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Title: Contribution of Community Volunteers in supporting HIV cascade in Orphans and Vulnerable Children and Caregivers

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- **Introduction:** USAID Kizazi Hodari Northeastern Zone project is a child-focused and family-centered project aiming to enhance the health, well-being, and protection of OVC and youth in high-HIV burden areas. Implemented under ELCT-HQ covering Arusha, Dodoma, Kilimanjaro, Manyara, Singida, Tanga, Geita, Mara, and Mwanza; it provides comprehensive services to OVC including escorted referrals for ART initiation, Enhanced ART Counselling, and HIV Viral Load tests; health insurance, economic strengthening, nutritional, psychosocial, and educational support. These aim to achieve UNAID 95-95-95 targets and improve clinical outcomes for OVC and caregivers affected by HIV.
- **Methodology:** The project trains community volunteers in case management, aligning them with the National Integrated Case Management System to deliver comprehensive health and social welfare services to OVC and caregivers at the household level. Volunteers, coordinated by ward-level NICMS coordinators and project staff, conduct household visits to provide services directly or through referral. They collaborate with health facilities to ensure continuity of care and improved clinical outcomes.
- **Results:** During FY23 (October 2022 – September 2023), 43,191 OVC were reached with case management services. Among them, 9,625 (22%) were on ART. Of these, 8,372 (87%) were eligible for viral load testing, 8,058 (96%) had documented results, and 7,665 (95%) were virally suppressed. 8,444 (98%) showed good adherence to ART.
- **Conclusion:** USAID Kizazi Hodari Northeastern Zone project learned that Community Volunteers are crucial for achieving the 95-95-95 UNAIDS goal, especially for HIV-affected OVC. Their collaboration with households, health facilities, and communities highlights the need for ongoing capacity building and recognition of their contribution.

Keywords: Orphans and vulnerable children, HIV/AIDS, Community Volunteers, Primary health care, viral suppression, National Integrated Case Management System.