

SUPPORT FOR AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE



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Support for awareness campaigns on Antimicrobial Resistance

By Mirza Alas

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are crucial in mobilising local action to address Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and provide health promotion strategies closer to the community. Recognising this, the South Centre continuously supports grass root and context-specific efforts in developing countries on raising awareness on the threat of rising resistance to medicines that is making it harder to treat infections.

The World AMR Awareness Week (WAAW) is held annually to increase global awareness and understanding of AMR. The theme for the 2023 WAAW campaign was "Preventing Antimicrobial Resistance Together," which took place from November 18 to 24.

To support WAAW 2023, the South Centre offered small grants to eleven CSOs to design and launch awareness and education campaigns on AMR, with financial support from the Fleming Fund. The selected organisations represent youth, women, healthcare workers, veterinarians, and students:

1. **Africa Public Health Student Network Initiative**
2. **Aga Khan Health Service, Tanzania (AKHST)**
3. **Alliance for Sustainable Livestock, Nigeria**
4. **Alliance Against Antimicrobial Resistance (Triple-A), Nigeria**
5. **Actions des Jeunes contre la Résistance aux Antimicrobiens (AJRAM) (Youth Action Against Antimicrobial Resistance), Burkina Faso**
6. **AMR Alliance Rwanda**
7. **Centre For Women and Youth Empowerment (CEWAYE), Uganda**
8. **MUSUHUM (Mouvement Universel pour la Survie de l'Humanité), Benin**
9. **Roll Back Antimicrobial Resistance Initiative (RBA Initiative), Tanzania**
10. **Solving Resistance, Kenya**
11. **Youth Against Antimicrobial Resistance (YAAR), Uganda**

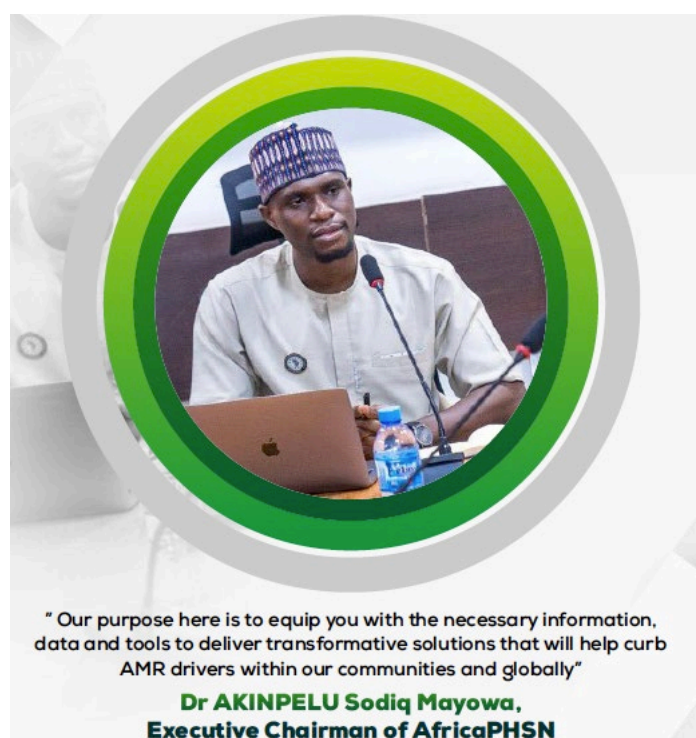
Below is a summary of all the different campaigns.

1. Africa Public Health Student Network Initiative

In January 2024, the Africa Public Health Network Initiative held its first in-person Africa Public Health Students Summit (PHSSAfrica). The youth-led summit on public health was organised by a consortium of the Africa Public Health Network Initiative, International Pharmaceutical Students Federation – African Regional Office (AfRO), International Veterinary Students Association, Roll Back Antimicrobial Resistance Initiative, Federation of African Medical Students Association, Students Against Superbugs Africa, and Alliance Against Antimicrobial Resistance. The summit had the participation of youth from across Africa physically at AMREF International University in Nairobi, Kenya and virtually through the Zoom online platform. The summit had a registration of 620 youth (virtual and in person) and highlighted the need to include the African youth population in implementing the national action plans on AMR.

The theme for the summit was “Primary Healthcare and Antimicrobial Resistance: Sustainable Solutions Through Youth Participation.” It featured speakers from the World Health

Organization, Africa Center for Disease Control and Prevention, ReAct Africa, Global Antibiotics Research and Development Partnership, United Nations Environment Programme, Ducit Blue Foundation and Federal Ministry of Health Kenya. A crucial document titled "Youth for a Resilient Future: Policy Strategies to Tackle AMR in Africa" was adopted at the summit. This document serves as a significant call to action by the youth-led consortium, and it has the potential to serve as a blueprint for harnessing the power of Africa's youth to safeguard the continent's health, well-being, and prosperity in the face of the persistent threat of AMR.



2. Aga Khan Health Service, Tanzania (AKHST)

Aga Khan Hospital, located in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, has a robust antimicrobial stewardship program established in 2016 to ensure the rational use of antibiotics. The program comprises a multi-disciplinary team of doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and microbiologists. Aga Khan Hospital organised a World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Symposium to raise awareness among healthcare workers about AMR, its impact, and measures to combat it. The symposium brought together experts, researchers, policymakers, healthcare professionals, and the public to create a platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and collaboration to combat the critical issue of antimicrobial resistance.

The symposium included presentations by experts, simulation activities, panel discussions, and the sharing of experiences of health care professionals. It included representatives of the human, animal and environmental sectors. The symposium highlighted, in particular, the importance of infection prevention and control programs in healthcare settings. This session, in particular, focused on the significance of hand hygiene and its role in reducing healthcare-associated infections. The essential elements of infection prevention and control programs were highlighted, emphasising hand hygiene and monitoring hospital-acquired infections to develop early detection and prompt intervention. Discussions also included standard and transmission-

based precautions: adopting standard and transmission-based precautions helps prevent the transmission of infections. Another critical topic of discussion included the issue of waste management. Current waste management practices were analysed, and better management practices were discussed to minimise the infection risk.

The symposium was attended by 91 in-person attendees, and more than 100 attended virtually. Attendees came from both public and private institutions and urban and semi-urban areas. One of the key takeaways of the symposium was the commitment of the hospital management team to the inclusion of Aga Khan Hospital as the first private hospital in the national AMR/AMS (Antimicrobial Stewardship) surveillance programs and technical working groups. The Aga Khan Hospital also committed to working with the government and development partners on the observed gaps regarding knowledge and prevention of AMR that were pointed out during the symposium interactive session.



Photo by Aga Khan Hospital

3. Alliance for Sustainable Livestock, Nigeria

The primary aim of the 2023 campaign was to create awareness about AMR among livestock farmers and provide education on what they can do to prevent the spread of AMR using best practices. A stakeholder map of engagement was carried out to identify key partners, including community animal health workers (CAHWs), livestock market leaders, Kaduna State Livestock Regulation Authority (KADLRA), and community leaders. To engage the relevant stakeholders and help build a shared understanding of the importance of the campaign, a meeting with stakeholders was conducted in which the Alliance for Sustainable Livestock presented the campaign objectives and the expected impact on the community. Graphic materials were developed for the campaign that included critical information about the prevention of AMR in animals and humans, and radio jingles were also developed that were aired throughout the week of the campaign in English and Hausa to spread more awareness. The radio jingles carried information about AMR, its causes, how farmers contribute, and how to prevent AMR. The radio jingles aired across three radio stations, twice daily during the news hour. This was because the News Hour had one of the highest average listeners on the radio. The metrics showed that the radios had an average of 100,000 listeners during this program.

Alliance for Sustainable Livestock also developed a training manual on AMR awareness for Community Animal Health Workers (CAHWs), and a sensitisation campaign was also carried out for 18 CAHWs in Kaduna State. The CAHWs then returned to their various communities and carried out the campaign. The CAHWs were given the campaign toolkit containing flyers (in Hausa and English), posters (in Hausa and English), shirts, and caps, and given timelines to engage relevant stakeholders, mobilise, and carry out the campaign in their communities. The CAHWs were involved with community leaders to reach more farmers; the community engaged the town criers to inform the community of the upcoming campaign. The target locations for the community campaigns were village centres, community school fields, farmers markets, mosques, and community leaders' compounds. The campaign was held from 21st to 24th November 2023 across the 18 communities.

Alliance for Sustainable Livestock organised market road walks and door-to-door campaigns in the Kaduna metropolis, targeting three livestock market locations: the live chicken market, the cattle market, and the veterinary drug market. These markets are popular among livestock farmers and veterinary medicine merchants. The campaign aimed to collect data on livestock farmers' practices regarding vaccination and the use of professional services for animal healthcare delivery. It was discovered that all 1,177 livestock farmers surveyed used antibiotics. However, only 62% (733) of them vaccinated their animals, while the remaining 38% (444) did not vaccinate their animals. It was also found that most farmers who vaccinated their animals used animal healthcare service providers. In contrast, the farmers who did not vaccinate their animals did not use animal healthcare service providers and instead treated their animals themselves.

Awareness campaign at farmers' markets



Photo by Alliance for Sustainable Livestock

4. Alliance Against Antimicrobial Resistance (Triple-A), Nigeria

The WAAW 2023 campaign served as an opportunity to harness and expand the potential, expertise, energy and ideas of youths in Nigeria to address AMR. The capacity of Nigerian youths was built to bridge the gap in AMR awareness by developing, implementing, and evaluating unique youth-led/driven AMR advocacy campaigns. Building on their more

significant “Meet the Public Where They Are” initiative, they have successfully developed a one-page infographic containing evidence-based AMR messages in 53 local languages.

First, 15 young people from 15 different states in Nigeria were invited to tailor-made capacity-building sessions to equip them with the knowledge, skills, resources, and guidance necessary to take action in their communities. The sessions included Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), Infection Prevention, and Control (IPC), Community and Stakeholder Engagement, and Monitoring and Evaluation. They also extended the sessions to all 150 youth volunteers who had been part of previous projects. The invited youths were from diverse backgrounds, including healthcare students, media and communications, youth service corps members, etc. After the capacity-building sessions, they were given the “community-in-a-box” pack, which consisted of translated infographics, cardboards, placards, a mini-projector, and a screen. They were required to use the “pack” to organise a unique AMR advocacy campaign during the WAAW.

The campaign of AMR Champions at Abuja, Kwara, Gombe and Jigawa involved various activities (workshops, quizzes, debates, etc) at a secondary school in their respective state/locality. They submitted a request for permission to carry out such AMR activity in the school. The AMR campaign in Ogun state involved colleges of nursing. The project at Kwara state also involved a radio awareness campaign program. Campaigns in Rivers, Zamfara, Borno, Plateau, Anambra, Edo, and Akwa-Ibom conducted a market sensitisation on AMR in their respective state/locality. The AMR Champion organised a pre-workshop for the team and sought approval from the market leaders as necessary.

In Lagos state, the AMR Champion planned an AMR awareness program at the primary health care centre and the National Youth Service Corps centre near each other. In addition, AMR Champions at Jigawa and Borno states conducted an awareness campaign using “Keke Napep” riders (tricycle riders) in each state. This was initiated by first contacting the Chairman of the Keke Napep Riders Association to discuss the purpose and aim of the campaign to facilitate a seamless implementation. Volunteers were trained to conduct a mini-workshop for the keke riders before using their tricycles for the campaign.

Lastly, AMR Champions at Kano and Anambra states conducted awareness campaigns at religious institutions.

Information on the campaign “Meet the Public Where They Are”



5. Actions des Jeunes contre la Résistance aux Antimicrobiens (AJRAM) (Youth Action Against Antimicrobial Resistance), Burkina Faso

Founded in 2021 in Burkina Faso, Action des Jeunes contre la Résistance aux Antimicrobiens (AJRAM) aimed to mobilise youth to tackle AMR as a critical public health problem. The 2023 AJRAM campaign focused on children and young people as the primary target audience, but it also set up communication messages for the public and engaged farmers.

The first activity was to organise educational talks in four schools across two towns for 400 young pupils aged 5 to 18 on AMR. These talks allowed students and teachers to exchange ideas and knowledge. The educational program focused on infection prevention through good hygiene practices and the rational use of antibiotics. Additionally, AJRAM also worked on organising four health clubs in the schools. Round table discussions were held with young people and health experts to discuss AMR. These forums enabled participants to ask questions from specialists and increase their knowledge on the subject.

The second activity involved organising a digital campaign called ‘7 Days of Activism’ against AMR. During the campaign, messages were broadcast on social networks to raise awareness of AMR. Key messages were developed for the campaign and disseminated on social networks. Seven personalities were also identified and agreed to add their voice to the digital campaign and send messages for publication regarding actions on AMR. Traditional media was also used to disseminate key awareness messages, including two popular TV channels in Burkina Faso. The digital campaign on social networks reached more than 650.000 people. One of the TV channels also agreed to report on a round table that AJRAM organised in

Ouagadougou with young people. During the event, a doctor, a pharmacist, and a veterinary surgeon participated and delivered vital messages. Given the large audience reached by the TV channel, it is possible that up to 1 million people could have tuned in to the program.

AJRAM also carried awareness campaigns among livestock farmers at the Tanghin and Kiln livestock markets in Ouagadougou. During the campaigns, issues about the link between the use of antimicrobials in animals and resistance in humans were discussed. One of the recommendations of this exchange was to increase the reach of more farmers and extend information to butchers and abattoirs. A second important recommendation was the need for farmers to use alternatives to reduce their reliance on antibiotics.

Education campaign in Medina School



Photos by AJRAM

6. AMR Alliance Rwanda

From November 18 to 24, the AMR Alliance carried out a comprehensive public awareness campaign. The campaign included a range of strategies, such as radio talks, educational materials, and social media. As a part of this effort, the AMR Alliance collaborated with more than five local radio stations, including Radio Salus, Radio Imanzi, and Radio10. During these broadcasts, the experts discussed the importance of responsible use of antibiotics and the threat of AMR. They encouraged listeners to adopt safe practices that can help mitigate the risks associated with AMR. The organisation also developed appealing brochures, posters, and infographics, tailoring the materials to convey the significance of antibiotics and the consequences of AMR and shared these materials through various social media platforms to reach an online audience. This approach allowed sharing of engaging content, including graphics and twibbons that reached a large audience and allowed for multiple interactions through comments, shares, and likes.

The AMR Alliance also organised a day-long training program for healthcare, environmental health, and veterinary professionals—the training aimed to educate them on how to contain AMR, focusing on the One Health approach. Additionally, the Alliance collaborated with other organisations to conduct community outreach events where they shared information about AMR. The dissemination of information took into account the demographics of the target groups so that the materials could be customised accordingly.

The events provided valuable lessons to consider for improving further campaigns, including the need to continue leveraging digital platforms to share relevant and up-to-date information and engaging with community members in the planning and developing interventions to ensure the information is appropriate. The training of professionals was also noted as a critical aspect, and therefore, collaboration with educational institutions was seen as a crucial aspect that needs to be built further. Also, the training emphasised the need to promote local research on AMR and to foster international collaboration to expand knowledge and learn from best practices.

Community Outreach Event



Photo by AMR Alliance Rwanda

7. Centre For Women and Youth Empowerment (CEWAYE)

The Centre for Women and Youth Empowerment in Uganda carried out a campaign to raise awareness about the dangers of AMR and to provide training on infection prevention and control. The campaign occurred in 7 health centres in the Mbarara district and aimed at nurses, midwives, and pharmacy technicians. Around 400 healthcare workers were trained as a part of this campaign.

CEWAYE was involved in setting up AMR stewardship clubs in 7 lower health centres of the Mbarara district. These clubs will serve as platforms to prevent AMR by ensuring infection prevention measures and monitoring antibiotic use at a health facility. Additionally, CEWAYE designed, printed and distributed 1000 information, education, and communication (IEC) materials focused on AMR and its preventive measures. Before using the designed training materials, CEWAYE validated them with healthcare workers to ensure they were fit for purpose. These materials will be utilised in health centres and other public places to inform the trained health workers and visitors continuously.

The training and education campaign increased knowledge of AMR, infection prevention and control measures and antimicrobial use among 412 community health workers in 7 health centres of Mbarara district and neighbouring districts. This has equipped health workers to

ensure infection prevention measures, prescribe antibiotics only when needed, and extend the knowledge learned to other health workers and patients they attend to. During the training, a survey was carried out, with 66% of the respondents reporting that they often prescribe antimicrobials without conducting a diagnostic test due to pressure from patients. This was reported in private clinics, retail pharmacies and dispensaries/drug shops. It was also identified that some of the drivers of AMR in lower-level health facilities include unnecessary prescription of antibiotics, limited knowledge of AMR prevention among health workers and community members, lack of diagnostics for microorganisms before antimicrobial treatments, pressure from patients, poor clinical waste management and lack of functional policies on stewardship of antibiotics. During the training, it was also identified that to prevent the unnecessary use of antibiotics, lower-level health facilities need to be equipped with diagnostic tools to improve their ability to diagnose infections. Furthermore, there is still a significant need for comprehensive training in AMR prevention for health workers such as nurses, pharmacy technicians, laboratory technicians, and midwives since they are closer to the patients than other health workers.

Community health workers were championing AMR prevention in southwestern Uganda.



Photo by CEWAYE

8. MUSUHUM (Mouvement Universel pour la Survie de l'Humanité), Benin

MUSUHUM carried out a wide-ranging campaign during the World Antimicrobial AMR Week 2023. Apart from their usual activities for WAAW, such as creating awareness campaigns in primary schools, this year, MUSUHUM adopted a more comprehensive approach. This included a Symposium on AMR, a dedicated training session, and the distribution of educational materials emphasising advocacy. The campaign in primary school included 20 primary and secondary schools (1000 students). After the sensitisation sessions, bottles of liquid soap (1500 litres) were given to encourage hand hygiene and infection prevention. The educational posters were pasted in classrooms and schoolyards.

The Symposium and Dedicated Training Session was held on 24th November 2023 and served as a pivotal event, uniting experts, researchers, policymakers, healthcare professionals, and students. The overarching objective was to raise awareness about AMR, its implications, and collaborative measures to combat this critical issue. The Symposium provided a dynamic

platform for dialogue and knowledge sharing, fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders. The simultaneous training session aimed to empower 50 students pursuing degrees in public health, microbiology, medicine, and pharmacy, equipping them with specialised knowledge to contribute effectively to tackling AMR. Concurrent with the Symposium and Training Session, MUSUHUM designed and distributed educational materials. These materials served a dual purpose – facilitating knowledge transfer during the event and advocating for the incorporation of AMR and One Health topics into academic curricula.

The campaign's success was amplified by collaboration with diverse organisations and institutions (national public health schools, medicine schools and teaching hospitals). MUSUHUM's efforts to enhance cooperation further emphasise the need for a collective approach in addressing AMR. Moving forward, continued collaboration with relevant stakeholders is paramount for sustained impact.

One Health symposium on AMR



Photo by MUSUHUM

9. Roll Back Antimicrobial Resistance Initiative (RBA Initiative), Tanzania

This year, the RBA Initiative expanded its reach to a broader population through the ‘Dalala bus campaign’. RBA designed visually appealing advertisements that could capture attention and communicate essential AMR-related messages. The messages illustrated the causes and risks of AMR and preventive measures. These visual aids were incorporated into the posters and presentation slides for training the bus drivers and conductors. Including the local demographics of the bus routes and designing advertisements in multiple languages was a key consideration in designing the materials. Both Kiswahili and English languages were used throughout the campaign.

The campaign wanted to use a more interactive methodology whereby bus passengers were briefed about AMR. Then throughout the trip, they were free to ask questions and give their opinions on issues that drive AMR and provide the community solutions that can mitigate this public health issue. Additionally, interactive displays and QR codes directed the passengers to additional AMR-related resources, educational videos and AMR projects conducted by the RBA Initiative. Further, the “Daladala” campaign was also featured through social media. This approach amplified the reach of the AMR messages by encouraging passengers to participate and spread awareness through their social networks.

The RBA Initiative team prepared and designed AMR awareness materials. These involved flyers, T-shirts with AMR messages, posters and adverts with AMR messages and banners. These were prepared in alignment with the local context, WAAW 2023 Quadripartite (WHO, UNEP, FAO and WOA) campaign guidance and the Tanzania AMR communication strategy.

The RBA-Initiative carried out training for 30 bus “Daladala” drivers. The training was conducted to educate the drivers about the general concept of AMR. They were then encouraged to disseminate the messages and act as ambassadors to share the AMR messages, distribute AMR flyers, and sensitise the community about AMR. After the training sessions were completed, posters with AMR messages were added to two strategic bus stations, and permission was obtained from the appropriate authorities to display AMR posters on the back of 60 buses. These visually engaging posters were powerful tools to raise awareness about AMR and promote responsible antimicrobial use.

The RBA Initiative also organised an AMR Dialogue in Manyoni and Dodoma town. The objective was to empower community members with knowledge about AMR and encourage them to advocate for responsible antimicrobial use, thereby stimulating AMR discussions within their communities. The AMR Dialogue sessions incorporated interactive talks and visual presentations. The sessions covered a wide range of topics related to AMR, including the causes and consequences of misuse and overuse of antibiotics, the importance of proper prescription and adherence to treatment and the role of individuals in tackling AMR. Passengers who attended the dialogue sessions were encouraged to share their experiences, ask questions, and voice their concerns related to AMR.

The “daladala” campaign has significantly impacted addressing AMR by spreading awareness and promoting responsible antimicrobial use. The strategic placement of AMR messages on buses (“daladala”) has provided a platform to reach a large and diverse audience. As people commute and travel on these buses, they are exposed to messages about the risks of AMR and the importance of using antimicrobials prudently. Furthermore, the “daladala” (bus) campaign has sparked community conversations and discussions. The messages on the buses have served as conversation starters, prompting passengers and onlookers to reflect on their behaviours and practices regarding antibiotics. The drivers also distributed over 2500 flyers to community members. The campaign's key messages were “Seek and follow the advice of healthcare providers before using medicines” and “AMR happens when microorganisms develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them/stop their growth.”

“DALADALA” (Buses) Campaign 2023



Photo by RBA Initiative

10. Solving Resistance, Kenya

Solving Resistance is an initiative led by undergraduate Pharmacy students from the University of Nairobi. This initiative aimed to raise awareness about AMR. In 2023, they focused their AMR awareness campaign on high school students of one of the poor neighbourhood areas in Nairobi as they believed this group could help spread awareness amongst their peers and relatives. Solving Resistance conducted pre-visits to the area in Nairobi where they would focus their education, health promotion and awareness campaign. These pre-visits allowed them to secure a location and ensure that the volunteers knew the access routes to the area. In preparation for the campaign, they designed and printed posters and brochures. They also determined the locations for five washing stations to be donated.

On Tuesday, 21st November, Solving Resistance held an online training for volunteers to sensitise them on the order of events of the program, what to expect during the outreach, how to execute their activities and to address any questions or concerns that the volunteers had regarding the outreach. The volunteers included students from both Health Science courses, such as Pharmacy and Medicine and students from the Veterinary School who were critical for enabling to utilise aspects of the One Health Approach during the sessions. The volunteers were divided into eight groups, six of which were engaged with the community directly, and two groups were involved in the education sessions with teenagers at the Mathare Special Training Institute. The discussions at the Mathare Special Training Institute were engaging and effective, and the volunteers were able to steer the discussion appropriately amongst the groups while also being able to answer any questions the participants had regarding AMR.

The washing stations were donated to specific institutes and businesses frequented by many people in the community, and the community can easily access them. Hand-washing soap was also provided, and one of the local elders agreed with the county government water suppliers who would facilitate water refilling in these water stations. Having the water stations placed in locations that are near the water distribution point also makes it easier for the water stations to be constantly refilled. The purpose of the water and soap distribution stations was to encourage hand washing as an infection prevention strategy in the community. A WhatsApp group with community members was also created to provide regular updates and information on AMR.

Solving Resistance team with the water stations



Photo by Solving Resistance

11. Youth Against Antimicrobial Resistance (YAAR), Uganda

YAAR Uganda is an association comprising young professionals and students from diverse fields. It organised activities for WAAW 2023 to raise awareness about AMR. In preparation for WAAW 2023, the YAAR team developed campaign materials such as Continuous Medical Education series (CMEs), posters, field report templates, and participant lists.

Awareness campaigns on AMR were conducted at Mukono General Hospital, Kairos, and the Medical Access Clinic. Additionally, three CMEs were held at these hospitals, educating 300 community health workers on AMR, IPC, and AMS. Antimicrobial stewardship clubs were established in the three hospitals within Mukono District, serving as platforms for impact assessment, AMR prevention, and monitoring antibiotic usage in healthcare facilities. To bolster infection prevention, three hand-washing facilities were provided to Mukono General, Kairos, and Medical Access facilities.

Before the WAAW celebrations, YAAR engaged the hospital administration and staff. During the week, YAAR engaged with 231 patients and 57 health workers at the outpatient department (OPD), providing them with health talks. Many of the patients expressed unawareness of AMR, which provided further motivation for YAAR in the need to intensify awareness efforts at Mukono General Hospital.

Dr. Kikonge Isaac, a team member, conducted a health talk focusing on Infection Prevention and Control, emphasising AMR in the local language, Luganda. He discussed the origins of AMR, its impact, and mitigation strategies, encouraging patient engagement through questions

and discussions. Public Relations officer Ms. Halima Nalugo coordinated the distribution of posters in various languages, including local dialects and English, ensuring accessibility for everyone to comprehend the messages.

Training sessions were also held at Kairos Hospital; healthcare practitioners shared their knowledge and experiences while seeking further information about IPC. It became apparent that some lacked awareness of IPC's significance in addressing global health threats like AMR. Patients were also engaged in the health talk at the OPD. Over 124 patients were unaware of Antimicrobial Resistance. The talk offered guidance on how to combat it and adhere to their treatment plans. YAAR donated a hand-washing facility to Kairos Hospital and encouraged participants to continue implementing IPC measures.

The YAAR team displaying some of the campaign materials.



Photo by YAAR

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