

METS WATCH

MakSPH-METS hosts CDC Kenya on a RASS Benchmarking Visit to Uganda



CDC Kenya, CDC Uganda and the MakSPH-METS team after the debrief meeting at METS offices.

PEPFAR supported countries procure the required HIV/TB commodities, and upon arrival in the country the commodities are inventoried, segregated, stored, and distributed to intended beneficiaries. However, commodity management challenges are often faced by majority of the countries.

Kenya is one of the PEPFAR supported countries that has experienced

recurring challenges in commodity management resulting in service disruptions. The challenges include limited visibility of commodities throughout the distribution cycle and the absence of timely commodity status information. This often leads to overstocking, stockouts, and expiries. Despite Uganda facing similar challenges, the Real Time ARV Stock Status (RASS) System, developed by MakSPH-METS with

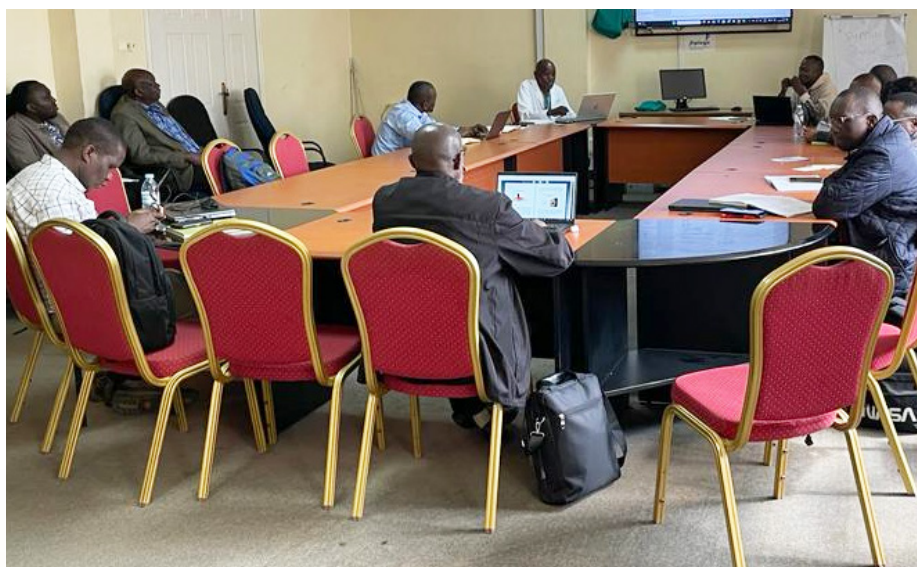
funding from CDC Uganda, serves as a potential solution to these issues. The system, in real time, can provide an update of stock status triggering decisions for redistribution, restocking and resolving expiry of the commodities in facilities.

The CDC Kenya team undertook a learning visit to Uganda to benchmark RASS on 4th to 8th September 2023, to gain insights



into Uganda's experience and explored its potential application to address commodity management challenges back home. The visiting team were able to deep dive into the development process of the system, costs involved and the possibility of designing a similar decision-making tool for Kenya. The visit included site visits to health facilities in the Rwenzori region under Baylor-Uganda as the comprehensive partner including Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital, Kyenjojo Hospital and Kataraka Health center IV. They were able to observe commodity management tools and central data repositories showcased by health workers. The METS Program of Makerere University School of Public Health (MakSPH-METS) took lead in hosting the team in collaboration with CDC Uganda, Baylor Uganda, and the Ministry of Health - Uganda.

Key lessons from the field trips included the need for Implementing Partners to prioritize routine support as well as the motivation of super users who play pivotal roles. Innovative tools like WhatsApp groups were also deemed



Debrief meeting at Baylor-Uganda, before proceeding to the health facilities

importance for enhancing reporting.

The CDC Kenya benchmarking visit underscores the potential benefits of adopting a real-time patient/commodity visibility system like Uganda's RASS. The visit also served as a foundation for future collaboration and improvements in the healthcare commodity management system in Kenya. In addition, the visit aided valuable

exchange of knowledge and experiences between the Kenya and Uganda teams.

As a next step, MakSPH-METS will enhance the functionality and dynamic nature of the RASS dashboard using PowerBI dashboard which is more functional and dynamic as well as continued mentoring and provision of support to end users.

ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

- CDC Kenya initiated the visit and identified specific areas of interest.
- METS presented an overview of the RASS system.
- A discussion on RASS and a visit to Baylor Uganda offices.
- The team visited healthcare facilities, including Fort Portal RRH, Kyenjojo Hospital and Kataraka HC IV, to observe commodity management tools.
- A super user at Kataraka HC IV showcased her energetic and enthusiastic approach.
- The team also visited the Kyenjojo District Health Office and the Fort Portal City Health Office for courtesy calls and interface feedback.
- A debrief session and expression of gratitude and fostering future learning visits.

Quality Improvement at Regional Referral Hospital

The Ministry of Health (MoH) encourages strengthening Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) as an approach known to bring about positive change in the sector. Through the National QI Framework and Strategic Plan (NQIF&SP), MoH has decentralized leadership to the Regional Referral Hospitals (RRHs) in partnership with regional health implementing partners who provide technical and financial support.

MakSPH-METS continues to coordinate and support seven regions and 10 Implementing Partners through strong engagement and capacity building. To strengthen the bond with regional QI teams, METS coordinates bi-weekly learning and coordination meetings. The bi-weekly meetings specifically facilitate inter-regional learning, documentation and

adoption of high yielding practices while providing a platform for capacity building for implementation and follow-up on quality improvement activities. These efforts consequently track regional progress for timely intervention.

The bi-weekly learning meetings are held virtually, and participants include the RRH teams and IPs, MoH, METS, CDC. Regional QI leads from the implementing partners spear head presentations, working closely with focal persons, RRH QI officers and districts.

The focus of the meetings is on functionality of the QI structures and implementation progress for the ongoing QI activities, and this involves identification of areas of limited skills and slow progress. Areas for capacity building are identified during support supervision and

onsite mentorship visits. Subject matter experts are then assigned to facilitate discussions that allow for developing the capacity of QI teams. Sharing of ideas and documenting best practices form key sessions in the meetings. Participants are encouraged to present these ideas in the form of abstracts. Progress to date is evidenced by the 115 abstracts submitted for the upcoming 10th national QI conference slated for November 2023.

Going forward, we expect increased capacity of the regional teams to initiate and implement QI projects and document changes, with high yielding practices identified timely for adoption and scale up as well as improved coordination and collaboration of QI stakeholders.

Quotes from beneficiaries

“ The meetings are very informative; the biweekly frequency is okay and the interactions from the other IPs offer a platform for learning best practices from other regions
Eric Okolimong (IDI) ”

“ The meetings are good, and they keep me up to date, it has been a great learning platform for CQI and the database. I like the knowledge sharing from IPs and RRHs through the weekly presentations. Let’s have some physical meetings occasionally and bring top managers on board.
Azaria Kanyamibwa (UPS) ”

“ ‘Meetings are useful to share learnings and discuss prevailing issues and they are participatory. It would help to involve technical leads at CDC/ MOH level to improve ownership of processes that QI teams are working on
Dr. Andrew Ndawula (Baylor Uganda) ”

“ The meetings have been good and have helped improve coordination, sharing updates and ensuring teams are supported where they need help. There was a lot of learning that took place. There was also opportunity to raise challenges.
David Okello (RHSP) ”

PEPFAR Q3 Data Review Meeting

In a bid to enhance the effectiveness of PEPFAR reporting and review progress against the UN goals and national commitments, the PEPFAR Data Review meeting for the April – June

2023 quarter convened at the Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala. The meeting, which took place on 5th September, brought together more than 125 participants (plus 45 online), representing key

stakeholders from the Ministry of Health-AIDS Control Program (MOH-ACP), PEPFAR Coordination Office, US Government Agencies, and various implementing partners.



Some of the participants at the meeting

The primary goal of this quarterly review was to evaluate performance over the previous quarter and provide a platform for discussion and future planning.

The event kicked off with insightful

presentations, including Dr. Wilford Kirungi from MOH-ACP, who shared the National HIV performance. MAKSPH-METS then highlighted PEPFAR's contribution to these results. Throughout the meeting,

participants engaged in discussions around key topics such as data quality assessments, data safety and security, and strategies for achieving the 95-95-95 UN goals.

Key takeaways from the meeting included:

1. The need to increase HIV services coverage to reduce new infections and mortality rates and strive to meet established targets for epidemic control.
2. Identification and scaling up of priority interventions is essential for achieving the triple 95 UN goals.
3. The need for advocacy to secure additional funding from the Government of Uganda
4. Strict adherence to data safety and security guidelines is critical to protect sensitive information.
5. Unexplained losses or gains in HIV care and treatment prompting the need for further investigation.
6. Collaboration with civil society organizations was highlighted to bridge existing gaps in HIV prevention and treatment efforts.
7. Beyond improving data quality, Data Quality Assessments (DQAs) were recommended for improving program-related issues and post-DQA follow-ups were encouraged.
8. While results appeared promising for treatment; HIV prevention remains a challenge. Focus on the 15-24 age group was emphasized to increase chances of attaining epidemic control.

The meeting served as a platform for strategizing, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among key stakeholders, setting the stage for continued efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Uganda.

Gallery



The in-person Review of the Health Information Exchange Guidelines and Health Data Protection and Confidentiality Guidelines at Kabira Country Club, Kampala held on 11-15 September 2023



Dr. Simon Muhumuza presented results from the inter-agency Data Quality Assessments (DQAs) during the PEPFAR performance review meeting for the April-June 2023 period. The meeting was a platform to discuss Quarter 3 results, identify challenges that affect performance, and discuss possible solutions for improvement.



Post-GBV DQA feedback meeting at Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital validating facility data for October 2022 to March 2023





Naseef Mayanja demonstrating the UgandaEMR integration with ART Access to the IDI team on 14th September 2023. ART Access is currently used by community pharmacies for ARV drug refills.



The team enjoys a light moment during the staff retreat with a focus on ethics training and review of the METS Strategic Plan on 8th September 2023



METSWATCH
EDITORIAL TEAM

Nancy Karunganwa
Dr. Alice Namale
Herbert Mulira
Naseef Mayanja
Dr. Flavia Nakanwagi
Wilfred Simba Soyekwo
Evelyn Akello