

Quarterly Newsletter Habari

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Rest in Peace Chairman Dr. Augustine W. Massawe



Dr. Augustine W. Massawe

Tanzania Health Promotion Support's (THPS) Founders, Board of Directors, Management and staff received with deep grief the demise of THPS Founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Dr. Augustine Massawe. A world renowned compassionate Neonatologist, Clinician, Public Health Expert, Teacher and Mentor; Dr. Massawe will always be remembered for his great contribution to the Tanzanian Health system.

As Founder and Chairman of THPS; his careful, insightful, enthusiastic guidance and support to THPS in fostering a healthy society in which every individual receives quality healthcare and contribute positively to socio-economic development will be greatly missed.

Supporting COVID- 19 Vaccination scale up in Kigoma, Pwani and Shinyanga regions



One of THPS staff getting vaccinated

In collaboration with regional and Council health management teams (RCHMTs) in Kigoma, Pwani and Shinyanga regions, THPS have scaled up COVID -19 vaccination from 1st October 2021 to date. This is a continuous acceleration effort in supporting Tanzanian government.

Notable rise in COVID -19 vaccine uptake has been possible though increasing vaccination entry points from **58 to 200 at HIV clinics (CTC)**, RCH, and OPD/special clinics; **integrating COVID- 19 vaccination with the**

ongoing outreach community ART services; supporting outreach vaccination campaigns; and procurement of vaccine carriers. Over **500 health care workers (HCWs)**; **300 lay counsellors and peer educators** have been trained on COVID 19 vaccine demand creation, motivation counselling, myths and knowledge on vaccine.

As of 12th December, 2021, **22, 247 (21%) PLHIV** in Tier 1 & 2 health facilities were vaccinated; **133 (96%) community health workers (CHWs)/ lay counselors/ peer educators** and **462 (100%)** of supported HC were vaccinated, and increased from 41% in October, 2021. **98% of THPS 234 staff** are also fully vaccinated.



COVID -19 Vaccination signage at health facilities



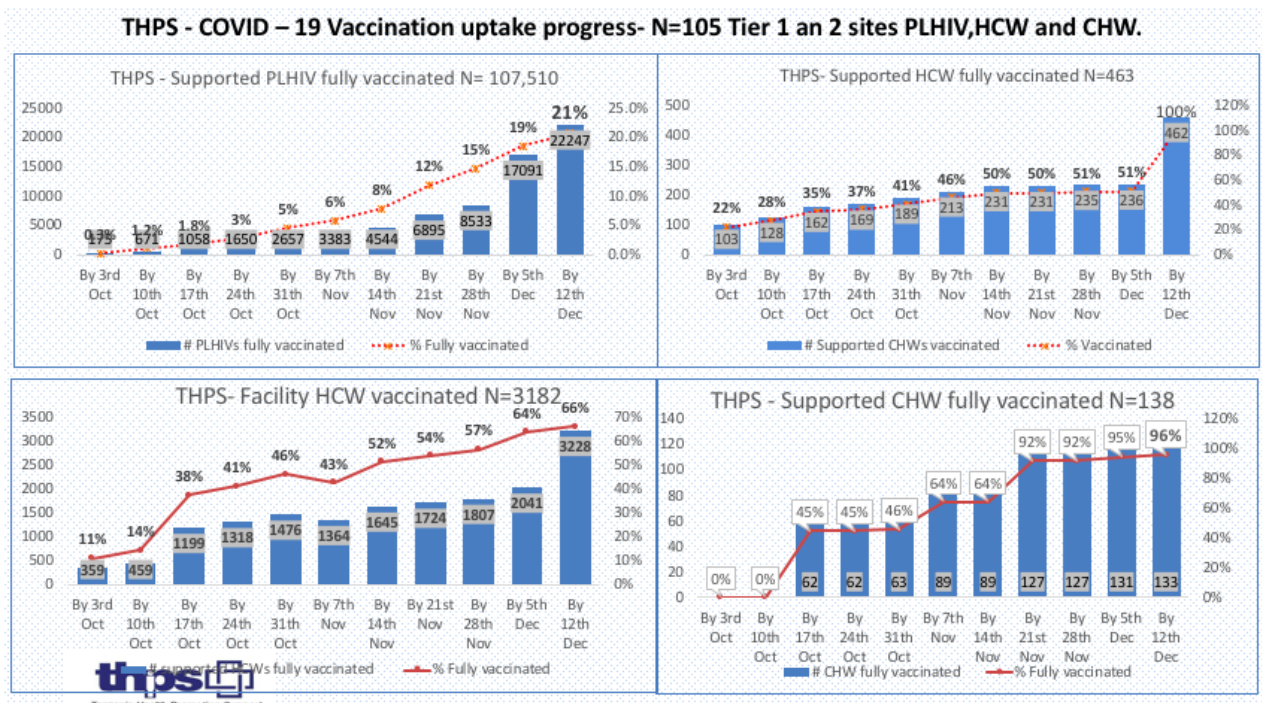
A HCW in Manyara getting vaccinated during training

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Strategies used included:

- COVID 19 sensitization in all meetings and trainings
- Strong collaboration with regional health management teams (RHMTs) and council health management teams (CHMTs) in phase 1 and 2 national vaccine acceleration plans
- Used trained champions among THPS staff, sub-granted staff; health facility to provide sensitization and daily updates
- Revised patient flow at RCH and CTC to incorporate COVID-19 vaccination desks
- Provision of targets to health facilities after training of vaccine doses.
- Modeling by THPS staff whereby 98% of the 203 have been vaccinated. This encouraged health care workers to uptake the vaccine
- Vaccination of HCWs and CHWs during trainings
- Regional/ District medical officers' sensitization at meetings and trainings.
- HR Manager trained as task force member, ascertains employee's status and refer staff for specific counselling
- CDC led motivational counselling during training to improve counselling and the 6 pillars of vaccination journey
- Trained motivational counselling during training to improve counselling of HCWs to unvaccinated HCWs and the 6 pillars of vaccination journey

Below is COVID-19 vaccination uptake progress as of December 12th 2021.



Implementation of this initiative has been done by THPS CDC Afya Hatua project funded by the American People through the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief through CDC.

Additionally, through the Global Fund Mlango II project, 1,233 CHWs and influential leaders have been trained in Manyara and Kilimanjaro and Morogoro regions. During the trainings 636 unvaccinated participants received vaccination.

Tanzania Health Promotion Support commemorates its 10th Anniversary while launching its second five-year Strategic plan (2021- 2025)



Symbolic launch of THPS Strategic Plan (2021-2025)

On October 28 2021, THPS commemorated its 10th Anniversary while launching its five – year Strategic Plan (2021-2025). The event took place at Morena Hotel in Dodoma City and was officiated by the Minister of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Hon. Dorothy Gwajima (MP) represented by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Aifello Sichelwe. The event was attended by several officials including, representatives from the Ministry of Health Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC), PORALG, Ministry of Home Affairs, Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) Tanzania's Country Director, Dr. Mahesh Swaminathan, USAID representative Dr. Jacqueline Kalimunda, Development Partners, NGOs' representatives, THPS Founders and Board of Directors, representatives of clients served by THPS and THPS staff. Additionally, many participants attended the event virtually.

In his remarks, the Guest of Honor commended THPS for its great achievements throughout the ten years of its existence as a local NGO and ascertained continuous support and collaboration by the Ministry. *"The Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender Elderly and Children appreciates THPS support in provision of comprehensive health services in Tanzania. We promise continuous collaboration with THPS in implementing its new strategic objectives."*

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Dr. Mbatia giving remarks at the event

THPS Executive Director, Dr. Redempta Mbatia explained that the new Strategic Plan is the second five years Strategic Plan (2021-25); after the first that began in 2015 and ended on December, 2020. This Strategic Plan has prioritized four focus areas including:

- I. **Strengthening THPS Organizational capacity** which comprises of human and financial resources, governance and management, visibility, partnerships, accountability and sustainability.
- II. **Excellence in Health service delivery** focusing on communicable and non-communicable diseases across general and vulnerable populations, emergency preparedness for disease outbreaks, maternal and child health and water hygiene and sanitation (WASH).
- III. **Health system strengthening** i.e. to enhance skills of health care workers, supporting ministries in health policy development, health laboratory services and supply chain management.
- IV. **Monitoring and Evaluation** which includes health information systems, data management, use of data for program quality improvement, research and public health evaluations.

Representing THPS Board of Directors and members, Dr. Yahya Ipuge treasured incredible collaboration that THPS is receiving from the Government of Tanzania. *“Our ten years successful achievements could have not been possible without getting notable collaboration from the Government Ministries including MOHCDGEC, Ministry of Health in Zanzibar, Ministry of Home Affairs, and PORALG. We really appreciate your great collaboration.”*

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CDC Tanzania's Country Director, Dr. Mahesh Swaminathan congratulated THPS for marking its ten years of existence in offering Public Health services and called upon its continuous innovations in addressing Public Health issues in Tanzania including addressing the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic through scaling uptake of COVID 19 vaccination in the regions where THPS implements its activities.



CDC Country Director Dr. Mahesh Swaminathan commending THPS for its achievements

Dr. Mbatia further added, “In the next five years, THPS will continue to strengthen its internal capacity in health programs technical excellence, financial systems, management information, procurement, human resources and other operating systems so that it can deliver and increase access to the needed services to Tanzanian society. While THPS will continue implementing comprehensive HIV prevention, TB, epidemic control for both diseases; reproductive health services, maternal health, in this 2nd Strategic Plan the NGO will also address the increasing burden of emerging public health threats including COVID 19 and non - communicable diseases in Tanzania.

THPS will continue to envision on: A healthy society in which every individual receives quality health-care and contributes positively to socio-economic development.”

CDC/PEPFAR AFYA HATUA Project kicks off

THPS have received PEPFAR award to implement a five years project (**October 2021 – September 2026**) supporting the Government of Tanzania (GOT) in its efforts of reaching HIV Epidemic Control. Led by Tanzania Health Promotion Support, the **CDC funded Afya Hatua project** (a Swahili phrase meaning 'Health Step')/Sustain Treatment, Enrolment and HIV Prevention) supports comprehensive facility and community-based HIV prevention, care, and treatment (PCT) services including Methadone assisted treatment (MAT), voluntary medical male circumcision (in Kigoma and Shinyanga) and DREAMS in Shinyanga.

Based on the Government of Tanzania's National Multisectoral Strategic Framework (NMSF) IV, Health Sector HIV Strategic Plan (HSHSP) IV, and PEPFAR COP21 priorities, Afya Hatua will extend best practices and lessons learned from THPS's 10+ years conducting HIV PCT projects for CDC/PEPFAR and other international sponsors throughout mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar.

THPS's partners are the all 32 LGAs in the three regions, faith-based NGOs i.e. BAKWATA AIDS Project (BAK-AIDS) and PASADA, and key population led community-based organizations to support reaching vulnerable and priority populations. Also, THPS will work with International Training and Education Center for Health (I-TECH) in continuous quality improvement (CQI) and project evaluation.

USAID Uhuru TB and Family Planning LON Activity supported regions recognized as best performers on key national TB program indicators for year 2021

Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS) implements the USAID Uhuru Tuberculosis and Family Planning Facility Solutions for Local Organizations Network Activity (USAID Uhuru TB & FP LON Activity) in the regions of Katavi, Kigoma, Rukwa and Songwe since July 2020; supporting facility-based TB and FP services at 130 health facilities across 22 district councils.

Informed by facilities rapid needs assessment and formative research, in its first year of implementation, the USAID Uhuru Activity worked collaboratively with regional and council health management teams, health facilities, community implementing partner the USAID Afya Shirikishi Activity under Amref Health Africa, regional HIV implementing partners and served communities to address key challenges on TB program performance indicators including low TB case notification, low TB diagnostic capacity, weak referral and community-facility linkage and poor data quality.

To address the challenges, USAID Uhuru Activity supported various interventions including knowledge and skills enhancement to health care workers (HCWs) and community health workers through integrated supportive supervision and mentorships, training on different TB modules, clinical attachment at Baylor's Centers of Excellence in Bugando and Mbeya Zonal Referral Hospitals; improved data quality and data use through data quality assurance activities, revitalization and initiation of quality improvement teams; improved TB diagnostic capacity through procurement of eight GeneXpert machines and 11 i-LED microscopes, gap filling of supplies, establishment of 64TB direct observed treatment centers, support sputum sample referral system and quarterly progress review meetings.

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USAID Uhuru Activity supported training of different cadres of HCWs to improve delivery of quality TB services including TB quality improvement module (75 HCWs), drug resistance TB module (35 HCWs), pediatric TB modules and 180 CHWs and ex-TB patient volunteers and 44 peer leaders for adolescents and youths were oriented and deployed at supported health facilities (HFs) to create demand for TB and FP services among clients attending the facilities and enhance active TB case finding and contribute to the reduction of the national gap of the missing cases in TB case notification rate.

For its first financial year one (October 2020 to September 2021), overall 4,429 new TB cases were notified an increase of 23% from TB cases notified the year before commencement of USAID Uhuru TB & FP LON Activity support i.e. 3,426 cases. In addition, the new TB notified cases during the first financial year surpassed the national target of 3,956 cases for the year. Pediatric TB case notification also surpassed the national target of 15% whereby 18% of the notified cases were children. A total of 23 DR-TB cases were notified during this reporting period reflecting annual performance of 64%.



From Right to left, Rukwa, Kigoma and Katavi's Regional TB and Leprosy Coordinators holding their certificates of appreciation from NTLP

With this remarkable achievements, Katavi, Kigoma and Rukwa regions were announced and awarded certificates of best performance (being among the top three) by the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) through National Tuberculosis (TB) and Leprosy Program (NTLP) during the annual TB and Leprosy conference held in Dar es Salaam from 6th to 8th December 2021. THPS congratulates these regions and commits to continued collaboration and support to contribute in the achievement of national set goals and targets in TB programming.

Pwani Region improves its HIV Viral load Coverage performance

PEPFAR/CDC Afya Kwanza program supported sites in Pwani region has improved their HIV Viral Load (HVL) coverage to over 80% in June, 2021. Notable improvements have been observed at various health facilities including Maria Consolata and Bungu Dispensaries (Rufiji District Council), Kisarawe District Hospital and Chole Health Center (Kisarawe District Council) and Mkoani Health Center in Kibaha District Council.

Service providers at both health facilities commended the support from THPS leading to this achievement. HVL coverage at Maria Consolata Dispensary's care and treatment clinic (CTC) increased from 92% in March 2021 to 94% in June, 2021; Bungu Dispensary's CTC improved from 87% in March 2021 to 100% in June 2021; Kisarawe District Hospital's (DH) CTC improved from 93% in March 2021 to 96% in June 2021 Chole Health Center's (HC) CTC

increased from 91% in March 2020 to 93% in June, 2021 and Mkoani HC's CTC increased from 90% In March 2020 to 99% in June 2021.

"To identify HVL eligible clients, we review client files on a daily basis and make phone call reminders to clients whose visits are scheduled within the week.

This improves our HVL coverage performance leading to proper adherence on ARV drugs among the clients through enhanced adherence counseling offered to clients with higher HVL count." Explained Suleiman Obeid, Clinical tracker at Maria Consolata Dispensary.

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Appreciating PEPFAR/ CDC Afya Kwanza program's support, Bungu Dispensary's CTC in charge, Mr. Emmanuel Malugu explained,

"THPS supported us with centrifuge machine used for separation of HVL blood samples and trained our laboratory technician on its uses. THPS also supports us in transportation of HVL samples to Temeke Referral hospital where the tests are done."

Kisarawe DH's laboratory technician, Ms. Devotha Faustine said, *"THPS support enhanced my skills in using the centrifuge machine. I now comfortably draw HVL blood samples and process them well ready to be transported to the testing laboratory at Temeke Referral Hospital."*

Devotha added that THPS provides two peer educators attached at Kisarawe DH CTC with bus fare to facilitate transportation of collected HVL samples to Temeke hospital's Laboratory twice in every week; and the results are received within 14 days.

"This facilitates keen follow up of clients' progress; for those with high HVL count we provide them with enhanced adherence counselling to ensure their retention on care and treatment services." She added.



Bungu Dispensary's Laboratory Assistant, Shindo Kivyele drawing HVL blood sample from a client

Maria Kasongo, a peer educator at Mkoani HC CTC explained that THPS provides her with bus fare to facilitate HVL sample transportation to the testing laboratory in Temeke. *"Twice in each week I Transport HVL blood samples to Temeke Hospital. I am passionate of this task. Through this I contribute to saving the lives of my fellow people living with HIV."*



Maria Kasongo, ready to transport HVL sample to the testing laboratory.

Tumbi DH's CTC clinician Dr. Ombeni Mushi explained that through collaboration with THPS, introduction of 'macho sticker' initiative was done; through which all client files are labeled with colored stickers yellow, red and green indicating client's eligibility on HVL sample collection.

This alerts the service providers on the scheduled HVL appointments. *"Red stickers alert us on missed appointments and hence phone calls follow up and home visits are done through collaboration with our peer educators and lay counsellors."* He added.

Implementation of this initiative has been done by Afya Kwanza project (September 2018 - September, 2021) funded by the American People through the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief through CDC. THPS was implementing this project in partnership with Management for Health and Development (MDH).

Reaching out to communities during International Nurses Day



HIV testing services at the ground

On May 12th, 2021, THPS through AMREF Mlango II project joined other stakeholders in commemorating International Nurses' Day that was nationally marked at Kwaraa grounds in Babati District, Manyara region. The event was officiated by the Minister of President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government (Po-RALG) Hon. Umyy Mwalimu.

Mlango II Regional Program Officer Mr. Lusekelo Mwakalundwa explained that on this day the project provided HIV testing and counselling services and health education to community members at the ground. *"During the event, Mlango II project in collaboration with Manyara Regional Health Management Team provided HIV testing and counselling services to 128 people including 39 males and 89 females. Among them three were diagnosed HIV positive and were linked to HIV care and treatment services. Community members were provided with knowledge on effective and efficient use of condoms and we distributed a total of 768 Male condoms."* Lusekelo added.

Mlango II project is 3 years (January 2021- December 2023) implemented by THPS as sub recipient of Global Fund's Principle Recipient – Amref Health Africa aiming to increase access to HIV services among key and vulnerable population in four regions of Tanzania (Arusha, Kilimanjaro, Manyara and Morogoro). The project works to accelerate the decline in new HIV infections while sustaining progressive decline in AIDS-related deaths.

Health care workers in Pwani acquire skills on HIV/Syphilis Dual testing

Twenty four health care workers in Pwani region received the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children three days training on HIV/Syphilis Dual testing; with support from THPS through PEPFAR CDC Afya Kwanza Program in June 2021 at Kibaha Town Center.



Practical session on HIV/Syphilis Dual testing

The training aimed to equip healthcare workers with knowledge, skills and desired attitudes for provision of HIV/Syphilis Dual testing services to pregnant women attending antenatal care (ANC) services at both reproductive and child health (RCH) and labour & delivery departments in health facilities.

According to WHO's Global elimination of congenital syphilis: Rationale and Strategy for Action, syphilis remains a global problem with an estimated 12 million people infected each year. Despite the existence of effective prevention measures like condoms, and effective relatively inexpensive treatment options, pregnant women who are infected with syphilis can transmit the infection to their fetus, resulting into congenital syphilis with serious adverse outcomes of the pregnancy for up to 80% of cases.

An estimated two million pregnancies are affected annually; approximately 25% of these pregnancies end in stillbirth or spontaneous abortion. At the same time, around 25% of the newborns, present with low birth weight or serious infection features associated with an increased risk

of perinatal death.

Through this training, it is anticipated that:

- No eligible test beneficiary will be missed for HIV/Syphilis care and treatment service.
- An Increase in syphilis testing coverage for pregnant women in comparison to HIV testing coverage rate will occur.
- Improved care and treatment services among pregnant women diagnosed with syphilis and or HIV will be raised.
- Reduction/eradication of syphilis relate still births/abortions and or infections among pregnant women will be done.



THPS Pwani's Regional Manager, Dr. Rehema Msimbe highlighting a point at the session

Improving Dried Blood Spot samples collection through mentorship at Mkoani HC



In June, 2021, THPS in collaboration with Pwani region's health management team provided mentorship on dried blood sample (DBS) collection for Early infant diagnosis of HIV to service providers dealing with prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) services at Mkoani health center (HC) in Kibaha Town Council. Service providers from reproductive and child health department, labour & delivery ward and from laboratory were oriented on effective DBS sample collection, storage, package and transportation to testing laboratories.

Kibaha Town Center's Nursing Officer, Sr. Asteria Massawe explained that, increased DBS sample rejection from Mkoani HC was due to lack of proper knowledge in sample collection among the service providers caused by trained service providers relocation to other health facilities; and new employees not being conversant to DBS samples collection.

Sr. Massawe added that in collaboration with THPS Team, they started doing mentorship to service providers at all non-performing PMTCT sites in Kibaha Town Council; Mkoani HC being among them, and made a close follow up to ensure appropriate DBS sample collection is done.

Sr. Veronica Hassan Mkandya, RCH Nurse at Mkoani HC explained that through mentorship on DBS sample collection the facility has reduced sample rejection

"Together with my fellow RCH nurses we were mentored on DBS sample collection. This helped to change DBS sample rejection rate from 40% in May 2021 to 0% in June 2021. We are so grateful to THPS support on this; it has increased our morale in providing appropriate services to HIV exposed infants. The mothers we serve appreciate our services as well."



AR together with her infant at Mkoani HC's RCH clinic

AR is a mother living with HIV whose infant's DBS sample was collected at Mkoani health center's RCH clinic in May 2021. Appreciating the services, she said *"I brought back my infant for HIV testing service six weeks after my delivery as advised. My child's DBS sample collection was perfectly done in few minutes. Thanks God my infant tested HIV negative. Thanks to the good services I received from the service providers at Mkoani health center."*

According to THPS Pwani region's PMTCT Field Officer, Sr. Aloisia Msaki, THPS ensured all health providers rotating at Mkoani health center's RCH clinic were mentored on 'TATU BOMBA' sample collection technique through which only three sufficient circles have to be filled with blood, leaving a gap of one circle in between each circle. This helps to avoid circles' fusion leading to sample rejection.

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Sr. Aloisia further explained that THPS team collectively agreed with the District reproductive and child health coordinator (DRCHCO), RCH staff and laboratory personnel at hubs that every DBS sample should pass through Mkoani HC's hub for accuracy verification prior to sending to testing laboratories.

Implementation of this initiative has been done by Afya Kwanza project (September 2018- September,2021) funded by the American People through the US President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief through CDC. THPS was implementing this project in partnership with Management for Health and Development (MDH).

Availability of Modern Family Planning Services applauded in Songwe Region *USAID Uhuru TB& FP LON Activity makes it possible*



Sayi and his husband Mahona are enjoying the benefits of Family Planning services

“Never had I thought to stop bearing children at the age of 36, until when I learned from service providers on the risks of having a large number of children. In reality, I was getting weaker and tired day after day. I am so grateful to the nurses that made us have informed decision on the best family planning method we could use. My husband and I are now happy and energetic; taking good care of our children.” Explained Sayi Makubi, a lady from Ipumpila village in Ndalambo Ward in Momba District Council, Songwe region.

Sayi is among the beneficiaries of family planning (FP) outreach services conducted by Tunduma Health Center in collaboration with the USAID Uhuru Tuberculosis & Family Planning Local Organizations' Network Solutions Activity at Mpande village in July, 2021. Despite having ten children, Sayi had never thought of accepting any family planning method until when she came into contact with the service providers during FP outreach event at their village. *“In our society, we believe that whenever a woman uses modern family planning methods, she may get divorced. I am so thankful to the nurses who involved my husband on the choice of family planning method we could use. We collectively opted for a permanent family planning method, Bilateral Tubal Ligation.”* She said.

Sayi's husband, explained that through conversation with the nurses at the FP outreach in their village, he realized that it is risky for her wife to continue bearing more children and he allowed his wife to undergo Bilateral Tubal Ligation (BTL) procedure at Tunduma HC. *“USAID Uhuru Activity provided us with transport to and from Tunduma health center when my wife went for BTL procedure; a permanent family planning procedure. I am happy because now we can take a good care of our children. My wife will also actively participate in farming activities and eventually raise our income through selling of more farm products.”* He added

Tunduma Town Council's Reproductive and Child Health Coordinator, Sr. Martha Mlowe explained that through the USAID Uhuru TB and FP LON Activity's support, 164 women were served with modern family planning services through FP outreach in July 2021. *"Through collaboration with Uhuru activity implemented by THPS we have utilized FP outreach services to cover clients living in remote areas. In these outreaches we provide them with health education on FP, screen them for TB, provided them with modern family planning methods and refer some women to Tunduma HC to undergo minilap procedure.*

Contrary to the past, Tunduma Health Center is now capable of conducting minilap for BTL to clients. Our surgeon has been trained in performing vasectomy and minilap procedures. Moreover, the Activity provides us with FP surgical equipment and other medical supplies to perform the procedures. Availability of these services has created demand in permanent FP services as the women are no longer referred to Songwe Regional Referral Hospital to access the services." She added.



Dr. Karumuna is ready to perform BTL through minilap procedure at Tunduma HC's theatre

Jackson Karumuna is the minilap surgeon trained by the USAID Uhuru TB& FP LON Activity in provision of voluntary surgical contraception (VSC) family planning services. According to him the skills he acquired has added his efficiency in provision of FP services." I am now confidently advising other health facilities with no VCS family planning provision capacity to refer their clients to Tunduma HC for BTL. *"From June 2021- July 2021, we received five women from Lupepe and Katete dispensaries whom I conducted BTL procedure. I have also oriented one assistant surgeon on how to perform BTL through minilap." He added.*

The USAID Uhuru Tuberculosis and Family Planning Facility LON Solutions Activity is five years (July 2020 - September 2025) Activity that aims to improve access to and use of quality TB) and family planning services for better health outcomes for Tanzanian citizens in Katavi, Kigoma, Rukwa and Songwe regions; all having suboptimal uptake of TB and FP services compared to other regions and received limited support for TB and FP services from existing USAID/Tanzania programs before this award from USAID Tanzania