

Fast facts



From Policy to Action

Providing Safe Motherhood and Reproductive Health Services to Young People in Kenya

Despite increasing global and national attention on the fifth Millennium Development Goal (MDG) (reducing maternal mortality), Kenya has been identified as one of eight countries in Africa that have made no progress in reducing maternal deaths. The limited capacity of the health system, combined with poor community participation in maternal health interventions, undermines efforts to make motherhood safer.

The Kenya Essential Package for Health (KEPH) and the Community Strategy for its implementation represent promising commitments by the government. However, these documents have yet to translate into meaningful results. The situation remains particularly troubling for young women, as they face significant geographical, socio-cultural and financial barriers to accessing quality health care for themselves and their children.

DSW's From Policy to Action project was therefore developed to accelerate improvements in maternal and child health (MCH) and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) among young Kenyans. Activities focus on increasing access to high quality, youth-friendly safe motherhood and SRHR services by:

- Improving the capacity of health workers
- Strengthening systems and structures for health care delivery
- Increasing demand for comprehensive safe motherhood and SRHR services among youth

The health workforce is one of the essential building blocks for strong health systems, and in Kenya, community health workers play a critical role in service delivery. From



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From Policy to Action: at a Glance

Project Duration: 2010 – 2012

Donor: European Union and private donors

Budget: EUR 799,982

Location:
Kenya (Nairobi and Coast)

Partners:
St. John Ambulance Kenya
Mathare Youth Sports Association (MYSA)
St. Luke's Hospital



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Policy to Action provides training for community health extension workers (CHEWs) and community owned resource persons (CORPs). At the facility level, DSW facilitates training for health workers on basic obstetric care, focal antenatal care, emergency obstetric care, post-abortion care and family planning options. Health workers are also sensitised on youth and mother-friendly service provision.

Beyond knowledge and skills, health workers need appropriate equipment and consistent supplies of commodities in order to meet the needs of their communities. From Policy to Action conducts training on supply chain management and also procures and distributes supplies to health facilities and community-based distributors. The project also supports improved health information systems including maternal health audits.

At the same time, the project addresses the many factors – such as long distances to facilities, poverty, and inadequate knowledge – that can limit demand for MCH and SRHR services. DSW works closely with community leaders and conducts integrated community outreach campaigns that combine awareness raising with the provision of counselling, MCH, SRH and immunisation services. Young mothers are also linked to resources such as micro-finance institutions that can help them become more financially secure.

From Policy to Action currently works in the Korogocho-Mathare slums (an informal settlement in Nairobi) and Kaloleni District in Coast Province, making motherhood safer for underserved and hard-to-reach populations.

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