



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES PROMOTION: THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

ACORD (Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development) is a Pan-African non-governmental organisation that has been working for social justice and development in Africa since 1976. ACORD's work is guided by a number of fundamental values and working principles, chief amongst these is the belief that individuals are the primary actors in their own development.



WHY ACORD WORKS TO PROMOTE THE RIGHT TO HEALTH

Health is a fundamental human right and everybody deserves to live a healthy life. Poor health affects development by reducing time spent on productive work in a context where the majority is not yet covered by social protection. In Africa where small-holder and subsistence agriculture is the main source of livelihoods, health has a major effect on productivity. Epidemics such as HIV and AIDS, cholera, Ebola, and complications related to pregnancy and childbirth among others, negatively affect families as many are unable to access basic health care. Women, as primary caregivers in most cases and a major source of labour in agriculture, are particularly strongly affected. Although there have been major global improvements in health and in the fight against epidemics in the last decades with more people living healthier and longer lives, sub-Saharan Africa still faces serious disease burdens.

Effects of Poor Health on Development:

- Limiting school attendance of children and youth as a result of illness or caregiving responsibilities;
- Loss of productive labour through the diversion of time spent on care seeking and giving;
- A reduction in crop and livestock yields when labour is diverted by illness or caregiving;
- An increase in medical costs, therefore reducing the household income; and
- Changes in family diets and nutrition status as less is spent on buying nutritious foods for consumption.



HOW ACORD WORKS TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY HEALTH

ACORD's work focuses on encouraging and enabling communities to take control of their health by understanding the factors that expose them to ill health and identify ways in which to address them.

ACORD works to build communities' capacity to participate in managing their access to health by working to generate awareness and knowledge of human rights, gender and health issues within local communities, including among traditional and religious leaders. In complement, ACORD builds the capacity of rights organisations by increasing policy literacy, networking, communication and advocacy and leadership skills.

ACORD also works to change socio-cultural norms by supporting women and men to develop visions for change in gender relations, improved livelihoods and healthier lives.

ACORD's work in health focuses on the following areas:

✦ Sexual and Reproductive Health

Strengthening communities' understanding of gender inequalities affecting sexual and reproductive health and empowering women and girls to access information and make informed and independent decisions on their sexual and reproductive rights, free of coercion and violence.

✦ HIV & AIDS

Tackling the effects of HIV and AIDS on marginalised populations in Africa with a focus on preventing the further spread of HIV and AIDS in these communities by addressing both the immediate and root causes; mitigating the economic, social and psychological impacts of the epidemic on communities; promoting equal access to information, services and treatment; and addressing human rights violations by challenging all forms of discrimination and social exclusion.

✦ Water and Sanitation

ACORD supports access and availability to safe water for human and livestock consumption as well as agricultural production. We support communities to understand the benefits of clean and safe water and hygiene practices for prevention of disease outbreaks.

✦ Psychosocial and trauma healing

Working with specialized partners, ACORD supports communities and individuals exposed to physical and psychological trauma, particularly victims of conflict and violence to access services.

✦ Nutrition

Building communities' understanding of the importance of good nutritional practices, ACORD also provides direct support to populations through social safety nets programmes to fight food insecurity and malnutrition, in particular for pregnant or lactating women and young children.

ACORD'S RIGHT TO HEALTH STRATEGY 2016 - 2020

Objective: Contribute to good health and well-being and access to universal quality health services

- ACORD will support access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, in marginalized and hard to reach communities (including for refugee populations).
- ACORD will challenge stigma, discrimination, attitudes, and laws that undermine access to health services
- ACORD will support communities to improve their sustainable access to safe and affordable drinking water as well as adequate and equitable hygiene and sanitation paying special attention to the needs of women and girls.
- ACORD will take action to promote universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform of Action and advocate for the integration and adequate resourcing of reproductive health in national strategies and programmes.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHTS

Radio calls to curb maternal mortality in Ngorongoro, Tanzania

In an effort to combat clinical maternal and child mortality in remote parts of Ngorongoro District, ACORD distributed sets of radio call equipment to ease communication. Radio calls enable fast communication between dispensaries and health centres in the district, which, for the most part, is not covered with cellular phone service. The radio calls, together with other maternity ward equipment for safe-delivery, were distributed across the district during the launch of a special campaign to eradicate mother-and-child deaths and HIV/AIDS infections.

Increasing Access and Utilization of Integrated Sexual and Reproductive Health Services for Women and Adolescent Girls in Pastoralist Communities, Tanzania

The project was carried out between 2013 and 2016 with an overall aim to contribute to the reduction of maternal mortality (MDG5) and child mortality (MDG4) in pastoralist households of Ngorongoro District. The project contributed to reduced number of preventable maternal and child deaths in Ngorongoro District by facilitating increased access and utilisation of integrated sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services by women and adolescent girls in the district. Through the project, ACORD was able to generate awareness and knowledge of human rights (including sexual and reproductive health and rights) and gender issues within local communities, including among traditional and religious leaders; facilitate the provision of justice and comprehensive services for survivors of violence by strengthening referral pathways and mechanisms for recording and updating rights violations; Build the capacity of rights organisations by increasing policy literacy, networking, communication, and advocacy and leadership skills; and work to change socio-cultural norms by supporting women and men to develop visions for change in gender relations and improved livelihoods. The project resulted in an 18% increase in births attended by skilled personnel from 47% to 65% in the project area over the lifetime of the grant. The proportion of women between 15 and 49 using a modern contraceptive method also increased from 27% at baseline to 42.8% at evaluation. In addition, ACORD trained frontline health workers and traditional birth attendants (TBAs) have increased capacity to incorporate health-related data in the appropriate health management information system (HMIS) booklets and submit data up the chain to the district authorities. Most trained TBAs are correctly documenting cases referred and deliveries assisted and reporting and referral of deliveries and pregnant mothers to health facility staff has increased.

Reaching the Poorly Served (RTPS) in Tanzania

The objective of the RTPS programme was to complement district efforts to build an integrated health system that addresses the sexual and reproductive health of women and adolescent girls in Ngorongoro District. It was implemented in partnership with Ngorongoro NGOs Network (NNGONET) and developed in close consultation with the district health management team. The programme increased access to integrated sexual and reproductive health services for women and adolescent girls; reduced maternal and child mortality; reduced harmful traditional practices that have negative impact on female health; and improved access to information and services.

Promoting Safe Motherhood in Uganda

ACORD, with support from the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA), recruited six midwives who are stationed in five different health centres in the Adjumani District of Uganda. UNFPA supported ACORD to provide two beds and dignity kits for the mothers at Nyumanzi Health Centre II.

Strengthening Coordination of Support Provided for Young People Living with HIV in Uganda

Between 2013 and 2016, the project sought to contribute to the positive health, dignity and prevention of HIV re-infection among young people living with HIV by supporting them to articulate their own needs, and by strengthening the overall coordination of the support they are provided. Through direct capacity building and mentorship activities, young people's ability to advocate for policies that will ensure access to the services they need was enhanced. The project outcomes included the development of a partnership with the local partner UNYPA and the signing of a MoU, which increased opportunities of building the capacity of YPLHIV and enhance their level of participation in project implementation. Regional-level coordination meetings enabled scale-up of project activities to other stakeholders and regions, giving the project national-level coverage. Increased engagement with national and ministerial-level institutions has strengthened collaboration between the project and the institutions. This will ensure increased access to technical support and resources from these institutions.

A Social Business Solution for Access to Safe Water, Uganda

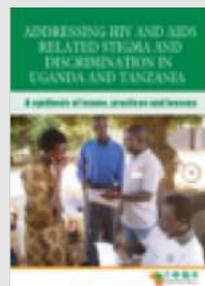
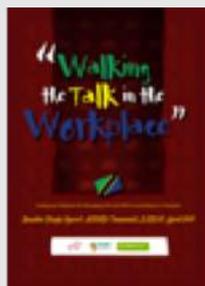
ACORD is currently (2016-2018) working toward the creation of a sustainable and replicable business model that improves access to safe drinking water at household level in the districts of Mbarara and Kiruhura in Uganda contributing to SDG6 through innovative low-cost technologies for solar water disinfection. The expected results of this project include: 1) Community members (leaders, families) and institutions at community level (primary schools) are aware of the causes and consequences of contaminated water consumption and engage in safe water practices; 2) The use of Solar water disinfection (SoDis) with WADI has become a standard procedure used in the households, local schools and health centers; and 3) A phased market entry of the WADI (a solar powered UV-measurement device that serves as an indicator for the process of solar disinfection and has been tested by World Health Organisation against guidelines for drinking water quality) at community level is successfully piloted. Thus far, ACORD had introduced WADI to 500 rural households (with funds from Bread for the World) and is partnering with HELIOZ to scale up this approach. In addition, ACORD and HELIOZ are also partnering for ACORD's ECHO funded project to distribute WADI devices in refugee settlements in southwest Uganda.



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT:

ACORD has conducted much research into the social determinants of health, as well as ways of enhancing universal health coverage, leaving no one behind, with a particular emphasis on hard to reach populations. These are being used in our advocacy and policy influencing work and are available in different languages online or upon request.

- FGM in Hadjer Lamis and Guera, Chad, 2015 (study in French)
- African women and girls at the grassroots: their say on their world post-2015, Synthesis report from citizen-driven workshops in 13 countries, 2014
- Attaining to vulnerability to HIV and AIDS in food insecure settings in Sub-Saharan Africa, a synthesis report of Ethiopia, Uganda, Burundi and Mozambique, 2013
- Walking the talk in the workplace, Tanzania and Uganda studies, 2012
- Addressing HIV and AIDS related stigma and discrimination in Uganda and Tanzania, 2008
- Implementing Stepping Stones, a practical and strategic guide for implementers, planners and policy makers, 2007



Supporting local communities affected by the Ebola virus epidemic in Guinea

At the height of the Ebola outbreak in Guinea, ACORD provided support to affected communities in the region of Forest Guinea, epicentre of the epidemic, through mass sensitization campaigning on prevention measures and safe hygiene practices, distribution of hygiene kits and referral to health services. ACORD also provided livelihood assistance to Ebola-affected families through targeted support to the development of income-generating activities.

The Power of Collective Action in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia

Building on ACORD's successful experience of working with Iddirs (the most dominant form of community based association in Ethiopia), ACORD implemented a programme in Dire Dawa to increase Iddir's capacity to provide low cost credit and basic sanitation services in slum areas, provide livelihood support to women, youth and people living with HIV and give the urban poor a space and a voice in urban planning processes. As a result of this programme ACORD and two Iddirs councils have helped women headed households to improve their livelihoods and mobilised the community to ensure their basic rights are respected.

Drama and sports as therapy for youth and children refugees in South Sudan

ACORD in Uganda in partnership with the United Nations Population Fund UNFPA work in a number of the South Sudanese refugee settlements. In Ayilo with a population of 20,000 and majority of youth, ACORD encouraged these young people to organise and participate in recreational activities through sports and drama. These activities served as a form of therapy and an avenue to pass on useful information concerning Sexual Reproductive Health and Gender Based Violence with the assistance of volunteers.

Safe Drinking Water in Mauritania and Mali

ACORD conducted different interventions aimed at improving access to drinkable water for rural populations, ensuring livestock watering, and creating secured vegetable gardens for a women's agricultural cooperatives in Mauritania and Mali. Enhanced water supply was realized through the installation of pumping stations with boreholes, and related water supply systems, construction of large-

diameter wells, and the rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructures. In Mali, ACORD also worked on the development of hygiene and sanitation facilities in households, communal areas and schools to foster the generalisation of good hygiene practices. These initiatives have contributed to better living conditions and reduction of water-related diseases for more than 12 000 people from rural districts of Mauritania and Mali.

Supporting food and nutritional safety in Mauritania

ACORD has been working for several years in partnership with the EU Humanitarian Aid Directorate-General (ECHO) and UNICEF to support vulnerable populations facing food insecurity and malnutrition during the hunger gap period in the country's south-east region. Cash transfer operations for the poorest households and nutritional supplements distribution to pregnant and lactating women and children under 59 months, coupled with screenings and sensitization on good hygiene and nutritional practices have enabled ACORD to effectively prevent malnutrition and allow for diversified food consumption of 2500 vulnerable households.

Economic recovery and strengthening of social cohesion in Ouham prefecture, Central African Republic

As part of this project, which ran in 2016, ACORD provided psychosocial support to families and individuals affected by war trauma in the Ouham prefecture of the Central African Republic. Activities included the identification of people with psychosocial trauma, the creation of community listening centres to facilitate individual sharing and listening to accompany healing, and organizing peer support groups and self-help groups, and facilitating the narration of personal stories of affected people.

The Role of the Private Sector in Workplace Wellness, Kenya

In 2015, ACORD hosted roundtable discussions in Kenya and Uganda that brought together representatives of the private sector, government officials, civil society organisations and other organisations to discuss the increasing cases of non-communicable diseases and how workplace wellness programmes in the private sector could tackle this issue. Health hazards caused by employment and demographic shifts in structures, employment patterns, migration, Urbanization, discriminative health care services which exclude temporary or casual workers, new technologies leading to sedentary lifestyles for instance introduction of computers, intercom phones and laptops are influencing the increasing menace for non-communicable diseases in Africa. Non-communicable diseases affect the productivity and growth that the continent aspires to. These diseases have developed over the past 50 years as a result of these increased workplace hazards and economic conditions. Employers need to look at determinants of health and the dimensions of wellness - from physical, economic, intellectual and spiritual - of the employee and develop policies that safeguard Africa's potential for future growth.



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