

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

Addressing Malnutrition Sustainably among Under-5 Children in Poor Rural Households through Positive Deviant (PD) Hearth; *A case of Kwale County*

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Abstract

Background: Kwale County continues to be significantly affected by malnutrition with 30.2% of children under-5 being stunted and 15.0% being underweight (KDHS, 2022). The Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) Survey of 2022 also established disparities between sub counties with Kinango/Samburu having 39.2% and 19.9% stunting and underweight prevalence respectively. This is attributed to poverty, food insecurity and lack of information on consumption of locally available nutrient dense foods as well as poor hygiene practices.

Objectives

This abstract highlight how under-5 children with malnutrition can be rehabilitated sustainably using peer-learned practices within the same setting.

Methodology: In April 2022, USAID Stawisha Pwani trained 12 health workers and 30 CHVs on PD Hearth in Samburu, mapped six hotspot villages, conducted a rapid nutrition assessment which established 84% of children were at risk of or already underweight. The project prioritized two villages with 23 children who were severely malnourished for the intervention, conducted Positive Deviance/Hearth enquiry in households with well-malnourished children, supported 14-days hearth sessions and monthly follow-up of the children

Results: After 14 days, 19 children (83%) had gained between 100-1000g, at three months follow-up, average weight gain was 783g, with 15 having attained normal weight. Caregivers also set up 12 kitchen gardens, home-made handwashing stations, ensured their children were up-to-date on immunization, initiated family planning, and formed and registered a *Chama* group with Department of Social Services.

Conclusion: This model is a sustainable way to reduce malnutrition in poor households using community own initiatives to solve existing challenges using available resources

Key words

Positive Deviant, well-malnourished, peer-learned practices, Sustainable