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OCTOBER, 2019 | VOL. 2

HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING FOR BETTER HEALTH OUTCOMES



The Turkana County Governor - Hon Josphat Nanok with the Turkana and Samburu Counties Health management teams

THE MEASURE OF DEVOLUTION

Samburu and Turkana counties face similar social, cultural, economic and climatic challenges which are the contributing factors to the livelihood of a majority of their residents who are nomadic pastoralists. For decades both counties have experienced the poorest health indicators but devolution has been a game changer which has boosted their commitment to achieving their targets and contributing to the national and global family planning, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health service goals among others.

Some of the pronounced changes in the health situation in Turkana County since devolution include the expansion of the human resource base for doctors and nurses patient ratios from 1:70,000 and 1:5,200 in 2013 to 1: 20,000 and 1:232 in 2018 respectively. The County's vast investment in health infrastructure has led to the increase in health facilities from 44 in 2013 to 222 in 2018 reducing the coverage of facility distance from 50km to 15km. These are some of the investments that Turkana County credits to the gains in all the improved health indicators that were visible during a learning visit to the county by the Samburu County Health management team (CHMT). The visit that took place between September 30, 2019 to October 4, 2019 was led by the Deputy Governor for Samburu County; Honorable Julius Leseeto, and eleven delegates from his County.



One way of strengthening devolution is through exchange visits.....



Hon Josphat Nanok



SAMBURU COUNTY



ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES

Both Turkana and Samburu counties host referral hospitals with both similar and unique areas of operations to ensure that their residents have access to quality health services. The Lodwar County Referral Hospital (LCRH) boasts of a unique blood bank that is a key solution to the obstetric emergencies that both counties grapple with.

To ensure that the county is able to meet a consistent supply of blood for its emergency needs, Turkana County health department conducts a monthly blood drive that collects up to 200 pints of blood. LCRH also has an oxygen manufacturing plant that offers a lifeline to the residents of Turkana County and beyond.

Speaking during a tour of the hospital, Honorable Loseeto sighted that a blood bank was one of the urgent investments that Samburu County needed to invest in as a major solution to its obstetric emergencies.

Another take home for the Samburu County team was the capacity building of health facility workers and ensuring a constant supply of drugs and other commodities in all health facilities in Turkana County. This enhances service delivery for primary health care in all facilities hence promoting decongestion of the LCRH. Turkana county government also procure orders for commodities and supplies twice a year with a buffer stock of two months. All the drugs are then stored within facilities ensuring a constant supply.



The Lodwar County Referral blood transfusion center



The Lodwar County Referral oxygen manufacturing plant



...every month Lodwar County Referral Hospital conducts blood drives that collect up to 200 pints.

LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE



The Turkana County Governor - Hon Josphat Nanok and the deputy governor Samburu County - Hon Julius Leseto (Right and left) during a courtesy call to the governors office.

The delegates from Samburu also sighted they would borrow from Turkana County's leadership structure to promote efficiency in different operations of the health department. They also said that this kind of structure would motivate staff and mitigate the challenge of staff attrition and high turnover. Hon. Julius Leseeto also suggested that "The leaders in Samburu and Turkana counties should collaborate and provide the Kimormor outreach for the cross border populations". He also recommended that Turkana County should adopt the 'Letter of Commitment' that was introduced by the Afya Timiza project as a binding document with all partners implementing in the county as this also enhances accountability by all parties. The letter of commitment is a binding document that stipulates the roles of the government in partnership with other organizations.

Turkana County also has an autonomous leadership with several directorates that promotes accountability and efficiency of services. These include the directorates of Medical Services, Preventive and health Promotion, National Agency Campaign against Drug Abuse (NACADA), Administration, Policy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Medical Supplies and Lodwar County Referral Hospital.



Both sister counties should discuss how to coordinate and facilitate the Kimormor cross sector outreach to provide services for the cross border communities



Hon. Julius Leseeto



..both counties should facilitate exchange visits for their medical experts and establish centers of excellence where other counties can benchmark from....Hon Leseeto



COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES ACT



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GOVERNOR NANOK SIGNS INTO LAW COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES BILL

Governor Josphat Nanok, August 3, 2018 assented into law the Community Health Services Bill.

The new act seeks to improve efficiency of community health service delivery by among others, provide for the establishment of Community health services units in the county, and create coordination frameworks to facilitate provision of community health services, as well as protect health and safety of community health volunteers.

The act provides for establishment of community health units for ease of service delivery of not more than twenty villages with a village comprising of at most twenty households. Each unit will be linked to a health facility and will be under a Community Health Extension Worker who will be recruited by the County Public Service Board.

The act also establishes three Community Health Services Committees: a County Community Health Services Committee, County Community Health Technical Committee and Community Health Unit Committees; each with specific functions contributing to effective delivery of community health services.

The act provides for appointment of Community Health Volunteers and states their responsibilities which include visiting households to advise the community on healthy living practises as well as provide first aid with guidance from the extension officer.

The new law also provides for establishment and management of a community health services fund managed by the County Community Health Services Committee, to finance activities and projects in the sector. The fund includes financial donations from partners to the fund account and funds set aside by the County Assembly or Parliament.

COMMUNITY HEALTH



A community health worker in Namorpuh PAG health facility demonstrating how to use beads for diagnosis of pneumonia in children under five years

One of the provisions of the bill was the establishment of community health units of 20 villages with each village consisting of not more than 20 households linking to a health facility under a community health extension worker. A year down the road the gains of this bill can be attested to by all the registered community health workers (CHW's) in Turkana

County. The community health workers receive a monthly stipend of Kenya Shillings 3000 and Kenya shillings 500 is contributed to their national health insurance fund. The chairman for the Lorugum community unit, Mr. Ibokolem Amojong' lauded the county government and Afya Timiza project for the stipends they have received so far as it has boosted their income.

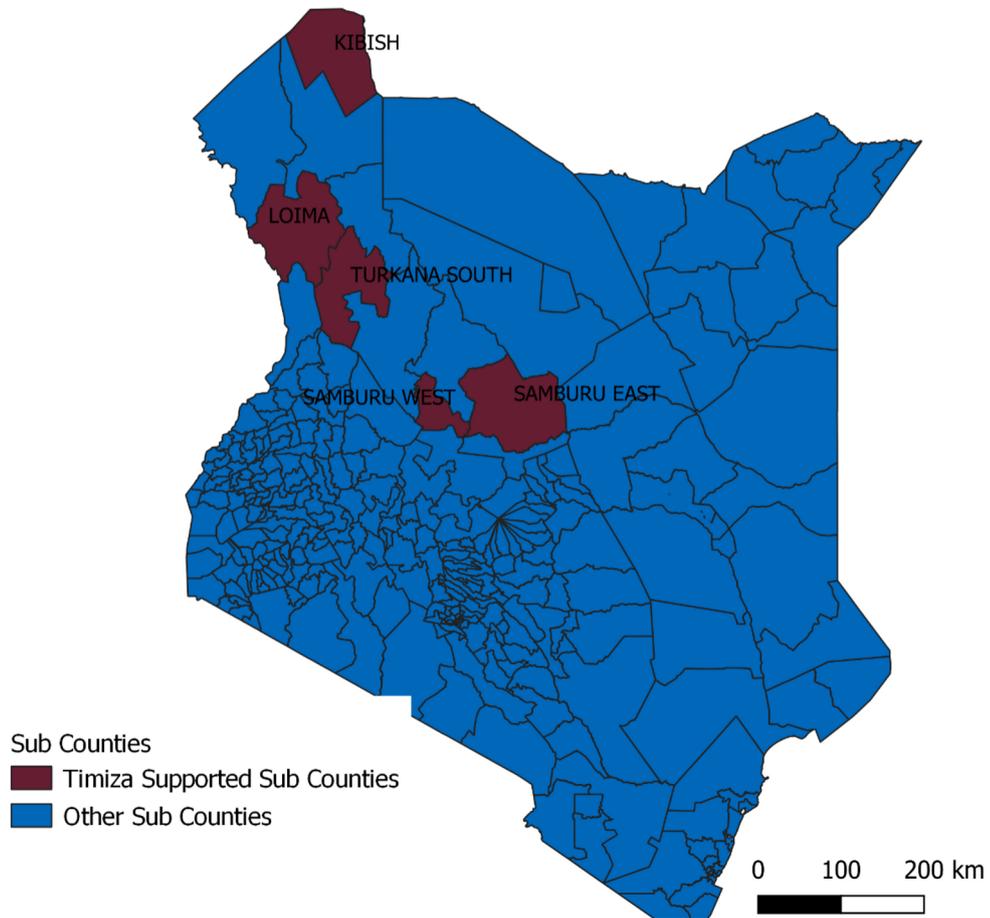
Ms Lucy Nasike, a faith leader in Lorugum explained that "The CHV's now have an identity. They have uniforms and have been well trained to look after the health of children and women. Most of them are now being nominated for leadership roles in the community".

During a debrief session at the end of the trip Samburu County Director for Health Dr.

Thuraneira recommended that Turkana County should lobby for donors and partners to invest in funding proposals by CHW's for income generating activities. Dr. Thuraneira opined that this was a sustainable way of motivating CHW's. During a visit to Namorpuh community health unit CHW's displayed and demonstrated the various tools and devices they use in their work including the Ministry of health registers, the digisomo talking book that they use for disseminating health messages and beads for diagnosis of pneumonia in children under five years.

Sister Deborah Sirgoosing, a Canadian missionary who has worked in Namorpuh for thirty five years credits the tremendous transformation in community health in the recent years to the community health services act and the empowerment received by the support of donors. "The Turkana people are very receptive people who believe in seeing. The training's that the CHW's receive is saving the lives of mothers and children in their homes. The communities are slowly abandoning harmful traditions once they experience the benefits of healthy seeking behavior, all because the CHW's can diagnose malaria, pneumonia, diarrhea and the danger signs of both maternal and newborn health." explained Sister Deborah

Afya Timiza Supported Sub Counties



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