



The ACHAP Quarterly

November 2021 | Issue No. 2

In this issue

Healthy hearts – ACHAP’s newest partnership....	1
Our work.....	1
Spotlight on members.....	2
Photo gallery.....	4
Parting shot.....	4

Foreword

The Africa Christian Health Associations Platform (ACHAP) continues to be committed to the promotion of health services across the continent. It is for this reason that we look for and get into partnerships with donors and other stakeholders. The latest such engagement is with giant medical firm AstraZeneca to promote heart health in Cote d’Ivoire. Read more about this partnership in this newsletter and on our website.

In this issue we continue to celebrate our increased engagement with members in service delivery. In Kenya and Uganda we have been working with CHAK and UCMB, respectively, to strengthen maternal, newborn and child health in target communities. In Nigeria, we are helping to bring together communities, health workers and church leaders to fight stigma and discrimination of people living HIV/AIDS. On the Covid-19 front, we partnered with Malawi, BukinaFaso, Zimbabwe, Chad and most recently Lesotho to not only educate communities but also support health facilities.

We appreciate the support of our members as we continue to increase our engagement even as we work on our next strategic plan.

Pray with us and for us, and as always, give us feedback to make our engagement richer. Enjoy the read

Nkatha Njeru

ACHAP Coordinator

Healthy hearts – ACHAP's newest partnership

On September 24, ACHAP launched the Healthy Heart Africa (HHA) programme in Abidjan. HHA is an initiative by AstraZeneca that contributes to prevention and control of cardiovascular diseases, with a focus on hypertension.

ACHAP has partnered with AstraZeneca to implement this programme in Côte d'Ivoire, led by our in-country partner Initiatives Chrétiennes Pour la Promotion Humaine (ICPH). This new partnership's goal is to further early detection, prevention and control, strengthen health systems through training of healthcare providers, and implement local treatment protocols to standardise care in Côte d'Ivoire. The two-year, \$500,000 programme will be implemented in five regions: Hautassandra, Bélier, Marahoué, Poro and Tchologo.

"By bridging some of the gaps that hinder access to healthcare services, especially for low income and marginalised communities, we hope to improve health outcomes for hypertension treatment and management," said ACHAP Coordinator Nkatha Njeru.

The programme has so far provided capacity building to 60 health care providers and 100 community health workers. It has also procured and distributed equipment to 20 supported sites.



HHA Programme Manager Dr Coulibaly Ouonna gets his blood pressure taken during the launch in September in Abidjan.

Our work

Responding to the pandemic

Since the declaration of the Covid-19 pandemic by the World Health Organization, IMA has partnered with ACHAP to strengthen Covid-19 response in selected CHAs and their facilities. IMA funding has covered procurement of critical health supplies, which include personal protective equipment (PPE), hand hygiene supplies such as hand washing equipment, production of messages on Covid-19, as well as training for health workers.

Phase One was implemented in seven countries and ended in August 2020. In Phase Two, the support was provided to five countries: Nigeria, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Chad and Burkina Faso.

The work done by Union Chrétienne Médicale et Paramédicale de Burkina (UCMP) and Assemblée de Dieu De Burkina Faso (ASAD) fell in this quarter. Focus was on prevention in rural communities and schools. Key successes included:

- Development of Covid-19 messages with biblical verses
- 140 persons (50 pastors, 50 community leaders, 40 young people) were trained on communication for behavioural change
- More than 5,000 people were sensitised on Covid-19 prevention measures
- 2,000 reusable fabric masks were distributed to community members



Pastors attend a training on Covid-19.

Growing social support among mothers

Since its inception, ACHAP Afya has prioritised formation of mother-to-mother support groups within the communities it serves.

In Pajulu-olevu Village, Arua, Uganda, the members of Munguci Women's Group, made up of 20 mothers between the ages of 17 and 24, are happy to report that they are now actively engaged in providing for their homes, having started small economic ventures such as kitchen gardening and savings to raise funds for family emergencies.

Women continue to receive guidance on antenatal care (ANC) from their fellow mothers, and check on each other constantly to ensure that each one is receiving health assistance throughout their journey of pregnancy and motherhood.

Male engagement in family health

ACHAP Afya has sought to challenge gender norms, especially around the subject of family health. Men are trained and encouraged to support their spouses through pregnancy and motherhood, and make sound decisions for the family on matters health and nutrition.

We celebrate Mr Oyirwoth Patrick from Nebbi District who was directly involved in providing Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) for their pre-term twin boys. KMC involves skin-to-skin contact, heavy swaddling in cold weather, exclusive breastfeeding and minimal agitation of pre-term babies. Patrick provides KMC to his sons to allow his wife time to rest and rejuvenate.

Mr Bidong Francis is yet another hero that we wish to celebrate. He is full of praise for the male champions training, saying he has always actively supported his wife in bringing up their children, and other men should do the same for their families.

While the conversation on male engagement continues, and proves highly tasking, seeing men step up for their children and spouses as a result of training provided through the project is extremely encouraging.



Patrick, his wife and their twin boys.

Reduction of home deliveries

Sikudhani Mlongo is a Community Health Assistant for Kanyumbuni Community Health Unit in Rabai sub-county, Kilifi County, Kenya. The CHU has 20 community volunteers covering a population of 5,963. ACHAP Afya supported Sikudhani to develop action points to eradicate the problem of home deliveries in the area.

One of the actions was the use of dialogue days to sensitise the community on the importance of delivering at a health facility. She was able to identify the villages reporting home deliveries and stage the dialogues.

The main issues identified and addressed were around the social cultural beliefs on delivering in health facilities as well as finance and accessibility challenges associated with getting skilled birth services.

In August it was noted that there was a drop in the number of home deliveries reported. The CHU reported one case down from four in July and eight in June.

Fighting HIV/AIDS stigma

In Kenya, Uganda and Nigeria, ACHAP partnered with UNAIDS to implement the Framework for Dialogue approach towards reducing stigma against people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHIV). The project, targeting religious leaders, health workers and PLWHIV, saw representatives from these groups engage in dialogue on their experiences and how they can eliminate stigma. About 162 health workers and 153 religious leaders received training on various aspects of HIV that would help them fight stigma.

Spotlight on members

Ghana

The Christian Health Association of Ghana (CHAG), with funding support from UKaid, commissioned a Covid-19 High Dependency Unit (HDU) at St Dominic Hospital in Akwatia. This means that district hospitals and smaller facilities in the Eastern Region will no longer have to send severe Covid-19 to the national treatment centres.

The setting up of the HDU is part of the two-year Covid-19 Response and Institutional Capacity Building project being implemented in CHAG facilities in 40 districts.



A plaque at the HDU facility.

Cameroon

The Cameroon Baptist Convention Health Services (CBCHS) has received recognition and praise by various bodies for its work. The organisation was singled out by the media in the country as the leading health provider with people-oriented services. The recognition was conferred by My Media Prime International.

At the same time, the Mbingo Baptist Hospital was selected and recognized by Echos Sante, a bilingual newspaper focused on health, the

environment and sustainable development, as the best confessional hospital in the country.

In August, the Confederation of Cameroon Trade Unions (CCTU) recognised CBCHS for continuing to provide critical services during the ongoing armed conflict in the Northwest and Southwest regions compounded by the upsurge of Covid-19.



CBCHS Director Prof Tih Pius (left) and the Minister for Public Health Dr Manaouda Malachie exchange signed partnership agreements on the management of clubfoot in Cameroon.

Kenya

Dr Samuel Mwenda, the General Secretary of the Christian Health Association of Kenya (CHAK) published an opinion piece in a national weekly health magazine calling for more support for mission hospitals. In the article, Dr Mwenda highlighted the important role played by faith-based health facilities in handling the Covid-19 pandemic, and called for corporates and other donors to increase funding to these facilities.



Mission for Essential Drugs (MEDS), held the Health Systems Strengthening Award ceremony for 2019/2020 during the quarter. MEDS awarded all its clients and thanked them for the constant support they have given the organisation. Among the rewarded clients were Consolata Hospital Mathari, who received ambulances.

Chad

In a bid to improve local health infrastructure, AEST, plans to build the capacity of healthcare agents by training them on infrastructural planning and maintenance using local materials. The first training, which took place in November, was attended by 40 officials in charge of health facilities and facilitated by two architectural engineers and a hygiene and sanitation consultant.



Officials in charge of health facilities attend training.

Liberia

Nine Christian Health Association of Liberia (CHAL) health facilities have benefited from the installation of solar electricity at a cost of over USD60,000. This is the first phase of the solar project as CHAL is currently negotiating to extend the same to 16 other facilities.



Logistics Officer Clifford Daitouah revealed the installations will be completed before the end of February 2022. A drugs depot in Gbarnga has also had solar power installed.

Zambia

Over 300 guests attended the Christian Health Association of Zambia (CHAZ) golden jubilee held on October 19 under the theme: *50 Years of God's Faithfulness and Grace in Health*. The ceremony was officially opened by Health Minister Sylvia Masebo on behalf of President Hakainde Hichilema. In a speech read on his behalf by Mrs Masebo, the President commended CHAZ for focusing on the remote and hard-to-reach areas where government health facilities were inadequate or not present.



Health Minister Sylvia Masebo cuts the cake during the ceremony.

CHAZ Executive Director Karen Sichinga thanked the government for recognising the role CHAZ has played in the delivery of quality healthcare services and for the unwavering support that it has given CHAZ over the past 50 years. She also celebrated the unity of purpose between Catholic and Protestant churches in the delivery of health care services, saying CHAZ was proof that what unites Christians is greater than their differences.

Photo gallery



ACHAP Afya team in Kilifi, Kenya.



A volunteer health worker records a child's nutritional indicators during a home visit.



ACHAP Afya team in Arua, Uganda.



ACHAP and EPN Norvatis meeting to explore partnerships with faith-based organisations.



Donation of Covid-19 equipment and other supplies in Uganda.

Parting shot

As the world battles the Covid-19 pandemic, vaccines have proven to be a critical component. Unfortunately, while developed countries have stockpiled vaccines, African countries and others in the Global South have continued to suffer shortages resulting in stark inequity. With the world being a global village, the only chance we have of beating this disease is if vaccination happens across the world, anything else is futile. Therefore, the developed countries and other world bodies must look into making the much-needed vaccines available to all.

Lastly, while many countries have eased restrictions aimed at controlling the spread of Covid-19, the pandemic remains a threat. This is especially so as new variants emerge. We must therefore all ensure that we remain vigilant and encourage our staff and communities to get vaccinated and observe the primary protocols: wash hands regularly, wear masks and avoid crowded places.

Peter Yeboah

ACHAP Chairman