

## **Cancer Advocacy**

### *Developing a Framework for Community Participatory Partnerships for a Breast Cancer Communication and Education Campaign in Rural Kenya—Lessons from the HIV/AIDS Initiatives*

Authors: Ndunge Kiiti, Cornell University; Miriam Mutebi, KESHO; Sarah Ndonge, Vota Ranch

Breast Cancer is the most common cancer affecting Kenyan women with an incidence estimated at about 40.3 per 100,000.<sup>1</sup> Despite an increase in breast cancer services, a lack of awareness about signs and symptoms of cancer is common particularly in rural populations. Strategic partnerships for a more aggressive campaign to empower women could improve uptake of the services and resources for rural women.

Building on the lessons learned from previous HIV/AIDS initiatives in Kenya, researchers, health professionals, and community development workers, will seek to develop a framework to learn how they can adapt, integrate, and implement a rigorous communication and education campaign mainly targeting rural women. In partnership with The Kenya Society of Haematology and Oncology (KESHO), community development organizations (CBOs), NGOs, MOH and other Governmental institutions, among others, the campaign will be designed around six key lessons learned from HIV/AIDS work in Kenya.

- Sociocultural competencies- Using culturally, sensitive *approaches* to engage the local communities and organizations to address the problem from their perspective and in their language;
- Generation of Awareness-Creating evidence-based *awareness* of the breast cancer problem in Kenya among populations and health care providers;
- Improving *access* to basic services for screening and informed treatment through enhancing community linkages to care;
- Designing aggressive community led *action* plans to ensure the prevention-care continuum works to positively impact rural populations from basic nutrition to holistic treatment;
- Implementing an *assessment* process with strong Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL); and
- Integrating lessons learned into community *advocacy* initiatives to impact policy at all levels.

Strong partnerships paired with community participation and leadership are essential for any initiative. Thus, these six steps will facilitate sustainability, enhance knowledge and education, and deepen the effectiveness of programs<sup>2</sup> and policies that reduce the incidence of breast cancer among rural Kenyan women. This pilot framework will be applied to leverage on existing community-based programs that can amplify key messages around breast health awareness.

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<sup>1</sup> Ekpe, E.E., Shaikh, A.J., Shah, J.S., Jacobson, J.S., & Sayed, S. (2019). Metastatic Breast Cancer in Kenya: Presentation, Pathologic Characteristics, and Patterns—Findings From a Tertiary Cancer Center. *Journal of Global Oncology*, 5.

<sup>2</sup> Wallerstein, N. (2006). *What is the evidence on effectiveness of empowerment to improve health?*, Copenhagen, WHO Regional Office for Europe.