

Nutrition. Foods that hurt your health. **P.19**

Fitness. Social media and working out. **P.20**

Ask the Doctor. Should I take aspirin to avoid AstraZeneca jab clots? **P.19**



Healthy Living

BETTER LIFESTYLE, GREAT LIVING

Young people key in the fight against NTDs





Young people key in the fight against NTDs

Youth in Africa can fight Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) by raising awareness. They can educate their communities about NTDs, their causes, and the available treatment and prevention options. Young people can also advocate for policies by engaging with policymakers to advocate for increased investment in NTD control programs and policies that address the social determinants of health.

BY STEPHEN KAFEERO

Kampala. Young people can play a vital role in the fight against Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) by leveraging their energy, creativity, and passion to improve the health and wellbeing of their communities.

Uganda, according to the health ministry, still has a high burden of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) that affect mainly the rural poor, resulting in low productivity and affecting the development of these populations.

For example, children who suffer from NTDs miss school and experience physical and mental harm. NTDs don't simply have an impact on health; they also hinder productivity and economic progress.

NTDs of the highest public health importance in the country include lymphatic filariasis (elephantiasis), schistosomiasis (Bilharzia), soil-transmitted helminths (intestinal worms), onchocerciasis (river blindness), trachoma, human African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness), visceral leishmaniasis (Kala-azar), plague, Buruli ulcer disease, rabies, tungiasis (jiggers), podocniosis (non-filarial elephantiasis), echinococcosis, cysticercosis, snake envenoming, scabies, brucellosis and leprosy.

The NTDs disproportionately affect young people in Uganda, particularly those living in poverty and rural areas. Some of the most common NTDs in Uganda include soil-transmitted helminths, schistosomiasis, lymphatic filariasis, and onchocerciasis.

These diseases can cause a range of health problems, including malnutrition, anemia, impaired cognitive development, and physical disabilities. NTDs can also prevent young people from attending school and engaging in productive work, which can have long-term consequences for their future opportunities.

Neglected tropical diseases are a group of parasitic and bacterial infections that disproportionately affect poor and marginalised communities in tropical and subtropical regions of the world. However, they are often neglected in terms of research funding and attention, despite being treatable and preventable. Over the years, efforts have been made to control and eliminate NTDs through a combination of

mass drug administration, improved sanitation and hygiene, and disease surveillance and research.

By 2025, the health ministry plans to fully integrate all NTD services into the existing healthcare system by the end of 2025, build the capacity of health workers to manage NTDs at different levels of the healthcare system and address GESI-related gaps affecting service delivery in health facilities of Uganda. This according to the national sustainability plan which guides the country in its continued efforts to control and eliminate NTDs. By the end of the same period, government plans to increase domestic resource mobilization, says Health minister Dr Jane Ruth Aceng in her remarks about the policy.

Preventive measures such as regular deworming, improved sanitation and hygiene, and access to safe water sources can help reduce the burden of NTDs among young people in Uganda. Education and awareness-raising campaigns can also play a critical role in promoting behavior change and reducing the risk of infection.

In the policy, the health ministry says

“Incorporation of NTD priorities into routine government planning, implementation and monitoring will be essential to the sustainability of NTD programming in Uganda. However, this will require targeted advocacy, alignment with broader health and multi-sectoral policies and strategies as well as national domestic resource mobilization,”

**Health minister
Dr Jane Ruth
Aceng.**

it is committed to investing in mainstreaming NTD control and elimination activities into the national health systems through other health programme areas, such as malaria control and other relevant sectors, including education, water, and sanitation.

The WHO's 2030 roadmap on ending the neglected tropical diseases sets global targets and milestones to prevent, control, eliminate or eradicate 20 diseases and disease groups as well as cross-cutting targets aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The roadmap calls for the integration of young people across all NTD activities, recognising youth as key stakeholders able to bring innovative thinking, new solutions, and help mobilise change.

“We must step up and continue the path to eliminating these debilitating diseases and their negative effects today. By partnering with Reaching the Last Mile, we can ignite collective action and harness the power of African youth, often overlooked during discussions and decision-making processes, to transform engagement into tangible action so that nobody, anywhere, lives at risk of NTDs. This way, they can step forward and take both leadership and advocacy toward eliminating NTDs.”

Although preventable and treatable, NTDs continue to affect more than 1.7 billion people worldwide, including 1 billion children. There are currently 20 diseases and disease groups defined as NTDs by the World Health Organization (WHO), including river blindness (onchocerciasis), leprosy, elephantia-



The youth leadership initiative is part of wider efforts to drive progress towards the goals of the WHO's 2030 roadmap on NTDs, which seeks to reduce by 90% the number of people requiring treatment for the diseases; to have 100 countries eliminate at least one NTD; and to eradicate two diseases. To date, 47 countries have eliminated at least one NTD, showing progress is attainable and possible

WHO

sis (lymphatic filariasis), Guinea worm disease, rabies, schistosomiasis, and trachoma. NTDs cause significant morbidity and mortality, and can lead to long-term disability, disfigurement, and social stigma.

NTDs cause immeasurable suffering – they debilitate, disfigure and can be fatal. By most commonly affecting vulnerable and marginalized populations – who often live in remote communities – NTDs create cycles of poverty and cost developing nations billions of dollars each year. Nearly 40% of the global NTD burden is shouldered by Africa.

New initiative

Earlier this month, a new youth leadership initiative, part of wider efforts to drive progress towards the goals of the WHO's 2030 roadmap on NTDs, which seeks to reduce by 90 per cent the number of people requiring treatment NTDs; to have 100 countries eliminate at least one NTD; and to eradicate two diseases was launched.

Reaching the Last Mile, a portfolio of global health programs driven by the philanthropy of Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), backs the new initiative designed to mobilise young people to lead efforts to eliminate NTDs in Africa.

The youth leadership initiative seeks to build a network of youth-led organizations committed to ending NTDs within their communities and countries through national-level advocacy, action, and leadership engagement. Participants in the program will receive funding, mentorship, and resources to support them to engage effectively in decision- and policymaking spaces, and to drive forward their efforts to champion change in their communities.

The initiative, which will be delivered in partnership with policy and advocacy organisation Speak Up Africa, will provide US \$250,000 in grants and training to at least 10 youth-led entities within Senegal and Niger over a 15-month period. The supporting network will also act to unify and amplify the voices of youth-led organisations, enabling them to engage with like-minded peers, share knowledge and solutions, and bring learnings back to their own communities.

“The potential to eliminate NTDs in Africa is within our grasp. By promoting youth leadership, and by mentoring and motivating a new community of young advocates, we can beat NTDs, save lives, and help protect the health and wellbeing of future generations,” says Nassar Al Mubarak of Reaching the Last Mile.

QUICK FACTS ON NTDs

NTDs affect some of the world's most vulnerable populations, including the poor, those living in rural areas, and marginalized communities such as indigenous people.

There are 20 NTDs recognized by the WHO, including diseases such as dengue fever, leprosy, lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis (river blindness), and schistosomiasis.

NTDs cause a significant amount of morbidity and mortality, leading to chronic illness, disability, and premature death. NTDs are preventable and treatable, but they often go untreated due to a lack of access to healthcare, limited resources, and insufficient public health policies.

The economic burden of NTDs is significant, both in terms of lost productivity and direct healthcare costs.

NTDs disproportionately affect women and children, who often bear the brunt of the disease burden.

Youth in Africa can fight Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) by raising awareness. They can educate their communities about NTDs, their causes, and the available treatment and prevention options. Young people can also advocate for policies by engaging with policymakers to advocate for increased investment in NTD control programs and policies that address the social determinants of health.

Young people can volunteer with local organisations and health clinics to help with the delivery of treatment and education programs. They can also engage in research and can contribute to research efforts to develop new tools and technologies for prevention and control of NTDs.

Crucially, young people can mobilise communities: Youth-led mobilisation and outreach activities can encourage community participation in NTD control programs and help to reduce stigma associated with these diseases.

This article was produced with the support of Speak Up Africa's Media fellowship program

All about Babies

www.verywellfamily.com

How to take a baby's temperature



Taking care of a baby can be overwhelming—especially when they are not feeling well. Parents often have questions about the proper way to check a baby's temperature when their forehead is feeling warm.

If you have seen different types of thermometers on the market, you may be wondering which is the best choice for you and your baby.

How you take your baby's temperature will depend on both your preference and their age. You may use a forehead thermometer (temporal artery) on babies of any age.

These no-contact thermometers work by measuring the heat waves coming off your baby's skin. Each forehead thermometer works slightly differently, so you will want to be sure to read the specific instructions that come with your thermometer before using it.

For younger babies, a rectal temperature is generally known to give the most accurate reading. You can also check a baby's temperature under their armpit, which is called an axillary temperature. Babies who are older than six months can use an ear (tympanic) thermometer.

Multi-Use Thermometers

Multi-use thermometers work by activating a small sensor at the thermometer's tip that reads your baby's temperature. If you are purchasing two multi-use thermometers for axillary and rectal readings, it may be helpful to label them accordingly.

Forehead Thermometers (Temporal Artery)

If you have multiple children, forehead thermometers can come in handy. The temperature is read by pointing the thermometer at the front and side of your baby's forehead. The fact that forehead thermometers require no contact can help reduce the spread of germs in your household.

Ear Thermometers (Tympanic)

Ear thermometers read the heat waves in your baby's eardrum and report the temperature. This type of thermometer is often used in the doctor's office. Babies under six months of age should not use an ear thermometer. Be sure to read the instructions carefully, as ear thermometers must be placed precisely in the eardrum to generate an accurate reading.

Which thermometer is most accurate?

Sometimes, it takes a bit of trial and error to determine which method is best for taking your baby's temperature.

Some babies tolerate certain thermometers better than others, and it's important to find the one that works best for you and your baby. Still, parents should be aware some temperature-taking methods produce more accurate readings.

