

# COMMUNITIES

## AT THE HEART OF UHC

October 21, 2019

*In this edition of our newsletter we talk about our participation at the United Nations General Assembly and the High-Level Meeting on Universal Health coverage, as well as post-meeting planning, country commitments on UHC and what it was like to grow up as the child of a community health worker in Nigeria.*

### Welcome New Members

Indigenous Community of Muslim Women Living with HIV in Kenya, Integrate Health, NCD Child

Click [here](#) to see more of our members!

### Communities in the Spotlight: UNGA74

At the end of September, the Communities at the Heart of UHC Campaign was active in New York City for the 74th United Nations General Assembly. Joining heads of state, ministries of health, global leaders and like-minded advocates from around the world, the campaign celebrated the adoption of the [Political Declaration for Universal Health Coverage \(UHC\)](#), a landmark for all of us in working in global health. While the Political Declaration, which calls for the scale-up of competent, skilled and motivated health workers, including community health workers (CHWs), is an accomplishment, it is also just a starting point. The real work begins now. We must collaborate across sectors and with partners in the implementation of the Political Declaration to make UHC a reality.

### Delegations Prioritize Community-Based Primary Health Coverage at High-Level Meeting on UHC

In the lead up to the High-Level Meeting on UHC (HLM-UHC) and adoption of the Political Declaration, the Communities at the Heart of UHC Campaign actively advocated at both the global and country levels for the prioritization of community health as critical to achieving UHC. To deliver optimal outcomes, community health programming must be integrated into national health systems, be financially sustainable and rooted in quality. Our vision is recognition of and commitment to community health programs across the UHC agenda.

At the High-Level Meeting on UHC, UN Member State delegations were given the chance to deliver remarks on UHC and their plans for implementation in-country. Of the countries that spoke, 31 across six continents included and referred to community health and/or primary health care in their remarks, recognizing its importance to UHC. Here are comments from just a few:

**Côte d'Ivoire:** "The government has undertaken measures to improve and develop primary health care facilities. The president just launched a \$1.6 million program on primary health care. The government has also developed a community-based health system to provide more local service to more local people." - *Vice President Daniel Kablan Duncan*

**Ethiopia:** "As one of the basic steps to ensure UHC in practical terms, Ethiopia has developed a comprehensive five-year health sector transformation plan that includes training and retraining of a sufficient amount of health workers. Through the Ministry of Health, Ethiopia has developed a national health financing system and is currently implementing community-based health insurance to fund service delivery." - *President Sahle-Work Zewde*

**Uganda:** "The government of Uganda commits to expanding community-level health promotion and prevention programs to reduce the preventable disease burden. Leaders at all levels will be resourced to effectively mobilize and steer community-level programs. Community awareness of what constitutes good quality care and effective services shall be strengthened." - *Minister of Health Jane Ruth Aceng*

A list of the 31 countries and their remarks on community health and/or primary health care can be found on our website [here](#). The campaign will work with our members to organize and support networks to track progress on the commitments to community health and primary health care. Political will is important but developing implementation strategies and funding plans to achieve UHC is necessary for success. If you are working on advocacy in any of the 31 countries please contact us at [info@UHC4Communities.com](mailto:info@UHC4Communities.com). We would like to connect advocates and networks working in the same countries to ensure collective advocacy efforts.

## Post-HLM Action Planning Meeting

On the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, members of the Communities at the Heart of UHC Campaign came together to discuss next steps following the adoption of the Political Declaration on UHC. The meeting included an engaging dialogue with featured panelists:

- **Dr. Michael Bukenya**, Member of Parliament, Uganda
- **Dr. Lola Dare**, CHESTRAD
- **Angela Gichaga**, Financing Alliance for Health
- **Ruth Ngechu**, Living Goods
- **Rob Yates**, Chatham House



Photo by Keke Ezime / Living Goods.

*Participants at the post-HLM Action Planning Meeting.*

The conversation covered many topics involving supporting countries to reach UHC and coordinating advocacy efforts. The main takeaways and themes from the meeting included:

- **Prioritizing community voices:** While we all recognize the need to listen to community voices, participants discussed how the global health community can amplify and elevate authentic community voices to ensure they are truly heard. For UHC to be successful, communities must actively define what services they need and how they want them delivered. As countries move forward in making the Political Declaration actionable, communities need to be included in setting priorities and policies.
- **Utilizing budget tracking to hold decision-makers accountable:** As governments move forward in implementing the Political Declaration for UHC, civil society organizations have an important role to play in holding decision-makers accountable in delivering on their promises. One key way to do this is to track budget line items to ensure funds are being committed and released to expand access to health services.
- **Collaborating and advocating across sectors:** Delivering health for all isn't just a decision made and implemented by ministries of health. Ministries of finance are equally important and need to be engaged. Budgeting is competitive and advocates need to demonstrate the value of investments in the health sector. As post-HLM meetings are hosted, both ministries of health and finance need to be in the room with civil society organizations and advocates.

As the campaign enters its second year, we will focus on ensuring that the commitments made in New York turn into action on the ground around the world. Together, we can show decision-makers and stakeholders that strong community health systems are necessary for achieving UHC.

A participant list from the meeting can be found at the Communities at the Heart of UHC website [here](#).

## The Privilege of Care: The Daughter of a Community Health Worker Reflects



A new blog from Ezinne Keke, advocacy fellow at Living Goods and MPH candidate at The George Washington University, shares her view of UHC from her experience living in Nigeria and facing the reality of an inadequate health system. She writes: *At an early age, I discovered that health was not a human right, but something only the privileged could afford. At the age of 35, my uncle, a husband and father of two, died from complications of HIV/AIDS — a disease referred to in my community as “the unknown.” I later learned that it was more complicated than that. My uncle was a victim of an inadequate health system that lacked quality services and resources to properly treat patients.* Read the full blog [here](#).

**[Join the campaign and share with others!](#)**

### About Us

We are a coalition of six organizations—Amref Health Africa, Aspen Management Partnership for Health, Financing Alliance for Health, the International Rescue Committee, Last Mile Health and Living Goods—leading this effort but working with many other organizations to elevate the visibility of community health within the UHC space. We are a part of the larger movement of key organizations, including UHC2030, donors and country leaders working to increase the dialogue on community health programs globally and advocate for funding through domestic resources and foreign assistance.

