

Dear colleagues,

Since the last update, Healthy Action partners have engaged in constructive discussions with MPs and district officials in Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda helping them reconsider their priorities. In Uganda, the Ministry of Health now supports a new working group on adolescent health, while MPs are calling for a strengthening of reproductive health systems. Increasingly, the need for linking health with other sectors such as infrastructure is being emphasised by decision-makers and civil society alike. The civic education module continues to empower citizens; this recently resulted in citizens handing over a petition on increased resources for medical staff to Ugandan county officials.

The role of the EU delegations in partner countries continues to grow. In Uganda the delegation and the EU member states welcomed a deepened cooperation with civil society on health, and in Kenya EU representatives engaged in an open talk with civil society on the nature of EU funding and cooperation with CSOs. DSW Kenya participated in a policy communication training that featured sessions on media strategies and how to work with parliaments. Finally, at the International FP Conference in Dakar DSW staff held a successful and well attended presentation on civic education and community dialogue as ways of improving reproductive health.

We hope that the presence of Healthy Action partners in decision-making processes at all levels will continue to lead to improved access to health, family planning and reproductive health services for men, women and children also in 2012.

To reach out with these impressive results to a wider audience we do however need input on the many advocacy activities implemented by our partners and we therefore ask you to send us articles on your achievements. The next editorial deadline for contributions is February 10. Please, send your articles and feedback to: Kenya: howard.akimala@dswkenya.org | Tanzania: diana.dsw-tz@habari.co.tz | Uganda: ritan@dswuganda.org.ug.

Enjoy reading

Your DSW team

www.healthy-action.org

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Policy and Budget Trends

Uganda: MPs call for a strengthening of reproductive health systems

13 September



In a press conference MPs called for a strengthening of reproductive health systems to reduce maternal mortality and improve maternal and newborn health. This was highlighted as benefitting not only individuals, but also communities and the country at large. To achieve MDGs 5 and 5B, it is however crucial to include sectors others than health; improving education and facing gender inequalities are examples of issues that need to be considered. The MPs promised to monitor

the sh24 billion allocated to maternal health in the 2011/12 budget and to hold the government accountable for its commitment to promote and protect the health of mothers. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Kenya: DSW takes part in consultations on the Medium Term Expenditure Framework

November



In recent consultations between CSOs and county officials on the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) which is aimed at improving livelihoods through improved incomes and social welfare, CSOs had a number of recommendations to offer the government. These included separating the heading on reproductive health (RH) into different headings to respond more effectively to challenges in the area of safe motherhood, maternal and newborn health, adolescent health, gender

issues etc. Further decentralisation of resources was requested as well as the fulfilment of previous commitments from the government on establishing youth centres. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Uganda: Ministry of Health supports Adolescent Health Working Group

22 November



Following a meeting organised by DSW and RHU, a working group on adolescent health was formed and promised support by the Ministry of Health and by MPs. Considering that youth make up 78 % of the Ugandan population and most of them lack sufficient access to reproductive health facilities, a renewed focus on this group is crucial if the MDGs and other international commitments are to be achieved. Increased coordination among stakeholders (policy makers, administration, civil society) will be an

important part of improving services and develop strategies for how to tackle the issue of adolescent health. A WHO representative recommended a number of indicators that the

working group could use to measure impact; among others contraceptive prevalence rate, age at first sexual intercourse and proportion of health facilities providing adolescent friendly health services. The working group is suggested to meet four times a year in the premises of the Ministry. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Advocacy Achievements

Uganda: Civic education session prompts residents to sign petition on recruitment of nurse **14 October**



As part of the civic education module of the Healthy Action project, residents in the Busia district were encouraged to sign a petition demanding the placement of a nurse in the local health centre. The petition was delivered to the District Health Officer and community members hope that this will put additional pressure on the health office to react on the oral complaints already filed on the matter. At the moment, the health centre is manned by one single health worker after the transfer of

the previous nurse to another facility. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Uganda: DSW takes part in EU's structured dialogue with civil society **21 November**

As part of EU's [Structured Dialogue](#) with civil society, DSW recently participated in a meeting with the EU delegation ending in agreement on deepening cooperation and strengthening CSO capacity. The meeting came after intensive advocacy for a more transparent EU development cooperation process and more effective civil society participation. Alongside the EU delegation officers, representatives from most EU member states delegations were present at the meeting and welcoming the initiative. The EU delegation programme officer expressed his confidence that DSW would contribute to the process, not least in the December CSO meeting aimed at harmonising CSO viewpoints on continued cooperation with the EU. Having access to information shared by DSW Brussels on the intentions of the structured dialogue was crucial for the effective participation in the meeting. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Tanzania: DSW gathers MPs and government officials to discuss SRH issues **21 November**



DSW Tanzania recently convened a national roundtable meeting in the Dodoma region with Members of Parliament (MPs), government officials and its project implementing partners; Pathfinder International and WAMATA. Participating MPs were identified by DSW as RH/FP champions during the Dodoma parliamentary session earlier this year. The roundtable saw Healthy Action partners advocate for an increase in the RH/FP budget, human resources for health and improvements

in maternal health issues. Major outcomes of the meeting included agreement to strengthen collaboration among MPs, government officials and NSAs on RH/FP issues; NSAs to

cooperate with the government to raise public awareness on RH/FP in rural areas; and district councils to make RH/FP a priority in their plans. The meeting received wide coverage in both electronic and print media.

Uganda: Youth use music, dance and drama to highlight SRH needs

26 November



An event including music, dance and drama performances was organised by Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) and Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) under Health Priorities for the Youth (HPY), a sub-grant initiative of the Healthy Action project. Taking place in Mukono District it allowed participants to share their reproductive health concerns through music, dance and drama. They also emphasised the need for district leaders to plan for

adolescents and youth and ensure budget allocations for youth services. The activity was aimed at advocating for increased access to sexual and reproductive health services for young men and women in the district, thereby contributing to the Healthy Action project objectives. To read the full story, click [here](#).

DSW presents on 'Governance and FP Services' at the International Conference in Dakar

2 December



In a well-attended presentation during the International Family Planning Conference in Dakar, Senegal, DSW staff highlighted the gains that investments in civic education, local advocacy and dialogue with decision-makers can bring to reproductive health and family planning (RH/FP) services. By empowering citizens to know and demand their rights and make their leaders act on these demands, implementation and delivery of services can be improved. The presentation was based on a paper

published under the Healthy Action framework; 'Governance and Family Planning Services'. The RH/FP community was recommended to reach out to good governance experts and attending officials from several African countries suggested that this paper should be turned into a best practice for future projects in other geographical areas. To read the full story, click [here](#).

Kenya: DSW joins NSAs and the EU delegation in discussion on EU health and NSA support

5 December

DSW Kenya was represented by Caroline Teti when the EU delegation organised a consultative forum to seek NSA views on EU funded projects. Participating NSAs emphasised the importance of increased support for health projects, more consultations with the EU and the need for the EU to share best practices based on previous projects with NSAs. They also called for the integration of health projects into other, more prioritised sectors (e.g. infrastructure) to increase gains in both sectors. The meeting was important as it revealed opportunities for closer engagement with the EU on the 2012 review of the country partnership strategy and, given the dissatisfaction and disappointment with current budget support in Kenya, an opportunity to influence EU funding modalities.

Capacity Building

Kenya: Policy communication training provides health advocates with important insights 6-19 November

DSW Kenya took part in a policy communication training that included sessions on advocacy with MPs, media strategies and a final session on recommendations and findings of DSW's budget study. MP RH champions highlighted that the fulfilling of government commitments on improving maternal health and sexual and reproductive health are in progress, but reminded advocates that these commitments will take time to realise. MP Ethuro further noted that it is not only an issue about funding medical staff in hardship areas, but also to find staff that are willing to work in these areas. To read the full story, click [here](#).

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