

Integrating Data from INDEPTH Network's Health and Demographic Surveillance System Centres And Multiple Household Surveys to Monitoring Vital Events in Kenya

INDEPTH Network Secretariat



Introduction

INDEPTH is a global leader in health and population research, providing robust answers to some of the most important questions in development. The lack of a reliable information base to support the identification, prevention and treatment of health problems is a major hurdle to addressing the high burden of disease in low- and middle-income countries. INDEPTH — through its global network of 52 health and demographic surveillance system (HDSS) sites run by 45 research centres (including Dodowa HRC) in 20 countries across Africa, Asia and the Pacific region — is the only organisation in the world capable of developing that information base. It tracks a total population of over 3.8 million people, providing high quality longitudinal data not only about the lives of people in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), but also about the impact on those lives of development policies and programmes.

Summary of the Impact

The INDEPTH Network has enabled its member Health and Demographic Surveillance System (HDSS) centers in Kenya to work closely with four key ministries of the government to improve their understanding of mortality trends and patterns in the country and to explore the use of the INDEPTH demographic surveillance system as a tool for improving coverage of civil registration of vital events in rural settings. The Secretariat organized a workshop in 2012 in Bellagio, bringing together leaders of four HDSS centers based in Kenya (Kisumu, Kilifi, Mbite, Nairobi) and representatives from the government of Kenya, led by the Director General of the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics. A memorandum of understanding was reached and under this collaboration, a pilot study has commenced to institute vital registration systems based on existing surveillance structures in Kilifi and Kisumu HDSS as well as other interested HDSS. While it is too early to report population-level impacts, this collaboration has demonstrated that the HDSS is a viable platform for the Kenyan government to consider seriously as support for civil registration of vital events.





OpenHDSS workshop in Dubai: INDEPTH supports HDSS through training.

The Role of the INDEPTH Network in Enabling the Impact

Kenya has five HDSS centers that are members of the INDEPTH Network. They include predominantly rural (Kilifi, Kisumu, Kombewa and Mbita) and an urban center (Nairobi). The Network supports these HDSS through training to improve the quality of the demographic surveillance data and capacity strengthening in data management, analysis, and funded places for master's degrees. The data from the HDSS are used primarily for research and there is potential for their integration with census and household surveys to create powerful decision tools at the national level. For example, adult mortality patterns in the rural and urban HDSS complement each other, demonstrating the impact of urban-to-rural and rural-to-urban migration on mortality. The country's wealth of census, household surveys, and administrative data is under-utilised, and there is even greater potential to inform national and sub-national policies when data from HDSS centers are integrated with these surveys. In addition, the demographic surveillance platform used by HDSS centers can be used to improve coverage of civil registration of vital events. These are the issues that led the INDEPTH Secretariat to use its convening powers to bring together key stakeholders in Kenya and representatives from four of its HDSS centers. The meeting took place in February 2013, in Bellagio, Italy and included representatives from four Kenyan HDSSs (Kilifi, Kisumu, Mbita and Nairobi) and key ministries (Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation; Ministry of Planning and National Development, Vision 2030; Ministry of Migration and Vital registration; Ministry of Medical Services) in a landmark event.

The Director General of the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics led the government delegation. The meeting discussed the potential for using the demographic surveillance system data, the census, and survey data to develop methodology for identifying trends and patterns of mortality in the country and to develop methodology for improving vital registration especially in rural areas. A memorandum of understanding was reached and a technical working group was formed to spearhead joint actions including a proposal to INDEPTH for US\$10,000 to pilot the integration of census and HDSS data for the analysis of mortality patterns in Kenya. Another action was to explore the methodology for extending the tools used in demographic surveillance to improve civil registration of vital events.

Details of the Impact

Although it is too early to measure population level impact, the collaboration has stimulated discussion between researchers and practitioners and is beginning to lead to changes in the way that vital events are recorded. The collaboration has also increased the profile of the Kenyan HDSS and the INDEPTH Network as a whole in the eyes of the Kenyan government.

The ultimate beneficiaries of this initiative are the people of Kenya, and the intermediate beneficiaries are the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, the key ministries involved, (Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation; Ministry of Planning and National Development, Vision 2030; Ministry of Migration and Vital registration; Ministry of Medical Services), and the HDSS centers.

Sources to Collaborate the Impact

- Dr Evasius Bauni, Kilifi HDSS, KEMRI/Wellcome Trust, Kenya.
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- Dr. Frank Odhiambo, Kisumu HDSS, KEMRI/CDC
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Source of Funding

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