



Habari Newsletter

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THPS Executive Director, Dr. Redempta Mbatia

Welcome to the Sixth Edition of the THPS Habari Newsletter! This Newsletter intends to share THPS successes, events, partnerships, collaborations, and lessons learnt with the broader community. This issue features activities and success stories for the period of January - June, 2022. We look forward to a strengthened partnership to ensure accessible and sustainable high-quality health care services to Tanzanians; Good reading!

THPS increases COVID- 19 Vaccine coverage among Female Doctors and General Population at MEWATA’s 19th Annual General Meeting

Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS) facilitated COVID-19 vaccination service among Medical Women Association of Tanzania (MEWATA) and community members during the MEWATA's Annual General Meeting that took place at Morena Hotel, Dodoma on 24th and 25th February, 2022. The Guest of Honour at the meeting was the Minister of Community Development, Gender, Women, and Special Groups Hon. Dr. Dorothy Gwajima (MP).

A total of 452 people received COVID -19 vaccine. This included 206 males and 246 females. Among them were 7 female doctors and 4 people living with HIV. At the meeting, THPS in collaboration with District Immunization and Vaccine Officer, Mr. Victor Kweka, Health Care Workers, and Community Health Workers provided sensitization and vaccinations both at the meeting and the surrounding community. Vaccines used included Johnson and Johnson, Pfizer, Sinopharm and Moderna.

Meeting participants and community members were provided with basic knowledge on vaccine’s accessibility, safety and efficacy.

Dr. Erenia Sambua is among the Doctors that were vaccinated at the meeting. Impressed by the services’ availability she said: *“I am grateful to getting vaccinated at MEWATA’s Annual General Meeting. This has increased my confidence in convincing others to get vaccinated.”*

On her opening remarks the Guest of Honor, Hon. Dr. Dorothy Gwajima appreciated THPS support in ensuring availability of COVID-19 vaccine services at the meeting and explained the importance of the vaccine to people. *“I urge all female doctors to be at the frontline in up taking COVID-19 vaccine and educating the general public on the benefits. This will ensure a clear understanding on the vaccine’s importance among the citizens of Tanzania, ”* she said.

The meeting’s theme was **“Women in Health. Their experience and role in the COVID-19 Era; strengthening vaccine up take”**. The Ministry of Health through Immunization and Vaccine Development (IVD) Program emphasized the importance of COVID-19 vaccine to health professionals and healthcare workers in the industry and getting them on board in advocating for uptake of vaccines in Tanzania.



THPS staff Aloisia Msaki (left) sensitizing meeting participants to get vaccinated.



MEWATA's member, Dr. Erenia Sambua getting vaccinated.

Nguruka Health Center's Continuous Quality Improvement Performance acknowledged



Mr. Mushubira Balinda from CDC Tanzania(middle) commending Nguruka HC's staff for their great efforts.

Nguruka Health Center has been applauded for its outstanding Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) performance for the period of April to June 2022. This was noted during the US Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Tanzania visit at the health center on June 14th, 2022.

Notable recognition followed significant improvement of quality of services at the CTC, as reflected by improvement in overall performance on the CQI scorecard, from 82% back in January to 100% in March, 94% in April and 100% as of May 2022. The CQI performance scorecard focuses on indicators which assess key areas of HIV care and treatment program including program growth, data quality, linkage, clients' retention, mortality and HIV Viral Load.

Speaking at the visit, CDC Tanzania focal person for Kigomaregion, Mr. Mushubira Balinda commended the CTC's efforts in providing standard services to clients served at Nguruka Health Center's HIV care and treatment clinic (CTC).

"We really appreciate the great efforts and commitment you have shown in serving our beneficiaries with quality and recommended standards. Keep up the good work." He added.

Nguruka Health Center's CTC Incharge, Mr. Baraka Teyumwete explained that, for the period of April – June, 2022 the CTC showed improvements in both service delivery and data quality and registered 100% scores on the CQI scorecard, contrary to January – March, 2022 period, where there were challenges affecting some of the indicators.

Mr. Baraka further highlighted some of the indicators which had challenges back in the period of January – March, 2022 but have shown significant improvement in April – June, 2022 which included early retention, Same Day ART Initiation, Paediatric ART and current on ART Data Quality.

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CTC in charge, Mr. Baraka (right) providing mentorship to a peer educator at the facility.

Explaining the strategies used to improve overall site's performance from 82% back in January to 100% by May 2022, Baraka said that mentorship activities provided by CDC/PEPFAR Afya Hatua project staff in collaboration with R/CHMT have contributed to their improved performance.

“THPS staff mentored us on strategies to improve quality of care and proper documentation of the offered services through quality improvement (QI)

Additionally, through our CTC weekly review meetings, we evaluated our daily performance based on targets, identifying all the gaps hindering our performance improvement and developed innovative strategies and addressed them.

This included provision of proper counselling and follow up of newly enrolled clients through the ‘wateja marafiki’ initiative, ensuring clients’ adherence to ART and HVL coverage appointments through phone calls and outreaches for distant and mobile populations to ensure uninterrupted services to our clients.

Furthermore, mentorship has been provided to ensure proper TB screening to our clients in order to improve TB case identification and prevention. Clients who are identified with TB disease are linked to TB treatment services while those who are negative are linked to TB Preventive Therapy.

Through QI weekly meetings, mentorship has been provided on strategies to improve specific indicators and proper documentation of clients’ files as well as other monitoring tools including registers. Since we work as a team, other CTC staff were also involved in mentorship on various key performance indicators. This has greatly contributed to our improved work efficiency especially in understanding key performance indicator requirements and proper documentation of the monitoring tools including files and registers.

We really appreciate THPS staff support in building our capacity on both service delivery and data quality, it is only through their continued technical assistance we have reached this good performance.” Baraka added.

Implementation of this activity has been done by Afya Hatua project funded by the American People through the US President’s Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through CDC in partnership with Tanzania Health Promotion Support (THPS). The project is implemented in Shinyanga, Kigoma and Pwani regions. The project supports comprehensive facility and community - based HIV prevention, care and treatment services including Methadone assisted treatment (MAT) in Pwani, voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) in Kigoma and Shinyanga, and DREAMS in Shinyanga.

Maweni Regional Hospital laboratory receives SADCAS accreditation



In November, 23rd 2021, Maweni Regional Referral Hospital (RRH) Laboratory supported by THPS through Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) received South African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS), International standard under ISO 15189:2012. The accreditation covers three scopes including GeneXpert TB, TB Auramine and Malaria Rapid diagnostic tests (MRDT).

Maweni RRH's Laboratory Director, clarified, *“this accreditation facilitates accurate and rapid diagnostics; treatment efficiency and reduction of errors in laboratory process and hence appropriate services will be provided to our clients. Through this the laboratory is allowed to assess its performance in terms of work efficiency, standards and provide itself with benchmark for maintaining the competence.”*

Maweni RRH Laboratory started its accreditation process in 2014 where it scored 0 during Laboratory assessment by the Ministry of Health (MOH) strengthening laboratory management toward accreditation (SLMTA) program; in 2015 through MOH in collaboration with implementing partners mentorship activities that led the laboratory to score 1 star and gradually improved to level 4 stars in 2018. The laboratory qualified to apply for accreditation in 2020 and was assessed by SADCAS using below 12 elements of quality management system (QMS):



Good clinical assessment cures spinal TB patient at Uvinza District, Kigoma

“Never had I thought that I would resume to my normal health after suffering for a long time. I was bed ridden for twelve months. My weight abruptly diminished. I could no longer walk and became a burden to my family. Thanks to the health care workers at Ilagala Health Centre for their tireless support and restoring my health. Explained MN.

MN, a widow and a mother of three lives at Kabuyange village located in Ilagala ward, Uvinza DC, Kigoma region. Carried by her relatives, she visited the hospital for treatment on September, 2021. While at the hospital, a clinician took her history and performed a physical examination and later ordered investigations. The spine x-ray coupled with physical examination findings revealed that she had spinal tuberculosis (TB).

MN further explained that the illness created a lot of agony to her as she kept moving from one traditional healer to another without any relief rather than her health condition deteriorating. *“Never had I trusted that this disease could be treated at hospital until when the doctors at Ilagala health center reassured me that everything would be okay. All health care workers attended me tirelessly and with passion.”*



The clinician who attended MN on her first visit at the hospital, Athumani Tanuke explained that when MN was brought at the hospital, her condition was scary and she had severe back pains. *“I was a little bit scared due to client’s condition however I told myself that I should act professionally till I get the right diagnosis. I took the patient’s history followed by a thorough physical examination which revealed a swelling at the lower part of the back “the Gibus”. We did sputum examination and X ray of the spine; sputum test by GeneXpert was negative and the spine x-ray was TB suggestive. MN was started on TB treatment on 22/09/2021. One month later we observed her health becoming better and encouraging. She could walk on her own and the swelling disappeared.”*

Narrating his experience, the clinician, Athumani clarified, *“taking comprehensive patient’s history and conducting thorough physical examination are key towards obtaining correct diagnosis which then will be supported by respective investigations.”*

Implementation of this service was supported by the USAID Uhuru Tuberculosis and Family Planning Facility LON Solutions Activity; a 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.

Community Outreach accelerates COVID-19 vaccine uptake in Kasulu District, Kigoma



A client getting vaccinated against COVID-19 at Kitagata Dispensary

Community outreach activities have increased the number of COVID-19 fully vaccinated individuals in Kasulu District. Kitagata Dispensary is among the health facilities that demonstrated a drastic increase of number of fully vaccinated people from 113 in January, 2022 to 5,182 by June 20th, 2022.

Kitagata Dispensary, a non-CDC/ PEPFAR Afya Hatua supported site located in Kitagata Ward of Kasulu District in Kigoma region, started receiving THPS support to implement COVID-19 vaccine's uptake acceleration in February, 2022.

The Dispensary's Facility incharge, Mr. Deogratius Kahitra explained that CDC/PEPFAR Afya Hatua project's support has enabled them to conduct vaccination outreaches resulting to increased number of fully vaccinated people in Kitagata Ward and beyond. *"Prior to THPS support we could not travel further and reach out to people with COVID-19 vaccination services. Thanks to THPS for supporting us with transport and allowances for the outreach team. This has really enabled us travelling to distant villages and vaccinate more people."* He said.

Mr. Kahitra further added that through THPS's support his dispensary conducted several sensitization meetings to raise community members' knowledge regarding the importance of getting vaccinated and created a clear understanding on how the vaccine works. This has helped to clear prevailing misconceptions on the vaccine. According to him, THPS supports allowance payment to fifteen Village & Ward Executive Officers and Counsellors to facilitate

house to house sensitizations. *"Working in collaboration with the Village and Ward leaders has created vaccine acceptability among the community members. Thanks to THPS support we can now easily access households and vaccinate people even at late hours."* Kahitra added.

Kitagata dispensary conducts outreach every Sunday where they organize three teams going in different locations including market areas and local bars. In every outreach they vaccinate over 1000 people. On Sunday 19th June, 2022 the facility vaccinated 1,363 people through outreach conducted at Kacheli, Kazuramimba, Mwamila, Rusesa and Zeze villages.

Kitagata Dispensary is not the only health facility that has increased number of people that have received COVID-19 vaccination, the entire Kasulu District's performance in COVID-19 vaccination has raised following THPS's support in the District.

Appreciating CDC/ PEPFAR Afya Hatua's project support, Kasulu District Medical Officer, Dr. Robert Rwebangira explained that since February 2022, THPS through its Afya Hatua project and the GlobalVax support started accelerating COVID-19 vaccination services in his council leading to increased number of fully vaccinated people from **12,213** in January 2022 to **67,287** by June 20th, 2022.

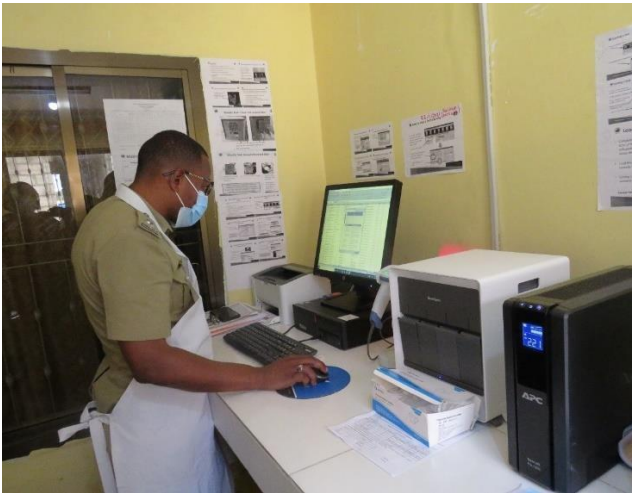


"I am so thankful for the incredible support from THPS through paying allowances to vaccinators and outreach teams, providing transport for outreaches, distribution of vaccines from the region to the council followed by health facilities, provision of internet bundles for data entry into national Chanjo Covid system and payment for data entrants. This has made our people to get fully vaccinated." Dr. Rwebangira added.

Availability of GeneXpert machine improves HIV Viral Load Coverage at Mbeya FFU Dispensary's CTC

Availability of GeneXpert Machine at Mbeya FFU Dispensary's care and treatment clinic (CTC) has facilitated improvement of HIV Viral load (HVL) coverage among eligible clients from 280 (34%) in June, 2021 to 836 (95%) by February, 2022.

Mbeya FFU's CTC clinician, Baraka Luoga explained that availability of GeneXpert machine has improved the CTC work efficiency and performance contributing to increased clients' adherence to ART services leading to reduced number of clients lost in treatment.



Laboratory Scientist, A/INSP Fauz Abubakar reviewing HVL coverage monthly data

“Additionally, availability of GeneXpert machine at the CTC, has reduced HVL results turnaround time from three months to one day leading to increased clients' trust on us and we are also motivated to serving our clients. In the past we felt guilty in delaying the HVL results.” He added.

Baraka further explained that reduced time (turnaround time) in getting HVL results increased the coverage of six-months multi month dispensing of ARV among active clients on ART from 44 in October, 2021 to 456 by February 28th, 2022. This reduces clients' congestion at the CTC and provide the clients with ample time to concentrate in their economic and social activities.

OB a client attending ART clinic at Mbeya FFU Dispensary explained, “learning that I have low HIV Viral Load (below 50 copies) has motivated me to appropriately take my ARV drugs. I am happy to have my HVL results within the same week. I am also overjoyed after being given three months ARV drugs supply. This will remove the need to attend monthly clinic and hence I will have more time to attend to my family chores and income generating activities.”



CTC clinician, Baraka attending a client

Appreciating USAID's support, Mbeya FFU Dispensary's Laboratory Technician, Assistant Inspector (A/INSP) Fauz Abubakar said, *“we are so grateful to USAID for providing us with this important equipment, that guarantee quality and standard service provision to the clients we serve. Contrary to the past, our clients can now get their HVL results within one day and hence we efficiently serve the clients attending to our HIV care and treatment clinic.*

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Prior to getting the GeneXpert machine, we used to transport collected HVL samples to Mbeya Zonal Referral Hospital, and Mbalizi Military Hospital for testing. This compromised with the quality of obtained results due to collected samples staying longer without being tested and sometimes the samples were destroyed by heat during transportation process. Also, there were cases where sample results could not be traced back. Additionally, availability of this equipment has increased our efficiency in providing appropriate interventions to the clients served at the CTC depending on their HVL status. For those detected with high HVL we timely call them back to the clinic and provide them with enhanced adherence counselling services. Through this, a close follow up on how they take their ARV drugs is done to ensure proper and timely use of ARVs leading to HVL suppression.” A/INSP Abdul added.



Laboratory Technologist, Richard Ifande loading HVL sample in the GeneXpert machine.

Peer Educators at Mbeya FFU applauded availability of GeneXpert machine at the facility explaining that, this has helped clients’ retention and adherence to ART services. “From December to date all clients whose HVL samples were collected received their HVL results within one day. The clients are now comfortably using their drugs while knowing their HVL status. In the past we received a lot of complaint on HVL results from clients. This also resulted in poor ART adherence among the clients.” Said Tabea Iteleke representing other peer educators at the CTC.

Mbeya FFU Dispensary’s CTC is among the ten health facilities that received GeneXpert machines through the USAID Police and Prisons Activity’s support in September 2021. According to the Dispensary’s Laboratory Scientist, Assistant Inspector Police Fauz Abubakar, donated GeneXpert machine was installed and started operations at Mbeya FFU dispensary in December, 2021.

Implementation of this activity have been funded by the USAID Police and Prisons Activity; a 5 years project started in August 2020, implemented in 35 districts of Tanzania mainland and Zanzibar with a goal to improve access, quality and strengthen HIV and TB prevention, care and treatment services in supported health facilities. The Activity also works to strengthen health systems including capacity building to improve ownership and ensure future program sustainability, and ensure delivery of integrated, person-centred health services in line with Government of Tanzania and PEPFAR guidance.