

FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIPS FOR EFFECTIVE CHANGE

BROADENING THE IMPACT OF CHRISTIAN HEALTH ASSOCIATIONS

BACKGROUND

For more than 30 years IMA World Health has nurtured and fostered partnerships with local, national and international partners to advance its mission of achieving health, healing and well-being for all. As much of Africa's health care is provided through faith-based organizations, IMA works with Christian Health Associations and their regional coordinating body, the Africa Christian Health Associations Platform. CHAs have historically operated as umbrella organizations of church-based member institutions, such as health facilities and nurse training institutions. Subsidizing financial and human resources in resource poor settings, these networks often serve vulnerable populations in remote and rural areas where the public sector's coverage is limited. To empower partnerships and to achieve sustainable development, IMA focuses on strengthening the technical and organizational capacity of CHAs in East, West and Southern Africa. These efforts have resulted in improved health outcomes in communities served, increased CHA engagement with national and international stakeholders and recognition of the CHA contribution to the health sector.

PARTNERING TO CREATE AN AIDS-FREE GENERATION

As part of a USAID-funded global Strengthening High Impact Interventions for an AIDS-Free Generation Project, IMA partners with the Christian Health Association of Kenya to implement a novel approach to engage religious leaders to expand the demand in uptake of pediatric HIV services in Nairobi. The approach builds the capacity of religious leaders to influence community and individual behaviors towards pediatric HIV and AIDS, and to increase use of care and treatment services. Together, IMA and CHAK have developed guides for religious leaders on pediatric HIV and have trained religious leaders on pediatric HIV as a technical area. As a result, 84 percent of the 1,950 completed referrals for HIV support services in 2017 were from religious leaders—proof that empowered faith leaders can be more effective at generating referrals than community health workers in some communities.

In Dedza, Malawi, IMA has mobilized a group of faith leaders through AIDSFree to educate their community members on prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV and to



As a member of the AIDSFree partnership, IMA World Health engages community health workers and religious leaders to help foster testing and treatment, with a special focus on youth.

encourage healthy behaviors and use of PMTCT services. One of the key goals is to build the capacity of our partner MANERELA+, the Malawi Network of Religious Leaders Living with HIV/AIDS, to engage with faith communities to influence these health-seeking behaviors. In 2018, IMA worked with religious leaders to develop contextually appropriate “key messages” on PMTCT and trained them on how to deliver them. The faith leaders then promoted the key messages during awareness campaigns, couples counseling, youth forums, couple symposiums, mothers group meetings, male champion group meetings, and worship services at their church or mosque—reaching 11,333 people in total.

PARTNERING TO BUILD STRONG HEALTH SYSTEMS

IMA partners with CHAK and Mission for Essential Drugs and Supplies to increase access to and utilization of quality health services through strengthened service delivery and institutional capacity of county health systems under the USAID-funded *Afya Jijini* Project in Nairobi, Kenya. The project is implementing interventions supporting HIV services, maternal, newborn and child health, family planning, water, sanitation and hygiene and MNCH-related nutrition services in 113 facilities in informal settlements in Nairobi City County's sub-counties.