

## M-PESA Foundation partners with AMREF Health Africa to promote maternal health in Homabay County

*Uzazi Salama is a two-year program that aims to promote access to quality health services in Homabay County, targeting about 86, 469 women and children under 5 years in Ndhiwa and Suba Sub-Counties.*

**Homa Bay, 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021...** Close to 90, 000 women of reproductive age and children under 5 years are set to benefit from a KES 150 million project that seeks to improve access to quality maternal health services in Homabay County.

Uzazi Salama project, a partnership between M-PESA Foundation, PharmAccess Africa, AMREF Health Africa, Action Aid, Pathfinder international and Homabay County Government, will strengthen the county's health systems to support the delivery of quality reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent healthcare.

Homabay is one of 15 counties in Kenya with poor reproductive, maternal, new-born, child and adolescent health indicators. These are attributed to poor access and/or low-quality health services, social-economic and cultural behaviours and unavailability of medical equipment to support optimal maternal health. Maternal deaths in the county stand at 583 per 100,000 live births and 119 deaths per 1,000 live births.

Uzazi Salama, launched at the Ndhiwa Sub-County Hospital today, has also been tried and tested in Samburu County since 2015.

“Every mother and new-born child deserve an equal chance of survival during the childbirth process. We believe that through Uzazi Salama, we will increase demand for hospital-based deliveries and greatly improve the quality of life for mothers and their babies as we have witnessed in Samburu County,” said Les Baille, Executive Director, M-PESA Foundation.

Speaking during the launch, Homabay Governor H.E. Hon Cyprian Awiti acknowledged the challenges facing the County and efforts in place to mitigate them.

“As a County, it is unfortunate that we are still battling teenage pregnancies, an issue that has been flagged as a risk especially during childbirth because biologically, their bodies are not ready to welcome a child. It is through such partnerships with Safaricom and AMREF Health Africa that we aim to not only educate on safe sex and childbirth, but also to reduce maternal and child deaths. I look forward to Homabay being a success story, like Samburu County,” he said.

According to Dr George Kimathi, Director, Institute of Capacity Development, Amref Health Africa, some of the notable success of Uzazi Salama in Samburu County has been a 22 percent increase in health facility deliveries; 9 percent increase in immunization and 6 percent increase in the first Antenatal clinic visit.



“These can be attributed to increased community education, capacity strengthening of health workers, as well as upgrading of health facilities to provide quality Maternal and Neonatal Health services. Additionally, over 500 community health workers have been trained on safe delivery methods and over 200,000 residents benefitting from the project,” said Dr Kimathi.

Uzazi Salama is the second maternal health initiative the M-PESA Foundation is launching in Homabay County today. The foundation in partnership with Gertrude’s Children Hospital will later launch the regional Daktari Smart telemedicine program, at the Suba Sub-County Hospital, that is part of a [larger telemedicine initiative](#) that targets over 32,000 children in Homabay, Samburu, Baringo and Lamu Counties.

## **ENDS**

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## **About M-PESA Foundation**

The M-PESA Foundation was duly registered as a Charitable Trust in March 2010. The M-PESA Foundation invests in large scale and long-term sustainable projects that have maximum impact on Kenyans in the areas of education, health and environment. Michael Joseph is the Chairman of the M-PESA Foundation.

## **About Amref Health Africa**

Amref is an international NGO headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya. In Kenya, Amref presence (programmatic and/or physical) is in all 47 counties. Key pillars in Amref’s corporate strategy (2018-2022) are: i) to develop and sustain Human Resources for Health (HRH) to catalyse the attainment of UHC, ii) Innovative solutions in health, and iii) health financing. Together with its constituent entities such as the Amref Health Innovations (AHI), Amref’s capabilities include capacity development of individuals, institutions and government; innovations in health programming; strategic partnerships; and co-creation with communities for the development of responsive interventions.

## **PharmAccess Foundation**

Founded in 2001, [PharmAccess Foundation](#) believes that technology has the potential to revolutionize the healthcare sector. PharmAccess is an entrepreneurial organisation dedicated to delivering healthcare solutions that leave no one behind. These capabilities create a synergy among the partners that has contributed to the success of the Uzazi Salama initiative. Established in 1957 to champion sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide as well as mobilize communities most in need to breakthrough barriers and forge their path to a healthier future.

### **Pathfinder International**

Pathfinder was established in 1957 to champion sexual and reproductive health and rights worldwide as well as mobilize communities most in need to breakthrough barriers and forge their path to a healthier future. Pathfinder is implementing programmes in 13 counties in Kenya and has designed its MNCH programme to reduce maternal and new-born mortality and morbidity as an integral part of its work: a) Increasing access to and quality of MNCH care; b) Promoting knowledge and adoption of healthy behaviours, including contraception across communities; and c) Providing support to and long-term collaboration with national, sub-national and local health care health systems. The key programme areas they will be focusing on include: i) Implement a County context-specific tailored approach aimed at decreasing preventable maternal, new-born, and child deaths through; ii) Increase awareness and demand for quality maternal, new-born, and child health services; iii) Increase access and utilisation of quality maternal, new-born, and child health services; and iv) Strengthen County capacity to plan, finance, and coordinate maternal, new-born, and child health services. These will be achieved through utilization of various approaches such as advocacy, capacity building of communities and health systems, SRH integration and scale-up of innovative and high impact evidence-based interventions

### **Action Aid**

ActionAid is a global movement of people working together to further human rights and defeat poverty for all. We're a global justice federation working to achieve social justice, gender equality and poverty eradication. We're a non-partisan, non-religious development organization and have been working in Kenya since 1972 to end poverty and injustice for all. ActionAid is un-apologetic in advancing women's rights and ensuring that women living in poverty and exclusion are at the centre of our work in Kenya. We commit to working with Women, Children and the Youth to claim and realize their constitutional rights through working within three pillars: empowerment, solidarity and campaigning