



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Paula, a MWENDO Project participant, reads one of the messages sent through the m-Health platform. Florence Ogola, CRS.

m-Health in Kenya

IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN LIVING WITH HIV (CLHIV)

WHAT IS M-HEALTH?

m-Health, also known as mobile health, is in reference to the use of mobile phones and other wireless devices for medical care. m-Health is used for treatment, epidemic outbreak tracking/response, and chronic disease management. The most common use of m-Health is to create awareness or provide information on healthcare services. Simply put, m-Health can be defined as a system used to send bulk health messages to an intended group of people.

MWENDO

MWENDO (Making Well-informed Efforts to Nurture Disadvantaged OVC) is a USAID funded project that focuses on improving the wellbeing of Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) through enhancing the capacity of caregivers and communities to sustainably provide care and support to children impacted by HIV/AIDs in Kenya. This is achieved through increasing access to health services, education, and strengthening the institutional capacities of formal

and informal structures to respond to child welfare and protection needs.

PROBLEM

In 2017, 72 percent of OVC enrolled in MWENDO were adolescents aged 10-17 years; of these, 70 percent were adolescents living with HIV with a viral load suppression rate of 69 percent. In March 2018, MWENDO conducted an in-depth interview with 500 adolescents and 100 caregivers living with HIV. The meeting was to establish the root cause for their high viral load, some of the reasons included non-supportive caregivers, no reminders, inadequate food, and drug-related effects/pill burden, lack of family support, stigma, late or non-disclosure and stigma within and outside the household.

INTRODUCING THE M-HEALTH PLATFORM

MWENDO introduced the use of the m-Health platform to strengthen the caregivers' involvement and support to HIV positive OVC in order to achieve viral load suppression. The platform is intended to

educate caregivers on the importance of Direct Observation Therapy (DOT) and how to administer to adolescents, educate caregivers on the importance of HIV disclosure of adolescents in boarding schools to teachers/matrons, and to remind caregivers on support group schedules for adolescents.

CHOSEN SOLUTION

“MWENDO designed a mix of CLHIV age-appropriate and caregivers focused interventions on addressing the identified root causes, where m-Health was identified as one of the innovative approaches to reach out to caregivers of HIV positive OVC,” said Elizabeth Kimutai, Senior Project Officer, HIV Linkages. “The project partnered with Safaricom and adopted Ujumbe bulk SMS that disseminates scheduled messages to caregivers.” Elizabeth added.

At the forum, caregivers agreed to six key messages that they wanted to receive through the platform; disclosure of HIV status, disclosure to teachers, drug monitoring, keeping clinic appointments, participation in support groups, and VL follow up. These messages are simple, short, contextualized, and affordable. The translation is done in various languages depending on the target audience/receiver.

HOW WE USE IT

“We use the m-Health platform to remind caregivers of the clinic appointments, to request for viral load results from the health facilities, and to ask them to bring their children for the OTZ club meetings,” said Irene Ogonda, Social Worker, Hope for Victoria Children (HOVIC). “During this pandemic, we have been integrating messages on COVID-19 shared by the Ministry of Health to ensure that our beneficiaries protect themselves because they are already immune-suppressed,” Irene added.

Irene says that on occasions when they use the platform to mobilize caregivers and their children to attend support group meetings, the attendance rate is higher, an indication that the solution is working.

TESTIMONIAL FROM PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

Paula and her 16-year-old daughter Tori¹ are enrolled in the Project. They both are on treatment and are also receiving messages through the m-Health platform. Paula acknowledges that the messages are helpful because she has seen her health and that of her



Paula reads one of the messages sent through the m-Health platform. Florence Ogola, CRS

daughter’s change for the better since they can keep clinic appointments.

“*The platform is beneficial. I receive reminders to go for clinic appointments and to send Tori for her support group meetings. The groups are helpful; she has learned to accept her status and takes her medication as required. She is happier these days.*”

—PAULA, PROJECT PARTICIPANT

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

Currently, the m-Health platform reaches out to 15,489 caregivers of children and adolescents living with HIV in the Western and Nyanza regions. MWENDO has further adapted messaging to support various programming needs, including preventive messaging on COVID-19. Feedback from caregivers is received through caseworkers and through SMS sent back by caregivers to the local implementing partners particularly during this time of COVID-19 when house hold visits are not recommended.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- [MWENDO ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN PROJECT](#) USAID
- [SUSTAINABLE CARE FOR KENYAN CHILDREN AFFECTED BY HIV](#) CRS
- [SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH HIV IN KENYA](#) CRS
- [HELP FOR ORPHANS WITH HIV](#) CRS
- [KENYA COMMUNITY HEALTH VOLUNTEERS PROMOTE HIV TESTING](#) CRS
- [BOOSTING RESILIENCE AND INDEPENDENCE IN KENYA](#) CRS

1 Names have been changed to protect identity.