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AJENDA ya WATOTO eNEWS: 19/Jun/2010 Follow the Children's Agenda



The Children's Agenda ("Ajenda ya Watoto") is the result of broad consultation with children across Tanzania as well as collaboration between the leading children's organizations in the country and the government. The Agenda reflects the top ten investments that need to be addressed by the nation's leaders in order to ensure the development of a nation that meets the rights and aspirations of all citizens, including children.

Each week we will describe one investment that we are calling leaders to make for children and profile a Children's Agenda member. See below for our first profile; the Tanzanian Education Network (TEN/MET) and the Global Campaign for Education.

Invest to save the lives of children and women

DID YOU KNOW? * More than 400 children die every day; over 110 are less than one month old. * Every hour a woman also dies as a result of complications during pregnancy or childbirth. * Affordable solutions that can save thousands of lives are within reach of leaders and communities. * More than 400 Tanzanian children under five die every day.

Since 2005 these deaths have dropped by almost a quarter following investment in effective and mostly low cost solutions like the increased use of insecticide treated mosquito nets, improved treatment of malaria, immunization, which has reduced deaths from measles, and increased coverage of children receiving Vitamin A supplements, which boosts their immune systems. As a result of these achievements Tanzania is on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goal for Child Survival. There has been much less success, however, in reducing deaths among newborns. Every day more than 110 infants die who are less than one month old; most have survived for only a few days. There has been even less progress in reducing the deaths of women during pregnancy and childbirth which takes the lives of about 25 women every day.

We are very far from achieving the Millennium Development Goal for Maternal Survival; and in fact there has been no improvement since 1996. The causes of death among women and infants at birth are numerous. Women and their infants are more vulnerable if childbearing begins too young and if births are closely spaced. On average, every Tanzanian woman gives birth to about 6 children and one in four begins childbearing before their 18th birthday.

There has been no change in fertility rates in more than 10 years and the fast pace of population growth is undermining development. More than half of all births in Tanzania take place at home, with assistance from a relative or traditional birth attendant. When an



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emergency arises decisions to seek help often come too late, and trained care is often too far away. The poor quality of care due to insufficient staff and equipment as well as the distance from home to health care are major deterrents to safe births.

The poorest families have the least access to skilled attendance at delivery, whether in rural or urban areas. More than 34 percent of child deaths are caused by or related to malnutrition, and this seems to be unchanged in more than a decade. While there have been major advances against malaria this still continues to be a leading killer of children as do respiratory diseases like pneumonia. There has been no improvement in reduction of diarrhea, related to slow progress in improving access to safe water, hygiene and sanitation.

Empowering families with the knowledge, skills and opportunities to prevent disease and care for their children more effectively is crucial as are efforts to improve staffing, facilities, equipment, supervision and accountability in the health system.

What can leaders do?

Leaders at all levels can help to save lives of children and women by using their influence and capacity to inspire to ensure increased budgets, better monitoring and accountability and collective action in the following key areas:

- >> Increase budgets and investment to build a more effective health system including investments in more staff, better equipped facilities, better monitoring and greater accountability.
- >> Make sure the poorest families have access to and are using health and in particular make sure emergency obstetric care is available to all women.
- >> Support proven strategies that save lives including: comprehensive distribution of insecticide mosquito nets to reduce malaria, expand immunization, increase Vitamin A coverage, increase use of ORS and zinc to treat diarrhoea and actively promote early and exclusive breastfeeding to six months.
- >> Ensure more women give birth with trained attendants. Increase the availability of trained birth attendants and support efforts to bring trained care closer to women during childbirth.
- >> Encourage greater community involvement in local health centres, revive health committees to improve accountability.
- >> Raise significantly the policy prominence of disability, mental health, violence and sexual abuse of children, and gender-based violence.
- >> Monitor the survival of infants and women in your constituency/district/community; keep informed about how many and how often families are using health services.
- >> Find out from local health authorities and workers about the challenges they face and the services they are providing; and find out how you, the community and other leaders can support them.
- >> Encourage schools to involve children as child survival advocates by tracking immunization, use of mosquito nets, and household hand-washing practices etc.

To learn more, please download the following:

- Key facts about children in Tanzania
 - Key messages about the Children's Agenda
 - Children's Agenda leaflet (Kiswahili)
 - Children's Agenda leaflet (English)
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Profiling the Tanzanian Education Network (TEN/MET) and the Global Campaign for Education

Tanzania may not have a football team playing in the FIFA World Cup 2010, but we can score one goal this year: education for all!

1Goal Tanzania is part of a global campaign calling for increased investment in education in order to achieve Education for All. It has been launched to coincide with the World Cup, which is taking place in Africa for the first time – the continent with the largest percentage of out-of-school children.

Now is the time to show your support for the 1Goal Campaign. Join 8 million supporters from around the world by signing the global online petition here: www.join1goal.org/you.php

As part of the campaign, TEN/MET have opened a 'call for evidence' on education financing issues. They want to collect as many practical examples and personal testimonies of how under-investment, delays in funding or 'leakages' in education financing are currently affecting schools, teaching, and, above all, children's education.

They will be using the information they collect to produce a report and exhibition. The report will be presented to education leaders on 8 September (International Literacy Day) as part of the run up to the MDG summit taking place later that month - and of course the national elections. The deadline for submitting evidence is 30 June.

They need your help in encouraging schools, civil society organisations, and community groups to take part. Please also submit evidence yourself to rachael@tenmet.org.

To learn more, please download the following:

- 1Goal Campaign Briefing
- 1Goal Campaign Call for Evidence

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Half of Tanzania's population is under the age of 18.
The future depends on how we treat these youth today.

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