

Strategic focus areas_YTH

Sexual & Reproductive Health

Access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services is a cornerstone of our health strategy, particularly for adolescent girls and women who are disproportionately affected by both preventable diseases and social barriers. Our work prioritizes awareness, education, and access—especially in areas where stigma, lack of infrastructure, and misinformation severely limit the ability of individuals to make informed health choices. A special focus is placed on conditions like **cervical cancer** and **female genital schistosomiasis (FGS)**—both of which represent major, yet largely silent, public health threats in endemic communities.

Cervical Cancer Prevention and Awareness

Cervical cancer remains one of the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among women in low- and middle-income countries. Despite being largely preventable through regular screening and HPV vaccination, many women remain unaware of the risks and lack access to preventive services. Our strategy includes community education campaigns that demystify cervical cancer and promote early detection through visual inspection with acetic acid (VIA), Pap smears, and HPV DNA testing where available. We also work closely with local health facilities to improve the availability and uptake of HPV vaccines, especially targeting girls aged 9–14.

We engage community health workers and peer educators to encourage women to attend routine screenings and overcome fears or misconceptions. In areas where health services are limited, we advocate for mobile clinics and outreach screening days to reach women in remote settings. By creating safe spaces for women to discuss reproductive health and by training local health providers in early diagnosis and treatment options, we contribute to the national efforts to reduce cervical cancer mortality.

Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS)

Female Genital Schistosomiasis (FGS) is a lesser-known yet highly debilitating condition caused by *Schistosoma haematobium*, a parasitic worm prevalent in areas with poor water and sanitation. FGS affects millions of women and girls, causing chronic pain, bleeding, infertility, and increasing susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections including HIV. Tragically, FGS is often misdiagnosed or completely overlooked due to its overlap with other gynecological conditions and the limited awareness among healthcare providers.

Our approach to FGS includes both medical and social interventions. First, we incorporate FGS education into broader community sensitisation and mass drug administration campaigns targeting schistosomiasis. Women and adolescent girls are specifically engaged through school and community sessions where they learn about the symptoms, prevention (e.g., avoiding contaminated freshwater), and treatment with praziquantel. Second, we are working to strengthen health worker capacity to recognize and manage FGS, particularly in primary care and SRH service settings, where symptoms often first present.

Importantly, we advocate for the integration of FGS screening and treatment into existing SRH services, including cervical cancer screenings, antenatal care, and HIV prevention

programs. This integrated model not only helps with early detection and treatment but also reduces stigma by normalizing conversations around female genital health. As part of our three-year vision, we aim to introduce FGS screening protocols in collaboration with national health authorities and pilot them in high-burden schistosomiasis zones.

Three-Year Milestones for SRH

1. **Reach and Educate:** Deliver SRH awareness campaigns—including cervical cancer and FGS components—to 50,000 individuals, with a focus on adolescent girls and women of reproductive age.
2. **Train SRH Advocates:** Train 300 community educators and frontline health workers on cervical cancer prevention and FGS identification and referral.
3. **Integrated Health Services:** Establish 10 Youth-Friendly Corners in community health centers that offer integrated SRH services, including HPV vaccination, cervical cancer screening, and FGS management.

Neglected Tropical Diseases

Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) remain a significant public health challenge, particularly in underserved communities where access to healthcare and proper sanitation is limited. Our strategic focus in this area is to support and enhance ongoing efforts in disease prevention and control, with a particular emphasis on Schistosomiasis, Soil-Transmitted Helminths (STHs), and Lymphatic Filariasis. Through collaboration with ministries of health and international health agencies, we work to expand the reach of mass drug administration (MDA) campaigns. These efforts ensure that life-saving medications are distributed widely and efficiently to at-risk populations, especially school-aged children.

Community sensitisation is at the heart of our NTD approach. We prioritize raising awareness at the grassroots level by engaging local influencers, educators, and community health volunteers to demystify diseases and the importance of MDA. Our behaviour change communication strategies are designed to address myths, stigma, and misinformation that often hinder participation in NTD programs. This includes educational outreach through local radio, interactive drama, and door-to-door campaigns, ensuring that information is not only accessible but culturally relevant.

Over the next three years, we aim to achieve three major milestones in our NTD strategy. First, we plan to facilitate MDA coverage in at least 100 high-burden communities. Second, we will develop and roll out a comprehensive NTD education curriculum for community health workers. Finally, we intend to publish a community impact report that captures behavioral shifts, treatment coverage, and reduction in disease incidence, providing valuable feedback for national and regional health planning.

Youth Health Advocacy

Youth remain a key demographic in shaping the future of public health, yet they are often excluded from health policy discussions and service design. Our Youth Health Advocacy program aims to fill this gap by equipping young people with the knowledge, skills, and platforms they need to influence positive health outcomes within their communities. Through targeted training programs, we empower youth health champions to advocate for adolescent and youth-friendly services, engage in peer education, and represent their communities in local and national health forums.

Mentorship is central to our youth strategy. We pair emerging youth leaders with experienced public health professionals, building a pipeline of advocates who are both passionate and well-informed. These youth champions play a dual role: they not only advocate for change in their communities but also provide vital feedback to health providers about barriers that youth face in accessing services, particularly around sexual health, mental well-being, and substance use.

In the next three years, we intend to reach three key milestones. Firstly, we aim to train and certify at least 500 youth health champions across various regions. Secondly, we will facilitate the formation of 20 youth-led health advocacy clubs in schools and universities. Finally, we plan to co-host an annual Youth Health Advocacy Summit that brings together young leaders, policymakers, and civil society actors to co-create solutions and drive policy dialogue focused on youth health needs.

Community Engagement & Outreach

Sustainable health transformation cannot occur without active community involvement. Our Community Engagement & Outreach strategy centers on building long-term partnerships with local stakeholders, including traditional leaders, faith-based groups, school administrators, and community-based organizations. By fostering trust and aligning health goals with community values, we are able to mobilize collective action and ensure the continuity of health interventions.

A major component of this strategy involves capacity building and participatory learning. We conduct training workshops for local leaders to become health advocates, integrating traditional knowledge with scientific health information. School-based outreach programs promote health literacy among children and youth, ensuring early adoption of healthy practices. These programs also serve as entry points for broader family and community engagement on topics such as hygiene, nutrition, and preventive healthcare.

Our three-year vision includes reaching the following milestones: First, we aim to establish formal partnerships with 150 community leaders to champion health initiatives. Second, we will implement a School Health Ambassador Program in at least 80 schools, equipping student leaders to serve as peer health educators. Third, we plan to publish a Community Engagement Toolkit—a practical guide for NGOs and health workers on best practices for grassroots health mobilization based on our field experiences.

Climate Change and Health

Climate change is an emerging and accelerating threat to global public health, especially in vulnerable communities where the capacity to adapt is limited. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, shifting rainfall patterns, and environmental degradation are increasingly

contributing to the spread of infectious diseases, malnutrition, water insecurity, and mental health burdens. Our organization recognizes the critical intersection between environmental sustainability and health equity, and we are committed to integrating climate resilience into all aspects of community health programming.

We are focusing on building awareness around the health impacts of climate change through community education, particularly targeting rural and peri-urban populations most at risk. This includes promoting climate-smart behaviors such as safe water conservation, heatwave preparedness, and the use of sustainable energy sources in health facilities. We also facilitate local dialogues on how environmental changes—such as flooding or drought—affect vector-borne diseases like malaria and dengue, as well as food systems, maternal health, and sanitation infrastructure. By promoting locally adapted, evidence-based solutions, we aim to empower communities to become active agents in both health and climate resilience.

Additionally, we are working with youth leaders, traditional authorities, and local governments to co-develop community adaptation plans that include health components—such as climate-resilient water and sanitation systems, early warning systems for climate-sensitive diseases, and support for climate-induced displacement. We also advocate for the inclusion of health considerations in broader climate policies at the regional and national levels. Our approach emphasizes participatory action, environmental justice, and equitable access to resources and information in the face of climate stressors.

Three-Year Milestones for Climate Change and Health

1. **Community Climate-Health Literacy:** Train 500 community health workers and youth leaders in climate-health education and risk communication, reaching 100,000 individuals through campaigns.
2. **Climate-Resilient Health Facilities:** Support the upgrade of 10 rural health facilities to use solar energy, rainwater harvesting, and sustainable waste management practices.
3. **Early Warning and Adaptation Plans:** Co-create localized climate-health adaptation plans in at least 15 high-risk communities, focusing on disease surveillance, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), and disaster preparedness.