

Kiteto demands accountability on health issues!

By Eugenia Madhidha, Kiteto

A local Social Accountability Monitoring (SAM) team in Kiteto district, revealed some shocking findings affecting the welfare of Tanzanians in 16 health facilities visited recently.

During a public dialogue organised by the community SAM team to share findings, it was revealed that at the Lesoit health facility, nurses used a bench as examining bed while at Loitepes facility, one of the delivery beds was found at the doctor in charge's house.

The SAM team formed to follow up on accountability issues in the district also explained that water is a great challenge in Kiteto district. In most facilities patients are advised to carry water from home when visiting the health facilities. At Ngabolo dispensary, the SAM team saw "flush" toilets full of stones and sands because patients were forced to use them due to lack of running water. The SAM team explained that this could have been caused by poor planning and they asked how the district could construct 'flush' toilets when they know that water is a problem in Kiteto.

At Songambe facility, nurses sometimes used their own money to buy water for patients. Lack of water is a public health issue increasing the risk of diseases such as cholera outbreaks. Moreover, most of the health facilities visited by SAM team were closed during working hours for lack of human resources.

At Irkiushi health facility, a drip was found connected with support from the window. Citizen complained that every time they visit the facility, either it will be closed during working hours or there are no medicines hence they do not rely on the facility at all.

The Kiteto District Executive Director (DED), Ms Jane Mutagurwa who was responding to issues raised from the findings was shocked by the poor operating conditions of the health facilities in the district. Expressing her disappointment she said, "What is the delivery bed doing in the doctor's house? You people have to change or do you want me to be transferred back to Dar es Salaam?"

Contributing to the debate, a community member, Assam Konge blamed the Councilors for not being accountable to the people and asked them to wake up and take their responsibilities seriously. "The Councilors should use all means to improve health services in our communities."

DED Mutagurwa promised Kiteto citizens that the embarrassing issues unveiled by the SAM team will soon be history. She said, "We are going to have full council meeting and I believe by then some of the challenges raised from the health facilities will be taken care of, before our next meeting".

The SAM public dialogue was facilitated by Sikika, a health advocacy organization after conducting training on SAM for almost 3 weeks. The team, comprised of members from the community, Councilors, representatives from Ward Executive Officers, representatives from health governing committees, religious leaders as well as local based Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

The team was tasked to follow up on quality of service delivery issues, seek clarifications from service providers and demand for accountability. Participants of the public dialogue included the representatives from the citizens, Councilors, Ward Executive Officers; District Medical Officer, DED, SAM team etc.

Speaking on behalf of Sikika, the Head of Programs, Mr Josaphat Mshighati said he was pleased with the exercise and that the organisation will proceed to other districts like Iramba, Singida Rural, Kondoa, Simanjiro and Mpwapwa. “We believe that the SAM exercise will bring a lot of change especially in the health sector...we have already seen some positive changes- Councilors have made a commitment to address all issues in the next full council meeting and citizens have started questioning authorities on the level of service delivery including construction of flush toilets in Kiteto where water is a critical problem.”