacy objectives:

- National governments adopt policies to engage CHWs and midwives to increase access to primary care
- National governments adopt policies to integrate CHWs into the formal health workforce
- National or regional regulatory bodies implement and support accreditation of all CHWs and midwives
- National governments adopt innovations and technologies in training of CHWs and midwives that maximise quality, reach, and cost-effectiveness
- Ministers of health and finance adequately remunerate CHWs and midwives

In our next bulletin, more about our corporate advocacy strategy and what countries will do!

Compiled by Veerle Ver Loren Van



Picture Speak





Contributors

Dr Joachim Osur | Jennifer Foulds | Veerle Ver Loren Van
Dona Anyona | Beatrice Oluoch | Hezron Owuor | Lilian Kimanzi
Rehema Chengo | Bertine Pries | Josiah Otege

Content Editing

Hezron Owuor

Layout & Design

Dennis Ochiel



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