

Leveraging on Citizen Journalism for Health Advocacy: The case of Kenya Malaria Youth Army

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BACKGROUND

There are 23.35 million internet users in Kenya by January 2022. Social media is an incredible driving force for digital advocacy, where people with divergent opinion can interact and debate. The young generation are also using it as a main source of news, entertainment and education. It serves as a distinct alternative to public national broadcast and commercial media.

OBJECTIVE

1. Evaluate the impact of citizen journalism, as exemplified by the Kenya Malaria Youth Corps, in raising awareness about malaria and promoting health advocacy.
2. Measure the reach and influence of citizen-generated content produced by the Kenya Malaria Youth Corps, exploring its penetration into diverse communities and its ability to engage different demographic groups.
3. Explore the challenges faced by citizen journalists within the Kenya Malaria Youth Corps, such as access to resources, credibility issues, or obstacles in disseminating accurate health information.

METHODOLOGY

Kenya Malaria Youth Army (KeMYA) is a homegrown grassroots movement of volunteers that supports and mobilizes resources for creating awareness towards achieving zero malaria in Kenya. KeMYA achieves this objective through community based activities and sharing key messages that help drive action to eradicate malaria in Kenya. KeMYA activists use citizen journalism and social media platforms to socially engage, articulate, promote, document and disseminate the information needed by providing a space for local dialogue and cohesion across generations and facilitate the involvement of the youthful population in the global fight. The social media platforms used by KeMYA include Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, Podcast, Vlogs and YouTube. These channels give the youth a voice and opportunity to communicate real time key malaria messages through writing, photography and video production. This youth are mostly lay people without a background in journalism, but occupying the role held by professional journalists.

RESULTS

Social media reach graph on WMD, 24th April

2023



HERE

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Summary reach during WMD 2023

| Numerical summary | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| 94 MENTIONS | 94 SOCIAL MEDIA MENTIONS | 0 NON-SOCIAL MENTIONS | 417 K SOCIAL MEDIA REACH |
| 0 NON SOCIAL MEDIA REACH | 2086 INTERACTIONS | 94 USER GENERATED CONTENT | 1649 LIKES |
| 23 88% POSITIVE MENTIONS | 3 12% NEGATIVE MENTIONS | \$ 30 673 AVE | 47 MENTIONS FROM TWITTER |

Sub Title: Key malaria messages on prevention, control and elimination through citizen journalism .

CONCLUSIONS

- Able to overcome communication gaps in local media contexts.
- Offering space for encounters
- Creating connections among communities that are geographically more distant from one another.
- These social media connectedness has led to a better malaria messaging campaign.
- Brought to light key malaria issues and helped to convey them to policymakers,
- Empowering young people and making major strides towards zero malaria where up to 417,000 people have engaged in a single day.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- There is need to train them on basic journalism skills.
- Be facilitated with equipment and internet bundles.

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