

Below are some key takeaways from the conversation.

- Decision-making for COVID-19 has been hurried due to the urgency of controlling the virus. This haste has led to limited scrutiny and stakeholder engagement which threatens accountability. This new way of operating also leaves constituents unaware of their role in accountability during the COVID-19 period.
- Information—the cornerstone of accountability—is limited at a time when it is needed most, and virtual methods for working have created a knowledge divide. In response, duty bearers need to go the extra mile to promote community engagement in innovative ways. To hold leaders accountable and enable community participation, education about and access to digital platforms is essential. For accountability to be realized during this pandemic, communities need to be engaged and enabled to push their voices higher up the policymaking ladder.
- Media is a main avenue for amplifying voices. CSOs need to redirect resources toward documenting stories and evidence, and should use the media to reach community groups across digital divides.
- Economic concerns, driven by stay-at-home orders and closure of businesses, are in tension with public health objectives. These tensions can stifle traditional champions for health, who may fear political backlash if they speak out.
- The pandemic has magnified the fissures in society—those at highest risk are most affected. Young people face loss of income, stress, increased crime rates, and poverty.
- The pandemic poses an opportunity to think bigger about health system reform and redesign.

“Now is the time to rethink our health system if we want to be strong and resilient.” - Amadou Kanouté

Panelists provided examples of effective tactics for promoting accountability, including:

- Hosting open forums, such as call-in radio programs and #AsktheDG twitter chats, for communities to publicly air their fears and challenges around the pandemic and its implications, targeting leaders at the national and local levels.
- Facilitating access to digital platforms for decision-makers and community members, through training, provision of equipment, and internet access.

“This pandemic is an opportunity to change the way that legislative frameworks think about information dissemination about health at the community level.” - Vania Kibui

Panelists also shared approaches for successfully reaching diverse community members with key information. These include:

- Publishing cartoons to elevate issues at the community level.
- Packaging information to be included alongside key commodities, such as disseminating resources for gender-based violence and sexual health through sanitary towel distribution.
- Tapping into the media—especially radio—to share community health messages.

This session was facilitated by **Pauline Irungu**, PATH’s Advocacy and Policy lead for Kenya.



PATH is a global organization that works to accelerate health equity by bringing together public institutions, businesses, social enterprises, and investors to solve the world’s most pressing health challenges. With expertise in science, health, economics, technology, advocacy, and dozens of other specialties, PATH develops and scales solutions—including vaccines, drugs, devices, diagnostics, and innovative approaches to strengthening health systems worldwide.

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