

Programme Information Sheet

Strengthening Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition using Mobile Technology

Wajir County, Kenya

84% of the Wajir County's 661,941 population are living in absolute poverty, whilst 72% are classified as 'food poor'. One of the most vulnerable of Kenya's 47 counties and toughest for child survival, Wajir has:

- High rates of acute malnutrition—at 11.4% they're almost double the country-wide estimated 6%
- Just 3% of households practice recommended Infant and Young Child Feeding practices (including breastfeeding through age two, introduction of solid and semisolid foods at six months, and gradual increases in amount of food and frequency of feeding as the child gets older)
- About one in four (26%) children are recorded to have stunted growth, and 21% as underweight

A child's growth and development is dependent on adequate nutrition. Education levels are increasingly being linked to health and nutrition levels—just 21% of women aged 15-49 are literate and only 8.5% have attended secondary education. A woman will have on average eight children.

The burden of malnutrition in Wajir is exacerbated by inadequate health and nutrition resources (human and financial), with just 1 doctor for every 132,000 members of the population, and on average a 30km walk to the nearest health facility.

IMAM: Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition

Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM) enables health workers to identify and initiate treatment for children before they become seriously ill at the community level. The success of IMAM is hampered by two factors:

- Poor **data management** results in low quality data that is incomplete and not readily available for decision makers to react in a timely manner to malnutrition surges
- Poor **following of protocol** for Community based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), undermining effectiveness, and increasing risk of children becoming lost in the system during follow-up, in-turn increasing risk of child mortality and raising operational costs.

The Solution

As part of World Vision's global programme, Save the Children piloted the introduction of mobile based data management for IMAM into 20 of Wajir's health facilities.

The Application provides health workers with simple, step-by-step guidance to help them assess, treat or refer children visiting the IMAM programme—reminding them throughout of the treatment protocol and counselling messages. It also records the child's information, making child follow up easier. Data is uploaded to a cloud, providing live and accurate data for county level management.

The Impact of mHealth on IMAM

An impact evaluation of the pilot in Kenya by Transform Nutrition has highlighted that use of the application:

- **Reduces data errors:** 100% of the data gathered is complete and useable compared to 73% of paper register data
- **Provides 'live' data to decision makers:** Data can be with decision makers 30 times quicker, than using the paper register—1.3 days vs. 40 days. Critical when in a drought-prone zone with surges in malnutrition
- **Improves adherence to IMAM Protocol:** 99% of Mid Upper Arm Circumference (MUAC) measurements were done correctly in comparison to 84% in the control group
- **Reduces mis-diagnosis:** The paper register sees 28% of weight-for-height scores being incorrectly calculated; and 17% of children being wrongly admitted to the IMAM treatment programme

Save the Children's end-line evaluation also found the application:

- **Improved Stock Management:** Over prescription was reduced as the app accurately guides on dosage
- **Improved Quality of care:** Use of diagrams and explanations supports health workers to provide detailed information and guidance to the patient

For more information on Save the Children's Pilot in Wajir County, Kenya, refer to:

- [Transform Nutrition's Research Summary](#)
- [Lessons learned from the five pilot countries](#)
- [Video documenting the Wajir County Pilot](#)

Save the Children are actively looking to scale this mHealth approach to IMAM. To find out more, contact Save the Children Kenya's Director of Programme Development and Quality, Jane Mutua: jane.mutua@savethechildren.org



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