

# Success Story

## Catalytic COVID-19 Action Project's Response to COVID-19 Outbreak in Kiambu County, August 2022

The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on March 11, 2020. After that, the global number of infections and deaths increased exponentially. As of August 4, 2022, Kenya has the 8th highest number of COVID-19 cases among 47 reporting African nations: 337,802 confirmed cases, 331,711 recoveries, and 5,672 deaths. Within Kenya, Kiambu County has the second highest number of COVID-19 cases. Kiambu County reported its first COVID-19 case in March of 2020, and by August 2022, had reported 21,209 confirmed cases and 896 deaths.

On July 14, 2021, The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) Kenya, in collaboration with Kiambu County, rolled out an initiative funded by FIND and Unitaid, to strengthen the public health response to COVID-19 in 12-subcounties within Kiambu. This was called the Catalytic COVID-19 Action (CCA) project.

The CCA team, in collaboration with the Kiambu government, conducted an Intra-action review (IAR) to reflect on the county's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and identify both best practices and lessons learned. Their goal was to apply these insights on a tighter time scale to optimize the COVID-19 response in Kiambu county. In August 2022, after one year of implementation, the CCA Kenya team, GIS, KENCO, CRISSP, the County Health Management Team (CHMT), and subcounty representatives joined together to conduct the first IAR meeting in Kiambu. In total, 55 participants attended. The three-day IAR meeting reviewed actions and results between March 31, 2020, and July 31, 2022.



Attendees at the Kiambu County IAR meeting held in Mombasa. Photo Credit: Koffi Goga, August 2022

The CCA project staff organized the IAR meeting around the following six pillars in the WHO guidelines. These included leadership and coordination, surveillance and data management, case management, risk communication and community engagement, laboratory, commodities and supplies, and continuity of essential services. Key successes that the CCA project contributed in each pillar are as follows:

### **1. Leadership and coordination:**

The CCA project supported the formation of the multi-sectoral Kiambu Advisory Committee, led by the Governor and co-chaired by the county commissioner, and aided in coordinating the COVID-19 response approach from a single point of contact. The committee supported partnerships between the private and public sectors. Through collaboration, the county received resources to support infrastructure to increase COVID-19 isolation space, increase capacity for critical care, improve diagnostic capacity, provide personal protective equipment (PPE), and increase oxygen delivery capacity.

### **2. Surveillance and data management:**

The CCA project supported the integration of a COVID-19 testing module into the Kenya electronic medical record (EMR). Now, 30 facilities in Kiambu county use EMRs to enter COVID cascade dates. The systematic collection, analysis, and interpretation of health data in the EMR supported the integration of COVID-19 testing into CCC, MCH, and TB clinics.

### **3. Case Management:**

The CCA project's key achievements here were the development of, dissemination of, and execution of ongoing training to healthcare workers in case management standard operating procedures, guidelines, and protocols to care for clients positive for COVID-19.

### **4. Risk communication and community engagement:**

The CCA project supported the county's robust advocacy and communication system to disseminate messages on proper hand-washing techniques, six-foot social distancing, and wearing masks in public settings through multiple community outreach events.

### **5. Laboratory, commodities, and supplies:**

The CCA project ensured the provision of antigen tests in 30 health facilities and access to medication for severe COVID-19 cases. COVID-19 tests were also provided during CCA community engagement events.

### **6. Continuity of essential services:**

There were numerous successful approaches to maintaining the continuity of essential services. The CCA project supported this pillar by using community health workers in a clinical setting to screen patients for COVID-19. This reduced the workload of health providers. Kiambu county now wants to examine how to integrate CHWs into clinical care.

Based on the lessons learned from the IAR meeting, the participants agreed to develop a county emergency preparedness plan and monitoring tool to ensure the county is prepared for another pandemic. While the county has made significant strides in reducing COVID-19 cases, the IAR revealed that the county still faces low vaccine uptake. Moreover, vaccine hesitancy remains a challenge. Therefore, innovative ways to ensure these populations adopt COVID-19 prevention approaches will be a strong focus of the CCA project in the coming year to improve the efficiency of the healthcare system. The IAR was a very beneficial exercise to improve pandemic response initiatives.

**“The IAR meeting was a success for ensuring we continually work to make the CCA project effective in the county. We used the IAR process to see where we were successful and identify where we can improve our response efforts in the coming year.”**

**—Doctor Gitau, CCA Project lead**

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