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First-ever World NTD Day commemoration

Organized by: Integrated Community Health Initiative Organization (ICHIO) in partnership with the Uganda Ministry of Health, Makerere University and Kampala Capital City Authority

Theme: Beat NTDs for good, and for all



Date: 30th January 2020

Venue: Ggaba Landing site, Kampala Uganda

Funder: Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi



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Executive Summary

The integrated Community health Initiative Organization with support from the Crown prince Court of Abu Dhabi through the Global health Strategies organized the first ever World NTD day in Kampala-Uganda in partnership with the Uganda Ministry of Health, Makerere University and Kampala Capital City Authority. The celebrations attracted over 500 people including policy makers, University, paramedical and lower level students- (including primary and secondary) researchers, media, NTD experts and wider community members resident at the Ggaba landing site and the Katoogo zone.

ICHIO planned to achieve the following objectives:

Objective1: To increase students and partner involvement in the advocacy, prevention and control of NTDs at different levels

Objective 2: To raise awareness about NTDs in the most vulnerable communities of landing sites and slums

To achieve the above objectives, two major activities were planned and successfully executed. These included the student's dialogue code named "**Students Voices on NTDs**" and **the community NTDs awareness campaign**. Both activities had a special focus on Schistosomiasis, however, organizers and presenters were keen at giving highlights on other locally common NTDS such as Trachoma, Intestinal helminthes, Leprosy, Onchocerciasis, Filariasis among others

The students' dialogue (students' voices on NTDs) held on 29th January 2020 at Davis Lecture Theatre, College of Health Sciences -Makerere University, attracted 247 participants. This dialogue involved 6 students (panelist) who presented on NTDs guided by a predetermined criteria and topical areas including the burden of NTDS, the existing interventions, gaps and recommendations. One student presented a case scenario on Schistosomiasis case identification and management based on his experience on the ward as a 3rd year medical student. This was followed by general discussions guided by the NTDs experts including the Assistant Commissioner NTD control-Ministry of health-Uganda who as presented on national level strategies and priorities in line with NTDs. On Thursday, 30th January 2020-(1st World NTD Day), ICHIO led other partners local in sensitizing communities along Ggaba landing site and crowned the events at Katoogo landing zone with major NTDs awareness talks graced by local politicians, Makindye division health team (KCCA) among others in which over 300 people were reached with NTD control messages with specific focus on schistosomiasis.

For enhanced NTD advocacy and social mobilization, two media houses with national coverage that included NBS Television and The New Vision News Paper-Uganda's leading daily newspaper were engaged to cover the events and these broadcasted/published the events in English and Luganda (the widely used local language) -open the followings links <https://bit.ly/2SzfU5R>; <https://bit.ly/38cwK15>; <https://bit.ly/2uuYvmE>. Makerere University School Of Public Health offered to publish all the events on their Official media pages <https://bit.ly/2SCgvDS>. In addition, 30 students (volunteers) were primarily engaged in sharing the events on social media platforms including WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter among others.

Overall, the 1st ever world NTDs day celebration was success! The local collaborative efforts by different partners including the Ministry of Health, Makerere University, and Kampala Capital City Authority among



others created great synergy and opportunity for strengthened local involvement and coordination for NTD control at community

Background

The first ever World NTD Day was announced at the Reaching the Last Mile Forum in Abu Dhabi, and it will be held annually on 30th January, starting with this year, 2020. According to the World Health Organization, the Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) threaten more than one billion people living in the poorest and most marginalized communities, but until now, they lacked a dedicated advocacy milestone to raise awareness, celebrate hard-won progress and call for action. World NTD Day offers an opportunity to rally advocates, community leaders, global health experts and policymakers working across the diverse NTD landscape and align behind a common goal: to beat NTDs for good, and for all.

Integrated Community Health Initiative Organization (ICHIO) is a youth led NGO in Uganda that leverages the capacity of students to provide cost-effective human resource for promoting improved water, sanitation and hygiene, as a way of preventing NTDs in slum areas next to landing sites in Uganda. ICHIO's other areas of focus include: HIV/TB, Drug & Substance abuse & Non-Communicable Diseases. We planned and organized two activities to celebrate the first ever World NTD Day in Uganda, with support from Crown Prince Court of Abu Dhabi and the Global Health Strategies. The initial activity: Students Voices on NTDs, was held on Wednesday, 29th January 2020 and the second activity: Rising community awareness on NTDs, was held on Thursday, 30th January 2020.

Objectives, Activities, Expectations, Strategies and Outcomes

Objective 1: To increase students and partner involvement in the advocacy, prevention and control of NTDs at different levels

Objective 2: To raise awareness about NTDs in the most vulnerable communities of landing sites and slums

Activity 1: Students Voices on NTDs, with a focus on Schistosomiasis

ICHIO in collaboration with Ministry of Health-Uganda and Makerere University organized a student-led dialogue on NTDs with a focus on Schistosomiasis, on Wednesday, 29th January 2020, in order to achieve the following expectations

Strategies Used

Students Voices on NTDs

- ICHIO introduced the intention to celebrate the 1st ever World NTD Day to the Uganda Ministry of Health, through the office of Assistant Commissioner in charge of NTDs
- Ministry of health through the Office of Assistant Commissioner in charge of NTDs accepted our proposal and pledged to technically support the event
- This was followed by planning meetings between ICHIO Uganda and potential partners including Makerere University and the Uganda Institute of Allied Health and Management Sciences, Mulago (Paramedical schools), students and community leaders. This provided an avenue for mobilization



of participants, venues as well as identification of potential technical people to give expert opinions during the events.

- To ensure wide engagement of students, we circulated IEC materials (posters, fliers, banners among others) on various strategic locations at Makerere University, the paramedical schools and Ggaba landing site. 30 students (volunteers) were assigned to circulate the posters via social media including whatAP groups, Twitter and Facebook.
- WORLD NTD Day Branded materials such as T-shirts, placards and certificates were procured to increase visibility and motivate potential target participants.
- A central venue with sufficient capacity was identified and secured at Davis Lecture Theatre, Makerere University College of Health sciences and this was branded with World NTDs banners and posters for enhanced visibility and access.
- Intensified mobilization of students was done in the morning hours before the start of the student's dialogue through activation of adverts on whatsAPP groups and reaching students in their classes.
- 5 main Presenters (students) were selected based on their capacity and interest to present. In addition One Key note speaker and on expert were identified to guide the event.
- Two Major national media houses were invited to cover the events, these included NBS TV and The new Vision-the national daily newspaper.

Community NTDs awareness campaign:

- ICHIO team visited the office of the Division Medical Officer Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) –Makindye Division one week before World NTDs day and discussed how best to implement Community NTDs awareness campaign.
- A community- wide NTDs diagnosis was carried out by ICHIO and Makindye division DHT representatives together with the local leaders who included Local Council Chairpersons, Women representatives and Village health team members. The purpose of the community diagnosis was to identify the best venue for the NTDs awareness campaign based on vulnerability
- Katoogo zone was identified for this awareness campaign and local mobilisers contacted to identify the most suitable venue.
- The Village health team members and other local leaders were oriented about the activity and were assigned with Intensive community mobilization using megaphones pre and during the World NTDs Day.
- Local political and technical leaders including the mayor, the Division Health team, councilors were invited to participate in the World NTDs awareness campaign
- Two Major national media houses were invited to cover the events, these included NBS TV and The new Vision-the national daily newspaper.

Outcomes



Student's voices on NTDs

From a 10-day mobilization, we gathered 247 students from Makerere University and the paramedical schools in Mulago, to engage in a discussion on NTDs. The students were pursuing courses ranging from Masters in Public Health; Bachelors in Medicine and Surgery, Biomedical sciences, Environmental Health, Social Sciences, Computer Science to Diploma and Certificate in Environmental Health.

From the twenty students who expressed interest in participating on a panel discussion on NTDs, we selected six students with backgrounds in Environmental Health, Medicine, Biomedical Sciences and Social Sciences. The students clearly shared about the burden of NTDs, burden of Schistosomiasis and its control measures, as well as the existing challenges and recommendations for improving Schistosomiasis control in Uganda and other low and middle income countries.

The event was graced by the presence of the Assistant Commissioner in charge of NTDs at the Ministry of Health, Dr Alfred Mubangizi, who gave a key note address on NTDs and emphasized the country's strategies and priorities in the fight against NTDs. A public health expert with experience in NTD control, Mr Norman Aweno, shared an expert opinion on NTDs and Schistosomiasis and encouraged students to utilize technology in innovating solutions to fight against NTDs.

We received support from the Leadership at Makerere University and the paramedical schools. The Principal of the Makerere University College of Health Sciences, Prof Charles Ibingira was happy about the event and welcomed us to host it within the biggest seminar hall in the college, the Davis Lecture Theatre. The Dean Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH), Dr. Rhoda Wanyenze, provided a strong opportunity for promoting the World NTD Day events by sharing our intensions in the school's board meeting and granted permission for the World NTD Day activities to be shared on all the social media platforms of MakSPH, so as to boost advocacy and awareness. The principal of the paramedical schools permitted his faculty to participate and we had 60 of their students and 3 tutors participate

Representatives from two media houses, Vision Group and NBS Television participated and published highlights of the events in English and in a widely used local language (Luganda)

Community awareness on NTDs:

- The event was officiated by the secretary for health Local council 3 represented the Mayor, 2 division health team members Village health team members and other community leaders
- Over 300 community members including school going children were sensitized about NTDs .We targeted vulnerable population living on the shores of Lake Victoria, in a zone named Katoogo.
- Community members expressed their concerns as regards vulnerability to NTDs and other health challenges and these were taken up by the local authority for redress.

Key Lessons



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- Both the students and the general community had inadequate information regarding NTDs which made them prone to NTDs. The residents of Katoogo-Ggaba landing site, were more at risk due to the dire state of Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and poor housing facilities.
- The community perceived the awareness campaign as a great tool to catalyze demand for better health services as demonstrated by some community members asking for particular interventions such as fumigation and desilting of drainage channels.
- Students' active involvement in planning, mobilization and execution of the dialogue codenamed "students voices on NTDs" clearly demonstrated the great role students can undertake in NTD advocacy ,awareness and control
- The Kind support and participation by the Ugandan Ministry of Health, Makerere University, Kampala Capital City Authority and community members elaborated shared commitment towards ending NTDs in Uganda.

Conclusion:

Overall, the 1st ever world NTDs day celebration was success! The local collaborative efforts by different partners including the Ministry of Health, Makerere University, and Kampala Capital City Authority among others created great synergy and opportunity for strengthened local involvement and coordination for NTD control at community.

Next steps/planned activities

1. ICHIO to expand innovations for NTDs control in Uganda through championing a –students' focused call for innovations towards ending NTDs. All universities and other higher institutions of learning in Uganda will be eligible to respond to the call.
2. ICHIO will closely work with the Ugandan Ministry of Health, local authorities and implementing partners to support NTDs control through integrated WASH /NTDS control approaches. The Community Cluster Head model (championed by ICHIO) will be applied in all interventions for systematic implementation.
3. ICHIO will continue mobilizing resources both locally and internationally through grant writing, fund raising and strategic partnerships.
4. ICHIO will document and share learnings from its NTDS Control experiences in workshops, local and international conferences and all media platforms



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Photo 1: Students demonstrate the days' on the branded T-shirt



Photo 2: Students share a moment after a students' dialogue-In a blue suit is the Assistant Commissioner (NTDs) Ministry of Health-Uganda



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Photo 3: ICHIO Officer-(Arnold) sensitizing community members on NTDs in Katoogo-Ggaba Landing site

In a white branded T-shirt is Maxencia (L) the chairperson and ICHIO co-founder overseeing and



Photo 4: ICHIO core organizing team after a successful World NTD day celebrations

