

Leadership & Learnings on Community Health & Climate

Background

The increasing impacts of climate change pose a significant threat to the health and well-being of communities worldwide. The World Health Organization recognizes climate change as the most significant health threat to humanity¹. Climate change causes more frequent extreme weather events, disruption of food systems, and increases in food-, water- and vector-borne diseases. Moreover, it influences social determinants for good health, such as livelihoods, equality and access to social support structures². Climate change also disrupts access to primary health services as extreme weather events can impact supply chain, infrastructure, and migration patterns³. These disruptions include sexual and reproductive (SRH) healthcare, which in turn impacts maternal and child health outcomes. It is projected that without effective climate mitigation strategies, an additional 77,000-131,000 deaths among children under 5 years of age will occur in 2030⁴.

Impact of Community Health Workers

Living Goods partners with governments to support community health workers (CHWs) to have the tools, support, and knowledge they need to be successful and reach their full potential. For the past 15 years, we have helped optimize CHW performance using digital tools and data, and our approach has been validated by two Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) that have shown at least a 27% reduction in childhood mortality.

As essential members of the primary health workforce, Living Goods-supported CHWs in Burkina Faso, Kenya, and Uganda are already playing a critical role in addressing the effects of climate change by building community resilience and mitigating health impacts on last mile communities. CHWs provide health education and promotion on issues including nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH); assess, treat, and refer children under age 5 for malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia; deliver essential health services, including SRH services, and contribute significantly to strengthening health systems.

In 2022, we saw a severe drought in Isiolo, Kenya result in hunger reaching a nearly 40-year record high increasing the risk of malnutrition. Living Goods, with the county government, was able to support CHWs to undertake a mass screening of children under age 5 and lactating mothers to determine their nutritional statuses and link those needing treatment to facilities. **Additionally, researchers found that in the areas where Living Goods-supported CHWs in Uganda operate, [there was a 46% reduction in under-five mortality](#) compared to control areas following rainfall deficit seasons. We are encouraged by these results and what they signal: that an effective CHW workforce significantly reduced the number of children who might have died due to drought, and that investing in improved community healthcare helps build climate resilience in low-income areas.**

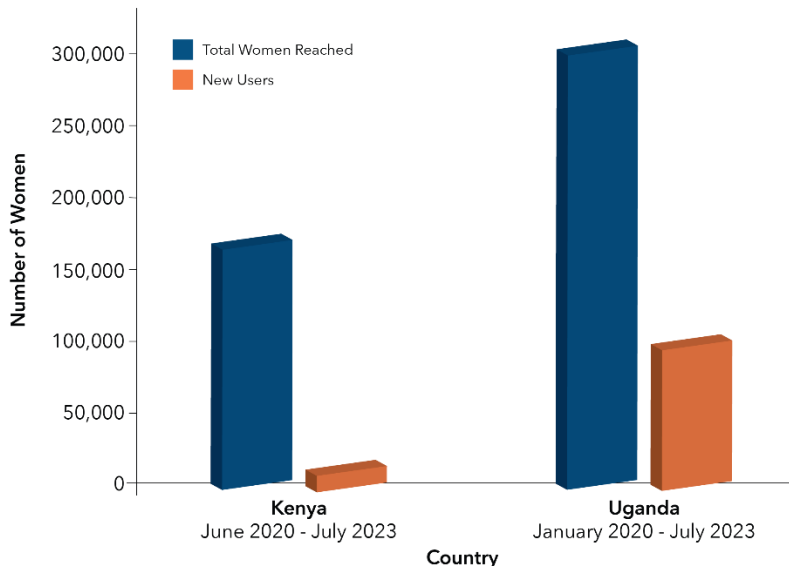
Living Goods' Work in Areas Impacted by Climate Change

Enhancing access to SRH services plays a pivotal role in addressing climate change. Experts acknowledge that fulfilling SRH needs not only bolsters resilience but also empowers women and girls to actively engage in



society, serving as agents of change in climate action initiatives. In Kenya, from June 2020 to present, Living Goods-supported CHWs reached more than 175,000 women with comprehensive family planning services, including 13,000 new users.

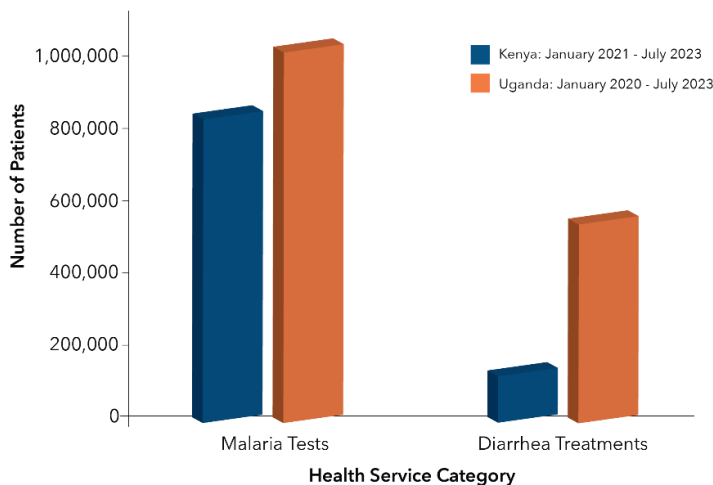
Family Planning Services by Country



Similarly, in Uganda, from 2020 to present, Living Goods-supported CHWs reached over 315,000 women with more than 100,000 women being new users. This demonstrates CHWs’ ability to break down barriers to family planning services and information to reduce unmet need in the areas where Living Goods operates.

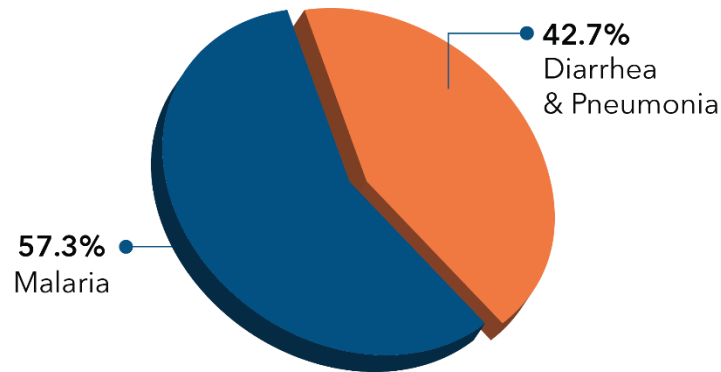
Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths annually from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea, and heat stress⁵. Living Goods-supported CHWs in Kenya conducted malaria tests for a cumulative total of almost 900,000 patients since 2021 and treated close to 135,000 for diarrhea. Similarly, in Uganda, Living Goods-supported CHWs cared for more than 1 million patients through malaria testing and assisted more than 575,000 patients with diarrhea since 2020.

Health Services Provided in Kenya and Uganda



Living Goods launched operations in Burkina Faso in January 2023, and by June, CHWs with Living Goods support had conducted 5,200 malaria tests and treated more than 3,700 malaria cases in the Ziniaré District. During the first half of 2023, these CHWs treated a total of 6,500 children for malaria, diarrhea, and pneumonia in Ziniaré District, which is more than five times the number of cases compared to the same period in 2022. With these numbers expected to grow due to climate change, CHWs remain a lifesaving link between communities and health services.

Distribution of Treatments in Burkina Faso
January 2023 - July 2023



Living Goods is committed to supporting government partners to strengthen community health systems to improve current health outcomes and prepare for the health challenges already being caused by climate change.

¹ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health?msclkid=8018c226d13b11ec9710a78508b88375>

² https://www.who.int/health-topics/climate-change#tab=tab_2

³ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2667278223000299>

⁴ <https://adc.bmj.com/content/104/5/417#ref-6>

⁵ <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-and-health>

