

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Advancing Africa's Demographic Dividend through Collective Action



The Continental Conference for Non-State Actors on Demographic Dividend and Reproductive Health provided a high-level strategic platform for over 250 participants from across Africa to engage in critical dialogue, strengthen collaboration, and advance the continent's reproductive health and demographic dividend agenda. Bringing together civil society organizations, faith-based institutions, researchers, development partners, and community actors, the conference underscored the vital role of non-state actors in driving policy advocacy, shaping community-centred health interventions, and accelerating progress toward improved reproductive health outcomes across the continent. A major outcome of the conference was the adoption of the Lusaka 2026 Call to Action, formally recognizing non-state actors as key partners in shaping reproductive health policy, advocacy, and accountability at national, regional, and continental levels

Key highlights included:

- Adoption of the Lusaka 2026 Call to Action/Declaration as a continental commitment framework.
- Renewed calls for increased domestic investment in health and reproductive health services.
- Strong recognition of youth, civil society, and faith leaders as critical drivers of change.
- Emphasis on inclusive, community-led, and evidence-driven reproductive health advocacy.

For Access to Medicines Platform, the conference provided an important opportunity to engage with continental actors, strengthen strategic partnerships, and align ongoing advocacy efforts with broader African commitments to advancing adolescent health, reproductive rights, and equitable access to healthcare.

## SHARP's Legacy: Reflection, Impact and the Road Ahead

Bringing together implementing partners from across the six SHARP project's focus countries, the final reflection meeting created an important space to celebrate four years of impact, share lessons, and collectively shape the future of adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights advocacy beyond the project cycle. Key successes highlighted included SHARP's contribution to a landmark sexual and reproductive health law reform in Rwanda allowing adolescents aged 15 and above to access SRH services without parental consent, as well as advocacy efforts in Zambia that contributed to a 30% increase in health budget allocation. The meeting also reinforced the strength of SHARP's multi-stakeholder approach, which mobilized youth champions, journalists, faith leaders, policymakers, and civil society actors to drive advocacy, challenge harmful norms, and strengthen accountability across communities and institutions. A particularly significant outcome was the recognition of youth leadership as one of the project's most enduring legacies, with young people sharing how SHARP strengthened their confidence, leadership, and ability to advocate for their rights. The meeting also created space for honest reflection on emerging challenges, including declining donor support and reduced access to essential SRH commodities, reinforcing the urgent need for sustainability, stronger partnerships, and continued collaboration to sustain momentum in advancing adolescent health and rights.



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## Celebrating SHARP impact and sustaining momentum



As the SHARP project approached the end of its four-year implementation cycle, the CSO Dissemination and Learning Forum provided an important platform to reflect on impact, celebrate achievements, and shape a pathway for sustainability beyond project funding. A key highlight of the forum was the presentation of results from implementing partners across Isiolo and Marsabit, showcasing the scale and diversity of community-level impact achieved through the project. Notably, My Body My Body reported reaching over 50,000 people through digital advocacy, engaging 3,000 students through school-based interventions, distributing 3,000 sanitary pads to support menstrual health, and helping 300 girls remain in school. Other CSOs shared equally meaningful outcomes, including intergenerational dialogue sessions reaching over 500 community members, school mentorship programmes, youth-led advocacy initiatives, and innovative awareness campaigns through radio, spoken word, and community engagement platforms that expanded conversations around adolescent SRHR in culturally sensitive settings. Particularly inspiring were testimonies from youth champions who shared how the project strengthened their confidence, leadership, and ability to advocate for their rights, including standing against harmful practices such as child marriage and FGM. The forum also reinforced sustainability efforts through stronger collaboration with local stakeholders, growing support from religious leaders for adolescent health advocacy, identification of key advocacy priorities such as adolescent substance abuse, and a collective commitment to establish a SHARP Network to sustain collaboration, advocacy, and joint action beyond the life of the project.

## Strengthening Accountability and Data-Driven Action for RMNCAH in Isiolo

The Isiolo RMNCAH Technical Working Group meeting provided an important platform for county health stakeholders to review progress, interrogate emerging evidence, and strengthen accountability in the delivery of reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health services. A key highlight of the engagement was the presentation of comparative baseline and endline findings, which revealed persistent gaps in the availability, affordability, and accessibility of essential ASRH and maternal health commodities, including prolonged stockouts of family planning methods, oxytocin, magnesium sulphate, and other life-saving maternal health supplies.



These findings reinforced the direct link between weak commodity security and worsening health outcomes, including rising adolescent pregnancies, increased HIV vulnerability, and maternal health risks among women and young people. The meeting also showcased the use of health facility scorecards as practical accountability tools to track service delivery performance, helping stakeholders identify gaps in staffing, infrastructure, access to medicines, and service availability across facilities.

Encouraging progress was noted on key RMNCAH commitments, including strengthened emergency maternal referral systems through ambulance availability, successful reintegration of adolescent mothers back to school, and improved enforcement of laws addressing child marriage and sexual offences. Beyond reviewing progress, the engagement prompted critical reflection on the need to strengthen data use for decision-making, improve forecasting and supply chain systems, protect financing for essential commodities through ring-fenced budgets, and develop structured implementation frameworks to ensure commitments translate into measurable and sustainable health outcomes for communities in Isiolo County.



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## Strengthening Media Partnerships for Better Health Reporting



Recognizing the media’s powerful role in shaping public discourse, influencing behaviour, and strengthening accountability in health systems, Access to Medicines Platform convened a media sensitization workshop to build the capacity of journalists on accurate, ethical, and evidence-based health reporting. The engagement deepened participants’ understanding of critical public health issues, including the Triple Threat ; HIV, teenage pregnancy, and gender-based violence, while strengthening practical skills in research, sourcing, interviewing, data storytelling, and solutions journalism. The workshop also emphasized the importance of rights-based and human-centred reporting, particularly when covering sensitive issues affecting adolescents, minors, and marginalized communities. Beyond skills building, the engagement fostered stronger collaboration between journalists and us the civil society, creating a foundation for sustained partnerships that can amplify health advocacy and improve public understanding of complex health issues. A key outcome was the development of practical story pitches on pressing health challenges, alongside the formation of a collaborative media network to support ongoing knowledge sharing, stronger storytelling, and continued engagement beyond the project cycle.



## Enhancing Facility Readiness to Address Adolescent SRHR Gaps in Isiolo



Following a series of support supervision exercises conducted in five health facilities across Isiolo County, Access to Medicines Platform Kenya supported a dissemination forum bringing together County Health Management Team (CHMT) representatives and healthcare workers from 28 health facilities across Isiolo and Garbatulla sub-counties. The engagement aimed to share key findings emerging from the support supervision visits, promote collective reflection on existing service delivery gaps, and support the development of rapid action plans to strengthen Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health (ASRH) service provision across facilities.

The dissemination of CHMT findings created an important space for healthcare workers to reflect on the challenges affecting adolescent SRHR service delivery, particularly persistent issues such as commodity stockouts, weak supply chain systems, limited adolescent-friendly spaces, and provider capacity gaps that continue to hinder access to quality services for young people. At the same time, participants shared practical solutions and promising practices, including improved stock management, integrated service delivery, stronger community engagement, and extended service hours. The engagement strengthened commitment among healthcare workers to improve adolescent-friendly care and develop practical facility-level actions aimed at making services more accessible, responsive, and supportive for adolescents and young people.

## Strengthening Adolescent-Friendly SRHR Service Delivery in Isiolo



Recognizing that healthcare workers play a critical role in shaping adolescents’ access to quality sexual and reproductive health services, the Access to Medicines Platform Kenya supported an Adolescent and Youth Sexual and Reproductive Health (AYSRH) training for healthcare workers in Isiolo County to strengthen the delivery of respectful, adolescent-friendly care. The engagement was informed by persistent challenges facing adolescents and young people, including stigma, provider bias, limited youth-friendly services, and inconsistent access to essential SRH commodities, all of which continue to hinder the realization of positive health outcomes among adolescents.

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The training therefore provided an important platform to build the capacity of frontline health providers while also creating space for reflection on the realities facing adolescents in the county. Key highlights from the training included the dissemination of findings from the Isiolo SRHC study, which revealed significant gaps in access to essential SRH commodities and adolescent-focused services, alongside discussions on maternal and newborn health risks among adolescents. The sessions also emphasized the importance of confidentiality, empathy, and non-judgmental care in building trust between healthcare workers and adolescents. Importantly, the training strengthened participants' understanding of national ASRH policies and reinforced their commitment to creating safer, more responsive, and youth-centered health facilities.

## Tracking Impact in Adolescent SRHR Advocacy Through the SHARP Project

The SHARP Outcome Harvesting Workshop provided a strategic platform to reflect on progress, validate key outcomes, and identify priority actions in advancing adolescent sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) across Mandera, Marsabit, and Isiolo. Framed around the outcome harvesting approach, the engagement moved beyond activity reporting to examine the real changes the programme has contributed to in addressing adolescent pregnancies, gender-based violence, stigma, and barriers to youth-friendly health services.

The workshop flowed through presentations on county experiences, programme data, policy engagement, implementation and media impact, highlighting notable gains in youth leadership, stronger community dialogue, improved referral pathways, increased openness among adolescents to seek services, and greater participation of young people in advocacy and decision-making spaces. Beyond validating achievements, the engagement created space for collaborative reflection on pending priorities, accountability, and practical next steps to sustain momentum in adolescent health advocacy and community-driven change



## Showcasing PHC Advocacy Wins and Strengthening Partnerships for Change

The meeting provided an opportunity for Access to Medicines Platform to showcase key advocacy wins achieved under the PHC project, while also learning from the experiences and approaches of other implementing partners across different counties. The engagement created space for reflection on the progress made in strengthening citizen-led accountability, advancing discussions on equitable access to healthcare and essential medicines, and influencing increased RMNCAH budget allocation in Kisumu County. It also enabled ATMP to share challenges affecting communities, including medicine stockouts, weak coordination systems, and financing gaps within PHC service delivery.



Through the discussions and exchange of experiences, the meeting strengthened networks among civil society actors and reinforced the value of coordinated advocacy and shared learning in driving sustainable health systems change. Additionally, the proposed signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) presents an opportunity to strengthen collaboration and partnerships beyond individual project cycles, supporting continuity in advocacy efforts and long-term engagement on access to medicines and PHC issues.



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