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Knowledge for Health

END OF PROJECT REPORT

K4HEALTH EAST AFRICA FIELD SUPPORT

2014 - 2019

END OF PROJECT REPORT
K4Health East Africa Field Support (2014 - 2019)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Regional institutions in East Africa and USAID/Kenya and East Africa (USAID/KEA) share the long-term vision for an integrated, prosperous, and resilient East Africa. As outlined in the mission's 2016-2021 Regional Development Cooperation Strategy, African-led institutions are positioned to lead the region in sustained economic growth, human development, and risk mitigation. Key to this leadership is greater integration, collaboration, and cooperation among Regional Intergovernmental Organizations (RIGOs).

To strengthen strategic collaboration and systematic learning across RIGOs, USAID/KEA is investing in knowledge management as a valuable approach to improve regional health outcomes.

> *Knowledge management is the intentional and ongoing process of generating new knowledge, capturing and organizing existing knowledge, and adapting that knowledge to meet different audiences' needs, so that it is accessible and usable for the intended audience(s).*

Since 2008, USAID's Knowledge for Health (K4Health) Project has helped global health professionals – from community health workers to physicians and from program managers to policy makers – connect to the high-quality scientific evidence and programmatic experience they need to do their jobs effectively. K4Health is the flagship knowledge management project of the USAID Bureau for Global Health, Office of Population and Reproductive Health, led by The Johns Hopkins Center for Communication Programs (CCP) in partnership with FHI 360, IntraHealth International, and Management Sciences for Health. The project draws on more than 40 years of collaborative knowledge management work between USAID and CCP to strengthen family planning and related global health work around the world.

From 2014 – 2019, USAID/KEA engaged K4Health in partnership with five RIGOs: East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC), East African Community (EAC) Secretariat Health Department, East Africa Health Research Commission (EAHRC), Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC), and Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Leveraging its knowledge management expertise, K4Health worked with these RIGOs to strengthen their processes, systems, and technical expertise to help them more efficiently and effectively achieve their mandates as cross-border coordinators and conveners in the region, and ultimately support a healthier, stronger East Africa.

Dr. Peter Mudiope, Coordinator, HIV Prevention, National Disease Control, Ministry of Health Uganda leads a session during an EAC share fair. Credit: Nemuson Studios, Kampala, Uganda.

SNAPSHOT

5 REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
DEVELOPED A CULTURE OF KNOWLEDGE
MANAGEMENT FOR HEALTH

85 PUBLIC HEALTH PROFESSIONALS
TRAINED IN KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT
BEST PRACTICES

250 REGIONAL EVENT PARTICIPANTS
CAME TOGETHER TO LEARN, SHARE & COLLABORATE

2 NEW HEALTH JOURNALS
PUBLISHED 64 ARTICLES & 96 CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

16 INSPIRING STORIES
SHARED BY CHAMPIONS OF POPULATION,
HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT

Photo credit: Kristin L Thomas, Courtesy of Photoshare

A PARTNERSHIP JOURNEY

Key Players in Regional Development

East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) has a clear mandate to foster and encourage regional cooperation in health and to strengthen capacity to address the health needs of its nine member states: Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Mauritius, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

East African Community (EAC) Secretariat Health Department is mandated to foster regional cooperation on health and to promote the management of health delivery systems and better health planning in partner states, with the aim of developing more efficient health services across the region. The department is also mandated to promote the exchange of information on health issues. The six member states are: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda.

East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC) is an institution of the EAC that coordinates and maps out a regional agenda on health research as well as the translation of its results into policy and practice within Burundi, Kenya, South Sudan, Tanzania, Rwanda, Uganda.

Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) is a specialized institution of the EAC located in the City of Kisumu, Republic of Kenya and within the Lake Victoria Basin (LVB). The Commission is mandated to coordinate sustainable development and management of the Lake Victoria Basin in the EAC Partner States.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD)'s mission is to support "peace, security and prosperity" through regional cooperation and integration among its eight member states: Ethiopia, Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, and Uganda. Through its regional health program, IGAD prioritizes cross-border health initiatives aimed at providing health systems strengthening support to improve the quality of services for cross-border marginalized populations.
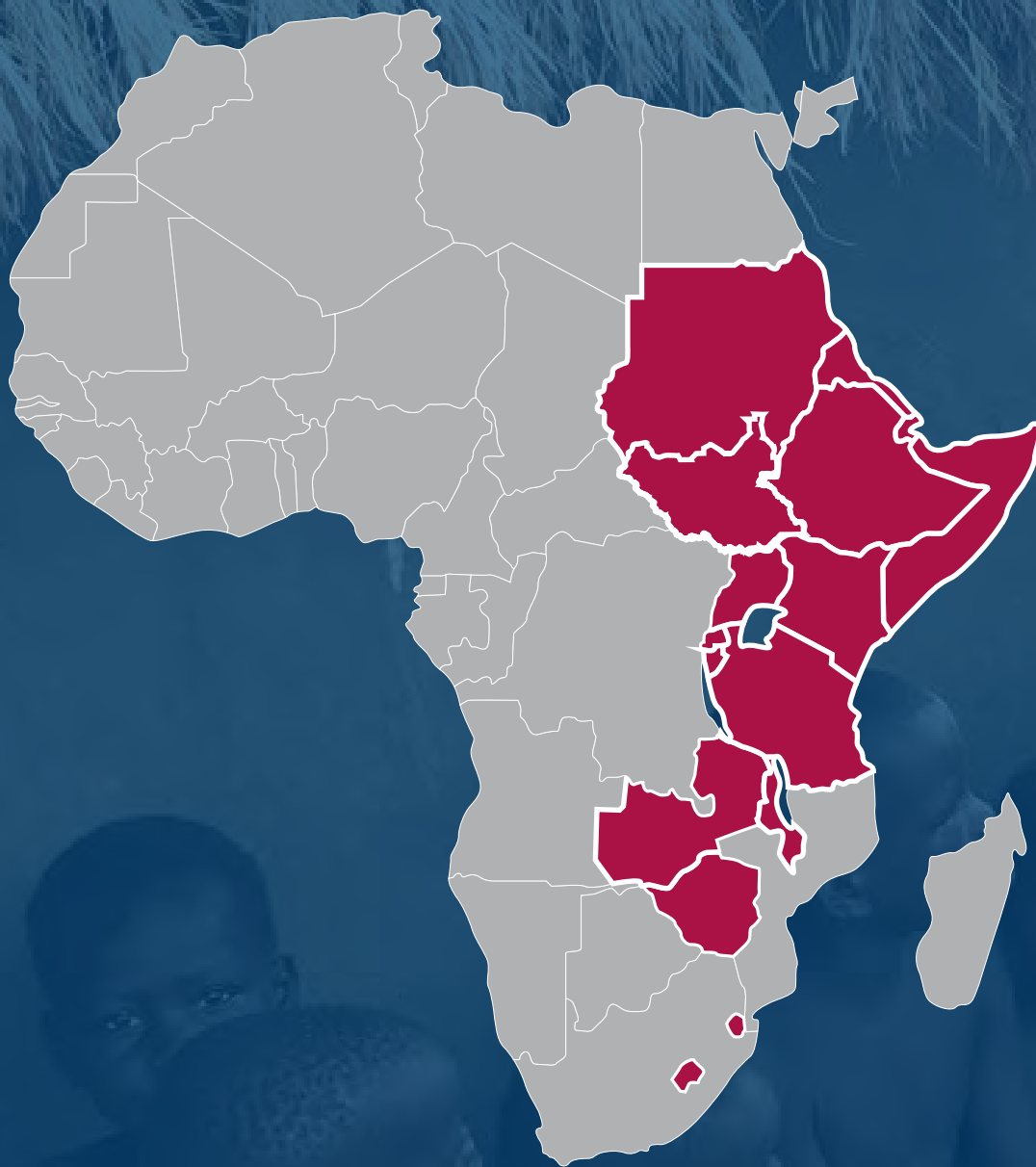
Partnership Timeline

2014

2015

2016

2017

2018

2019

ECSA

LVBC

EAHRC

EAC

IGAD
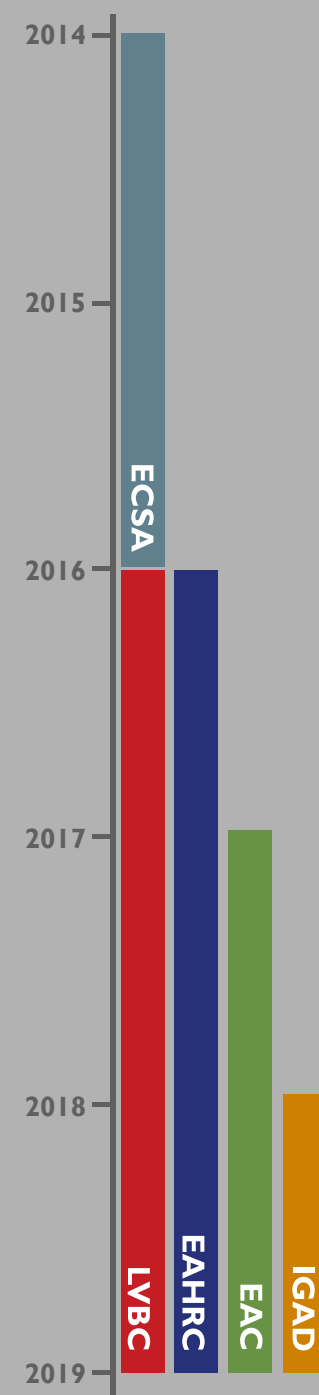
17 COUNTRIES
IMPACTED BY THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

RIGO MEMBER STATES

Burundi
Djibouti
Eritrea
Ethiopia
Kenya
Lesotho
Malawi
Mauritius
Rwanda
Somalia
South Sudan
Sudan
Swaziland
Tanzania
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe

Credit: Carly Smith/ US Agency for International Development, Courtesy of Photoshare

PARTNER REFLECTIONS

"This is one of those partnerships that has really helped the Population, Health, and Environment (PHE) program. The program has grown and is known for [the digital health tool] Kobo and knowledge management even in the partner states because we have trained them on knowledge management and digital M&E. This is a partnership that has really supported me to deliver on my mandate as the coordinator of the PHE program."

–DR. DOREEN OTHERO

Regional Program Coordinator, PHE program, LVBC

"ECSA-HC practiced some knowledge management before, though our definition of it has changed. With all the training we had from K4Health, we are now using more knowledge management tools, and using them better. We have set up communities of practice for lab experts in our tuberculosis (TB) Lab Strengthening project. It has made communication so much easier, and is especially benefitting the weaker labs, helping them to improve in order to be accredited. Essentially, this improved communication can result in better and faster diagnosis of TB, which means earlier management that will reduce the spread and mortality from TB."

–ANN MASESE

Program Officer, Family Health and Infectious Diseases, ECSA-HC

"[While reviewing the protocol that established the EAHRC], I noticed that a major area of focus is knowledge management. Yet the East Africa region was not substantially contributing research to the published health literature… Coming from academia, I know there is a host of literature that has not been published and therefore will never be seen, unless we find a way to bring it forward."

–GIBSON KIBIKI

Executive Secretary, EAHRC and Editor-in-Chief, East African Health Research Journal

SETTING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

With an eye toward sustainability, K4Health leveraged its technical expertise to cultivate a strong culture of knowledge management within each of the five RIGOs using a systematic and collaborative process. Guided by a spirit of mutual trust and partnership, an intention to work within existing structures without creating news ones, and a clear role to support the RIGOs' mandates as cross-border coordinators and conveners in the East African region, this process involved the following key elements:

- **Knowledge Management Needs Assessments:** K4Health collaborated with the partners to design and conduct assessments to understand existing knowledge-sharing practices, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities unique to the RIGOs and the partner states they support. Understanding the local context was key to finding country-specific and regional solutions that are most likely to be adopted and sustained.

- **Individual capacity strengthening:** The ability of any institution to effectively and efficiently implement knowledge management interventions depends on the skill set and motivation of its employees. For this reason, K4Health invested in a capacity strengthening approach that provided in-person and virtual technical assistance for RIGO staff and partner state members. Training sessions included knowledge management basics and products, knowledge capture and synthesis, and knowledge sharing. K4Health also seconded local personnel to champion and support the organization's knowledge management and M&E needs by providing day-to-day "learning by doing" style coaching and mentorship. As a result of these efforts, staff at RIGOs have increased technical capacity to manage health knowledge generated within the region.

- **Institutional capacity strengthening:** Based on the results of the Knowledge Management Assessments, K4Health engaged in participatory processes with the RIGOs to develop Knowledge Management Strategies. These processes allowed RIGO staff and key stakeholders from partner states to jointly articulate and build consensus around the priority areas for the strategies. As a result, the RIGOs now have Knowledge Management Strategies that are locally owned, aligned with the priorities of their institutional strategic plans, and geared toward making the RIGOs more effective, efficient and responsive to the needs of partners and stakeholders in the region. The strategies set parameters for the RIGOs to more efficiently coordinate knowledge among the countries they serve and thereby strengthen cross-border collaboration, sharing and learning to improve the quality of East African health systems. K4Health's approach to strategy development is based on the Knowledge Management Road Map for Global Health (see Figure 1).

Figure 1.

Along with the Knowledge Management Strategy, developed to broadly support the RIGOs' overall institutional strategies, K4Health developed actionable workplans to guide the technical assistance. The workplan activities, implemented collaboratively, resulted in strengthened staff capacity and established and/or strengthened processes and platforms for cross-border knowledge management.

SETTING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

A participant at the East African Health & Scientific Conference browses through a recent issue of the East African Health Research Journal. Credit: Slide Visuals Limited.
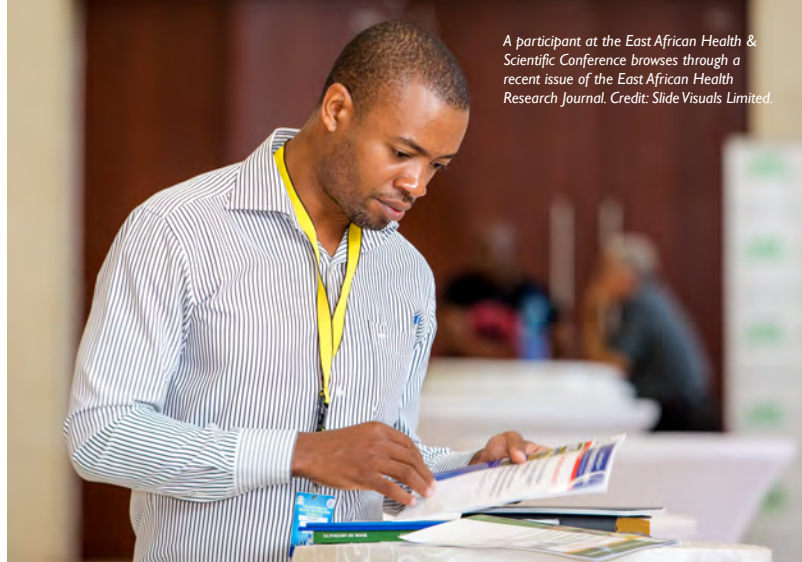
EAHRC

The East African Health Research Commission (EAHRC) is a mechanism for making available advice upon all matters of health and health-related research and findings necessary for knowledge generation, technological development, policy formulation and practices. It is the principal advisory institution to the EAC on health and research development.

K4Health partnered with the EAHRC from 2016-2019 to develop a peer-reviewed, open-access journal that promotes and facilitates the publication and application of East African-led research with the ultimate goal of strengthening national and regional health policy and practice. The role of K4Health was to develop the capacity of EAHRC staff and establish the infrastructure necessary for the EAHRC to publish the journal independently in the future.

Outlining Systems and Processes. Using its successful *Global Health: Science and Practice (GHSP)* journal as a model, K4Health co-developed a strategic plan with the EAHRC to follow for founding the EAHRJ. The plan included identifying the editorial processes, systems and human resources necessary to effectively manage the journal. This step was critical for establishing a sustainable foundation upon which the journal would be able to grow.

Recruiting and Mentoring Journal Staff. K4Health coordinated with EAHRC staff to solicit, screen, and review articles for the journal's first issue. K4Health provided virtual technical assistance through routine check-in calls and a technical assistance visit. Through our partnership, new staff hires developed the knowledge and skills needed to manage and copyedit the journal. As a result of K4Health's trainings, EAHRJ staff is now independently leading management of the overall editorial production schedule. EAHRJ staff are not only more adept at the publishing process, but are also more cognizant of their unique roles and responsibilities as well as the commitment required to produce a quality journal.

Launching the Journal. The EAHRJ was launched at the East Africa Health and Scientific Conference, held in Burundi in March 2017 with approximately 500 attendees. EAHRC has published five issues and one supplement of the EAHRJ. EAHRC staff regularly distribute printed copies of the issues and offer digital versions for download online. With the publication of the first five issues, the journal is now established as a product of the EAHRC and as an important resource to the regional health community.

Furthermore, EAHRC has gone on to independently establish and publish its inaugural issue of a sister journal, East Africa Science (EASci), focused on science, technology, and innovation in health—a testament to the organization's strengthened skills, confidence, and lessons learned through working on the EAHRJ.

With the creation of these two journals, East African scholars now have reputable outlets for sharing local experiences and generating solutions to improve health outcomes across the region.

> *Most of this literature is from young scientists who have not gained the confidence to publish. So we thought, we can also support them. This journal will be used as a way to mentor them, to build capacity, so later they can publish elsewhere."*
>
> **– GIBSON KIBIKI,** *Executive Secretary, EAHRC and Editor-in-Chief, EAHRJ*

SETTING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

LVBC

The LVBC's legitimacy is largely based on knowledge generated both internally and through exchanges with stakeholders and partners. LVBC is a facilitator, coordinator, and promoter of policies and practices that drive sustainable development and poverty eradication in the Lake Victoria Basin, including integrated population, health, and environment (PHE) programs. Knowledge management is at the heart of all that LVBC does.

After jointly conducting a Knowledge Management Needs and Gaps Assessment with LVBC to understand existing practices and knowledge management capacity for the LVBC Secretariat and LVBC Partner States, K4Health worked closely with LVBC to institutionalize a culture of knowledge management and establish systems to support knowledge management practices. K4Health focused its efforts on supporting the Commission to become more efficient in its role as a convener and knowledge hub for organizations in the Lake Victoria Basin working on PHE programs.

The LVBC Knowledge Management Assessment revealed that PHE stakeholders and implementing partners within the EAC countries had little or no knowledge of knowledge management. As such, K4Health worked hand-in-hand with LVBC staff throughout the Commission and the PHE Program to develop a workplan aimed at addressing the recommendations in the assessment. The workplan included activities focused on strengthening skills, knowledge, and internal processes and platforms for information-sharing across the Lake Victoria Basin. To support the workplan, K4Health provided on-going virtual technical assistance and in-house "learning by doing" mentorship from a seconded staff member. Thanks to this local presence embedded at the LVBC office in Kisumu, the LVBC team is now sharing and

> *"The training helped us learn a lot. A key issue was documenting PHE activities by in-country stakeholders. We needed that information to advocate for PHE as a way to address the livelihoods of our population holistically."*
>
> **–ANDREW TIONDI**
> *Coordinator of PHE activities, Uganda Population, Health, and Environment Network*

learning across Lake Victoria Basin borders in a more natural and organic fashion.

K4Health also conducted a regional training on basic knowledge management tools and approaches. Facilitators presented highlights of the knowledge management assessment report to ensure participants understood the purpose of the training.

In addition, K4Health worked with LVBC through a consultative process to develop a Knowledge Management Strategy by facilitating a series of writing workshops and virtual exchanges. As a result, LVBC has a five-year strategy that is locally owned, aligned to the priorities in its Strategic Plan and geared towards making the Commission more vibrant, effective, efficient, and responsive to needs of partners and stakeholders in the region and beyond.

Through our partnership, LVBC has strengthened its capacity to harness experiences and share cross-border knowledge efficiently and effectively, so that all five Basin countries have access to best practices in sustainable development through integrated health and environmental conservation initiatives.

K4Health's Knowledge Management Advisor leads a session at the LVBC Knowledge Management Strategy Development workshop in Kisumu, Kenya, August 9-11, 2016. Credit: Daniel Adero

SETTING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

IGAD

IGAD's Health and Social Development Division (HESAD) supports improved life expectancy and prosperity in the region through strengthened regional and national mechanisms and systems for health and social development. The health component of HESAD includes a focus on cross-border marginalized populations and pastoralists living on arid and semi-arid lands. HESAD is responsible for knowledge generation, capture, synthesis, and sharing to improve program effectiveness.

K4Health partnered with the IGAD Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health/Reproductive Health Commodity Security and Nutrition Division to provide technical assistance in two areas: 1) implementing a knowledge management assessment; and 2) collaborating on the IGAD Cross Border Health Program (CBHP) to improve its document management systems.

K4Health worked with IGAD to design and conduct an assessment to identify knowledge management practices, needs, and opportunities within IGAD cross-border health programs. K4Health facilitated an orientation workshop for IGAD representatives who would conduct the assessment, and then worked with IGAD to analyze the findings and prepare a recommendations report. These findings will serve to inform IGAD when developing its Knowledge Management Strategy for Health and Development.

K4Health and IGAD staff during a scoping visit to Malaba Dispensary before identifying a document sharing and archival system. December 2018. Credit: Daniel Adero

The knowledge management assessment found limited understanding of knowledge management, and inadequate systems to support knowledge management at the IGAD Secretariat, at IGAD HESAD and among the IGAD member states. Although most member states had departments responsible for health knowledge management, many of the people working in those departments had no training in knowledge management, and were not familiar with current advances in the field. In several countries, health knowledge management activities had been supported by development partner funded projects and stopped once the projects ended. The assessment also found that there were not structured ways of sharing information, lessons and experiences between various divisions at IGAD and between the IGAD Secretariat and member states.

As a first step to strengthening knowledge management for the CBHP, K4Health worked closely with IGAD to provide technical assistance through trainings and virtual and face-to-face technical assistance; to conduct a Knowledge Management training for IGAD Secretariat and member state focal persons responsible for cross-border health; and to collaboratively identify and develop a document management system to facilitate effective and efficient document management, sharing, collaboration and archival for the cross-border health program. As a result, IGAD HESAD is actively using Google Suite for its Cross Border Health Program.

IGAD now has a practical tool for harnessing all local cross-border health knowledge from their member states on a single platform in order to generate local solutions and take action.

> **"** *The archiving and retrieval methods have been very handy. Documents, proposals, budgets... We now know how to share almost everything online."*
>
> **–HASSAN MOHAMMED,** *IGAD focal person for cross-border health*

SETTING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

EAC

The EAC Secretariat Health Department is mandated to foster regional cooperation on health and to promote the management of health delivery systems and better health planning in partner states, with the aim of developing more efficient health services across the region.

Beginning in 2016, K4Health's partnership with EAC centered on strengthening the processes and technical expertise of EAC Secretariat to more efficiently share health information across the region. This support first focused on assessing current practices and needs related to the EAC Secretariat Health Department's strategic mandates and coordinating role.

Through the EAC HIV/AIDS Programme, with the support of USAID/KEA funding, the EAC Secretariat Health Department initiated a needs assessment of EAC knowledge management and partner states' knowledge platforms and systems. K4Health worked closely with and provided technical input and expertise to the department in this activity. The needs assessment was participatory in design and used a largely qualitative approach involving a literature review, key informant interviews, a capacity assessment and participatory stakeholder consultation, and validation workshops at the country and regional levels. The purpose was to ensure inclusiveness and maximum participation by a diverse set of stakeholders in the assessment process at the regional and partner-state levels. Thanks to this process, EAC was able to identify key audience needs and challenges to address in their knowledge management strategy.

K4Health then worked with the EAC on various activities geared toward the development of a

Participants at a Writers Workshop for the EAC KM Strategy for Health held at Voyager Beach Resort, Mombasa, Kenya from March 12-15, 2018. Credit: Daniel Adero.

Knowledge Management Strategy for Health for the region. K4Health was involved in reviewing the needs assessment report, held consultative meetings with EAC and the Knowledge Management Expert Working Group to discuss and formulate the strategy, and facilitated two writer's workshops to draft the strategy.

Through this process, EAC created a clear strategy to guide its systematic and coordinated efforts for sharing health information across the region and achieving its mandate.

Additionally, K4Health partnered with EAC to develop tools, such as a standard slide deck, for disseminating its Knowledge Management Strategy. These tools help to ensure the strategy is locally owned and sustained throughout the region. Moreover, this strategic document has been validated and approved by the governing bodies of the EAC (the EAC Sectoral Council of Ministers). This high-level buy-in is also critical for securing local ownership and sustainability of the strategy.

> **"**Our partnership with K4Health was able to evolve depending on the need, demand and the situation at hand.**"**
>
> **– DR. MICHAEL KATENDE,** *Principal Health Officer, EAC*

SETTING A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

ECSA-HC

The Regional Health & HIV Office at USAID's East Africa Mission (USAID/EA/RHH) engaged K4Health from March 2014 to December 2016, to strengthen knowledge management capacity for ECSA-HC. The project's key achievements included formal trainings, workshops, evaluations, and development of documents, policies, and reports.

K4Health research and ECSA-HC staff collaboratively designed and implemented a Knowledge Management Assessment to understand the knowledge needs of member states and the gaps in communication. Key findings of the assessment included: ECSA-HC staff considered knowledge management to be a new yet promising concept; knowledge management activities were happening but on an ad hoc basis and non-standardized manner; staff wanted to improve the current online library, expand the IT system, and tailor information to specific audiences.

In August 2015, K4Health led a knowledge management training for ECSA-HC staff to demystify the concept of knowledge management, encourage participants to use knowledge management in their day-to-day work, and provide tutorials on select tools, including After Action Review, Peer Assist, Data Visualization, and Communities of Practice. Participants left the training with strengthened confidence in their ability to talk about knowledge management and its relevance to global health work.

Throughout the partnership, K4Health provided on-going knowledge management technical support, for instance, with the evaluation of ECSA-HC's Best Practices Forum, held in the Republic of Mauritius from November/December 2015, using three knowledge management tools: audience response system, expectation wall, and qualitative survey. As a

"The exercises were very interactive and all participants were part of the work. The facilitation was very exciting, not the traditional reading from PowerPoint presentations. The facilitators understood the topic well and were able to guide the participants accordingly. It was an exciting training."

– ANN MASESE, *ECSA-HC Knowledge Management Training Facilitator*

result of this evaluation, ECSA-HC staff gained a deeper understanding of the uses and benefits of the three tools in providing better evaluation results and understanding audience needs to shape future meetings. ECSA-HC staff also developed the capacity to teach others how to use the tools for creating efficiencies.

These new tools, skills, and knowledge will help ECSA-HC more efficiently achieve its goals of fostering and encouraging regional cooperation in health and strengthening capacity to address the health needs of its nine member states.

Thanks to advocacy efforts by K4Health, ECSA-HC recruited additional personnel to support the organization's knowledge management and M&E needs. This staff recruitment proved ECSA-HC's appreciation for the value of knowledge management and its willingness to invest time and resources towards implementing the approach.

K4Health and ECSA staff at a Knowledge Management Tactics and Training in Tanzania, August 2015. Credit: Jarret Cassaniti

DEVELOPING TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO SHARE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

## Digital Regional East African Community Health (REACH) Initiative Roadmap

K4Health and EAHRC identified a need to develop a coordinated response to addressing cross-border health risks in the region using a digital health approach. To this end, the partnership focused on institutional process coordination, consensus building, and technical assistance on digital health at the leadership level.

The Digital REACH Initiative Roadmap lays out the plan for coordinating regional action to improve health outcomes across the EAC through the creation of a robust enabling environment for digital health and the implementation of strategic regional health programs supported and facilitated by digital health. EAHRC is leading the Digital REACH Initiative as part of their mission to provide the EAC with reliable information on health practice and research to guide knowledge generation, technological development, and policy formulation and practice.

K4Health and EAHRC worked together to develop the Roadmap following the successful East Africa Digital Health Roadmap Conference and technical workshops. Through the partnership and in collaboration with USAID/KEA partner, CB-HIPP, EAHRC convened the key players and drafted a process to guide the consensus building, articulation of the commitments and development of the Roadmap. In addition, K4Health and EAHRC co-developed connections with global key digital health stakeholders including bilateral donors focused on supporting digital health governance in East Africa.

A regional initiative for digital health, guided by a unified vision, will create economic efficiencies, improve health outcomes, and enable faster implementations,.
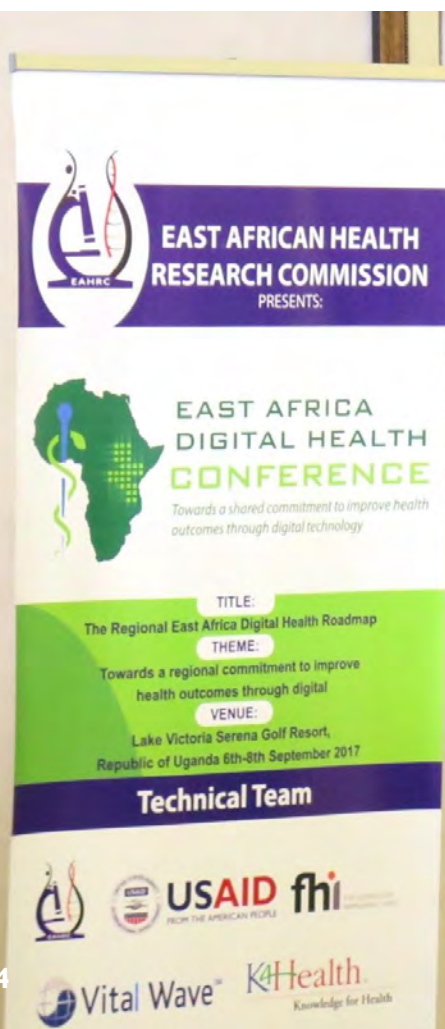
Professor Gibson Kibiki, Executive Secretary EAHRC, speaking at the Regional East Africa Digital Health Roadmap Conference in Kampala, Uganda. 2017. Credit: Sherri Haas, Management Sciences for Health.

DEVELOPING TOOLS AND RESOURCES TO SHARE HEALTH KNOWLEDGE

LVBC Web portal

In December 2016, LVBC launched a dynamic PHE web portal during their 10th anniversary celebrations. K4Health and LVBC PHE Program worked together to develop, construct, and populate the digital platform. Fully managed by LVBC, the web portal is a one-stop shop for PHE news, updates, resources, and opportunities for various stakeholders interested in learning about the program. K4Health also coordinated a digital health assessment and the design of a mobile phone M&E application based on the open source KOBO Toolbox software. The application allows community based PHE champions to report PHE monitoring data into the government health management system, and to LVBC. K4Health provided support for LVBC to facilitate training for PHE stakeholders on customizing M&E platform for use in their own PHE programs and projects.

PHE Mainstreaming Guidelines

There are many environmental conservation projects and programs in the Lake Victoria Basin, which, through integration, could expand the reach of health and population interventions. Previously, there were no guidelines that program managers or policymakers could refer to. K4Health therefore worked with LVBC to develop a document outlining guidelines for PHE mainstreaming. Based on a literature review of PHE programs in East Africa and across the globe and key informant interviews with representatives of PHE networks in the region, the guidelines include tools that implementers can use to design programs specific to the communities they serve while remaining true to the fundamental PHE approach concepts.

Credit: © 2005 Alanna Jorde, Courtesy of Photoshare

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"As for strengthening knowledge management for the PHE program, the knowledge management expert helped us a great deal to establish a PHE web portal which is up and running and very active. He worked very closely with our Systems Administrator and the Communications and Development Officer. We also developed the PHE, Mainstreaming Guidelines which is a very important tool that guides both governmental and non-governmental organizations."

–DR. DOREEN OTHERO
Regional Program Coordinator, PHE program, LVBC

STRENGTHENING CROSS-BORDER CONSENSUS, COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

When working with the RIGOs to draft their Knowledge Management Strategies, K4Health proposed activities in alignment with USAID/KEA's strategy to strengthen RIGOs' institutional governance and capacity and to coordinate knowledge generation within the countries they serve. The activities further improve regional collaboration, sharing, and learning; scale up high-impact practices; reduce duplication of effort; and improve the quality of health systems across borders.

One knowledge management technique that fosters collaboration is a participatory event, such as a "share fair" or a symposium. These events, which encourage learning through the exchange of participant knowledge, may include presentations, breakout sessions, and knowledge cafés where participants engage in meaningful and practical discussions. Identifying and sharing local knowledge on approaches that have worked or not worked helps spread best practices to achieve better health outcomes across the region. These in-person events also provide opportunities for health practitioners to connect, build strong networks, and form lasting relationships, which allows for collaboration to continue beyond the conference. With technical assistance from K4Health, the RIGOs experienced a "learning by doing" approach for this knowledge management technique by co-leading the event planning process.

Share Fairs & Symposiums

EAC Regional Share Fair

With technical support from K4Health, EAC hosted a regional Share Fair, "Learning and Sharing on Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child, and Adolescent Health/HIV integration" in Entebbe, Uganda in June 2018. Bringing together over 100 participants from across East Africa who lead, manage and implement health programs, the EAC Share Fair provided an opportunity for networking and dialogue on using knowledge management principles and approaches to achieve better results from RMNCAH and HIV/AIDS integration. In addition, the event strengthened K4Health's partnership with EAC, demonstrated the value and power of knowledge management for a regional institution, and positioned EAC as a leader in knowledge management for health in the region.

Now I can say that I know what knowledge management is and what tools there are. We already organize annual conferences for knowledge translation in the institute. We could use knowledge cafes to share research findings and implications with our Ministry of Health. That is the 'audience' for the research we do."

—DR. JENNIFER ORWA, *Chief research officer and deputy director for knowledge management, Kenya Medical Research Institute*

> *The share fair was a great opportunity for all of us to understand common patterns of connections between people and how they impact the ways we can work together (or not). It was helpful to connect and discuss opportunities and challenges that we each face. With the support of the facilitators, the group engaged in interesting discussions, shared valuable stories, and formed meaningful networks."*

–WYCLIFFE OMANYA, *share fair attendee*

ECSA-HC Regional Knowledge Management Share Fair

K4Health and ECSA-HC led a knowledge management share fair in Arusha, Tanzania in April 2016, convening 80 professionals from 13 East, Central, and Southern African countries to exchange best practices in advancing global health and development. The event provided an opportunity for ECSA-HC to network, practice their skills, and highlight their expertise to current and potential partners and donors. According to a K4Health research evaluation, the share fair effectively facilitated the learning and use of knowledge management techniques, motivated participants to share their knowledge with their own contacts, and strengthened regional networks.

K4Health hosted a half-day "peer assist" activity during the share fair for select teams attending the event. The parallel session provided an opportunity for participants to share a challenge with peers with the goal of soliciting insights. ECSA-HC presented a challenge on the use of knowledge synthesis to ensure the organization's role as the information hub of Africa. Thanks to feedback from peers, ECSA-HC left the peer assist with a list of solutions, such as mapping country needs, collaborating with development partners, and increasing visibility.

STRENGTHENING CROSS-BORDER CONSENSUS, COORDINATION & COLLABORATION

LVBC PHE Symposium

K4Health provided technical assistance and strengthened the capacity of the LVBC and regional partners to organize, hold, and document a regional PHE symposium held in September 2017 in Entebbe, Uganda. Focusing on the theme "Enhancing Resiliency and Economic Development through Strengthened PHE Programming", the event brought together more than 80 participants from various areas of expertise within the East African region and other parts of the world. As participants reflected on regional PHE implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and advocacy over the past two years, the symposium defined a pathway toward mainstreaming an integrated PHE approach and established a set of resolutions. The event provided an opportunity for PHE implementers and policy makers to share regional learnings and approaches across East African borders, and renew their commitment to PHE.

Paul Mahabi, Director of Environment for Uganda's Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources, leads the Regional PHE Symposium 2017 delegates in signing symposium resolutions. Credit: Daniel Adero

"

"We know that a healthy community is dependent on a sustainable environment. Enabling women to choose the number and spacing of their children and helping communities create a robust environment gives people a pathway out of poverty. And as we experienced during the symposium, sharing the successes of early adopters and getting others to adopt the PHE approach as an innovative solution to emerging problems is an effective way to achieve the SDGs."

–BETTY MBOLANYI
Uganda Ministry of Water and Environment, Directorate of Environment Affairs | Environmentalist and Population, Health, and Environment Focal Person

EXPANDING COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Throughout the course of its partnerships, K4Health provided strategic communications support to promote the knowledge management skills and expertise of the five RIGOs. K4Health also worked with USAID/Kenya East Africa to share stories with USAID country missions to convey how its work with the RIGOs has impacted the health in the region.
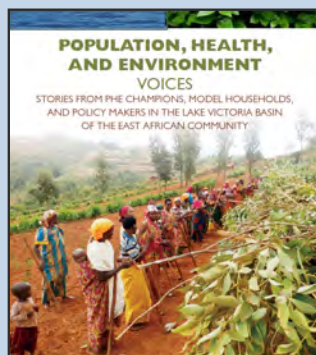
Booklet
K4Health collaborated with LVBC to strategically identify 16 individuals whose lives have been impacted by population growth and environmental degradation in the Lake Victoria Basin, and document their stories. These individuals have also played a key role in championing the PHE agenda at the regional, national and community levels. To share their experiences with global and regional health communities, K4Health ad LVBC worked together on the design, layout, publication, and dissemination of a "PHE Voices" booklet featuring their stories. The booklet serves as an advocacy tool to demonstrate the potential of PHE as an approach to help East African communities to sustainably develop and to thrive. K4Health also published these stories, along with those of numerous other PHE champions across the globe, on its Family Planning Voices platform.

E-newsletter
K4Health worked with USAID/KEA to establish the "East Africa Regional Health Spotlight," a communication channel aimed at sharing, with USAID bilateral missions in the region, stories about regional health work and how regional and bilateral mission investments can both serve to influence health systems in the region. As a result of this collaboration, the partnership delivered a first issue focused on the Digital REACH initiative to health teams working at bilateral missions in the region. K4Health also worked with USAID/KEA and EAHRC to develop a second issue focused on the EAHRJ and EAHRC's Scientific Conference. K4Health has developed a template for the Spotlight newsletters that USAID/KEA can use to lay out future issues.

Slide deck
K4Health collaborated with USAID/KEA to design a PowerPoint slide deck about its work with EAC and IGAD, and how that can be of use to national health programs and bilateral missions in the region. USAID/KEA representatives can use the slide deck during meetings of all sorts, to share standardized messaging about its regional work with the RIGOs.

Brochure
K4Health worked with ECSA-HC to create a full-color promotional brochure highlighting ECSA-HC's knowledge management expertise. The communications material serves as a tangible resource that the organization can distribute to current and future partners and donors.

LESSONS LEARNED:
ON PARTNERSHIPS, CAPACITY BUILDING, SUSTAINABILITY

Photo credit: 2017 Kato James
Courtesy of Photoshare

LESSONS LEARNED: ON PARTNERSHIPS, CAPACITY BUILDING, SUSTAINABILITY

Throughout this process, we learned valuable lessons that can be adapted and applied by any organization working on similar efforts.

1 **Establish a mutual understanding and a shared vision.** Deep understanding of each other's roles and missions will facilitate your collaboration towards a clear common goal. Knowing the context of your partner organization is also key to ensuring your technical assistance is embedded and integrated within the institution and not implemented as a vertical program.

2 **The process has to be locally owned and led.** When your partner identifies their own gaps in skill and knowledge, they will be more motivated to find solutions. Your role as a partner is to support the implementation of those solutions.

3 **Take the time to advocate and build trust.** Laying the groundwork to demonstrate the value of knowledge management will ensure that everyone is on the same page, and both parties will feel more committed to dedicating the necessary time and resources.

4 **Get leadership buy-in.** Encouraging the decision-makers to initiate and take ownership allowed activities to move along in a timely manner and ensured they would continue after our scope of work ended.

5 **Decide the right technical assistance approach for your partnership.** We applied both in-house and virtual assistance depending on the situation. Seconding staff to work closely with the regional partners on a daily basis ensured that the partners had access to technical assistance in real time. When providing virtual assistance, clear and honest communication is key for trust-building.

6 **Meet your partner where they are.** Be aware that the partners we work with may not always have the staff or resources they need at the start of an activity. Be flexible, and work with your partner to find the right people and put relevant systems in place.

7 **Manage expectations and meet those expectations.** Work with your partners to identify attainable goals. Establish practical timelines and stick to them.

8 **Find a process that works.** Throughout the course of our activities, we refined and perfected our two-step process for developing a knowledge management strategy, which involved a series of writer's workshops. By the time we began our most recent partnership, we had developed a strong and reliable methodology. With that said, be open to learning, adapting, and constantly improving.

K4Health and ECSA-HC staff participate in a Net-Mapping knowledge management exercise. Credit: Jarret Cassaniti.