

A Ciheb-Kenya **t a G**lance

Issue | May-June

Ciheb-Kenya signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Machakos County.

The U=U Communication Strategy Workshop

Revolutionizing Healthcare through Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

TRACK launches Report on Routine Immunization



Ciheb-Kenya signs a Memorandum of Understanding with Machakos County Government to Strengthen Healthcare Delivery in the County.

The signing of the MOU between Ciheb-Kenya and the Machakos County Government marks a significant milestone in the journey towards improving the health and well-being of the people of Machakos. By combining their expertise, resources, and shared vision, both entities are poised to make a lasting impact in the fight against HIV and TB, ultimately improving the lives of individuals and communities in the county. This collaboration sets a positive precedent for future partnerships to pursue better healthcare outcomes throughout Kenya.

In a significant move towards improving healthcare delivery and enhancing the HIV response, Ciheb-Kenya signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Machakos County Government. The ceremony, officiated by the Governor, H.E. Wavinya Ndeti, marked a crucial step towards collaboration in improving the health of the people of Machakos County.



During the ceremony, Governor Wavinya Ndeti reaffirmed her government's unwavering commitment to the well-being of the county's residents and emphasized the importance of partnerships in achieving this goal. By joining forces with Ciheb-Kenya, the county government aims to leverage the organization's expertise and resources to strengthen healthcare delivery across Machakos.

Dr. Emily Koech, the CEO of Ciheb Kenya, highlighted that the MOU was carefully crafted to address the unique dynamics affecting the county's HIV response. Drawing on best practices and lessons learned from previous experiences, the MoU aims to overcome challenges and maximize the impact of HIV interventions in Machakos.



The County Executive Member for Health, Dr. Daniel Yumba, emphasized the expanded scope of the County Department of Health in providing a continuum of HIV services. These services include prevention, care, and treatment, elimination of mother-to-child transmission (eMTCT), and community interventions that address the social determinants of ill health. Dr. Yumba also stressed the integration of this scope into the County Integrated Development Plan, ensuring a comprehensive and holistic approach to healthcare.

Ciheb-Kenya's involvement in Machakos County is through the PACT Imara program, which supports providing comprehensive HIV and tuberculosis (TB) prevention and treatment services. This program targets general, key, and priority populations in Machakos, Makueni, and Kitui Counties. By extending its expertise and support, Ciheb-Kenya aims to strengthen the response to HIV and TB, ensuring that these services reach those who most need them.

Through the MOU, Ciheb-Kenya and the Machakos County Government will collaborate closely to improve healthcare infrastructure, enhance capacity-building initiatives, strengthen data management systems, and streamline the delivery of HIV and TB prevention and treatment services.



This partnership will create a conducive environment for innovation, knowledge exchange, and continuous improvement in healthcare delivery within the county.





Revolutionizing Healthcare through Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI)

The University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), in collaboration with the Ciheb-Kenya, launched the Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) platform in Kisumu under the Entrench Program on 20th June. This event was presided by CEC Health Kisumu County, Dr. Gregory Nganda, UMB Kenya Country Director, Dr. Caroline Ng'eno, and representatives from CDC Kenya and National AIDS and STIs Control Program.

The CQI Digital Platform empowers healthcare providers with a digital tool to track, input, and process health data efficiently. Technology has enabled the platform to streamline data management processes and ensure data-driven decision-making, improving patient healthcare outcomes.

Ciheb and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB) have been developing a continuous quality improvement (CQI) approach to improve health systems and guide healthcare providers, policymakers, and program planners in more than eight countries. The results have directly contributed to developing national strategic plans and partnership frameworks, improved service delivery, strengthened health systems, and broadened programmatic activities. The resources to advance CQI include easy-to-use resource guides, curriculums, templates, and illustrated best practices.



Development of the platform began in 2011 and is the result of collaboration and iteration by numerous partners and individuals. These partners include the Ministry of Health, the National AIDS and STIs Control Program, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Kenya, Ciheb-Kenya, and the University of Maryland, Baltimore.

During the launch event, Violet Makokha, the Regional CQI Director for Maryland Global Initiative Corporation (MGIC), demonstrated the platform's functionalities, guiding those present through the login and user process. To ensure the implementation of the CQI platform, over 200 healthcare managers in Kisumu underwent comprehensive training on navigating and utilizing the platform's features.



The CQI Launch - ENTRENCH

The CQI Platform ensures personalized healthcare provision leads to adequate care and treatment with lower resource use. Through tracking and monitoring performance indicators, healthcare providers can identify areas of improvement and implement targeted interventions to enhance service delivery.

The launch marked an important step in revolutionizing healthcare in Kisumu and other parts of the country.





U=U Communication Strategy Workshop

Ciheb-Kenya's Connect hosted esteemed guests from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta and CDC Kenya for a U=U (Undetectable = Untransmittable) Communication Strategy Workshop.

The workshop brought together experts to discuss the transformative impact of U=U messaging in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

To gain first-hand insights into the Kenyan context and develop a robust communication strategy, the teams visited various facilities in Nairobi.

These visits included the Kibera Community Health Center, the Bar Hostess Empowerment Program (BHESP), and SWOP City. These interactions provided an opportunity to observe and learn from local initiatives that effectively communicate the U=U message.

The visits fostered engaging discussions on effective ways to communicate the message of U=U and ensure that this groundbreaking knowledge reaches individuals affected by HIV/AIDS in our communities.



The participants collectively worked towards refining and enhancing communication strategies by sharing experiences, best practices, and lessons learned.

The Workshop

The U=U Communication Strategy Workshop, officially opened by Dr. Rose Wafula, the Head of the National AIDS and STIs Control Program (NASCOP), brought together County AIDS and STI Coordinators from 26 counties, the Key Population Consortium, the National Empowerment Network of People living with HIV/AIDS in Kenya (NEPHAK), and other implementing partners.

The workshop's primary focus was conducting a comprehensive situation analysis and refining the program logic model for the U=U Communication Strategy. By critically analyzing the current landscape and leveraging evidence-based insights, the participants worked towards designing a tailored approach to communicate the U=U message.

This process aimed to ensure that the strategy aligns with the specific needs of communities across Kenya and is guided by evidence-based best practices.

The successful completion of the U=U Communication Strategy Workshop was celebrated on its final day. The participants showcased their dedication and active engagement throughout the five days, contributing to significant progress in finalizing the draft strategy and developing national charters. All attendees' collective effort and commitment have laid a solid foundation for implementing a comprehensive and effective U=U communication strategy in Kenya.



TRACK Launches Preliminary Report on Routine Immunization

Ciheb-Kenya 's TRACK program recently organized a workshop to review and enhance the preliminary report on routinizing catch-up vaccination in Siaya County. The study aimed to enhance the frequency and scope of catch-up vaccination for children under five years of age in healthcare facilities and understand short-term outcomes in Siaya. The workshop provided an opportunity to reflect on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly on routine immunization and other aspects of healthcare.



Dr. Emily Koech noted that Ciheb-Kenya has worked closely with the NVIP through the TRACK program, supporting immunization activities in Siaya County. The collaboration included integrating COVID-19 vaccination into routine immunization and addressing challenges related to the pandemic's impact on undiagnosed TB cases. Dr. Koech expressed her appreciation to the Task Force for Global Health (TFGH), County Leadership, and NVIP for their support throughout the journey and highlighted the importance of this evaluation in identifying different approaches to human resources for health, monitoring and evaluation, leadership, and governance, and health financing.

Dr. Rose Jalang'o, the Head of NVIP, highlighted Siaya County's history of being at the forefront of medical trials and pilot studies, emphasizing the county's strong and receptive health leadership. Ciheb-Kenya has been working closely with Siaya County and the national team to inform policies at the national level. Dr. Jalang'o acknowledged that the pandemic brought numerous challenges, as resources were diverted toward addressing a single disease, leading to routine immunization disruptions. She looked forward to hearing specific support strategies discussed during the workshop and emphasized the NVIP's commitment to sharing guidelines with counties to address these challenges.





Dr. Owino Omondi, the Chief Officer for Health in Siaya County, acknowledged the support of all partners involved in strengthening immunization efforts in Siaya. He emphasized the importance of learning from the workshop discussions to build a resilient system that ensures immunization reaches every child—the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic response were particularly valuable. Dr. Owino wanted to explore how routine immunization can be maintained during crises like COVID-19. He also highlighted the need for increased investment in immunization, as significant resources have been allocated to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) compared to immunization efforts.

Following the successful completion of the Routine Immunization workshop by the Ciheb Kenya TRACK program, alongside the Taskforce for Global Health (TGFH) team and Dr. Pierre Muhoza from CDC Atlanta, the team gathered for a strategy meeting to deliberate on a plan to enhance the delivery of routine Catch-up immunization for children below 60 months of age in Siaya County.

Some strategies for implementation include capacity building of healthcare workers, community health assistants, and promoters.

This is hoped to lead to improved documentation and reporting of immunization records; reduction of drop-out rates; minimization of missed vaccination opportunities; and enhanced communication with caregivers at facility and community levels.

Looking Ahead





USAID STAWISHA Pwani's Commitment to Ending AIDS by 2030

Over the past decade, significant strides have been made in combatting mother-to-child transmission of HIV. By prioritizing access to treatment for pregnant and breastfeeding women living with HIV, remarkable improvements have been achieved in the health and well-being of mothers and their children. This approach has not only empowered women to manage their HIV status effectively but has also ensured a brighter future for the next generation, free from the burden of HIV. However, despite global progress, Kenya's mother-to-child transmission (MTCT) rates are rising.

The national MTCT rate has increased from 8.3% in 2015 to 10.3% in 2020. Pregnancy and breastfeeding periods remain particularly vulnerable to transmission, with one in ten infants born to HIV-positive pregnant and breastfeeding women in Kenya acquiring the virus. The highest infection rates are observed during late pregnancy and breastfeeding, necessitating urgent action

Sustainable Development Goals and USAID STAWISHA Pwani's Contribution

Aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), one of which is to end AIDS by 2030, Ciheb-Kenya, as a sub-grant in the USAID STAWISHA Pwani project, has taken a proactive role in eliminating mother-to-child transmission. With a focus on the Coastal Counties of Kenya, including Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, and Taita Taveta, STAWISHA Pwani supports over 300 healthcare facilities. The initiative has intensified efforts to combat MTCT, making it the first partner among USAID's counterparts in Kenya.

EMTCT Taskforce and Collaborative Efforts

Recognizing the need for a coordinated approach, through Ciheb-Kenya, USAID STAWISHA Pwani established an EMTCT task force that engages stakeholders from the four counties. Each county has developed its terms of reference (TORs) and membership to participate in this critical initiative actively. Collaboration among these stakeholders has been crucial in achieving substantial progress.

Monitoring Progress with the EMTCT Dashboard

USAID STAWISHA Pwani has introduced an EMTCT dashboard to track county and sub-county performance. This tool enables real-time monitoring of progress toward reducing MTCT rates. The dashboard provides vital data that informs decision-making and allows for timely interventions, facilitating the achievement of the project's objective of reducing the EMTCT rate by 50% by September 2023

Focused Approach for COP 23 Priorities

In alignment with the priorities for COP 23, USAID STAWISHA Pwani is dedicated to unpacking and addressing them through a focused approach. The initiative has identified key strategies to enhance their impact, including:

Enhanced HEI Screening

Strengthening early screening for HIV-exposed infants (HEI) to identify and initiate appropriate interventions promptly.

Continuity of Care for Mother-Infant Pairs
Ensuring uninterrupted care and support for HIV-positive mothers and their infants from pregnancy to postnatal stages.

AGYW-Centered Services

Delivering services prioritizing the unique needs of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) to address their vulnerabilities and promote their well-being.

Enhanced Data Management Systems
Improving data collection, analysis, and reporting mechanisms to support evidence-based decision-making and program evaluation.

Our commitment to facilitating the journey towards ending AIDS by 2030 is evident through a proactive effort in combatting mother-to-child transmission of HIV. By establishing collaborative partnerships, and leveraging innovative tools like the EMTCT dashboard.



Kilifi County EMTCT task force meeting at Kilifi County referral hospital



**Mombasa EMTCT task force meeting at BOMU hospital
Presentation from Rose Nyaboke**



Kwale EMTCT Task force team at Red Cross Kwale County