



# COMMUNITY HEALTH

At IntraHealth, we know the transformative power of community health workers (CHWs), volunteers, and advocates coming together to improve health outcomes in their countries.

In 2022 alone, our projects reached over 30,000 CHWs with support such as supervision, training, and mentoring, leveraging national digital health and eLearning platforms. This helps ensure that CHWs have the right knowledge, skills, and support to help people get the care they need.

Here's how we deliver results:

- Revitalizing community health workforce management and learning, including digitizing CHW registries and pairing CHWs with nurse leaders for hands-on coaching
- Strengthening community-to-facility referral pathways, including training community outreach volunteers to counsel and link community members to health services
- Engaging communities to improve health care quality, including supporting grassroots advocacy committees to spur staffing and infrastructural improvements in facilities
- Leveraging behavioral science, including using interactive games and dialogues, to drive health service uptake.

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Kim Kadimala, a village health team (VHT) worker, returns to the health center where her team is based after a busy day in parishes surrounding Moroto, Uganda. Photo by Tommy Trenchard for IntraHealth International.

## OUR APPROACHES IN ACTION

### Revitalizing Community Health Workforce Management and Learning

In **Uganda**, IntraHealth partnered with the Ministry of Health to develop a **digital CHW registry** to give health managers an accurate snapshot of CHW distribution and capacity. The registry's automated reports and linkage with other information systems enable Ministry of Health staff to quickly generate, interpret, and share data across the health system to inform CHW recruitment, deployment, and training.

For the **Rwanda Ingobyi project**, we designed an eLearning platform for CHWs to continually refresh their skills in managing childhood illnesses, maternal and newborn health, and malaria. The platform, owned and managed by the Ministry of Health, features interactive audio-visual content in online/offline versions for CHWs to access anytime, anyplace. Used in parallel with in-person mentorship and supportive supervision, this eLearning has helped CHWs stay up to date on new practices and retain their knowledge.

In partnership with Novartis Foundation, our innovative **CARDIO4Cities Accelerator** model aims to strengthen CHWs' skills to combat cardiovascular disease, the world's leading cause of death, in 30 major cities. Through in-person and online training, CARDIO4Cities will coach health workers at all levels, including CHWs, to identify risk signs of hypertension and counsel community members in heart healthy behaviors, including routine exercise and healthy eating.

### Strengthening Community-to-Facility Referral Pathways

As part of the **South Sudan Advancing HIV & AIDS Epidemic Control (AHEC) Activity**, IntraHealth engages community outreach volunteers and peer navigators who are HIV-positive to share their experiences and encourage peers to test and

know their HIV status, adhere to antiretroviral therapy, and visit health facilities regularly to attain viral load suppression. Through community volunteers' tracing efforts that include escorted referrals to facilities, we are continuing to ensure that treatment initiation rates remain above the 95% benchmark.

**“Community outreach has helped us reach many people, including men, who have then been diagnosed with HIV and linked to antiretroviral therapy,”** said Rose (not her real name), a community outreach volunteer for AHEC. **“I’m happy because IntraHealth, through the AHEC project, has given us a second chance to live.”**

Through the **HIV Care and Treatment Project in Central America**, we engage community peers and community organizations to enroll and retain people living with HIV on treatment. In the first year of the project, community liaisons reengaged 1,841 (39%) HIV patients lost to follow-up, and adherence promoters provided counseling, with 83% of their clients reaching viral suppression. During COVID-19 shutdowns and hurricanes, we trained community liaisons to use surveillance tools and **alerTAR**, a mobile phone tool that sends text reminders, to identify and reach HIV clients who missed appointments and connect them to services at facilities.

For the **Integrated Service Delivery – Healthy Behaviors Project (Neema) in Senegal**, IntraHealth used the **Enhanced Peer Outreach Approach (EPOA)** to improve HIV case finding among men who have sex with men and female sex workers, leading to a doubling in HIV testing yield from 12% to 24% over five quarters. Peer mentors linked clients to treatment, offered counseling, and helped them tackle health or personal emergencies in a confidential manner.

### **Engaging Communities to Improve Health Care Quality**

On the **Rwanda Ingobyi project**, IntraHealth and partner World Vision used the **Patient Voice Program–Citizen Voice and Action (PVP-CVA) model** to engage citizens, service providers, and local governments to address health service

quality gaps. PVP-CVA community advocacy led to the construction of a new maternity ward at the Gashaki Health Center, where the average quality score for maternity services rose from 81% in 2021 to 100% in 2023.

Through the **INSPIRE project in West Africa**, we collaborate with health ministries and village leaders to improve access to quality, integrated maternal and child health and nutrition services at the community level. In Burkina Faso, we established the country's first two community health posts and worked with community groups to make sure the posts are staffed with respected and motivated CHWs who are trained to deliver high-quality essential services and refer clients to higher levels of care as needed.

**“The health post is the first contact with the community,”** says Kiendrébéogo Patindé, head of the Lo-Longo health post. **“It offers preventive, promotional, curative, and supportive care. And the training we received has equipped us to better care for children and better understand and prevent health problems.”**

### **Leveraging Behavioral Science to Drive Community Uptake**

As part of the **Scale-Up and Capacity Building in Behavioral Science to Improve the Uptake of Family Planning and Reproductive Health Services (SupCap)** intervention in Eastern Uganda, IntraHealth and partner ideas42 developed an interactive game—**Together We Decide**—for male partners of postpartum women to learn about child spacing and contraception. This game reshaped men's understanding of the risks and benefits of modern contraception, prompted open conversations with partners, and encouraged comprehensive counseling at facilities, resulting in a 61.5% increase in postpartum family planning uptake in 27 facilities from 2020-2022.

*Through our leadership of the **Frontline Health Workers Coalition** we are advocating for countries and donors to invest in CHWs, integrate them into national health systems, ensure safe and decent work, and pay them fairly.*

## **CONTACT**

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