



A family looks at their newborn after support through a healthy pregnancy journey. Kuboresha Afya Mitaani is focused on the health of women and children aged 0-1. Photo credit: Jacaranda Health

KENYA

KUBORESHA AFYA MITAANI

The Kuboresha Afya Mitaani: Urban Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) program integrates typically siloed actors in the quality-of-care space in Nairobi to create a ‘quality ecosystem’ in the informal settlements of Mathare and Kawangware. This includes women and families, communities, facilities and their providers, health regulators, and actors in sanitation and air pollution. This project is being implemented over three years with funding from USAID’s Health Research Program. The target populations are pregnant women, postpartum women, and children up to the age of 1 in the informal settlements, as well as the associated households and communities they live in.

The program is expected to affect the lives of approximately 60,000 mothers and children. It will work with both public and private facilities that provide MNCH services in the target areas, collaborating with the Nairobi Metropolitan Services and focusing on the care-seeking period that extends from pregnancy until 12 months postpartum. This period features the highest risk of morbidity and mortality for mothers and infants. Global data shows that 88 percent of maternal deaths occur in the period between pregnancy and 42 days postpartum. Additionally, many under-5 deaths in Kenya occur in the first year of life, making it a critical period for health implementation strategies and promotion of vaccine coverage.

OUR WORK

The ‘quality ecosystem’ created by the program will include an iterative learning agenda along with activities such as community engagement; empowerment of individuals through SMS messages;

improved quality of care in facilities through health provider mentorship and quality improvement; and a local policy environment that incentivizes and regulates quality of care in the health system (through cooperation with the Nairobi Metropolitan Services and joint health inspection teams). This will culminate in multi-stakeholder forums to address challenges and increase demand for better quality care. Kuboresha Afya Mitaani will also look at some specific environmental challenges – including access to sanitation and exposure to air pollution – and create avenues for advocacy and potential solutions.

As part of efforts to strengthen self-reliance, the program has partnered with the Nairobi Metropolitan Services and is implementing low-cost tools that can be absorbed in county health budgets. For example, the emergency obstetric and newborn care mentor training model designed by Jacaranda Health is a lower-cost model than competitors and has fed into the Ministry of Health guidelines on mentorship. Nairobi Metropolitan Services members are part of the project steering committee and have been involved in the co-creation and review of Kuboresha Afya Mitaani's activities.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Kuboresha Afya Mitaani has achieved the following results:

- Stakeholder mapping for engagement with the county and community conducted in November 2019 and updated in July 2020.
- Baseline study data collection completed in October 2020, consisting of interviews with 115 health providers and 24 officials in charge of health facilities, as well as surveys with about 800 households.
- SMS messages for mothers with life-saving advice and referral to care launched in October 2020 through the PROMPTS digital health platform.
- Discussions held with experts on air quality and air assessments to help monitor factors such as pollution that affect maternal and newborn health outcomes.
- Training workshop on emergency obstetric and newborn care (EmONC) conducted for participating facilities, resulting in a 19 percent improvement in EmONC knowledge scores.

In 2021-2022, the program will initiate an air quality assessment, sanitation mapping, multi-stakeholder forums, mentorship on emergency obstetric and newborn care, quality improvement, and broader community engagement activities.

BUDGET: USD \$1,076,664

DURATION

2019-2022

ACTIVITY LOCATIONS

Kawangware and Mathare in Nairobi County

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER

Jacaranda Health

KEY PARTNERS

The Population Council, Nairobi Metropolitan Services, Sanergy, Berkeley Air Monitoring Group

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