

## Addressing poor health in Nairobi's slums

The Nairobi Urban Health and Poverty Partnership (NUHPP) pilot project was a collaboration between the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), JHPIEGO, the Intermediate Technology Development Group (ITDG), the Nairobi City Council, and PATH, which sought to address the poor health outcomes associated with rapid urbanization and the related inaccessibility of adequate basic services. NUHPP was an integrated, multi-disciplinary project for the city of Nairobi with four key interventions: upgrading health services to better manage and treat childhood illnesses, behavior change communication, improvement of environmental sanitation, and improvement in household incomes.

PATH led the community mobilization and strategic communication interventions and was responsible for creating community-based networking units in order to stimulate dialogue among community members in Nairobi's slum areas. The goal of PATH's activities was to change hygiene and health-seeking behaviors, focusing on hygiene and environmental sanitation, but also touching on nutrition and home management of childhood illnesses. The PATH interventions took place in the Gitathuru and Grogan villages of Korogocho in Nairobi during 2005 and 2006.

PATH's activities were designed to be quickly visible in order to influence household practices related to hygiene and sanitation. Specifically, PATH's work focused on building skills and encouraging community dialogue around issues related to child health, nutrition, personal and environmental hygiene, and sanitation. PATH's main interventions were magnification of hygiene and sanitation practices through photography and training young mothers as peer educators.

### Magnification through photography

PATH used shoot-back photography to create dialogue around sanitation and hygiene with young men and women in Korogocho. PATH provided youth with cameras and film and asked them to take pictures of people, settings, or items representing a related theme. Shoot-back photography allowed youth to express themselves while focusing their attention on how these issues affect their lives. Photographs were then used to lead discussions about these issues. PATH provided photography training for 34 youth from 12 Korogocho youth groups in September 2005. During weekly follow-up sessions, photographs were used to initiate conversations about environmental sanitation and hygiene. Youth shared their experiences and discussed the good and bad sanitation processes they observed during the previous week. Participants were encouraged to create photo diaries and present them during weekly meetings to spark discussion.

### Training young mothers

In October 2005, several women's groups were selected as partners for a NUHPP training on personal and environmental hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, and home management of childhood illness. From these groups, 40 young mothers were selected to be trained as peer educators. Young mothers were selected specifically because of their direct involvement in child health, hygiene and nutrition; because of this direct involvement, their testimonies are likely to be particularly influential to their peers and other community members. Additionally, messages will reach and are likely to influence these mothers before they enter their peak childbearing years. In March 2006, health care personnel trained the selected young mothers to be peer educators. After the training was completed, women returned to their women's groups and shared the lessons they learned using their peer educator skills.

### Project impact

During the course of PATH's activities in the NUHPP pilot project, 74 individuals were trained through the shoot-back photography training and the young mothers' peer education training. These individuals in turn reached other community members through women's groups and youth groups, as well as their family members and other peers.



Photo: PATH, Stephanie Martin

Young girls in Korogocho

**PATH improves the health of people around the world by advancing technologies, strengthening systems, and encouraging healthy behaviors.**

For more information, contact:  
 John Waimiri  
 Program Officer  
[jwaimiri@path.org](mailto:jwaimiri@path.org)