

Reducing Chronic Malnutrition (Stunting) in Kagera region (Tanzania) in children under 5 years through PDH MODEL

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ABSTRACT

In Tanzania, chronic malnutrition (stunting) affects **31.8%** (3 million) of all under five children (**TNNS2018**). Stunting has severe negative effects on child's growth both physically and mentally, preventing these children from reaching their actual potential. Sadly, once stunted, the child will be stunted for life.

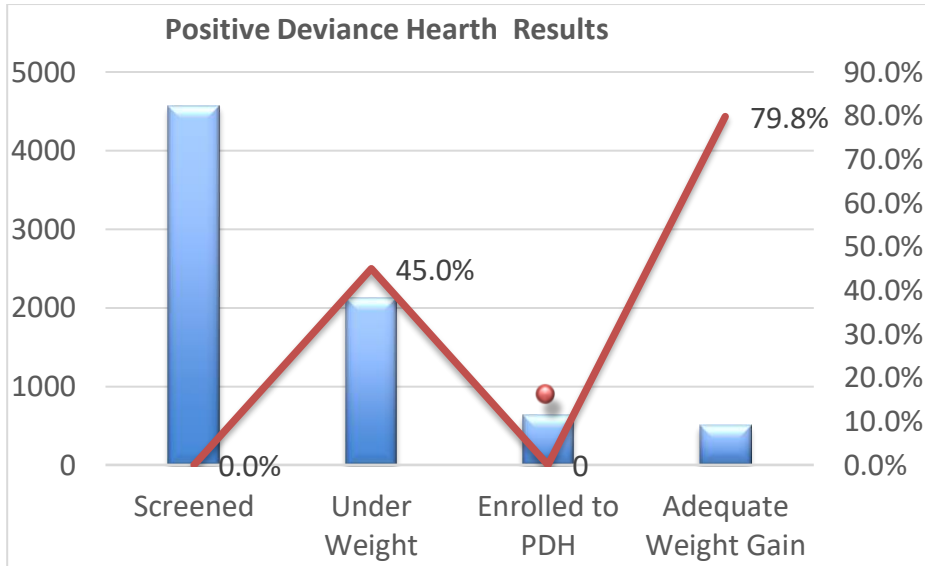
Kagera Region has a stunting rate of **39.8%** which is far above the Tanzania National average **31.8%** (**TNNS2018**). However, stunting can be prevented/reduced by simple and doable strategic measures one of which is "Positive Deviance Hearth (**PDH**).

Methods

PDH approach was implemented in 4 Districts out of 8 in Kagera in wards with high malnutrition burden. Involvement of community members and local leaders in planning, implementation of nutrition rehabilitation activities followed by close monitoring was key to success. In this approach, parents were encouraged to contribute locally available foods whereby nutrition professionals assisted in designing a balanced complimentary feeding diet. Parents and children attended 12 days consecutive sessions where cooking demonstrations, feeding, WASH, and ECD activities are reinforced. Sharing of knowledge gained was encouraged among other community members for behavior change. Body weight follow up was done on the 12th, 30th 90th days and after one year.

Results

Adequate weight gain of enrolled children >200g equivalent to 79.8%. After 30 days of close follow up 54% of PDH children improved.



Conclusion

PD/Hearth model allows community participation resulting in quick rehabilitation processes of malnourished children. It is cost effective, sustainable and a better way of preventing future malnutrition in the community.

PDH's goal is to quickly rehabilitate malnourished children enable families to sustain the rehabilitation and prevent future malnutrition in the community. PDH can be scaled up to other communities.