

# the helper



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Compiled and produced by  
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A newsletter between people working with village health programmes.

Around the world there are many programmes in which community or village people are given simple training so that they can go back and help their neighbours in matters of health. These programmes have many differences - such as different names, different kinds of training etc. But in one way they are the same - they all exist mainly to help people to help themselves. That is why we have named their newsletter The Helper. We hope it will help you to help people to help themselves.

## THE STORY OF A PROGRAMME: NANGINA

One of the oldest community helper programmes in Kenya is the one based at Nangina Hospital in West Kenya. In this programme the helpers are called Clan Health Workers (CHWs) because the communities are held together mainly by the clan system. Within this clan system the sense of Christian community is also very strong.

The Nangina CHWs encourage their neighbours to plant kitchen gardens, to immunize their children, to protect their water supplies, to be clean and to follow other practices which prevent disease. Also the CHWs find cases of sickness and help get them started on the road to treatment as early as possible. For some sicknesses treatment may be simply what the patient's family can get from local dukas, or else from their own kitchen (examples: chloroquin, worm dawa or salt-sugar-water mixture for diarrhoea). For more serious sicknesses the CHW helps the family decide if a hospital visit is needed and organizes the visit. The Hospital staff know and trust the CHW. They treat the CHW as part of the hospital care team. So the CHW's referrals are taken seriously.

An important part of the Nangina community-based health care programme is *helping the helpless*. Every community has a few people who cannot seem to get along on their own strength. From time to time they need help. The Nangina CHWs find out about such people and stimulate their neighbours' sense of Christian community to help the helpless get on their own feet again. This help may be in the form of digging or thatching, or gifts of food.



Anna talking to a mother. Anna is the organiser of Clan Health Workers at Nangina.

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Two other things make the Nangina programme work well. These are the Community Health Committees and the regular MCH clinics held in various areas. The CHWs and their Committees have important responsibilities in the running of these

clinics.

In summary, we might say that Nangina Hospital's work goes far beyond its fence. Through its helpers its work extends on a person-to-person basis right into the homes of people in the area it serves.

**THE CHWSU AT AMREF**

**News Notes**

On Aug. 4-9 the Saradidi programme held a seminar for its Health Committees and Helpers (Jakony). The seminar had talks mixed with small group discussions about subjects such as expectations, data collection, communication skills, family health and

certain diseases. Knowledge was also exchanged through plays and singing.

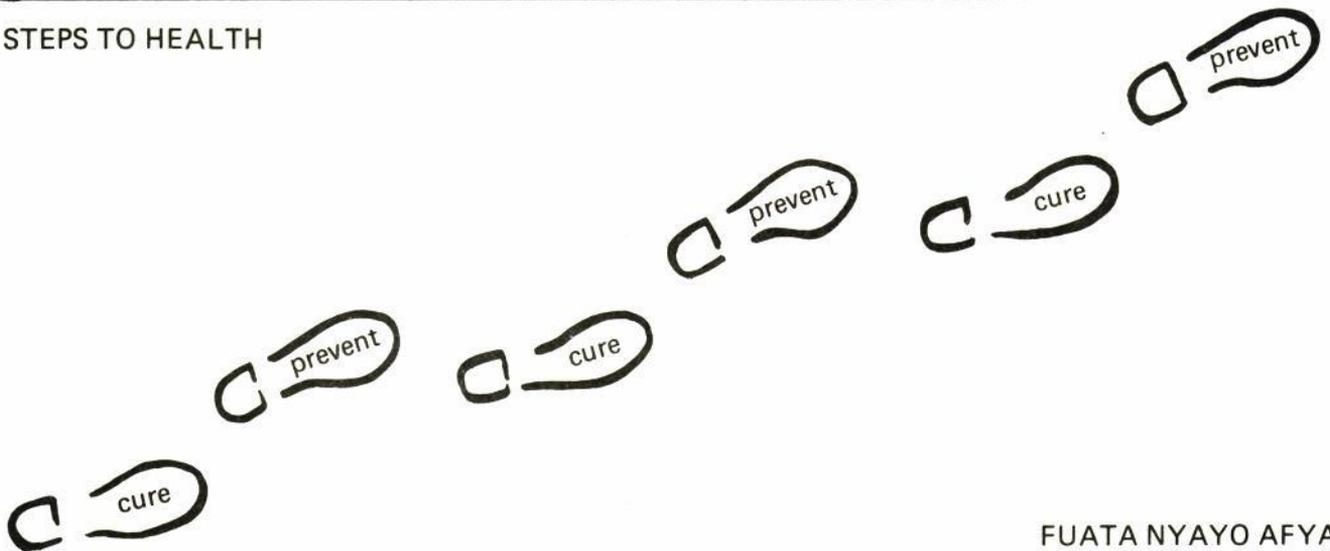
On Aug. 13-15 the Machakos Helpers (P.H.Aides) are having a seminar at Matuu. They will be working together on audio-visual aids (codes) and on ways of evaluating their work. Also they will be meeting with local women's groups to promote ideas about health.

**Steps to Health**

A helper's work is in two main parts: preventing disease and curing disease. These two cannot be separated. They must be kept in balance with each other, just as a person must keep his two feet in

balance when he walks. So we might say that a good helper in her work makes footprints on the path to health. These are the footprint of prevention and the footprint of cure. This picture can be used to stimulate discussion of this idea.

**STEPS TO HEALTH**



**FUATA NYAYO AFYA!**

**DIALOGUE**

This newsletter is about people who help their neighbours to help themselves. What is the name for these people? Well, every place seems to have a different name. Some of the names used in Kenya are Public Health Aide, Clan Health Worker, Community Health Worker, and Village Health Helper. In three places the name used is the local word for helper: Atethesia in Kibwezi, Jakony in Saradidi and Ath-

esia in Maua.

Do you think there might be one name which would be good for all such workers everywhere in Kenya? Such a name would help us to be United. It would also make the whole country know about our work. What are your ideas about a single name for people who work to improve health in their own community or village?

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Your name and address .....