



LINKAGES project beneficiaries at one of the drop-in centers in Kiambu County, Kenya. LINKAGES aims to reduce HIV infection among key populations and prolong life for those already infected. Photo: FHI 360

KENYA

LINKAGES ACROSS THE CONTINUUM OF HIV SERVICES FOR KEY POPULATIONS AFFECTED BY HIV

In Kenya, HIV is characterized as a generalized epidemic with pockets of concentration among key populations (KPs) considered more at risk of infection and transmission. Key populations describe men who have sex with men (MSM), sex workers, transgender individuals and people who inject drugs. Despite constituting less than one percent of the population, KPs are disproportionately affected by HIV and contribute up to one third of all new HIV infections.

Key populations have decreased access to healthcare due to stigmatization and criminalization of their behavior. Linkages across the continuum of HIV services for key populations affected by HIV (LINKAGES) is a PEPFAR-funded global program in 30 countries that aims to reduce transmission within KPs and their sexual partners and extend life for those who are HIV-positive. It aims to achieve project goals by:

- a) Increase availability of comprehensive prevention, care and treatment services for KPs
- b) Increase demand for comprehensive prevention, care and treatment services among KPs and
- c) Strengthen systems for planning, monitoring, evaluating and assuring quality of programs for KPs

OUR WORK

LINKAGES Kenya provides HIV prevention services to female sex workers (FSW) and MSM in 16 counties through a sub-granting mechanism to 18 direct service delivery partners, eight of whom are KP-led organizations. Due to stigma, discrimination and criminalization, many KPs remain hidden and do not access health services when needed. LINKAGES Kenya supports 30 drop-in centers (DICs) where KPs can enjoy safe spaces, meet with their peers and access health services. Services provided include behavioral, structural and biomedical interventions.

The project provides these services at the DICs, during outreaches at hotspots where KPs congregate for work or pleasure, or through integrated centers at Ministry of Health facilities. LINKAGES Kenya provides technical assistance and capacity building of local implementing partners, particularly those that are KP-led.

LINKAGES Kenya uses the participatory approach in working with KPs and ensures that services offered are sensitive to their needs. KPs take lead in running of the DICs and are included in key decisions like location of the DICs. This has resulted in higher uptake of services within the project.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Since March 2016, LINKAGES Kenya has:

- Identified and reached an average of close to 55,000 FSW and over 14,600 MSM annually with comprehensive HIV prevention interventions, including HIV testing, and screening and treatment of sexually transmitted infections to reduce their risk of HIV acquisition and transmission.
- Empowered KPs to identify, report, address and prevent cases of violence, harassment, abuse and discrimination that hinder their access to health care and puts them at risk of HIV.
- Trained 13 KP-led implementing partners and local community service organizations in finance, human resource, administration, procurement, program management and governance systems for funding sustainability and in readiness for direct funding from donors. This has resulted in nine organizations already receiving additional funding from other donors.
- Established and strengthened ten county advocacy sub-committees under the KP technical working groups (TWGs) to address violence and gender-based violence affecting KPs.
- Supported and participated in formulation of three national guidelines on hepatitis C, STIs and working with young KP; two standard operating procedures on setting up of DICs and conducting outreaches; and one training manual for KP sensitization for clinicians. This has resulted in strengthening of the KP program nationally.

BUDGET: \$ 14,748,175

DURATION

2016 – 2020

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

Nairobi, Machakos, Kiambu, Nakuru, Trans Nzoia, Narok, Turkana, Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale, Taita Taveta, Kisumu, Kakamega, Bungoma, Busia and Nyamira counties.

KEY GLOBAL PARTNERS

- The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
- Intrahealth International
- Pact
- University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill

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