

Strengthening the Health Information System for Evidence-Informed Decision Making

Healthcare officials and providers in Nakuru County are dedicated to serving the diverse health needs of about 1.9 million people. The county has 90 nurses and 12 doctors per 100,000 people, a much better ratio than the national average of 55 nurses and 10 doctors per 100,000. About 72 percent of children ages 12–23 months were fully immunized during 2015.¹

Still, there are challenges to address. Though the HIV prevalence rate for Nakuru County adults is relatively low (about 4.1 percent),² the mother-to-child transmission rate is 5.2 percent.¹ About 30 percent of births take place away from health facilities,¹ making it difficult to track all births and essential maternal and child health data.

Good-quality healthcare depends on a strong community health information system (CHIS) to measure and evaluate critical elements of care and provide accurate data for evidence-informed decision making aimed at improving services and outcomes. In 2012, MEASURE Evaluation PIMA (MEval-PIMA) staff began working with partners and Nakuru County stakeholders to help strengthen the CHIS, through baseline assessments, capacity building, strategic mapping, action plans, and consultations. The idea was to improve data availability, quality, and use to inform decision making and improve services. These collaborations further developed the county health management team (CHMT), resulting in the creation of the first monitoring and evaluation (M&E) technical working group among the project's target counties. This yielded stakeholder forums; training of trainers and health workers countywide; the development of the county's first comprehensive M&E plan and county health profile;



A workshop on child protection was held in Nakuru to discuss the upgrading of a national Child Protection Information Management System. Workshop participants conducted a field visit to a charitable children's institution in Nakuru. Photo by Yvonne Otieno, MEASURE Evaluation PIMA.

a stronger HIV referral system; more accurate tracking of births and deaths; and a sustainable child protection information management system.

Here are examples of achievements in Nakuru County during the past five years.

Used Data to Strengthen Referral Linkages to HIV Care and Treatment. By the end of 2015, more than 41,000 Nakuru County residents were living with HIV² and more than 15,000 were receiving antiretroviral therapy.¹ People living with HIV need a range of care and services rarely found in one location. Strong referral systems can help to link clients with appropriate specialists and programs that are accessible, affordable, and responsive to their needs. MEval-PIMA saw a need for an HIV referral services directory to guide people living with HIV to appropriate care. Referral system strengthening (RSS)

results in more-accurate data to inform officials establishing healthcare policies and priorities at national, county, and subcounty levels. MEval-PIMA collaborated with county HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections coordinators to develop the county's first HIV referral directory. More than 40 health workers participated in RSS training and 40 copies of the HIV services directory were disseminated during subsequent mentorship visits at high-volume facilities.

Improved Accuracy, Registration, and Use of Birth and Death Statistics. Accurate data on births and deaths are essential for establishing health program priorities, policies, and resources. Many births and deaths in Nakuru County occur away from health facilities, posing challenges for local health officials, who must rely on the community to help them report and track these vital data. MEval-PIMA supported a county stakeholders' forum aimed at strengthening civil registration of vital statistics (CRVS). Participants identified gaps in birth and death registrations and developed strategies to address them. The project also worked with the county Civil Registration Office to roll out an electronic CRVS system and strengthen information on international certification and coding principles and the World Health Organization's International Classification of Diseases diagnostic tool (ICD-10) to record vital statistics. This resulted in ICD-10 mentorship visits at local facilities.

Launched a Sustainable, Comprehensive Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS). More than half of Kenya's population is younger than 18. Many of them, particularly those under five, are vulnerable to abandonment, abuse, neglect, or violence due to poverty, disease, national insecurity, and other socioeconomic conditions.³ The regular use of reliable data from a well-designed information management system is essential to ensure sustainable improvements in the protection of vulnerable children. Strong information systems can document the incidence and prevalence of protection issues and bring them to public attention and policy agendas. Kenya launched the CPIMS to strengthen the routine collection, aggregation, and reporting of child protection data at national, county, and subcounty levels. MEval-PIMA provided technical assistance, communication technology equipment, and support to enhance M&E capacity, organizational development, and rollout of Version 1.0 of the web-based data system, which is now operating in Nakuru County and nine other target counties. Between July 2016 and March 2017, the system recorded 21,492 cases nationwide involving almost 21,000 children (an average of 2,500 children and cases per month, about half of them under five years of age).

References

- 1 Palladium. (2015). Nakuru County health at a glance. Health Policy Project fact sheet. Washington, DC, USA: Palladium. Retrieved from <https://www.healthpolicyproject.com/index.cfm?id=kenyaCHFS>
- 2 Kenya Ministry of Health. (2016). Kenya HIV county profiles 2016. Nairobi, Kenya: Ministry of Health and National AIDS Control Council. Retrieved from <http://nacc.or.ke/kenya-hiv-county-profiles/>
- 3 Government of Kenya, United Nations Children's Fund, & Global Affairs of Canada. (2015). Taking child protection to the next level in Kenya. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/protection/files/Kenya_CP_system_case_study.pdf

For more information on MEASURE Evaluation PIMA, visit:
<https://www.measureevaluation.org/pima>

MEASURE Evaluation PIMA is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through associate award AID-623-LA-12-00001 and is implemented by the Carolina Population Center at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in partnership with ICF International; Management Sciences for Health; Palladium; and Tulane University. The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government. FS-17-230

Using data to improve the safety and welfare of children in Kenya

The situation: Kenya has ratified international and national conventions on the rights and welfare of children, but Kenya has no functional system to monitor and report on the progress being made in children's rights and welfare due to the lack of reliable data.

The challenges:

- Reports from stakeholders aren't shared with national level mechanism
- Partners struggle with reporting
- Loss of reliable child welfare and protection data for decision making at all levels
- Loss of a national system that partners can use to report leading to loss of data

The solutions: Kenya needs a national system that captures information on all children who are orphaned or vulnerable and records the services provided to them by all players working in the children's sector. The Child Protection Information Management System (CPIMS) was designed to do that. It is an electronic system for a streamlined approach to timely collection, analysis, reporting, and sharing of child protection data in Kenya. The CPIMS makes quality data readily available for informed decision making. It promotes links among all child protection programmes, thereby enabling a coordinated response through a legal mechanism, which is emphasized in the draft National Child Protection Strategy (2014) of the Department of Children Services (DCS) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The document proposes robust information management and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of child protection efforts as a key success for action.

What are the benefits of CPIMS?

- Facilitates M&E of child protection interventions in Kenya, inform policy and evidence-informed decision making.
- Provides access to accurate, timely, reliable, and aggregated child protection data.
- Facilitates record-keeping and information management on individual child protection cases.
- Track vulnerable children—including those in institutional care—to ensure continuity of care and protection.
- Facilitates appropriate information sharing among stakeholders and service providers to serve the interests of the child.
- Cater to emerging needs in the children's sector through flexible and scalable approaches to interventions.

CALL TO ACTION

Community-based organizations and communities

- Educate the public on child welfare and protection issues through business and the media
- Report to the child welfare office all cases of violence against children, abuse, neglect, and exploitation

Subcounties and counties

- Document affairs through timely, accurate, and complete monthly reporting
- Share data on child rights and welfare
- Analyze and package child protection and welfare data
- Disseminate data to the Area Advisory Councils (AACs) and other stakeholders through each quarter

Nationally

- Operationalize the National Plan of Action for Children in Kenya (2015-2022)
- Allocate funds to child protection and welfare
- Establish public, programme, and donor government budget lines to support a broad view of welfare and rights for children
- Disseminate crucial and contextual data to the CPIMS steering committee
- Coordinate and mobilize resources and strategies among stakeholders
- Support continuous stakeholder engagement, national working groups, and AAC meetings

Use data to inform programming

The Department of Children Services and the Kenya National Council for Children's Services (NCCS) are mandated to ensure children's rights and welfare. These include the right to health, education, family life, play and recreation, an adequate standard of living, and protection from abuse and harm through enactment of relevant laws and provision of child welfare and child protection services.

MEASURE Evaluation PIMA provided technical assistance to launch the Comprehensive Child Protection Information Management System in Migori County and other counties.

