

Leveraging Health and Cultural System Interface to Break Socio-Cultural Barriers to Health Services

Author: Audrine Mikhala

Co-author: Dr. Catherine Mesianto

Affiliation: Centre For Behaviour Change and Communication

Theme: Integrated behavioral science and local knowledge

Topic: The 'LOIP LOLPAYANI' Leadership Model of Samburu, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

Samburu County experiences low uptake of health services, including family planning and reproductive maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (FP/RMNCAH), primarily due to socio-cultural and gender norms.

A County-wide landmark declaration presided by President Uhuru Kenyatta and top 40 Samburu clan elders of Samburu made to end female genital utilization, child and forced marriages.

This initiative contributed to improved health outcomes where over **34,280** women had improved access to skilled delivery services and over **146,885** individuals accessed voluntary family planning services.

CONCLUSION

Empowering traditional leaders bridges cultural and formal health systems promoting sustainable scale-up of FP/RMNCAH, WASH, and Nutrition services.

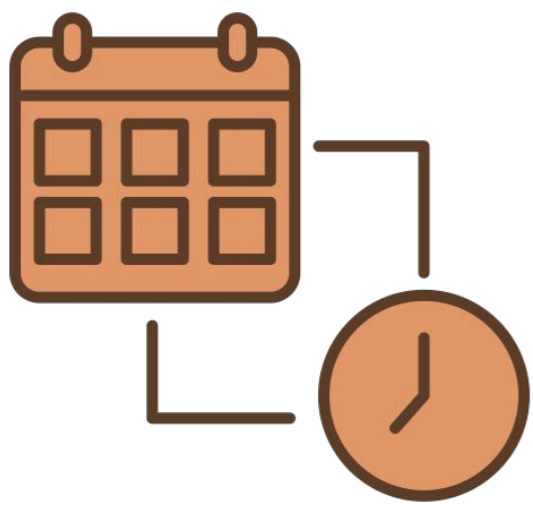
METHODS



USAID AFYA TIMIZA 'LOIPI LO LPAYANI' (*tree of men) traditional leadership model which leveraged respected cultural leadership to address socio-cultural and gender norms, enhance male engagement, and bridge the gap between community and formal health systems.



Engagement of Samburu Council of Elders, clan elders, and age set leaders **to address overlapping individual, social, and environmental influences** beyond individual behaviour change.



The approach entailed advocacy, joint planning between formal and informal systems, capacity building, identifying champions, ward-level sensitizations and social accountability.

RESULTS



2,250 elders and men **sensitized** on importance of uptake of FP/RMNCAH, WASH, and Nutrition and more so the effects of low uptake of the said services and its impact on families and community leading to clarity, understanding and unanimous endorsement.