



## SUCCESS STORY.

### Triumphs of the newly deployed staff Amidst COVID - 19 Pandemic in Zanzibar.



**Zanzibar:** When the COVID -19 pandemic hit in Zanzibar, Makunduchi Hospital, which serves as a district Hospital in Southern Unguja, was already in a bigger challenged to conduct its routine health services due to shortage of health workforce. With only 34 (19%) available Health Care Workers out of 181 requirements, the increased flow of clients at the facility mismatches the available human resources to battle with the needs including response to COVID -19 interventions.

*“We were caught at a surprise because many clients were flowing at our facility and the fact that we are serving whole district, we had to stretch ourselves with the available staff to provide better services from 8:00am until 3:30 pm everyday as we couldn’t afford going beyond late hours due to shortage of manpower.”* Says Dr. Amour Muhsin Burhan, the Acting facility In-charge.

Until last year in September, with an average of 3,100 clients per month, the Outpatient Department (OPD) at Makunduchi was the most affected section as many clients had to wait up to 3 hours to access services. Majority of the available healthcare workers were busy providing routine health services and at the same times responding to COVID -19 interventions. With two years into the pandemic and the vaccine rollout plan picking up a pace in Zanzibar, the demand for additional health workforce increased. A USAID funded Activity Afya Endelevu, led by Benjamin Mkapa Foundation contributed to addressing this gap.

Under the emergency response to COVID-19 support, the USAID Afya Endelevu prioritized allocation of five health care workers at Makunduchi Hospital in October 2021 - two clinical officers, two nurses and one laboratory technician.

*“It was a relief for us when these five staff arrived at our facility. Now that we have additional manpower, we can manage our roster with expanded task allocation. We have decided to strengthen our OPD section by increasing more hours-of-service provision from 3:30 pm to 9:30 pm, with increased opportunity for providing integrated services, including COVID -19 education, screening, and vaccination.”* Added Dr. Amour

The Activity is working in collaboration with the Ministry of Health in Zanzibar, to accelerate national response to COVID-19 interventions through allocation and management of human resources for health in prioritized high-risk health facilities and port of entries.

Fatma Yusuf Sijamini, a Laboratory technician alongside with other 4 contracted health care workers at Makunduchi works hard to ensure equitable access to right information among clients visiting the facility on COVID-19 prevention, available vaccinations services as well as offering test for COVID-19 suspected clients.

*“Things have changed here especially the speed to access services. I come here frequently and sometime bring relatives for health services. Before it was really challenging because we used to wait up to 3 hours to see the Doctor due to high volume of clients and if you are late, you can’t get the services because they used to close earlier. If the Doctor ask you to go for testing at the Laboratory, results took longtime, and you find yourself spending more time at the facility. At least we are happy that nowadays the facility is open even at the evening hours.”* Says Mwanaharusi Kombo, a client at Makunduchi Hospital

Narrating on COVID-19 vaccination uptake, Dr. Amour says they started vaccination services in September 2021 and because they had minimal working hours and limited-services expansion, they only managed to vaccinate 69 clients in September compared to 2,861 clients vaccinated during the period of October to December 2021 which is an average of 950 clients per month following addition of five HCWs, extended working hours, improved task allocation and integrated outreach services to the nearby communities.

Under this support, Afya Endelevu allocated 100 skills-mix health professionals in prioritized six ports of entries and 36 health facilities supporting response to COVID-19 screening, testing and vaccination in both Unguja and Pemba Islands.