

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Advancing SRHR and Youth Health Priorities Across the East African Region



Access to Medicines Platform co-hosted a regional engagement in Dar es Salaam where discussions highlighted urgent gaps in access to essential Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) commodities across Kenya and the East African Community (EAC), alongside rising concerns around HIV infections, adolescent pregnancy, and gender-based violence. Evidence from recent assessments pointed to persistent stock-outs, rising costs, reduced donor financing, and gaps in Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) budgets, all of which continue to affect service delivery and health outcomes. The engagement also underscored progress in the updated EAC Youth Policy (2025–2030), which adopts a more comprehensive, youth-centered approach to health, including mental health, rights-based SRHR services, and stronger protections for vulnerable groups. Overall, the discussions emphasized the need for increased domestic financing, stronger accountability, and coordinated regional action to translate policy into impact.

For more insights from the two-day engagement, read the full newsletter here:

[<https://t.co/jbHAZ5V6nL>]

Key Highlights:

- Persistent stock-outs and rising costs of essential SRH commodities
- Increasing adolescent health challenges, including HIV and teenage pregnancy
- Gaps in RMNCAH financing and reduced donor support
- Shift toward a more comprehensive, youth-centered EAC Youth Policy
- Need for stronger accountability, coordination and domestic resource mobilization

Sustaining Youth Leadership for the Future of SRHR in the Great Lakes Region

Adolescents under the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) SHARP Youth Oversight Committee, alongside consortium partners, convened for a dynamic two-day engagement focused on reflection, learning, and shaping the future of youth-led advocacy across the Great Lakes Region. The engagement provided a valuable platform to assess the effectiveness of youth engagement approaches implemented under the SHARP project, while identifying best practices and innovative strategies that strengthen and amplify youth voices in policy and advocacy spaces. Through interactive discussions and shared experiences, participants examined what has worked, key lessons learned, and opportunities for scaling impact, particularly in advancing youth-responsive and inclusive Sexual and Reproductive Health programming.

A strong emphasis was placed on sustainability and continuity beyond project funding, with participants collaboratively developing a roadmap to sustain progress and deepen impact. Discussions highlighted the importance of strengthening youth-led structures, fostering strategic partnerships, and institutionalizing advocacy within government and community systems to ensure long-term policy influence and accountability. There was also a clear call for locally driven solutions that respond to the evolving needs of adolescents, while maintaining momentum in addressing key SRHR challenges. As the engagement concluded, participants expressed renewed commitment and energy to scale up advocacy efforts, reinforce youth leadership, and ensure that adolescents remain at the center of driving meaningful, sustainable change across the region.



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER



The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Access to Medicines Platform, convened a high-level media breakfast meeting that brought together 23 participants and 18 media houses representatives, alongside government officials and development partners, as a strategic pre-engagement ahead of the International Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (IMNCH) Conference 2026. The meeting focused on aligning messaging, strengthening media engagement, and positioning Kenya's leadership in advancing maternal and newborn health, while highlighting both progress and persistent challenges such as preventable maternal and newborn deaths, weak referral systems, gaps in quality of care, and health system financing constraints. Discussions underscored the importance of integrated, people-centered approaches, sustained investment in frontline health workers, and the use of data to drive accountability and inform decision-making. Key speakers emphasized the need for stronger multi-sectoral partnerships and coordinated action to accelerate progress and ensure equitable access to quality care. The interactive session further enhanced media understanding and capacity for accurate reporting, with coverage generated across platforms including Ministry of Health social media, Kenya News Agency, and Kenya Broadcasting Corporation, helping shape public discourse and reinforce momentum toward IMNCH 2026



Celebrating Women, Inspiring Change: Advancing Gender Equality in the Community

With powerful voices, shared commitment, and a renewed call to action, communities came together to mark International Women's Day 2026 through a vibrant engagement focused on advancing gender equality and empowering women and girls. The celebration provided a dynamic platform to raise awareness on women's rights, amplify conversations on equality, and confront persistent challenges such as gender-based violence, female genital mutilation, and early marriage, which continue to hinder the full participation of women and girls in society



Through inspiring discussions, storytelling, and community reflections, participants were encouraged to remain resilient, support one another, and actively contribute to social and economic development while upholding dignity and confidence in their roles. Stakeholders emphasized the importance of collective responsibility, strong partnerships, and sustained advocacy in addressing harmful practices, strengthening community support systems, and promoting respect and equal opportunities for all. The engagement also highlighted the critical role of women as caregivers, leaders, and drivers of development, while reinforcing the need to prioritize marginalized groups and address intersecting challenges such as GBV, HIV, and adolescent health. Symbolic activities, including tree planting and a celebratory cake cutting, reflected a shared commitment to sustainability, unity, and continued progress in advancing gender equality.

Overall, the event strengthened community awareness, deepened collaboration among government, partners, and local leaders, and reinforced the importance of sustained, community-led advocacy in addressing deeply rooted social challenges. It also created a renewed sense of ownership among participants to champion gender equality initiatives within their communities, while fostering continued dialogue, partnerships, and action toward building safer, more inclusive environments where women and girls can thrive and fully realize their potential.



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Empowering Youth and Religious Leaders to Champion GBV Prevention



In a strong show of community leadership and commitment to ending Gender-Based Violence (GBV), youth and religious leaders came together for a sensitization forum aimed at deepening awareness, strengthening prevention efforts, and promoting survivor-centered responses. The engagement focused on building a shared understanding of GBV, including its various forms physical, sexual, emotional, and economic as well as harmful practices such as Female Genital Mutilation and child marriage. Participants explored the root causes of GBV, including gender inequality, harmful cultural norms, and socio-economic challenges,

while also reflecting on its far-reaching health, social, and economic consequences on individuals, families, and communities. The forum emphasized the critical role of community actors in preventing and responding to GBV, highlighting the importance of timely reporting, access to support services, and upholding principles of safety, confidentiality, and respect for survivors



Through interactive discussions and community reflections, participants acknowledged the need for collective action and sustained dialogue to challenge harmful norms and promote gender equality. The session also strengthened awareness of referral pathways and reinforced the role of partnerships between community leaders, health providers, and institutions in addressing GBV. Overall, the forum fostered a renewed sense of responsibility among participants to act as advocates for change, contributing to safer, more informed, and more resilient communities.

Strengthening Adolescent Health Through Coordinated Action



Access to Medicines Platform joined key stakeholders at the Adolescent Health Technical Working Group (TWG) meeting convened by the Ministry of Health in Nairobi. The engagement brought together government, partners, and sector actors to review progress, share critical updates, and align on national priorities shaping the adolescent health agenda. Discussions focused on pressing concerns, including the “triple threat” and other key health indicators affecting adolescents, while emphasizing the importance of innovative approaches such as peer-to-peer engagement in driving awareness, prevention, and increased uptake of services. The meeting underscored the value of coordinated action, evidence-informed programming, and strong multi-sectoral collaboration in addressing the complex and evolving needs of adolescents. Overall, it reinforced a shared commitment to strengthening responsive health systems at both national and sub-national levels to ensure no adolescent is left behind.

Forging Strategic Partnerships to Strengthen Maternal, Newborn Child Health and Commodity Security

On the sidelines of the IMNCH2026 conference in Nairobi, the Access to Medicines Platform team held a strategic engagement with the Sasa Initiative team from Jhpiego, exploring opportunities for collaboration to advance maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) and family planning (FP) commodity security in Kenya. The discussions focused on identifying synergies to strengthen advocacy for increased domestic financing and sustainable interventions, while also supporting policy reforms aimed at reducing preventable maternal and newborn deaths. Emphasis was placed on leveraging collective expertise to address gaps in access to essential commodities and improve health outcomes for women, girls, and vulnerable populations. The engagement marked an important step toward building a strong, results-driven partnership committed to driving long-term, sustainable impact in Kenya’s health sector.



MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Driving Collective Action on SRHR and Women's Rights Through UPR Coordination

Momentum is building around strengthening accountability and advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and women's rights in Kenya, as partners under the UPR thematic group convened for a strategic coordination meeting to align priorities and deepen collaboration. The discussions highlighted both progress and ongoing challenges, including limited funding, fragmented approaches across sectors, and persistent gaps in access to quality, inclusive health services, particularly for adolescents and other vulnerable groups. Participants emphasized the need for stronger collaboration, sustained policy and legislative reforms such as the Anti-FGM Act review and International Labor Organizations (ILO) conventions, and increased investment in health systems and domestic financing for SRHR services. There was also a strong focus on improving coordination through shared tools like the UPR implementation tracker and strengthening digital advocacy through unified messaging, including the use of #UPRKE4thCycle, to enhance visibility and accelerate the implementation of UPR commitments in Kenya. The meeting further underscored the importance of linking advocacy efforts to national processes and upcoming policy engagements to sustain momentum and drive meaningful change.



Amplifying Evidence for Action: Advancing SRHR Through Media Engagement

Strengthening the call for urgent action on sexual and reproductive health, SHARP Project Coordinator Dorothy Juma joined a radio discussion to spotlight key findings from the commodities study, drawing attention to persistent stock-outs of essential SRH commodities and gaps in RMNCAH budgeting. The conversation underscored critical challenges affecting health outcomes, including the continued prevalence of FGM, maternal mortality, and teenage pregnancy, as well as declining indicators such as skilled birth attendance, antenatal care (ANC) visits, and newborn survival rates. Emphasis was placed on the need for stronger investments, enhanced community engagement, and responsive policy formulation to address these gaps.



The discussion further highlighted the importance of increased domestic resource mobilisation, including ringfencing of funds, to ensure consistent availability of life-saving SRH commodities at the county level. Overall, the engagement reinforced the role of evidence-driven advocacy and media platforms in driving awareness, accountability, and sustainable solutions for healthier adolescents and communities

FOLLOW US ON;

✕ @MeTAKenya2018

📷 @MeTAKenya

f @metakenya2018

in Access to Medicines Platform

📺 Access to Medicines Platform