

Young Health Programme in Kenya

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as heart disease, strokes, cancers, diabetes and respiratory diseases account for 27% of deaths, many premature, in Kenya and pose a huge threat to young urban men and women. The main risk factors include tobacco use, physical inactivity, unhealthy diets and alcohol abuse.

The Young Health Programme in Kenya aims to contribute to improved health and gender equality of young people, aged between 10-24, in Kibera, one of Nairobi's largest urban slums. The Programme aims to reduce the risk behaviours which can trigger NCDs, such as substance abuse, harmful use of alcohol, and a lack of physical exercise, as well as those which damage adolescents' sexual and reproductive health (ASRH).

YHP Kenya is being implemented by Plan Kenya with key local partners.



AstraZeneca 

Young Health Programme

A global community investment initiative

in partnership with



Young Health Programme in Kenya



Key issues for adolescent health in Kenya include: alcohol abuse and associated violence (often sexual and gender based), unsafe sex (increasing exposure to sexually transmitted diseases including HIV), unintended pregnancy and unsafe abortions.

What do we want to achieve through the Programme?

The overall objective of the Programme is to contribute to improved health and gender equality of young people, between 10–24 years of age, in Kibera, Nairobi. Specifically, it aims to achieve this by ensuring that these young people are practising fewer risky behaviours, due to an increased capacity to make informed choices and to protect their health, now and in the future.

The Programme, which began in early 2016, will directly reach an estimated 82,000 young people over five years. Additionally, a further 286,000 people, such as families and community members, will benefit from outreach activities. Eight villages in Kibera will be involved in the Programme.

YHP Kenya will work to bring about three key results:

- Access to information and resources on the prevention of NCDs and SRH
- Creation of an enabling, community environment for the protection and promotion of adolescent health
- Government services and policies that are responsive to the health risks and rights of young people

What activities are taking place locally?

Information and resources on NCD prevention and SRH: After appropriate research, materials encouraging adolescents to change their risky health behaviours will be developed and communicated through different approaches, including the engagement of community role models as spokespeople. Both these spokespeople and the young people selected to be Peer Educators will be trained in NCD prevention, gender equality and ASRH. A total of 40 Peer Educators will carry out outreach activities, with schools as a main route for reaching young people. Community events, such as drama, debates, competitions, school fairs and fun days, will also be held to create large-scale awareness.

Enabling environment for protection and promotion: This will be developed by training different stakeholders – community leaders, teachers, health service providers and health workers – in adolescent risk behaviours, gender equality, NCD prevention and ASRH, and encouraging them to raise awareness and provide support within their particular community settings. Adolescent friendly services will also be introduced in existing health facilities.

Responsive government services and policies: An advocacy plan is being developed to influence the government to reduce risks and promote adolescent health. It will focus on youth friendly services, better training for health workers and promotion of healthy lifestyles and sexuality education. To enable the youth voice to be considered, selected Peer Educators will receive leadership, advocacy and communications skills training and support to participate in local and national forums.

Public Health Institute's Champions4Change: The YHP is supporting the Public Health Institute, a US based leader in global health and development, to implement a Champions for Change project (C4C) in Kenya. C4C is working to prevent and combat NCDs among young people through locally led advocacy. Government registered NGOs selected for C4C Kenya are participating in an intensive and transformational twelve month NCD advocacy capacity building and organisational strengthening programme. The aim is to build a local movement that has the potential to advocate strongly for laws, policies and budgets to combat youth NCDs.

NCD Child – East Africa Workshop: To help ensure youth NCD prevention and treatment are incorporated in key stakeholders' agendas and strategic plans, including national health and development plans, NCD Child, a key advocacy partner for the global YHP, held an East Africa region NCD and adolescents' advocacy workshop in Kenya in April 2016. Participants included leaders from national paediatrics societies, youth and family serving NGOs and national government/health ministries, UNICEF, WHO and others.
