



NATIONAL SYNDEMIC DISEASES
CONTROL COUNCIL

MONTHLY BULLETIN

JUNE - JULY, 2024

TOP STORY

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NEW FRAMEWORK TO ADDRESS MEN'S WELL BEING LAUNCHED



H.E Dr. Pastor Dorcas Gachagua and Principal Secretary Ministry of Health Harry Kimtai during the launch of the Action Framework for ending AIDS, and TB and promoting access to prevention and treatment services for STIs, drugs, alcohol, and substance abuse disorders in Mombasa in June 2024.

The launch of the Action Framework for Accelerating Progress in Ending AIDS and Promoting the Health and Well-being of Boys and Men heralds a new chapter in the fight against HIV. Under the rallying call of "Leaving No One Behind," the framework aims to transform the response to HIV and other syndemic diseases among men and boys, grounded in comprehensive policies that emphasize

gender inclusion in health and development.

The cohort that has lagged in the uptake of HIV and AIDS services — often due to seclusion and lack of specific programs that target men — is set to benefit from the deliberate move in addressing their health and general development through the multi-sectoral efforts guided by this Framework.

This deliberate move is informed by disturbing

data which has consistently shown boys and men leading in AIDS mortality rates and use of drugs, affecting their productivity in their prime ages. The 2023 World AIDS Day Report shows that men account for a disproportionate share of AIDS-related deaths, with men aged 15 and above constituting 47% of adult AIDS-related deaths in 2022 due to low antiretroviral therapy (ART) uptake and viral suppression. Similarly, according to data from the

launch of the Action Framework for Accelerating Progress in Ending AIDS and Promoting the Health and Well-being of Boys and Men heralds a new chapter in the fight against HIV. Under the rallying call of “Leaving No One Behind,” the framework aims to transform the response to HIV and other syndemic diseases among men and boys, grounded in comprehensive policies that emphasize gender inclusion in health and development.

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This deliberate move is informed by disturbing data which has consistently shown boys and men leading in AIDS mortality rates and use of drugs, affecting their productivity in their prime ages. The 2023 World AIDS Day Report shows that men account for a disproportionate share of AIDS-related deaths, with men aged 15 and above constituting 47% of adult AIDS-related deaths in 2022 due to low antiretroviral therapy (ART) uptake and viral suppression. Similarly, according to data from the National Authority for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA), 31% of males have used at least one drug or substance of abuse in the past month, compared to 6% of females. Boys and men make up 89% of those who inject drugs. As a result, men and boys constitute

87% of the prison population, driven by substance abuse and gender-based violence. The launch of the Framework, graced by H.E Dr. Dorcas Gachagua, the Spouse of the Deputy President, was a culmination of a series of multisectoral meetings with religious leaders in joint efforts to support the initiative targeting men and boys in the health conversation. Speaking at the event, Dr. Dorcas Gachagua appealed to religious leaders to unite and fight drug and substance abuse among boys and men, while accommodating them in worship places.

“I implore you, religious leaders, to support government efforts against drugs and substance abuse among men. We cannot sit and watch as the generation of young men waste away because of drugs. We must not only ensure they are alcohol-free but also nurture them spiritually in churches, mosques, and other holy places for the prosperity of our society,” she said.

Her sentiments were echoed by the National Syndemic Diseases Control Council (NSDCC) Chairperson Geoffrey Gitu, who noted that religious leaders are influential in our society, thus joining hands in this endeavor will add impetus to the ongoing efforts against the Triple Threat of mistimed pregnancies, HIV infections, and sexual and gender-based violence among young people.

The NSDCC CEO Dr. Ruth Laibon-Masha, while calling for partnerships in addressing

challenges facing boys and men, decried the high burden of HIV among men which has not been prioritized.

“Despite the remarkable progress we have made in HIV treatment, men and boys are always lagging. Unfortunately, high AIDS-related mortality rates occur among men and boys because of non-adherence. The time has come for us to rethink strategies moving forward on how to meaningfully engage this group. The Action Framework thus provides us with a solid platform to anchor our planning and programming for our boys and men,” said Dr. Masha.

Anchored on three pillars of the promotion of healthy masculinity, mental health, and strengthening coordination, The Action Framework seeks to achieve the following objectives:

Reduce new HIV infections among boys and men by 75% by 2030.

Reduce AIDS-related deaths among boys and men by 50% by 2030.

Reduce TB incidence among boys and men by 80% by 2030.

Reduce TB deaths among boys and men by 50% by 2030.

Other social economic challenges affecting men include:

Education: While more boys enroll in primary school, fewer transition to secondary school, increasing risks of crime and substance abuse.

Incarceration: Men and boys constitute 87% of the prison population, driven by substance abuse and gender-based violence.

Unemployment: High unemployment



GOVERNMENT AND PARTNERS RECOMMIT TO ACCELERATE EFFORTS TOWARDS ENDING THE TRIPLE THREAT



Homabay Governor Gladys Wanga keenly listening to young people sharing stories during a community engagement on Ending the Triple Threat in Ndihiwa Sub County in Homabay County in June 2024

A high-level visit by Government officials and the United Nations Joint Team to Homabay County resulted in a renewed commitment to end the Triple Threat in Kenya. The visit sought to bring together the leadership of state agencies, partners, and communities affected by the Triple Threat to engage and reflect on the shared responsibility in accelerating the campaign against new HIV infections, mistimed pregnancies, and sexual and gender-based violence as outlined in the Commitment Plan to end The Triple Threat.

Launched early this year by Health Cabinet Secretary Nakhumicha Wafula, the Commitment Plan

to end the Triple Threat <https://nsdcc.go.ke/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Ending-the-Triple-Threat-Commitment-Plan-2024.pdf> seeks to mobilize stakeholders and accelerate actions for the implementation of a scorecard to reduce mistimed pregnancies, eliminate sexual and gender-based violence, and prevent new HIV infections among adolescents and young people in Kenya.

Homabay County, which has recorded remarkable strides against HIV and AIDS, is still struggling with high cases of mistimed pregnancies and new HIV infections among young people. However, the bullish county leadership led by Governor Gladys Wanga is de-

termined to change the narrative. Speaking in Ndihiwa Sub-County, where the team interacted with young people affected by the Triple Threat, the Governor reiterated her administration's commitment to leverage existing education and health sector infrastructure complimented by community-led initiatives to provide sex education and mentorship programs to all adolescents and young people.

“As a County Government, we started a Governors Boys’ mentorship program that targeted boys. About 4,000 boys were put in this program, and I am happy because our boys and young men who were often left behind are now part of the conversation to end



The NSDCC CEO Dr. Ruth Masha interacts with young people during a community sensitization on Ending The Triple Threat in Ndhiwa Sub County Homabay County

the Triple Threat. We also launched a school re-entry program to ensure that every child's access to education is guaranteed. Our community health promoters are at the forefront of empowering communities against the Triple Threat, and I am certain we shall see a big shift in our efforts to end this menace," she said.

The National Syndemic Diseases Control Council CEO Dr. Ruth Laibon-Masha, while lauding Homabay County and its partners for the reduction of HIV prevalence from 28% in 2009 to 15.1% in 2023, noted that the Triple Threat risks eroding gains made if not addressed holistically by both public and private sector. "We have seen what partnerships can do. The continued decline

of new HIV infections and AIDS mortality rates over the last decade in Homabay County clearly shows that our multi-sectoral efforts are yielding positive outcomes putting the county and the country at large on a positive trajectory against AIDS. However, the Triple Threat cases among young people threaten to derail these efforts if we don't address them. Now that we know what to do as guided by the Commitment Plan, we can't afford excuses or complacency. We must end the Triple Threat," said Dr. Masha.

While reiterating partners' support towards ending the Triple Threat, The UNAIDS Country Director Dr. Medhin Tsehaiu lauded partnerships between the Government and the development partners that

put communities at the center of the programs. "Our visit has been informative. Interacting with young people affected by the Triple Threat has given us a sense, firsthand, of the struggles and hardships the young people endure due to Triple Threat. We must go beyond statistics leveraging such strategic partnerships to build resilient communities against the Triple Threat," she said.

This Commitment Plan outlines strategies for implementing a score-card through a coordinated and accountable whole-nation approach. The implementation of this initiative hinges on the success of a multi-sectoral response to HIV which adopted the "Three Ones Principle," one agreed upon HIV and AIDS Action Framework, one National AIDS Coordinating Authority vested with a broad-based multisector mandate, and one mutually agreed country-level monitoring and evaluation system. t rates contribute significantly to crime, with 62% of crimes linked to unemployment and 35% to substance abuse.

Gender-Based Violence: Men are the main perpetrators of sexual and gender-based violence, with young boys facing significant physical violence.

The 12 Commitments

 <p>1 Reduce new HIV infections among adolescents and young people</p>	 <p>2 Increase access to HIV diagnosis and treatment among adolescents and young people</p>	 <p>3 Reduce sexual and gender based violence cases against adolescents and young people</p>
 <p>4 Increase mean age of sexual debut in Kenya</p>	 <p>5 Increase the proportion of adolescent girls who have access to menstrual health and hygiene products</p>	 <p>6 Increase uptake of Human Papilloma Vaccine among adolescent girls</p>
 <p>7 Reduce pregnancies among adolescent girls</p>	 <p>8 Fully implement re-entry policy of back to school for adolescent mothers</p>	 <p>9 Increase proportion of pupils transitioning to secondary school</p>
 <p>10 Reduction in drug and substance abuse among adolescents and young people</p>	 <p>11 Increased proportion of young people transitioning to gainful employment</p>	 <p>12 Increase the proportion of community members sensitised on ending the Triple Threat</p>



SAMBURU COUNTY STEPS UP EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE TRIPLE THREAT



NSDCC Regional HIV Coordinator Gevonce Ooyi addressing students drawn from different secondary schools in Samburu County during a sensitization forum against the Triple Threat at Kisima high school

The National Syndemic Diseases Control Council (NSDCC) has intensified its multisectoral efforts to combat the alarming rise in new HIV infections, unintended pregnancies, and incidents of sexual and gender-based violence among adolescents in Samburu County. New HIV infections among young people aged 10-19 increased from 17 in 2015 to 30 in 2022. On the other hand, teen pregnancies also increased from 2,406 in 2016 to 2,739 in 2023 while SGBV cases reported rose from 4 in 2017 to 27 during the same period. The NSDCC's Regional Office, in collaboration with the county education sector, has launched a sensitization program targeting secondary school students, focus-

ing on peer-to-peer engagement to enhance their knowledge and skills.

The Council's Regional HIV Coordinator, Mr. Gevonce Ooyi, stated that the sensitization drive is prompted not only by alarming HIV statistics in the county but also by the intention to actively involve young scholars as key stakeholders in the conversation. "Samburu is one of the counties with high cases of new HIV infections and unintended pregnancies among young people. To change the situation, it is important to deliberately and strategically engage young people. We have partnered with the education sector and state agencies like NACADA to roll out a sensitization program that seeks

to impart knowledge for better decision-making among young people," said Ooyi.

County Director for Health Bosco Lempurkel lauded the program, noting that involving secondary school students in the campaign to end the Triple Threat will significantly empower adolescents and young people, making them champions of the cause. "This initiative is timely, as it empowers the young people most affected by the Triple Threat early enough to make informed decisions and advocate among their peers as stakeholders in the campaign," he said.

Kenya has embarked on an ambitious Commitment Plan to end the Triple Threat by 2030.



KENYA SIGNS GLOBAL FUND GRANT AMOUNTING TO USD 407,989,068 (KSH 59.7 BILLION) TO SUPPORT HIV, TB and MALARIA INTERVENTIONS



Principal Secretary of the National Treasury, Dr. Chris Kiptoo (3rd left seated) with his Medical Services counterpart Harry Kimtai (2nd right seated) during the Global Fund Grant signing in Nairobi in June 2024.

Kenya has signed six Global Fund grants amounting to USD 407,989,068 (KSH 59.7 billion) to support HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria interventions and strengthen health and community systems for three years beginning July 2024. The total amount for each component includes USD 232,580,654 for HIV, USD 72,934,665 for Malaria, USD 67,785,529 for TB and USD 34,688,220 for health systems strengthening.

The partnership between Global Fund, Governments, civil society, the private sector, and people affected by diseases is designed to accelerate the end of AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria epidemics globally. Since 2003, the Global Fund grant has helped the country achieve tremendous outcomes. In HIV, the grant has supported the procurement of commodities such as antiretrovirals (ARVs), HIV test kits, condoms, and laboratory reagents. Programmatic interventions at both health facilities and the community level have also

received a boost.

There has been a remarkable decline in new HIV infections, HIV-related mortality, and mother-to-child transmission by 78%, 68%, and 65% respectively. These significant reductions are attributed to increased access to HIV testing, treatment, and prevention services at the community and facility level. Currently, nearly 1.4 million people living with HIV receive lifesaving treatment at various facilities across the country. This progress is attributed to the decentralization of HIV services and collaboration between the Government, development partners, non-state actors, stakeholders, counties, and communities.

The TB program has recorded a treatment success rate of 86%. The average positivity rate among TB presumptive cases declined from 7.35% in 2021 to 5.6% in March 2024, while the absolute number tested more than doubled from 245,902 in 2021 to 502,970 in March 2024. Similarly, the Malaria program has contributed to the overall reduction

of the disease burden in Kenya, with the national level prevalence declining from 8.2% in 2015 to 6% in 2023. Through this partnership, there has been an establishment of 1,933 community health units, training of 18,500 community health promoters, and 3,700 community health extension workers.

The new Global Fund grants will support provision of quality care and prevention services for all people with TB, leprosy, and lung diseases and contribute to the attainment of Universal Health Coverage through comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment, and care.

The grant will also strengthen health systems at the facility and community level, support the procurement of TB, Malaria, and HIV commodities including medicines, laboratory supplies, and test kits, primary health care activities at the community level in line with the universal health care agenda and social support and Social Health Insurance Fund (SHIF) premiums for TB, HIV, and Malaria patients.



KENYA HOSTS MALAWI AND SIERRA LEONE DELEGATIONS



The Malawi delegation in a group photo with the NSDCC CEO Dr. Ruth Masha (2nd left) in June 2024



The Sierra Leone delegation in a group photo with the NSDCC CEO Dr. Ruth Masha (4th left, first row) in June 2024 in Nairobi

Kenya hosted delegations from Malawi and Sierra Leone who were on a learning mission on successes and best practices in the HIV response. The Malawi team drawn from the public and private sectors sought to understand how a harm reduction program for people who use drugs is designed, implemented, and monitored at national and grassroots levels in Kenya.

On the other hand, the Sierra Leone team comprising members of the Judiciary and Parliament was in the country to learn about Kenya's HIV legal framework. Established under section 25 of the HIV Prevention and Control Act of 2006, Kenya's HIV Tribunal is the first of its kind globally, adjudicating cases of HIV-related human rights violations. The West African delegation is thus keen on establishing its own HIV Tribunal in efforts to end HIV and AIDS-related stigma in the country with a 1.7% HIV prevalence rate according to UN-AIDS Global AIDS Monitoring 2020 report.

The visits by the African delegation on benchmarking mission is a statement of affirmation of Kenya's HIV program which has been on a positive trajectory over the past decade.



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