

RMO Newsletter

Results Management Office

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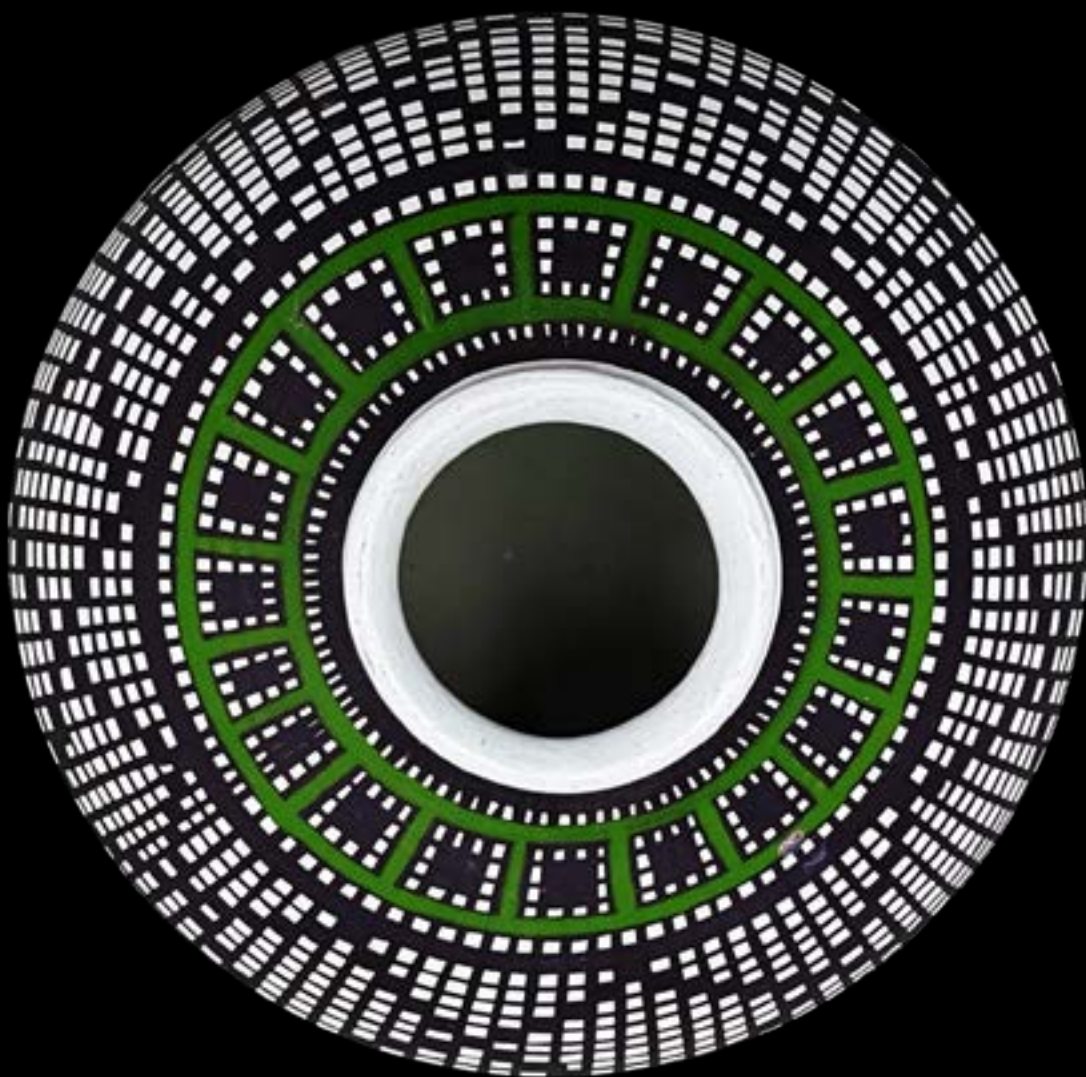
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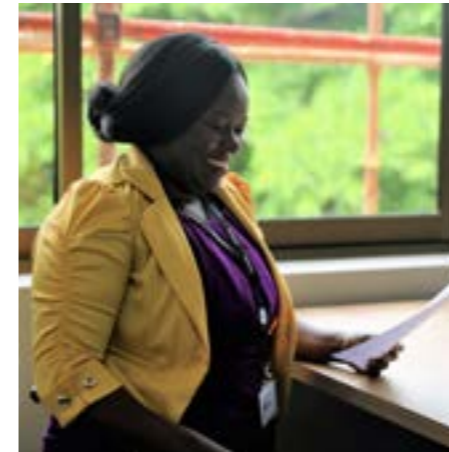
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Foreword

Dear Friends of USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone,

With the conclusion of our second quarter of financial year 2 (2018), I felt it important we share some of our program highlights with all our stakeholders with whom we have relentlessly worked side by side in what is our second issue of the Results Management Office newsletter. Throughout Quarter 2, the Program continued to implement activities in supported thematic areas i.e. HIV/AIDS, Family Planning, Tuberculosis, Malaria, Maternal, and Child Health through our three key results. Namely, these are; improved enabling environment for health services provision; improved availability of quality, integrated health services at facility level; and increased access to health services at community level.

on the gains of the past and excel in every aspect of our task to ultimately improve the health status of all Tanzanians.

In this issue you will get to read about how the Program has supported health service delivery in Southern Tanzania, participated in key commemorations over the past quarter and how some of our beneficiaries are breaking the chains of stigma in the fight against HIV.

I hope you will enjoy scrolling through the pages as much as we have cherished every minute in service of our benefactors!

Dr. Marina Njelekela – Chief of Party, USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone Program.

The ending of Quarter 2 ushers in a new era in which we aspire to work diligently from the onset to improve



Ligula Regional Referral Hospital, Mtwara Mikindani Municipal Council, Mtwara – Fatuma Mfaume thanks USAID Mission Director for support to persons living with HIV (PLHIV). ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone /Mhando.

Program highlights

USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone donates medical supplies and equipment to health facilities in Southern Tanzania

The Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) for Morogoro, Clifford Tandari, received medical supplies and equipment worth TZS 1.3 billion (US\$597,196) from the Chief of Party of the USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone Program, Dr. Marina Njelekela in a brief handover ceremony at the Saba Saba Health Centre in Morogoro region on 30 January 2018. The RAS received the goods on behalf of the Regional Commissioner for Morogoro Dr. Stephen Kebwe. Also in attendance was the Deputy Permanent Secretary (President's Office – Regional Administration and Local

Government) Dr. Zainab Chaula as well as other distinguished guests from the Government (region and district).

Included in the donation were laboratory refrigerators, working benches, thermo mixers, microscopes, weighing scales, medicines, desktop computers, laptops, printers, modems and various other IT equipment. The medical supplies and equipment were received in Morogoro on behalf of all the other regions in which the Program has a presence, i.e. Lindi, Mtwara, Njombe, Iringa and Ruvuma.



Saba Saba Health Centre, Morogoro – USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone Chief of Party, Dr. Marina Njelekela hands over a microscope to the Deputy Permanent Secretary (President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Government), Dr. Zainab Chaula. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone /Mhando.



Saba Saba Health Centre, Morogoro – Regional Administrative Secretary (RAS) for Morogoro, Clifford Tandari speaks to the audience at the Saba Saba Health Centre during the handover ceremony of medical equipment and supplies. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone / Mhando.

Speaking during the ceremony, the RAS who officiated the event thanked USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone Program for their commitment to improve the health status of all Tanzanians. “The Government of Tanzania is proud to work with partners who genuinely care about our citizens. Through this donation, USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone has shown that it stands beside us to strengthen health care in the country. I call on more partners to support the Government of Tanzania,” stated Clifford Tandari.

The Deputy Permanent Secretary (President’s Office – Regional Administration and Local Government), Dr. Zainab Chaula used the occasion to call for USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone to support the Government’s strategy of renovating health facilities across the country.

“I urge you to also consider more funding to renovating health facilities in the regions you work. This would be greatly impactful for our people,” said Dr. Chaula.

On her part, the Chief of Party for the USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone Program, Dr. Njelekela expressed her delight at the great collaboration the program receives from the Government of Tanzania.

“Since launching in October 2016, our Program has sought to work with the Government in improving enabling environment for health service provision, improving availability of quality, integrated health services at facility level and increasing access to health services at community level. In undertaking these objectives, we stand side by side with the Government,” she remarked.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been a long-standing partner to the people and Government of Tanzania. In 2017 alone, through the USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone program, USAID has spent TZS 47.2 billion (US\$ 20,996,370) on health care.



Saba Saba Health Centre, Morogoro – Some of the donated items included microscopes, weighing scales, medicines, desktop computers, laptops, printers, modems and various other IT equipment. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone / Mhando.

USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone participates in MEWATA Campaign

In a bid to reach the first 90, which is having 90% of people living with HIV (PLHIV) knowing their HIV status by 2020, USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone participated in the Medical Women Association of Tanzania (MEWATA) campaigns in Lindi and Njombe. MEWATA conducts periodic mass cancer screening services in various regions in the country. These cancer-screening events provided an opportunity to integrate HIV testing and Tuberculosis (TB) screening as a strategy towards achieving the third 90 (90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will have viral suppression by 2020) and increasing TB case notification in supported regions. In Njombe and Lindi, the MEWATA team in collaboration with its

partners Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MoHCDGEC), ITV/Radio One and USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone conducted community awareness on HIV testing, Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs) including High Blood Pressure, Diabetes, Breast and Cervical cancers and Communicable Diseases(CDs) in particular TB.

In Njombe, the campaign held from 24 – 27 January, was officiated by the Njombe Regional Commissioner, Hon. Christopher Ole Sendeka and reached 3,248 clients (342 Male and 2,906 Female) in Makambako, Lupembe and Matembwe communities. Out of these, 2,624 clients tested for HIV in which 83



Sokoine Hospital Grounds, Lindi Region – Honorable Mama Salma Rashid Kikwete with Dr. Marina Njelekela (right) and the MEWATA President on the left during the official opening ceremony of the campaign in Lindi. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone /Mbaruku.

clients (equivalent to 3.2%) were found HIV positive and linked into care while 2,474 clients were screened for TB.

In Lindi, the campaign was conducted from 22 – 24 March, after being launched by the country's former first lady and current special seats Member of Parliament, Hon. Mama Salma Rashid Kikwete. Some 3,577 clients (532 Male and 3,045 Female) were reached in the communities of Lindi MC, Mingoyo, Kinyonga and Tingi. Out of these, some 3,095 clients tested for HIV and

60 were found to be HIV positive (for the first time) and were enrolled in Care and Treatment Centres while 3,284 clients were screened for TB.

Overall, some 5,758 individuals who showed up for the campaigns in both regions were screened for TB and among them 513 (9%) were presumed to have TB. All with presumptive TB were investigated with 27 persons confirmed to have TB and initiated on treatment.

The Program Commemorates International Women's Day

USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone joined the global commemorations of International Women's Day on 8 March 2018 by carrying out various activities related to gender and women's empowerment across program regions. Related to the Program's cross cutting Gender Strategy, the activities were carried out in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Regional/Council Health Management Teams and other stakeholders including Police Gender Desks.

The global theme for the year 2018 was 'Press for Progress, Planet 50-50 by 2030.' Linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially Goal 5 which calls for 'Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls by the year 2030,' messages on

the day focused on promoting gender equality including making progress in the economic empowerment of women. The national theme adopted in the country was "Towards Industrial Economy, Let's Strengthen Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Rural Areas: Time is now."

Campaigns against gender-based violence were conducted with discussions centred on the significance of the day and the contribution of women to socio-economic development. Included within these campaigns were group discussions on harmful gender norms and education for young girls, drama and poetry recitals, exhibitions and themed traditional music performances. Some 5,157 people were reached (3,985 women | 1,172 men) across all Program regions.



Aris House, Deloitte Consulting Limited/USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone Headquarters, Dar es Salaam – Acting Chief of Party, Finance Director, Mkami Mahemba addresses staff in a brief gathering to mark International Women's Day on 8 March 2018. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/Mhando.



USAID Boresha Afya Hands Over 21 Computers and their accessories to the Government

On 15 March 2018, USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone donated 21 computers and their accessories worth over forty six million Tanzanian Shillings to the Lindi Regional Commissioner, Hon. Godfrey Zambi in a brief handover ceremony at Sokoine Regional Referral Hospital.

Christopher Hamaro, the USAID Boresha Afya Regional Program Manager for Lindi handed over the computers. The devices, allocated to different departments within the hospital, will assist the smooth running of an electronic information system better known as 'GoTHoMIS.' The system is

expected to improve electronic medical record keeping, tracking of inventory, billing and revenue collection. The Regional Administrative Secretary, Regional Medical Officer as well as hospital and Program staff attended the ceremony.



Sokoine Regional Referral Hospital, Lindi Municipal, Lindi – Regional Commissioner for Lindi, Hon. Godfrey Zambi (in cap) receives a computer from the USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone Regional Program Manager for Lindi, Christopher Hamaro. During the brief handover ceremony, Hon. Zambi cited the Program's continued collaboration with the Government of Tanzania as impressive. Photo taken 15 March 2018.

©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Msanga.

World Tuberculosis (TB) Day Commemorated Across Southern Tanzania

World TB Day is commemorated annually on 24 March across the globe and since 1977 in Tanzania. The Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children through the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme (NTLP) coordinates the commemorations across the country. In commemorating the event, USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone supported different activities across its implementing regions. The theme this year was "Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world."

In Morogoro, the Program supported commemorations in two councils: Morogoro MC and Ifakara TC. Some of the activities included mass TB screening services to selected communities, awareness raising at Ifakara Girls High School, work places, Care and Treatment clinics in Morogoro MC and Ifakara TC as well as densely populated areas in the aforementioned councils.

The Airport/Magereza grounds provided the venue for the commemorations in Njombe region. Teams on site offered TB and Non Communicable Diseases (NCD) screening, HIV counseling and testing as well as general health education sessions. A football and netball bonanza also featured during the event and helped create community awareness. Similarly, another team visited Njombe Regional Prison where inmates were the recipients of TB/HIV/NCD health education, TB/NCD screening, HIV counseling and testing, and general health sessions.

In Iringa, Kilolo District hosted the regional commemorations with TB screening conducted at Mwaya grounds (Ilula town) as well as cervical cancer screening, HIV counseling and testing and Family Planning outreach services offered. On the other hand, Masasi District was the venue for the commemorations in Mtwara. In addition to the aforementioned activities contributing largely to the agenda of the day, dramas,

poem recitals and traditional dance groups added vibrancy to the event.

In Lindi, the Program supported commemorations by conducting mass TB screenings at Mingoyo Dispensary and Kinyonga Hospital. Community sensitization was undertaken through public address, community radios and using influential leaders. Members of the community attending the two facilities were given brochures and leaflets. Some 780 persons were screened with 40 presumptive cases identified out of which two (2) were confirmed to have TB and immediately initiated on TB treatment.

The Minister of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC), Hon. Ummu Mwalimu stated recently that the Government through her Ministry has set aside 5 Billion Tanzanian Shillings to purchase GeneXpert machines which will be used in TB case detection across several health facilities countrywide.



Masasi District, Mtwara – A women's group performs during the World TB Day Commemorations in Mtwara. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone /Mhando.

USAID Mission Director Visits USAID Boresha Afya Supported Facilities in Mtwara

Mission Director Andy Karas of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Tanzania met with local government officials and conducted familiarization visits to U.S. government-supported programs in Mtwara and Lindi regions from 16-21 April 2018.

On his schedule was a visit to USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone supported sites of Ligula Regional Hospital and Likombe Health Centre in Mtwara on Wednesday 18 April 2018. Accompanying the Mission Director was the Agreement Officer Representative from USAID, Dr. Jema Bisimba as well as other key personnel from USAID.

Commencing his visit at the Ligula Regional Hospital, the Regional Medical Officer for Mtwara, Dr. Wedson Sichalwe gives him an overview of the health situation in the region. The Mission Director is also briefed on the services supported by the Program at the facility. Meanwhile, the Medical Officer in charge, Dr. Benjamin Rupia uses the occasion to commend support received from the Program and requests an additional ambulance to support the facility. He also highlights data reporting as a key area of improvement that urgently needs support.



Ligula Regional Hospital, Mtwara Mikindani Municipal Council, Mtwara – USAID Mission Director, Andy Karas (centre) is flanked by Agreement Officer Representative, Dr. Jema Bisimba (right) and USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone’s Results Management Office Director, Dr. Mussa Ndile (left). Walking slightly ahead of them (in purple tie) is the Mtwara Regional Medical Officer, Dr. Wedson Sichalwe. Standing behind the Mission Director and AOR is the Deputy Chief of Party for USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone, Dr. Emeka Okechukwu. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mhando.



Ligula Regional Referral Hospital, Mtwara Mikindani Municipal Council, Mtwara – A group photograph taken outside the hospital's eye clinic. ©USAID /T. Donigan.

Shortly afterwards, Andy Karas tours the different service delivery points supported by USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone, his mastery of the Swahili language impressing patients and hospital staff alike. This includes a tour of the Care and Treatment Centre (CTC) where he speaks to persons living with HIV (PLHIV) receiving treatment at the facility.

"I must say I am delighted to meet you all and see how USAID support has led to a general improvement in your health. The fact that you care enough to take your medication is encouraging. I would like you to urge your peers to do the same. A healthy population will contribute a great deal to national development," he candidly expresses to a group of PLHIV queuing to see the doctor.

A number of the clients at the CTC show their appreciation, in particular because of the sincerity in the Mission Director's voice and the fact he speaks their language. "I was bedridden for months when I learned of my HIV status but look at me now," Fatuma Mfaume gesticulates. She acknowledges that US Government support has led to her drastic improvement.

His delegation thereafter visits the Likombe Health Centre where the Mission Director tours the Outpatient Department, the Reproductive and Child Health wing, the Laboratory and finally the Care and Treatment Centre at the facility.

More about the facilities

Ligula Regional Referral Hospital

Ligula hospital is a regional referral hospital in Mtwara region serving a population of 1,351,038 (2012 census). It was officially opened on 14 October 1964 by Mwalimu J.K Nyerere, the first President of the United Republic of Tanzania with a few new buildings clustered in an area called Ligula in Mtwara's Mikindani Municipal. Another hospital called Frelimo was built some 800 metres away to serve Mozambique freedom fighters during Africa's liberation struggle and was handed to Ligula Hospital in 1976. By its geographical location Ligula Regional Referral Hospital also directly serves part of the Lindi region population as well as the Northern part of neighbouring Mozambique.

Ligula hospital provides various health services to the community such as medical, surgical, obstetric, gynecological, pediatrics, HIV testing, oral health, eye care, diagnostic and physiotherapy services. It presently has 270 employees (2016) and a bed capacity of 260.

Likombe Health Centre

Likombe Health Centre is located in Mtwara Municipal. It was officially opened in 1975. The Government of Tanzania owns the facility, which serves an estimated population of 23,529 people. Likombe Health Centre also directly serves part of the population from Mtwara District Council due to its geographical position.

Likombe Health Centre serves as the main reproductive and child health services centre for Mtwara Municipal and parts of Mtwara District Council. The facility was recently upgraded to offer comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care "CEmONC" and has 56 employees at present.

USAID Boresha Afya Commemorates World Malaria Day

The national commemorations of World Malaria Day took place on Wednesday 25 April 2018. The theme was 'nipo tayari kutokomeza Malaria: wewe je?' (I am ready to beat Malaria: Are you?) The event commenced at the Umoja Grounds in Kasulu District with the Regional Commissioner of Kigoma Hon. Brigadier General (retired), Emmanuel Maganga accompanying the guest of honour, Minister of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Hon. Umyy Mwalimu, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Professor Joyce Ndalichako as well as other distinguished guests to the implementing partner booths at the grounds. Amongst the dignitaries at the event were the Swiss Ambassador to Tanzania, Her Excellency, Florence Tinguely, USAID Mission Director, Andy Karas, UNHCR Head of Field Office in Kasulu, Anteneh Tesfaye who was representing the WHO as well as Heads of USAID funded organizations, regional and district authorities.



Umoja Grounds, Kasulu District, Kigoma – From Left to Right: USAID Mission Director, Andy Karas, Minister of Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Professor Joyce Ndalichako, Swiss Ambassador to Tanzania, Her Excellency, Florence Tinguely-Mattli, Minister of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children, Hon. Umyy Mwalimu and Regional Commissioner of Kigoma Hon. Brigadier General (retired), Emmanuel Maganga. ©USAID/T. Donigan.

In his speech, the USAID Mission Director commended the strong leadership of the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (MOHCDGEC) and the National Malaria Control Program. He also saluted the health care workers and communities on the frontlines in the struggle to beat Malaria in Tanzania. Andy Karas expressed pride in PMI's contribution to Tanzania's good results in cutting back Malaria. "Many children are alive today because of efforts in Tanzania and 18 other countries around Africa where PMI operates," he stated. Over the past decade in Tanzania, PMI has purchased and distributed nearly 10 million mosquito nets, purchased 20 million rapid diagnostic test kits and 38 million of the most effective treatments, and protected over 2 million people annually through indoor spraying. Andy Karas also urged all Partners present to recommit to end Malaria – in homes, schools, communities, and at health centers in every region of Tanzania.

The Minister for Education, Science and Technology, Hon. Professor Joyce Ndalichako in her speech commended the collaborative efforts of her Ministry and the MOHCDGEC. Speaking during the commemorations, she stated "...we cannot develop if we aren't healthy." She used the occasion to urge all students in the country to join the national efforts to fight Malaria in order to ensure they finish their education and contribute to the national development agenda.

In her key note address, the Guest of Honour, Hon. Umyy Mwalimu gave an update on the Malaria situation in the country by citing and launching the Tanzania Malaria Indicator Survey 2017 which was jointly produced by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) and the Office of the Chief Government Statistician (Zanzibar), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elderly and Children (mainland) and The Ministry of Health (Zanzibar).

The Guest of Honour commended work done by all stakeholders under the leadership of the 5th phase Government to



Umoja Grounds, Kasulu District, Kigoma – USAID Mission Director, Andy Karas addresses the crowds gathered at the Umoja Grounds in Kasulu during the commemorations of World Malaria Day on 25 April 2018. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mhando.

reduce Malaria prevalence in the country from 14.4% in 2015 to 7.3% in 2017. She however stated there was still work to do as 10 out of 26 regions across the country still had high Malaria prevalence rates. These included Kigoma (24.4%), Geita (17.3%), Kagera (15.4%), Mtwara (14.8%), Ruvuma (11.8%), Lindi (11.7%), Tabora (11.7%), Mara (11.2%), Morogoro (9.5%) and Mwanza (8.9%).

The Guest of Honour also issued health insurance cards to a few select senior citizens during the commemorations of Malaria Day. Adding vibrancy to the event were traditional dance group (Kasulu Theatre Arts Group) from Kigoma region as well as Bongo Flavour musicians (Weusi and Maua Sama).



Umoja Grounds, Kasulu District, Kigoma – The Guest of Honour, Hon. Umyy Mwalimu hands a health insurance card to a senior citizen. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mhando.



Umoja Grounds, Kasulu District, Kigoma – Vibrant Bongo Flavour Hip Hop Group Weusi perform during the commemorations of World Malaria Day. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mhando.



Umoja Grounds, Kasulu District, Kigoma –Bongo Flavour musician, Maua Sama performs during the commemorations of World Malaria Day. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mhando.

A pictorial journey of the commemorations

Meanwhile, in Lindi, Mtwara, Ruvuma and Morogoro regions where USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone is implementing among other thematic areas Malaria outreach and services, World Malaria Day was also observed. This was done through a host of activities including supporting provision of health education on Malaria prevention to selected wards through Community Health Workers (CHWs) under Program supported CSOs, screening for Malaria by mRDT and treatment of positive Malaria cases. T-shirts and leaflets on Malaria prevention and control were also distributed during the commemorations of the day.



Umoja Grounds, Kasulu District, Kigoma – USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone Chief of Party, Dr Marina Njelekela (L) and Senior Malaria Advisor, Dr. Joseph Mugasa during the commemorations of World Malaria Day. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mhando.



Umoja Grounds, Kasulu District, Kigoma – Kasulu Theatre Arts Group performs during the commemorations of World Malaria Day. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mhando.



Kilwa Masoko Area, Kilwa District, Lindi – Program staff hold up a banner during the commemorations of World Malaria Day in Lindi. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mkinga.



Kilwa Masoko Area, Kilwa District, Lindi – Brass Band leads march from Kilwa Masoko Fire Station to Benjamin Mkapa Gardens during the commemorations of World Malaria Day in Lindi. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/ Mkinga.

Success stories

Using Mother Champions to Save Lives in Iringa

In Iringa region, to the Southern Highlands of Tanzania, USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone is working with partners like Ilula Orphan Program (IOP) to reduce HIV infections amongst pregnant women, breastfeeding mothers and their infant babies. Through working with women living with HIV as mother champions, the Program trains them to educate pregnant and breastfeeding mothers about the importance of getting tested early so as to prevent transmission of HIV to their infant babies.

Dorcas Kinyaga (39) of Ilula ward in Kilolo District is one such champion. A wife and mother of four; she learned of her HIV

status in September 2006 at a time when stigma was rampant. “The taunting and insults trickled down to our children. It was horrible. My husband and I would encourage each other that one day things would get better,” she narrates.

Her role as a mother champion for the USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone commenced in June 2017 after a five day training workshop in Mafinga. This training brought together 58 mother champions from Iringa and Njombe regions. “I dearly love my children and the calling to be a mother champion was simply to help other mothers stay healthy and deliver HIV free babies,” Dorcas explains. From her base



Ilula Ward, Kilolo District, Iringa – Dorcas Kinyaga has been employed by the Program through Sub Grantees Ilula Orphan Program as a Mother Champion. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/Mhando.

at the Ilula Lutheran Hospital, she has assisted 95 women since June 2017. "Of all the 95 women passing through my care, only one has delivered an HIV positive baby. It haunts me. I wish I could've done more," she regrets.

To counter this, USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone through IOP encourages Persons Living with HIV (PLHIV) to form economic strengthening groups of peers to encourage each other to adhere to Anti-Retroviral Therapy, follow up on missed clinic appointments, provide nutritional education and economic support to lead normal stigma free lives. Dorcas chairs the 'Tujalane' group, which was established in September 2017.

To date, Tujalane comprises 24 women and meets four times a week.

One amongst the 95 women who have passed through Dorcas' care is Josephine Lugenge (36). She has learned a great deal under the stewardship of Dorcas in Tujalane. The mother of two girls, aged 3 years and 8 months and the other 1 year and three months (both HIV negative), has been living with HIV since 2008. Her husband is HIV negative. "Dorcas took me under her care as if I were family.

She reminded me of my responsibilities to ensure the safety of my husband and my children," she shares. "Today I am confident and educate others in my neighborhood about HIV and healthy living. I want everyone to know that living with HIV is not a death sentence," Josephine boldly states.



Ilula/Itunda Ward, Kilolo District, Iringa – Josephine Lugenge sits with her daughters, Mailina and Dominica in her living room. Josephine loves to sing in her church choir and sells pastries to make a living. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/Mhando.

Babeli Kikoti, the charismatic PLHIV Peer Educator



Ibumu Village, Ibumu Ward, Iringa – Babeli Kikoti works on the wall of an incomplete building. Apart from being a PLHIV Peer Educator and TB Community Health Worker, Babeli is also a mason. ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/Mhando.

By working closely with persons living with HIV (PLHIV) as peer educators, USAID Boresha Afya Southern Zone has been making positive strides in reaching the third 90 target, i.e. by 2020, 90% of all people receiving antiretroviral therapy will achieve viral suppression. The Program, through local NGO, Ilula Orphan Program (IOP), employs PLHIV peer educators as agents of change. The aim is to encourage PLHIV to adhere on Antiretroviral Therapy, follow up on clients defaulting from care and treatment, track missed appointments,

form Community Adherence Groups (CAGs) and combat stigma through health education amongst other notable tasks.

Babeli Kikoti (48) of Ibumu village in Iringa is one amongst a number of PLHIV peer educators working with the Program. His calling to be a peer educator was borne from a deep sense of empathy towards his fellow PLHIV. "I didn't have anyone supporting me when I learned of my status. I don't want others to go through this alone," he shares.

His first wife, with whom he was blessed with two girls, had used medication in hiding until her death in 2008. It was only following her death and a long bout of illness that Babeli learned of his HIV status, some three years later. Prior to this, he had sought the help of traditional healers to no avail. "Initially, I was diagnosed with Tuberculosis (TB). A few months later, I came to learn I was HIV positive. I was in total shock," he reveals. This was at the Lyasa Image Dispensary in 2011.

Babeli began taking his medication immediately and the transformation has been noteworthy. "I was bedridden for a lengthy period, but I'm now strong," he flexes his biceps. He smiles; and he has reason to. Today his viral load is undetectable. He is now married again, to

a fellow PLHIV, Magdalena. Her viral load is also undetectable. Together they have a healthy HIV negative boy, Ibrahim (3).

Babeli is a mason in his village. He takes great pride in his testimony and uses it in most of his sessions in Ibumu village as a PLHIV peer educator. On the wall in his living room is a Care and Treatment Centre schedule of the Lyasa Image Dispensary in which he has sessions to conduct. He routinely attends nine times a month to support and encourage his peers. At present, he is in the process of forming an economic strengthening group for PLHIV. The purpose is to empower them. "HIV isn't the end of our lives, it's just a different beginning," he says.

His most endearing trait is his mental strength; he has not succumbed to stigma. Although admitting he was the target of many jokes and snide remarks early in his battle with HIV, he has always shown remarkable resilience and fortitude. "I wouldn't be a peer educator if I let stigma sidetrack me. My testimony is what empowers my peers," Babeli expounds. His distinct passion for his work has seen him form a group of 10 peers and successfully return 18 lost to follow up (LTF) clients to care.

Babeli also doubles as a TB community health worker and uses his experience to educate his immediate community on the symptoms of the disease and its treatment. It has only been a month since he started this new role but already, he has referred nine clients for TB screening.



Ibumu Village, Ibumu Ward, Iringa – Babeli Kikoti stands outside his house with his wife Magdalena Mbena and son (Ibrahim). ©USAID Boresha Afya – Southern Zone/Mhando.

This Program is made possible by the support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

