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Our Vision: Healthy people, empowered communities.

Our Mission: To improve health and well-being among communities through capacity building and promotion of innovative leadership



Theme of the Month: Grassroots Advocacy

For the last two years, KANCO has been implementing the Wezesha Mashinani project in Turkana County. The three year project funded by USAID seeks to see devolution effectively implemented, through creating informed and empowered citizens to effectively Participate in the implementation of the Kenyan constitution 2010 tenets: devolution, integrity, public participation and equality.

The project anchored on the KANCO grassroot model is premised on organizing citizens at grassroots level, to participate in the effective implementation of devolution in Kenya. The model seeks to empower and catalyse citizens engagement to effectively engage. This is intended to realise the shared health, social and economic sustainable solutions in the counties. The grassroots model advances that when citizens are trained on how to interact with elected officials and how to organise, backed by rigorous analysis of issues affecting them and properly supported to muster the necessary courage, citizen groups will demand from elected officials accountability for resources and enactment of policies towards more equitable resources allocation.

Note from the Editor: Lucy Maroncha

Hundreds of grassroots citizens groups are forming across the country aimed at holding elected leaders accountable. These groups formed by electorate men and women, are organizing and forming watchdog groups to ensure that devolution is effectively implemented. They are working by analyzing the issues that are of interest to their counties/wards ranging from health and social-economic factors and using innovative ways like letter writing, one on one meetings with their elected leaders, participating in budget formation and reading processes, forming citizen manifestos among other ways to come up with people-oriented solutions. These groups are seeking to ensure that the vision of devolution is achieved: to bring power closer to the people'

The citizen engagement model dubbed 'Wezesha Mashinani' is modeled after the RESULTS model of citizen engagement, that has had great impact in terms of citizen engagement and participation in Europe. These groups also anchor their mandate on the

constitutional provision in articles 118(1)(b) and 196(1)(b), that provide for the right of citizens to participate in the decision making processes and other duties of the national and county legislative bodies, further directing these two governments to facilitate public participation in their work.

Mary Ngethe, a Citizens Grassroots manager for the Wezesha Mashinani project, working in 6 counties Murang'a, Turkana, Vihiga, Siaya Mombasa and Kilifi observes that 'Public participation is both a right and responsibility of the citizens, every citizen comes from a governance unit ranging from a ward to a county, and they are duty bound to contribute to the betterment of their livelihoods through engagement of their elected leaders, as entrenched in the constitution'

According to the RESULTS model, governments need to demonstrate openness to listen to the people and states that 'Governments need to show they are relevant, listening and acting on peoples con-

cerns' the model further tasks the people to engage their governments with a view that, whereas elected officials base their political decisions on a variety of factors, if and when citizens speak to them about the issues they care about, these representatives will be more inclined to make decisions in favor of these issues.

This model spearheaded by KANCO seems to be growing and impacting change in the counties, the impact is beginning to be felt and the people are excited to be experiencing and exercising the power of grassroots advocacy as evidenced in this issue

Read more to learn more on the impact of the grassroots model among other top stories from kanco in the month of November

Grassroots Testimonials

"I want to thank the Wezesha Mashinani project because through the trainings, I was able to write 2 letters to my member of the country assembly, Hon. Fredrick Wanyoike, on the problem of lack of piped water in our ward and he responded by engaging the county government and eventually we have piped water in our ward".

Irene Njoka-Grassroots advocate Gaichanjiru ward

After the wezesha Mashinani grassroots training, We took action to address a historical land injustice that we had suffered since independence. We organised and met the governor, who after giving us audience and further deliberations, we were able to get our land allotment letters. We are now ready to transform Mjini from an informal settlement to a developing residential area by putting up proper infrastructure. We are truly thankful for the training

Ali Abdul-Mjini Grassroot Advocate Group leader.

"The Budget allocation on drugs was increased from 138,364,739 in 2016/17 to 146,000,000 in 2017/18 financial year as a result of the constant engagement we had with our leaders and it has also been confirmed that we now have enough drug stock in Siaya by the MOH"

Siaya County Grassroots

As Muranga University grassroots we were able to write a letter to the township MCA addressing two issues the lack of security lights and the bad state of the road leading to the university. The MCA responded by bringing some marram on the road, and we are currently following up on the issue of security lights.

Wezesha Mashinani is truly changing communities and we are glad for the training"

Ann Njoki-Student and Grassroots Advocate leader

"My name is Rachael Njeri, a grassroots advocate Wempa Ward, Murang'a County. We had been having an alcohol problem in my ward for a long time. After training through the KANCO Wezesha Mashinani project, I was able to highlight the problem through Radio Waumini, I also called our county commissioner who responded by closing all unlicensed liquor stores and issued a regulation on the operational hours for the licensed stores and deployed patrol personnel to effect this order.

Bridging the gap between citizens and government leadership

Mary Ng'ethe– Grassroot Project Manager



The KANCO managerial team and the grassroots coordinators from Turkana, Siaya, Murang'a and Vihiga county

KANCO set ambitious targets to ensure effective devolution in Kenya in line with the new Constitution 2010. The new constitution devolved governance from a central authority to the Counties level in an attempt to make citizens feel connected to their leaders. Since devolution is a new concept in Kenya and has had a number of challenges, the citizens still continue to feel disconnected with the leaders they vote in during national elections

Grassroots model, borrowed from RESULTS Model in America attempts to bridge this gap between the two groups namely citizens and elected leaders. Wezesha Mashinani is one of the Grassroots projects funded by USAID.

Wezesha Mashinani is implemented in four counties, Muranga, Turkana, Vihiga and Siaya. The overall goal of the project is to influence the county leaders to come up with favorable policies and improve health service delivery in response to local needs.

The project seeks to raise the level of awareness among the grassroots citizens intended to make devolution a reality using health as the entry point. The output is measured by the increased health interventions per county and recorded increment of the funding of these interventions by the county government.

Recruitment of the grassroots citizens starts by identifying a connector (link) in every ward, the ward connectors are trained on group leadership, after

which they recruit at least ten members from the ward to join the grassroots movement. The groups are then trained to take action every month. The actions involve engaging elected leaders, among them MCAs, Governors, County Speaker, County Executive Committee members (CEC) and other county decision makers. They either write letters or carry out face to face dialogue meetings with these leaders.

KANCO supports grassroots engagement with leaders by providing evidence based county information as well as securing appointments with the leaders. The voice of the grassroots citizens is strengthened by experts dubbed Grasstops, comprising of health experts and private sector citizens who operate at the national level and they represent their counties of origin in the movement. Some of the champions include Dr Mulindi, a senior lecturer and consultant at the department of psychiatry, School of Medicine, University of Nairobi, Professor Kiiyukia (JKUAT, Major Karau Executive chairman of Kings Pride Properties and Paul Ejore (UON) with the anticipation that this number will continue to grow as the movement expands.

So far, KANCO has operational grassroots Chapters in 17 counties: Kajiado, Kiambu, Kakamega, Kericho, Kisumu, Kitui, Kwale, Machakos, Mombasa, Muranga, Nairobi, Nakuru, Nyandarua, Nyeri, Turkana, Siaya and Vihiga,

KANCO is starting an immunization project funded by Global Vaccine Alliance -GAVI, which will borrow heavily on the grassroots model to advance immunization and vaccine advocacy in Baringo, Bomet, Bungoma, Garrisa, Homa Bay, Isiolo, Kakamega, Kitui, Laikipia, Mandera, Meru, Nakuru, Nandi, Tana River, Transoia, Wajir and Nairobi.

The experiences learnt from Wezesha Mashinani will enable KANCO to create new grassroots chapters in the new counties. The envisioned outcome is that's the grassroots movement will not only transform the lives of community members but it will also make current community leaders popular among voters once the gap is closed. We therefore appeal to county leadership to partner with grassroots citizens for community based service delivery.

Since inception there is over 1200 grassroots citizens across 17 counties, representing men and women influencing change and being part of the change. The goal of the grassroots project is to have chapters in every county.

Award Winning Leadership Yet Again!

By: Wachira Charity



From left to right, certificates for the lifetime achievers award and the Continentals lifetime achievers awards respectively

For the second time in a row in 2017, KANCO, Executive Director Allan Ragi's leadership has worn accolades and awarded.

Allan has been named a continental leadership award winner, shortly after his Lifetime Achievers Award by the Global CEO titans Award.

The continental award received in Johannesburg South Africa as well as the lifetime achiever Award received in Nairobi Kenya, are a recognition of the efforts of men and women of influence contributing to Building Nations Globally

The awards are attributed to Allan's unwavering commitment, thought leadership and revolutionary health and policy advocacy to galvanize an effective public health response in Kenya and the region.

The lifetime achievement award is given to leaders over 55 years who have dedicated their lives to serving the people. While the continental achiever awards is given to men and women who have demonstrated outstanding leadership across sectors in the continent.

Allan's journey begun in the 1980s, with the realization that people were unwilling to talk about HIV & AIDS, and it was killing them. Together with likeminded individuals, they came together to shout about what the community was shy to talk about. With a solid background in public health, Allan with many of his colleagues, begun a movement focusing on the rights of People Living with

HIV, which over time has contributed to solidifying the human face of People Living with HIV and AIDS.

With over 30 years of regional and global leadership experiences, starting from the HIV response in Kenya, when the policy and legislative framework were still prohibitive, Allan set on a path that would later become a national response addressing policy and practice gaps in not just addressing the HIV/AIDS problem but also TB, Malaria, Childhood diseases, Early Childhood Development, Nutrition and generally the broader public health issues.

Addressing core issues in society always comes with its challenges, and Allan's leadership in HIV and public health has braved a few of these. Changing attitudes, practice and core policies that have formed and influenced people's way of thinking and life has not been easy.

Along the way he has mentored hundreds of public health enthusiasts on advocacy and the push for better legal and policy framework to address the disease burden in the continent and has planted seeds of thought leadership among them. He has often taken a lead in confrontational situations and along the way mentored others to take the mantle when need be. In a nutshell, Allan is a strategic, firm but diplomatic advocate.

These awards and recognition

could not have been given to a more deserving personality. He has taught and walked the talk of leadership and health equity. He has pioneered projects in uncharted territories; projects reaching out to the marginalized communities such as Harm Reduction for People Who Use Drugs that is presently covering the wider Eastern Africa region.

In the past, Allan has been awarded, a Head of State commendation award, Common Wealth award in recognition to his significant contribution to policy and advocacy as well as a Golden award for Excellence in Business Management. Allan has also contributed significantly to the national, regional and global health policy environment in access to health care. At the global level, he has in the past sat in the Global Fund amplifying the voices of the communities and is presently sitting at the ACTION and RESULTS partnerships think tanks.

While receiving the award, Allan dedicated it to the communities that KANCO has served and continues to serve stating, *'Health is our biggest resource and thus we can never talk of national or regional development without addressing health first, health is wealth.'*



Allan Ragi receiving the award presented by the CEO Global Chief Executive Annelize Wepener

The Emerging Voices in Turkana; a fruition of Grassroots Advocacy initiative

By: Peter Kamau



Turkana County Grassroot in a meeting during a visit by the KANCO team

There are three critical ingredients to democratic renewal and progressive change in America: good public policy, grassroots organization and electoral politics. 'Paul Wellstone'

While this quote makes reference to America, the concept is even truer in the African context, good policies, grassroots organization and engagement with elected leaders are critical ingredient to development in Africa and particularly Kenya. In the devolved state there is need for clarity on roles and resource allocation to different sectors to realize the constitutions provision of devolution and bringing power closer to the people through accountability.

Turkana County is one of the six counties that the grassroots model was piloted in to enhance the implementation of devolution. Two years down the line the seed planted in Turkana is thriving.

Kanco has managed to introduce the grassroots approach to 15 groups. These includes 8 in Turkana Central, 2 in Turkana South, 3 in Loima and 2 Turkana North. The project is keen to cover the two remaining sub counties Turkana East and Turkana North.

Women Advocacy Group TWAG which was formed in 2012 as a support group for widows which has 19 members. The second group is the Boda Boda Welfare Group Turkana which was formed in 2013 and comprised of motorbike riders in Lodwar town. Both the groups joined the Wezesha project in 2016.

The criteria for enrolment is being trained on how to engage with policy makers using different mechanisms. Both the groups appreciate the training as a powerful tool to engage with leaders. According to Khadija the Chairlady TWAG, "We were trained on

how to reach our leaders in a way that is positive. We used to fear our leaders but this no longer the case". According to the Secretary of Boda Boda group "Since the training on EPIC, we no longer close the roads to seek attention of our leaders. We reach them in their offices and they listen to us". EPIC is an element of laser talk standing for Engage, state the Problem, Inform about the solution, and Call for Action, which is a short and compelling talk used during encounters with policy makers, for effective engagement.

Since the training the groups have remained active and meet on monthly basis. The monthly meetings are central to ensuring citizens remains active and provide a platform for defining advocacy agendas, Identify with the action sheets developed for them by KANCO using the citizens information and strategizing on how to meet the various target leaders.

The media has continued to play in advancing the projects agenda as a partner and key stakeholders in addressing communal issues. Further the project has trained community journalists on health reporting and grassroots approach. According to Wycliffe Masinde of Matta FM, the project has been keen to have the media participate in various activities and this has helped him generate content of issues affecting people of Turkana that require the attention of county leadership. According to Maclain, a presenter with radio Ekeykon "KANCO recognizes the role of media in development and appreciate working with us". The citizens to seems to acknowledge the opportunity the project has provided for them to work with the media. According to Hellen Akidor of TWAG "We now have contacts with the media to support our work".

The grassroots are happy with the progress they have made, according to Halima, a member of TWAG "We now have a voice, we do not ask for money from politicians as we are now empowered. We advocate for issues that affect the society and have managed to secure education bursaries for vulnerable children in our area. Initially the money just benefited the people known to the politician".

The group also identified the challenge of lack of nutritionist in the Lodwar County Referral Hospital. Due to their efforts, the hospital has hired a new nutritionist in the Comprehensive Care Centre who is friendly and warm to the clients who seek their services. In addition, the group reports to have managed to curb the loss of

plumpynut supplement in the hospital and therefore ensuring that all TB patients who need nutritional supplements can access it for free. According to Truphena "We have seen the health of very weak TB patients improve as now they can access Plumpy Nut supplement from the hospital"

In Kanamkamer the group advocated for filling of a quarry dam which was a breeding site for mosquitos. Filling the dam site would eventually reduce the number of malaria cases. The group was also able to identify and solve the water shortage problem by reaching out to the member of the county assembly Health CEC to address this challenge and currently the county supplies water to the village twice per week.

The Boda Boda Welfare Group has also been able to engage the political leaders and Health ministry officials on health related issues. The group managed to raise security concerns at the Lodwar County referral hospital and met the security officials in the county and more security officers were placed at the hospital. The group has gone further to meet with the Medical Superintendent to address the poor waste management hence deteriorating cleanliness status of Lodwar town which lead to cholera and the issues were addressed. With support of KANCO, the group has established a WhatsApp group which is used to mobilize members but also share the action sheets.

Both the groups are proud of the fact they are now able to meet various leaders and policy makers including the MCAs, MPs, CEC and the Director of Health during the advocacy days face to face meetings. Currently the groups are involved in pushing for inclusion of Community Health Volunteer's allowance in the County Health Bill and inclusion of priority health issues in the County Integrated Development Plan as defined within the Citizens Health Manifesto. The groups continues to engage in the budget processes and there has been reported increased budgetary allocation to health.

The groups continue to demonstrate the impact of unity of purpose, by strengthening their voice to continue pushing for joint agenda with the media for improved resource allocation to health sector, accountability and health for the people of Turkana.

The citizens and media are keen to link with national institution to address county issues that should be addressed a national level, For example, according to CEC health budget ceilings provided by parliament and senate is a major setback in attempts to for more resource allocation to health. This is an issue the citizens are eager to address.

The grassroots are looking forward to forums where they can share and learn with grassroots from other counties.

Full Essential Drugs store house in Turkana County

By Francis Elim Ngikito-Turkana



Loturerei Health Facility drug storage room fully stocked with Essential

Drug stock out is a major challenge in some of the health facilities in the rural areas. This coupled with the perennial shortage of health care workers and the long distances that patients need to

traverse to get to some of the health facilities becomes an important issue for the county government to address. Loturerei Youth advocates, one of the KANCO and USAID supported grassroots advocacy chapters in Turkana County, challenged by the lack of essential drugs and adequate health personnel to attend to the health needs of the regions populace coupled with the long distance to the next available health facility in Lodwar town which is about 35kms, the youth decided to take action.

Given the urgency of the issues, they decided to address them with the governor and thus by passed all protocols to have audience with him.

They were able to engage guided by the EPIC model they had learned from the KANCO trainings and effectively deliver their plight to the governor.

In response the Governor made an instant call to the County Executive Commissioner Health who together with the Member of the County Assembly were ordered to rush to Loturerei village to ascertain the situation on the ground and report back to the governor on the same day.

In a quick turn around, to the surprise of the Loturerei community, their ward health facility was stocked with all essential drugs within three days. They were also sent two government nurses working at the health facility full time

By Mathews Onyango-Siaya

Vihiga Grassroot Advocacy Successes



Vihiga county has had citizens engage their leaders in various forums organized after the grassroots advocacy training.

Since its inception, the citizens came together into 15 groups to identify health gaps which cut across the wards and needed to be addressed by their leaders. The following issues were highlighted;

Understaffing in health facilities, Lack of essential drugs, Malaria, and Lack of essential equipment in the health facilities

The citizens have continued engage to their leaders in Advocacy on important days advocacy days such as 11th July 2017 which brought together members of the health committee from the county assembly and the citizens to share priority issues which they needed to be addressed by the leaders. From the meeting, the member of the county assembly promised a bill to increase the number of staff in the health facilities.

Emuhaya sub county hospital had been offering services to the residents without essential equipment like x-rays which often prompted patients referral to Mbale referral hospital which is quite far hence an impediment to people seeking treatment due to the transport cost involved.

The grassroots group in the sub county equipped with skills on how to engage their leaders, wrote letters to the area Member of Parliament, Hon. Chris Omulele to try and address the issue.

The grassroots also made various visits to their area MCAs who took the plight to the county assembly for discussion. The group further sought appointment and met with the CEC health of vihiga county, Mrs Kageha to address the issue.

During the Advocacy day 29th September 2017, the citizens engaged sectoral committee chairpersons from the various committees in the county assembly where the chairperson of health, Mr Amara gave a report that the hospital has already been equipped with the X-ray machine and laboratory equipment's and were in the process of sourcing for expertise to start operations. This success is attributed to the grassroots, advocacy group in the sub county for the numerous efforts made to ensure improved service delivery in the sub county hospital.

The issue of understaffing, in the health facilities was addressed where it was noted on the same day that there were nurse positions advertised to fill the gap created by the nurses strike and the County Executive committee Health. Stating that the government was carrying out a staff audit to rid health ghost workers and deploy a team that would effectively serve the county people.

The fifteen groups have been active in the County Integrated Development Plan for the years 2018 to 2022 aimed at gathering the views of the citizens on what they wanted to be accomplished within the five years. The issues which have been on course since 2016 were pointed out and their views noted down by the county planning unit which were to be incorporated in the final County Integrated Development Plan for the county.

The registered breakthroughs in advocacy have awakened a passion in the grassroots and have expressed interest to extend their advocacy to other related areas including Education, Agriculture, Water, Governance, Finance, budget, Youth and sports, trade and public administration.

The advocacy days have been a great success as the county deputy speaker said 'We thank USAID and KANCO for considering Vihiga yet again in Devolution and Governance project'

Up to now, efforts are underway to merge both the Legislature and the Executive wings of governance in vihiga to ensure accountability on the part of decision makers, resource allocators and the implementors. Assurance of support from both ends have been communicated in all dialogue meetings between the citizens and their respective leaders.

The citizen advocates through various engagement with their leaders have highlighted many stalled projects in the county from the last regime, especially the unfinished dispensaries in various wards which hampered access to health care in the county. The health sectoral committee have since taken the initiative of going round the wards to ascertain the claims by the advocates and have committed to enhance community member benefitting from the fruits of devolution.

Sustaining Nutrition through Agri-Nutrition

By: KANCO Writer



Second Right, KANCO's Technical Programs Director during the a panel discussion during the National Agrinutrition conference

Despite many stakeholders coming together and convening around nutrition for an effective response and the right to nutrition being anchored in the constitution and national policies, food and nutrition security remain a key challenge in Kenya where over 10 million people are food insecure and depend on food relief. 26 percent of Kenyan children under the age of 5 years are stunted, 11 percent are underweight and 4 percent are wasted.

Agriculture and nutrition are complimentary, however many people especially in urban and peri-urban areas remain vulnerable to malnutrition. Agri-Nutrition remains an important element in enhancing optimal nutrition through sustainable agriculture. This was fur-

ther echoed in seminar in the National Agri-nutritional forum which KANCO partnered in alongside the ministry of agriculture, the ministry of water, development partners USAID, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and European Union as well as local CSOs working in Nutrition. The conference themed Accelerating Nutrition outcomes through agriculture sought to bring stakeholders in nutrition to deliberate and come with resolutions that would inform future programming and policy directions on agriculture and nutrition, and identify high impact nutrition sensitive interventions for scale up.

KANCO as a key nutrition player in the country though implementing the Pwani Lishe Bora Project a project implemented in Mombasa county targeting women of reproductive age and children below 5 years partnered in the conference. Through research and in the course of implementation of the project through the breastfeeding advocacy groups, KANCO identified gaps hampering exclusive breastfeeding in women in the first 6 months in the county. Most mothers through a survey cited low milk production due to lack of proper diet specifically vegetables due to their high cost in

the region. In response the project in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture in the county, set out to establish lasting solutions that would end the nutritional challenges. This led to seeking partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture in the region and together with the project staff started sensitizing mother on nutrition sensitive feeding, and creation of hanging gardens that would allow the mothers and their families' access vegetables. This agenda was also pushed through the school programme, where school going children were sensitized on nutrition and used as change agents for their families.

Sharing on KANCO's experiences during the conference the KANCO Programmes director stated 'KANCO being cognisant that this approach is not new, we took our time to reflect on what we can do differently. One of the major setbacks that we noted was the cultural formations and beliefs and this required behaviour change communications and this is that we are working with the communities towards, to make them appreciate and own good nutritional habits through sustainable agriculture'

The need for such sustainable agriculture for effective nutrition interventions were emphasised through the conference, where resounding messages from the ministry of health, ministry of agriculture. Development partners as well as emphasised on the need to increased investment in agri-nutrition, promotional of nutritional awareness and stakeholder's commitment to nutrition in observance of food security as human right.

The key enjoyed a huge social media coverage with up to over 2million tweets and interactions.

KANCO HOLDS ITS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

By KANCO Writer



KANCO Grassroots Project manager sharing on the Grassroots advocacy model during the KANCO AGM

KANCO held its annual general meeting on the 24th of November 2017, where the consortium members representatives from the whole country came together to reflect on the ending year and plan ahead for the coming years 2018.

The meeting provided an opportunity to share

on the projects progress and the member sharing on what they felt needed to be improved.

The members registered their satisfaction on the secretariats operations including the board. The board through the chair also giving feedback stating 'As a board we are happy with the strides the organizations is making, specifically in the implementation of the strategic plan, we are proud of the gains we are seeing from this and more so seeing people rally behind the vision of a healthy people and empowered communities by taking their positions to ensure its realization'

Adding on to this the board secretary said 'Our strategy to remain small smart and strategic has paid off, where we have seen an expansion on both our programmatic base and partnerships.

Member also got a chance to give their feedback, including One member from Kajjado region expressing his gratitude having been a beneficiary of one of KANCO's initial projects, RAY which was creating awareness on HIV in the 1990's and as a result he says many youth were saved From contracting HIV. He added that KANCO's effect is still being felt on the ground and wished that the seemingly dwindling awareness component on HIV could be revived.

The member also got to share each county specific challenges and expressed excitement for the incoming project that would provide them with an opportunity to reach out to the communities more.

The 2016 KANCO financial auditor shared their report, sharing that in their assessment they had given KANCO account a clean bill of health.

By Onesmus Mlewa

THE POWER OF nutritionⁿ

Ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture anchored on the sustainable development Goals 2 are at the helm of development. According to the World Bank Report 2015, malnutrition is one of the world's most serious but least-addressed development challenges. Its human and economic costs are enormous, impacting mostly on the less privileged, women, and children. Action against Hunger - an organization working on nutrition issues notes the efforts in recent years where governments have begun to take seriously the issue of under nutrition and have made a series of commitments at both global and national level in this area. Action against Hunger notes that the levels of aid and domestic financing of nutrition interventions still lag behind this political ambition.

To advance the nutrition agenda, ACTION advocacy partners in Kenya KANCO and WACI Health have been working in Kenya to influence the GFF agenda through galvanizing a strong CSO chapter that continuously engage the Government and the banks GFF representatives in Kenya in setting priorities for the fund.

Through the CSO collaboration a score card has been developed to monitor the performance of the fund in Kenya. With the significant influence that KANCO and WACI Health together with other CSOs in Kenya have been able to realize on influencing the GFF agenda, the ACTION advocacy partnership in the region sought to support CSOs Tanzania to initiate an aggressive campaign on the GFF work in Tanzania with the starting point being conducting and disseminating of analysis results of the funding landscape including allocation of resources to relevant sectors such as nutrition supported through GFF.

Under the leadership of the ACTION partnership, expansion work to Tanzania started with an initial

scoping visit to Tanzania, which informed ACTION partners on Tanzania's nutrition and reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH) landscape and CSO actors.

In January 2017, in a meeting cohosted by local CSOs working on Health Promotion in Tanzania brought together seven CSOs who had not previously engaged in the GFF. In the meeting, participants broadened awareness of the mechanism, highlighted where opportunities for nutrition financing might be with relation to the GFF, and shared lessons learned from Kenya's experience in advocating for financing for RMNCAH and nutrition through the GFF.

From this meeting, two organizations, Partnership for Nutrition in Tanzania ACTION and HDT were identified based on their interest and demonstrated capacity on GFF and have since conducted an analysis of the nutrition financing and the GFF, that assess two components the GFF mechanism and flow of financing in Tanzania and, nutrition financing gaps, opportunities for increased financing for nutrition through the GFF and the Power of Nutrition (PoN). HDT and PANITA both worked with WACI Health and KANCO in the first half of 2017 to align priorities and clarify areas of work.

Based on that process of alignment and preparation, HDT and PANITA took on leadership of the in-country work and completed CSO landscaping and analysis work in early November 2017. In the same month initial findings of the analysis were shared with a wider range of CSOs and government stakeholders indicating existing gaps in GFF civil society engagement as well as priority allocation of the fund in relation to the country investment case.

KANCO and WACI Health had an opportunity to present to the Tanzanian team the roadmap that Kenyan CSOs have been able to engage with Government in ensuring accountability for GFF. The Kenya delegation shared their experience in CSO coordination and partner engagement in the GFF processes for the Tanzanian partners to learn on how to effectively engage in the GFF processes.

Initial feedback from this meeting has been very positive, with momentum now building around the usage of the analysis. By the end of the dissemination exercise and the cross sharing with the Kenya partners the CSOs in Tanzania formed a select committee representative of the present CSO members to start engaging with the Tanzania country World bank GFF contact person as well as the Tanzania Ministry of health GFF focal person to initiate discussions on possible review of the indicators currently being supported through the fund. This is an initiative the Tanzania CSOs have prioritized in order to ensure that the Fund is able to effectively support and deliver on country indicators as presented in the country's investment case.

A feedback meeting where the select committee will give feedback to the wider CSO chapter and other stakeholders is scheduled on the 14th of December 2017 where KANCO and WACI Health will continue to support the Tanzania partners to grow a strong CSO chapter that will be able to effectively mobilize a strong consortium to engage the Government on GFF processes.

Championing the rights of Disabled people in Murang'a County

By Wachira Charity



Janet Wairimu: Murang'a County
Grassroot advocate

Janet Wairimu, a Murang'a based Grassroots advocate, acquired disability as an adult through unprecedented events. This life changing experience got her to reflect on issues that affect physically challenged, people nurturing a determination to improve the lives of the physically challenged in Murang'a county who face a myriad of challenges. For the longest time, the major setback for Janet in her quest as she narrates, was the lack of a platform and the know-how, in terms of where to go, who to address and what provisions were in place in the constitution to base her advocacy efforts on.

In 2013, KANCO initiated Grassroots advocacy through the RESULTS model that seeks to enhance accessible, adequate and accurate information for citizens to engage decision makers for effective advocacy. The grassroots advocacy project set out to train grassroots / citizens to empower them for enhanced citizen participation in decision making especially in relation to health. In 2016, with the support of USAID dubbed Wezesha Mashinani loosely translating to Enabling the Grassroots was launched to build on the gains made in the Grassroots project.

Wezesha Mashinani has been supporting citizen advocacy chapters in 6 counties which are Murang'a, Turkana, Vihiga, Siaya Mombasa and Kilifi, where citizens come together to address the health, social and economic issues affecting them and sharing these with their elected leaders in an effort to seek shared solutions.

Janet was one of the beneficiaries of the KANCO training on grassroots

advocacy in Murang'a county.

"This training was the long missing link in my work" Janet Remarks, adding that it affirmed her confidence and gave her advocacy work a foundation by enabling her to identify who to talk to, how to reach, the tools, avenues to use them and affirmed her confidence that the right to participate in decision making for citizens in Kenya is a constitutional right.

In addition to her other major advocacy engagement, Janet recalls an incident in February 2016. A lady friend from one of the physically challenged groups that she has brought together got ill. Naturally, the family reached out to her, and they took her to hospital. At the hospital, the ill lady was required to take a stool test, for an effective diagnosis. This task which should otherwise not be strenuous was almost practically impossible for the sickly woman to do, as there were no disability friendly toilets to enable her get the specimen. This marked the beginning of a new advocacy agenda for Janet.

The biggest challenge at that point was the lack of disability-friendly services. For lack of any alternative, Janet's friend was forced to use an open area within the hospital premises, an experience Janet describes as dehumanizing. After the diagnosis the lady was admitted, and the absence of a disability-friendly toilet facility persisted being a setback.

This propelled Janet to act, she raised the issue with the nurse in charge who was very supportive and resolved to give one staff toilet to the disabled woman for the period which she would be in the hospital. As a follow-up to this, Janet mobilized her group and met the Member of County Assembly (MCA)- Mugoiri ward and expressed their concern over the lack of

disabled friendly services as a challenge that People with disability face when they attend hospitals in Murang'a. The MCA informed them that he would raise a motion in the county assembly so that the disabled people can be provided with friendly toilets in Murang'a hospitals. The motion is now at the county assembly and the hope is that soon the county will soon have disabled people friendly services.

'My vision is to see a county, where all the disabled people are fully empowered to engage with their elected leaders and create policies to enhance their social and economic empowerment and fully enjoying their right to participation.' Janet states. Janet has since not stopped there she has been involved in a series of activities, including writing successful proposals on giving monthly allowances to people with disabilities in the county as well as working closely with the county to train them on income generating activities.

Janet states that the biggest setback was fear and ignorance, but with the training, she is armed for her work and is thankful for the support. She is presently leading a group of over 200 People living with disability in the county. She is also keeping tabs with where she has made her first major step; following up to ensure that the motion gets to the floor and is discussed.



Janet Sharing updates with friends in the County

Dr Mulindi (inset) is a grasstop working closely with the Siaya county grassroots to enhance devolution and access to services .

Dr Mulindi has over 30 years of experience in social mobilization, policy advocacy and strategies for HIV prevention. He brings to the table a wealth of experience from the first national responses to the HIV epidemic, where he served as a member of the National AIDS committee as part of the Information communication and education materials subcommittee, working closely with stakeholders to promote awareness on HIV/AIDS. During this time he also worked with Red cross and other stakeholders and was part of the team that initiated the Voluntary HIV testing and counselling.

Dr Mulindi in what he calls the birth of the grassroots movement, reflects on the response to the HIV epidemic, where there was a need to reach the grassroots that led to the call for mobilization and galvanization of the civil society organizations which led to the formation of Kenya AIDS NGOS Consortium.

He remembers that at the time the grassroots were important in creating a critical mass , united to combat the HIV epidemic and thus the birth of grassroot advocacy in Kenya

Over time Dr. Mulindi has worked in different areas including coordinating research and translating it into policy, development of the Guidelines on antiretroviral therapy development as well as in the development of sessional paper number 5 in 1997 that led to the establishment of the National AIDS control council to facilitate a multi-sectorial response to HIV, which was enacted through an act of parliament , among other remarkable achievements in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

He recalls of the initial challenges in the response to the HIV epidemic, citing low capacity in all levels , the high costs of treatment which made HIV practically a death sentence for many Kenyans, where in some areas where there was up to 38% HIV prevalence and the bed occupancy at the national hospitals was about 60-70% HIV related.

He recalls on the role of CSOs advocacy towards the response and their instrumental role in the formation of the NACC which paved way for key stakeholders including development partners to come on board to support the HIV response including the first Global Fund Country grant and other subsequent grants.

Dr. Mulindi's grassroots walk was cemented when he assumed the office of the Deputy Director Coordination and Support at the National AIDS Control Council-NACC. His job involved

working closely with CSOs for a coordinated HIV/AIDS response and through other forums like the youth desk where he served as a committee member of the HIV free generation campaign.

In his journey he also worked closely with religious leaders, and national staff unions along the way cementing his role in research, which is critical in every area for an informed interventions in diseases response.

Dr. Mulindi adds that he has worked with KANCO, as a privilege partner, in the fight against HIV/AIDS in different fronts and is now very optimistic partnering in the grassroots movement as an grass top.



Dr. Mulindi points out the critical link between the grasstops and ad grassroots, stating that “ They are bridging the gap between the people and their elected leaders, through empowerment of the populace to effectively perform their watchdog role”

He adds that politician are stakeholders in development and thus grassroots movement is not about blame game, rather a consultative process guided by the constitution geared towards development.

He adds that the grasstops must therefore provide leadership, expertise, uplift their people to effectively create a change movement. They must also be passionate, and ready to mentor the grassroots towards creation of acritical mass impacting change.

Dr. Mulindi's vision is “ To see a sustainable grassroots movement, taking root by embracing knowledge , collaborating and cooperating and harmoniously working towards development

He however adds that there is need to set aside funds to facilitate the growth of the grassroots movement and this will ultimately have huge returns on investment where it will fuel achievement of the devolution objectives .

He reiterates that the grassroots movement is critical in creation of a continuum of activities that's address development though promotion of accountability and integrity, adding that ,its not only sustainable but also bound to be very fruitful in the long run.

He adds that grass root advocacy creates a sense of ownership, where communities take health as their responsibility by ensuring that human and financial resources are well utilized.

He spells out the role of the movement as to ensure that devolution is effectively implemented, through accurate articulation of issues .



About KANCO

KANCO is a regional membership network of NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, Private Sector actors, Research and Learning Institutions as well as associate membership that includes individuals and International Non-Governmental Organizations involved in or that have interest in HIV & AIDS, Tuberculosis (TB) and other public health care concerns.

Established in 1990, KANCO has implementing partners locally, regionally and globally with global advocacy networks; [ACTION](#) and [RESULTS](#) and is also an accredited linking organization of the [International HIV/AIDS Alliance](#) since 2009.

Over time KANCO has evolved to become a premier agency for sensitizing, mobilizing and promoting collaboration among civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the region.

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Our Vision: Healthy People, Empowered Communities

Our Mission: To improve the Health and Well Being of Communities through Capacity Building and Promotion of Innovative Leadership