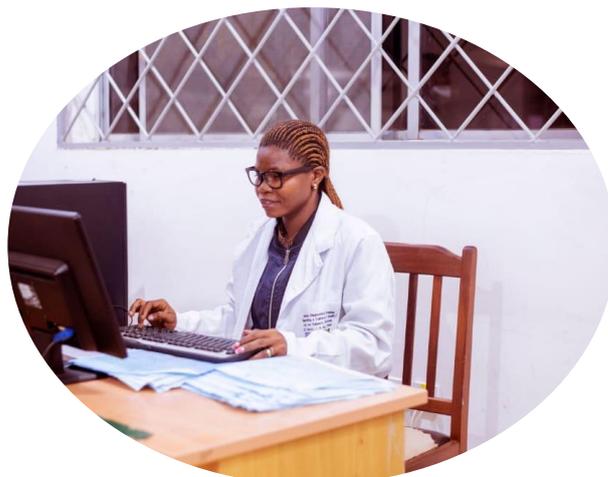


## SUCCESS STORY.

### How data management is unfolding new hope to HIV clients in Mtwara.



**Mtwara, Tanzania:** When data on HIV Viral Load (HVL) test results are available on time at the facility, clinician will always plan on proper way to decide on medication including monitoring on clinical progress.

At Ligula Regional Referral Hospital in Mtwara things were almost different for a while in the HVL testing laboratory due to shortage of data management personnel to manage documentation, distribution, and reporting of HVL testing which resulted into high turn-around time for testing results.

*“Our hospital supports viral load testing for two regions of Lindi and Mtwara. We were just four Laboratory scientists working on an average of 12 hours a day and performing about 210 viral load tests a day. We didn’t have a dedicated data clerk to support the PCR lab, as a result, documenting, reporting and distribution of viral load test data was not timely and efficient due to high workload.”* Says, Elias Maliki – Head of PCR Lab Section.

Thanks to the USAID Afya Endelevu Activity led by Benjamin Mkapa Foundation in collaboration with health facility management and USAID Boresha Afya service delivery partner, which apart from the allocated four laboratory scientists, added Fauzia Nguvu, a data clerk to support data management in the HVL testing laboratory. Fauzia work has progressively reduced turn-around time for HVL test results at supported facilities in Mtwara and Lind regions.

The Activity is working in collaboration with MOHCDGEC, PORALG and LGAs to Strengthen delivery of quality HIV, TB and reproductive, maternal, and child health services in high-disease burden areas with shortages of health workers through sustainable investments of Human Resources for

Health in Tanzania including data management staff like Fauzia Nguyu.

Re-calling the situation before the deployment of a data clerk at the laboratory, the CTC In charge Dr. Mwajuma Kimbau says management of HIV cases was difficult due to delay of viral Load tests results which in most cases delayed clinical decisions on medication and appropriate patient monitoring.

*“We were struggling to get result on time because of workload at the Lab and for clinicians it was difficult to categorize clients based on their viral load suppression level to inform planning for intensive adherence counseling planning especially for clients with high viral load above 1,000 copies which to us they needed next level of our attention.”* Says Dr. Mwajuma

Today, with presence of Fauzia, the 4 Laboratory scientists are now focused on collecting samples and testing while she performs documentations of results and packing by facilities as well as maintaining electronic records for distribution to respective facilities. The turn-around time for viral load test results to arrive at facilities has been reduced from the previous 3 months to an average of 3 weeks.

*We are happy now days, that we timely capture our clients’ conditions easily and each month we assess clients’ progress and make timely clinical decisions compared to the previous time when we’re spending almost three months waiting for viral load tests results.* Added Dr. Mwajabu

The PCR Lab at Ligula Hospital it’s not only serving Mtwara Region. Lindi have also been benefiting on their service to test the collected HIV viral loads. The tremendous change and speed of the services has been impacted their work too. The average sample

collection sent to Ligula have increases from 255 samples per months in 2019/2020 to 416 per month this year.

*We have been sending sample to Mtwara for testing. Initially, we used to spend like three months for results to come back. But now within three weeks to one month we get back results which helps us to provide earlier decision such as second line of ARVs initiation to clients who have clinical criteria.* Dr. Khamis Ajali – CTC Manager – Sokoine Regional Referral Hospital in Lindi

To date the PCR lab at Ligula Regional Referral Hospital records an approximately 315 viral load tests in a day and an average of 6,000 samples per month for both Lindi and Mtwara health facilities.

Since it started in February 2020, USAID Afya Endelevu in collaboration with GOT and USAID Boresha Afya Service Delivery Partners is currently managing a total of 1,022 HCWs across 16 regions, 585 being data management staff deployed and working on 456 HIV supported health facilities across 74 Councils in 11 Regions of Tanzania.