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KENYA AND EAST AFRICA

SUCCESS STORY

Combining Good Nutrition and Proper Sanitation Means More Happy Moms and Babies

For a long time, majority of community members in Masongaleni ward in Makueni County lacked access to appropriate basic sanitation services such as hand washing and sanitation facilities. . Out of an estimated 612 households in 12 supported villages, 27 were practicing open defecation while 347 did not have hand-washing facilities next to their pit latrines exposing families especially breastfeeding mothers and their babies to diarrheal diseases.

In order to achieve open defecation free (ODF) status in the county, USAID's Kenya Integrated Water Sanitation and Hygiene (KIWASH) project worked with the Makueni County Government to train 25 Public Health Officers on Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) and worked with Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) to roll out implementation of the approach.

A key component of this approach includes establishing mother-to-mother support groups comprised of pregnant and lactating mothers where they receive important health messages on hygiene and sanitation, treatment and safe storage of drinking water, food hygiene as well as infant and young child feeding practices. The mothers are also sensitized on production and consumption of nutrient dense foods through kitchen gardening at household level to achieve improved child nutrition status.

Within two months of this intervention, 25 mothers from Yiia Itune mother support group have ensured that each of their household has a pit latrine and a handwashing facility. To support their efforts, KIWASH has distributed storage containers for drinking water, water treatment chemicals and diarrhea management kits to the mothers and is supporting them establish simple kitchen gardens for production of nutrient dense vegetables.

"I'm happy to be part of a support group because we get to share our experiences and learn from each other. During our meetings, we are taught how to reduce under-nutrition among our children, keep our homes clean and store our water safely," says Purity Muema, a member of Yiia Itune.

KIWASH is targeting to stimulate demand in at least 275 villages in Kenya to attain ODF status. Already, 176 villages with 13,853 households have been educated on CLTS and as a result 430 households that did not have latrines have constructed new ones while 1,648 households have set up new hand washing facilities. The project builds on previous USAID's investments in WASH and nutrition to promote an integrated approach that will help achieve significant reductions in chronic under-nutrition among children and improve overall sanitation among Kenyan communities.



Eric Onyiego / KIWASH

34yr old Purity Muema with her son. She's among mothers in Makueni County who've received education on handwashing with soap at critical times, treatment and safe storage of water, safe disposal of feces and food hygiene with KIWASH support.

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- Purity Muema

Telling Our Story

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