

Finding and treating people with TB in

Kenya

- TB/HIV screening, TB screening camps and door to door case finding by community volunteers lead to increased case detection
- 1700 additional TB cases found, a 10% increase on earlier years
- Activities improve care in Nairobi's largest slums



Nairobi – Since December 2010, several Nairobi slum areas, where access to health services is limited at best, have begun to mobilize their communities to improve tuberculosis (TB) treatment. With the help of a KAPTLD project supported by TB REACH, this initiative is being carried out on three fronts.

Firstly, the project has engaged with former and current TB/HIV patients to work as peer screeners among people living with HIV (PLWHIV). These volunteers conduct screening at comprehensive care centers as well as organizing support clubs for PLWHIV, to enhance case finding by helping to overcome the stigma associated with TB/HIV through shared experience and knowledge.

Secondly, community health workers have held screening camps where music and theatre are employed to draw in an audience for performances promoting health education and encouraging testing. These workers also go from door to door in their communities to screen the general public. People identified in these screenings can then be referred to the nearest diagnostic center.

The third area of activity focuses on local drug shops and chemists. After a pilot study demonstrated that the majority of people living in the slums first seek medical assistance at these small private providers, the project engaged with them in four cities to help identify TB suspects.

In November 2011 KAPTLD field officers began to locate and map drugs shops and chemists in order to bring them into the project. Identifying patients at this first point of contact is expected to be a great help towards the goal of reducing the delay in diagnosis from the current 6-12 weeks to under a month as patients receive a test at their first point of care as opposed to waiting until they get to the public sector facilities. Early diagnosis will not only allow patients to receive timely care, thus improving their chance of a complete cure, it will reduce the rate of transmission.

As a result of this project, people living in these slums now have a much better understanding of TB and its treatment. During the first 9 months of the project over 18,000 cases of TB have been identified, many of whom would have gone without care if not for this project.

