

Quarterly Newsletter

Habari

September 2020

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Welcome to the first edition of the THPS Habari Newsletter! This quarterly Newsletter intends to share THPS successes, events, partnerships, collaborations, and lessons learnt with the broader community. Our first issue features activities and success stories for the April - June, 2020 quarter. We look forward to a strengthened partnership to ensure accessible high-quality health care services to Tanzanians; Stay tuned!

Dr. Redempta Mbatia
Executive Director



The Global Fund through Amref and THPS Mlango Project Transforms Lives of Female Sex Workers in Simiyu Region



“Since I stopped working as a Female Sex Worker, my life has been so productive and healthier. I no longer sleep at late hours selling my body in exchange for money. I am so grateful to Mlango Project implemented by THPS for changing my fellow women’s behavior and me. “I am now a productive woman and a member of ‘Umoja ni Nguvu’ Income Generating Activity (IGA) group. I live a happy life managing my own business through which I earn income to sustain my family’s life.” Said MC, a former Female Sex Worker (FSW) from a village in Kabita Ward of Busega District, Simiyu Region.

The Mlango project has helped 3,286 FSWs in Simiyu region to change their behaviors and join IGA groups; THPS facilitated formation of four IGA groups with 40 beneficiaries in Simiyu region in the last quarter; making a total of 25 IGA groups formed in the region since the program started in 2018. The beneficiaries are imparted with relevant socio behavior change communication (SBCC) topics, which include psychosocial education, gender-based violence, violence against children, family planning, stigma and discrimination and HIV prevention education.

THPS Mlango project introduced IGA activities in collaboration with local government authorities at the Busega and Meatu district councils in Simiyu where members

received entrepreneurship skills trainings and facilitated with seed funds to initiate project activities of their choice. The groups were registered with the local government authorities, received trainings conducted in collaboration with Community Development Officer (CDO) and Council Health AIDS Coordinators (CHACC); hence creating ownership by the local government authorities for close follow up, coordination and sustainability within respective councils.

The IGA groups also serve as a platform for SBCC sessions conducted thrice a week. The sessions involve health talks on prevention of HIV, sexually transmitted infections, tuberculosis and Gender Based Violence (GBV). As a result, some Key and Vulnerable Populations (KVPs) have transformed with many having started focusing on income generating activities as their main sources of income and stopped engaging themselves in risky behaviors leading to contracting HIV/AIDS. Activities conducted by the new four groups at Simiyu region include tailoring, gardening and farming through which they harvest and sell vegetables and sunflowers.

Funded by the Global Fund through Amref Health Africa the Principal recipient 2, the THPS Mlango project is a three (3) years Project implemented from January, 2018 through December, 2020 with the objective of facilitating HIV prevention programs for key and vulnerable populations through collaboration with civil society and local government authorities. The project is implemented at 26 district councils in 13 regions of Tanzania. Mlango is a Kiswahili word for ‘Door’ – intended to open access to health services to marginalized KVPs in supported districts.

THPS Coordinates eLMIS Data Cleaning at Public Health Facilities

THPS in Collaboration with the MOHC-DGEC and PORALG through the National Health Laboratory Services (NHLS) project has facilitated electronic Logistics Management Information System (e-LMIS) data cleaning process at 6,597 health facilities located in 184 districts in 26 regions of Tanzania; activity that took place from 19th to 29th May, 2020.

The e-LMIS is a web-based application developed in 2014 by the MOHCDGEC in collaboration with Implementing Partners that computerized the paper-based logistics management information systems in all public health facilities. However, since its official launch data cleaning of the system had never been conducted.

THPS supported data cleaning activity aimed at removing and updating incomplete, incorrect, irrelevant, duplicate or improperly formatted data involved system users, admins, data managers and technical staff. It also entailed addition of health facility registration (HFR) Codes to 6,021 health facilities present in the eLMIS and verification of crucial particulars including email addresses to all users as registered in the eLMIS as well as renaming of all health commodities according to their generic names and updating of facility information in the eLMIS. Other activities included addition of new products codes as per current Medical Store Department (MSD) catalogue, renaming/updating of users' job titles by their professions/designations as well as identification and disabling users no longer using the eLMIS.

e-LMIS data cleaning activity enabled MSD's efforts to use facilities HFR codes to migrate from Epicor 9 to Epicor 10; direct

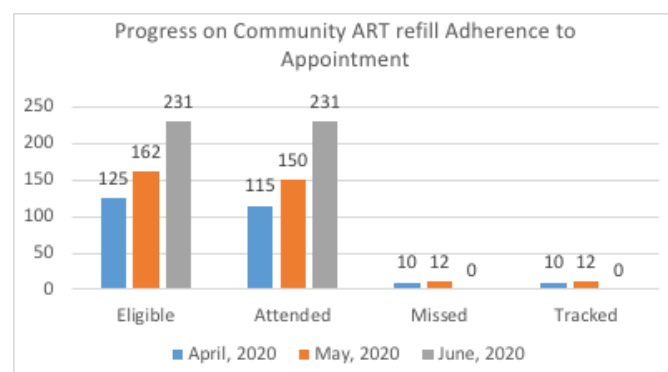
communication between MSD and health facilities through email notification alert to share missed item(s) list which can be used as evidence for the facility to procure missed commodities from prime vendor(s).

Key results of this activity were:

- Identification of 344 health facilities that were not initially recorded in e-LMIS but drawing commodities from MSD.
- Identification of 232 facilities in the eLMIS missing HFR codes.
- Identification of ranks for 420 users available in e-LMIS, these will later be uploaded on the system by the system developer.
- This activity also linked all 6021 Health Facilities in the eLMIS with Health Facility Registry (HFR) codes.

Community ART Services improves clients' ART retention in Kakonko District Council

Implementing Community ART services; THPS in collaboration with Kakonko District's Council Health Management Team (CHMT) through PEPFAR/CDC funded Afya Kwanza Project have increased clients' retention on ART from 125 in April to 231 in June, 2020.



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Community ART Services improves clients' ART retention in Kakonko District Council

Kakonko District Council's District AIDS Control Coordinator (DACC), Dr. Bigilimana Mapigano explained that in the past, the council had large number of clients disengaged from HIV care due to distances from health facilities, and this affected clients' adherence to ART services. Provision of Community ART intervention has helped in clients' retention on ART services.

Dr. Mapigano further explained that the current community ART intervention serves 431 clients in 13 villages from two mother facilities namely Nyanzige and Kakonko Health Centers.

Clinical tracker for Kakonko Health Centre Mr. Mishita clarified, "Long distance and costs incurred for travelling to CTC sites hindered some clients' adherence to ART services. Thanks to THPS initiative on community ART, we are now able to reach out to our clients at their villages. This intervention has also reduced stigma issues faced when clients travelled to our site on a monthly basis. They can now easily refill ART at their localities and hence no body is seeing them travelling anymore."

Community ART intervention is implemented across 13 distant villages and the schedule is organized on days host clinic does not have other clinics like reproductive and child health (RCH) to reduce congestion. These services are also scheduled during village market days where many people come for drug pick up and shopping.

Community ART initiative beneficiary, Ms. LK from Katanga village witnessed to have been enjoying the community ART refill services for over five months. She said, "contrary to the past, I no longer travel for ART refill services. I now get the services within my village. This has saved time and money

spent in travelling to get ART services. I currently get ample time in attending my house chores and income generating activities. I am so thankful for this service as it has come to save my life and ensures my adherence to ART services."

THPS Kigoma's Community ART initiative contributes in improving clients' retention to care and ART adherence as seen in Kakonko District Council.

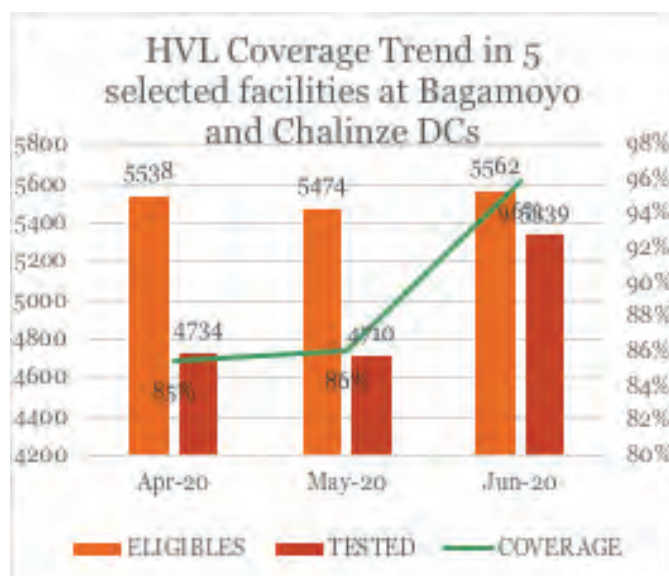


THPS staff, Dr. Juliana Ngaula Discussing clients' retention issues with Dr. Mapigano.

THPS supported sites in Pwani Region increased HIV Viral Load tests Uptake from 85% to 96%.



THPS Asanteeli Kweka, providing mentorship to healthcare providers at Chalinze Health Center on data triangulation for HVL coverage.



The above sites were identified to have poor HIV Viral Load (HVL) coverage due to several implementation gaps including attending clients pass through without blood samples for HVL being collected; delayed communication and re-collection of Viral load samples for error results and transfer in clients HVL results not captured during HVL coverage analysis.

To address these identified gaps, THPS Afya Kwanza team in collaboration with Bagamoyo CHMT members and HCWs at the sites designed and implemented various QI strategies that resulted in scaling up the viral load test uptake from 85% to 96% in June, 2020.

Implemented QI strategies included:

- Thorough review of CTC files a day before and during clinics to identify and mark HVL eligible clients.
- Daily review of samples collected vs Eligible attended clients.
- Timely recollection of testing error samples changed to 30 days of waiting before recollection.

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THPS is a to MDH in implementing the PEPFAR/CDC Afya Kwanza project. In Pwani region, THPS worked with health care workers (HCWs) to increase uptake of HIV Viral Load (HVL) test among eligible clients from 85% in April, 2020 to 96% in June, 2020. The increase was contributed by five sites i.e. Bagamoyo District Hospital, Chalinze Health Center, Kerege Health Center, Miono Health Center and Msoga District Hospital.

THPS supported sites in Pwani Region increased HIV Viral Load tests Uptake from 85% to 96%.

- Active involvement of all CTC staff, CHMT and district Laboratory Technologists.
- Use of DACC tool to generate list and review HVL coverage.
- HVL data triangulation in the laboratory HVL register, excel from testing laboratories, CTC2 database and CTC files.

Chalenze Health Center's CTC Hamidu Omary explained that THPS support has built their Health Center's capacities in increasing HVL testing awareness and demand creation among CTC clients, HVL eligible client's identification through CTC2 database use and CTC files scanning, proper HVL samples collection and documentation, HVL results interpretation and provision of enhanced adherence counsel-

ing to clients identified to have high Viral Load (>1000copies/ml).

Afya Kwanza is a PEPFAR/CDC funded Program aimed at Providing HIV Prevention, care, treatment and support services in Pwani and Kigoma regions. THPS through Afya Kwanza Project in collaboration with MOHCDGEC, PORALG, RHMT, CHMT and health care providers, provides facility based HIV care and treatment services to 122 health facilities (49 in Kigoma and 73 in Pwani region).



Plot 254, 3rd Floor, Coco Plaza Building, Toure Drive/Kaole Road, Oyster Bay, Dar es Salaam Tanzania.

Phone: +255 22 212 7149 | **Fax:** +255 22 212 7148

Mobile: + 255 689 103 046 | +255 222 923 107

Email: info@thps.or.tz

Website: www.thps.or.tz