

## Story of Change

# Open PHENCES, the Custodians of Public-Private Collaborations in Kenya



Open PHENCES coordinator, public, and private sector representatives having a discussion during a co-creation workshop in Trans Nzoia County.

## Strathmore University, Open PHENCES Project Milestones

- The 'popular version' public-private collaborations (PPC) document simplifying the Health PPC Framework for Kenya was developed and disseminated.
- The Open PHENCES' generic *Engage to Action* model was developed to guide in PPC engagements in health and non-health sectors.
- Co-creation events were coordinated in four counties to strengthen the uptake of innovations from small and medium-sized organisations and to define reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent healthcare (RMNCAH) priority investment areas.



### About the RISA Fund

The Research and Innovation Systems for Africa (RISA) Fund is a programme to support and strengthen research and innovation systems in six countries: Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, and Ethiopia. The programme runs from 2021 to 2024 and is funded by UKAid.

## About Open PHENCES Project

Open PHENCES stands for **P**ublic and **P**rivate **H**ealth **E**ngagement and **C**ollaboration **E**nhanced through **S**tronger **S**ystems. The project aims to improve the uptake and scaling of innovations and wider range of services and products available through PPCs at sub-national level in Kenya. Concurrently, Open PHENCES seeks to improve policymaker understanding of the PPC frameworks, and feed into strategic and operational frameworks of key institutions and other policy structures within Kenya.

The project funded by the RISA grant is a brainchild of the Open PHENCES Hub housed at Strathmore University Business School. The goal is to create structures and microenvironments that encourage public uptake of innovations from small and medium-sized innovators. The focus on smaller innovators is in recognition of the fact that their size may prove disadvantageous when it comes to establishing pipelines of partnerships.

Open PHENCES seeks to bring the ecosystem together to build and share available information about challenges, solutions, and innovations in counties and support co-creation of joint investment cases.

According to Prof. Francis Wafula, associate professor of health systems at the Strathmore University and Open PHENCES team lead, the project will open doors for more meaningful collaborations in health and non-healthcare sectors alike, and create a platform where priority setting and planning in counties can be achieved through a process of co-creation.



*“At Open PHENCES we exist to democratise public-private collaborations. We are trying to bring conversations from the boardrooms and other complicated areas to the counties where people receive health services,” he says.*

## Review of Policy and Regulatory Instruments

The Open PHENCES team reviewed policies and regulation that touch on public-private collaborations and synthesised them into a simplified ‘popular version’ document. The team believes that supporting county health managers to understand PPCs will allow them to be more confident in initiating and driving conversations around harnessing private innovations for public sector scaling.

Health systems in four counties were mapped and characterised (Homa Bay, Kiambu, Trans Nzoia and Kisumu). The mapping was based on social economic profiles to understand the gaps, challenges, and types of innovations within ecosystems, along with potential solutions and barriers that may hinder demand for innovations in RMNCAH and other areas.

During the mapping exercise, selected county-level RMNCAH services delivery indicators were reviewed. These include data reported through the Kenya Health Information System (KHIS), information on service delivery and readiness from the Kenya Health Facility Assessment, county integrated development plans, annual work plans, and other documents covering RMNCAH innovations. Further, key informant interviews were conducted with various stakeholders to understand views, perceptions, and experiences with PPCs.

Co-creation workshops were held with actors from the public and private sector in each county. The discussions revealed that county actors know their challenges differ from one county to another. There are great innovations that are not scaling through public sector because they are not on the radar of the public health managers.

*"Through stakeholder engagements we noted that in Kisumu County, they use drones to transport medication instead of boda bodas (motorcycles). This has significantly reduced the transportation costs and gotten rid of inefficiencies of traffic within the county. It is amazing that the public sector is now welcoming these innovations in the private sector," says Dr. Noelle Orata, ecosystems design, clinical partnerships, Open PHENCES.*

## Changing Stakeholders' Mindsets

Great innovations ought to be shared. This can only happen when the private sector is organised, as this allows easier and more transparent engagement with the county health managers and inclusion of the innovations in strategic planning.

The RISA-supported engagements have triggered conversations on how counties plan their strategic frameworks. Counties are now considering moving from the prescriptive, top-down (borrowing-from-last-year) approach that emphasise spending, to a bottom-up (ecosystem co-creation-based) models that emphasise investing (not merely expending resources).

*"We left them with clear mindsets, they are positive and ready to collaborate, and that's the kind of change that initiates better things in the community," adds Dr. Noelle.*

*"Bridging the gap between the private and public sector is an amazing thing. The two have started having conversations, there is trust and belief in each other, and will allow the ecosystem to work. Open PHENCES is committed and will continue to work as we open the fences," explains Francis Wafula.*

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