



2019 was an eventful year for the East African region, marked with a number of highlights and challenges. The resilience of the team was tested on several occasions, however their unity and commitment were unwavering, as they remained fully committed to the mission of North Star, by ensuring continuity of care and access to quality healthcare services for some of the hardest to reach, mobile and vulnerable populations across the region.



In June, we secured a grant from the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), which will be used for screenings and treatment of Tuberculosis (TB) in Mombasa, to help curb the spread of this highly infectious disease amongst mobile populations, especially truck drivers. This will be an exceptional opportunity for North Star, as well as our partners, to demonstrate our innovative and impactful approach in the fight against TB. Kenya is classified as a high burden country, and in 2016 a national TB prevalence survey found that approximately 50% of people with TB had not been traced by public health providers. The main purpose of this project therefore, is to identify this missing subset of the population, so they can be treated whilst

simultaneously reducing the spread of infection. In August we were given notice that CDC funding, which had been channelled through Hope Worldwide and used to support our eight Blue Box clinics across Kenya, was to unfortunately end in September. The decision was taken as part of a wider strategic review and realignment of donor support across the country, which included CDC funding, in an effort to minimise the duplication of resource allocation. Despite North Star's achievements in successfully delivering this project, the decision inevitably took its toll on operations, as well as the team.

However, alternative CDC funding was later secured in October via the Key Population Investment Fund (KPIF), which is managed by the Impact Research and Development Organisation (IRDO). The KPIF provides innovative and effective HIV prevention, care and treatment services to key populations across Kenya and their support will be used for the delivery of interventions at our Emali, Kipevu and Jomvu Blue Box clinics.

We were extremely pleased to have secured funding from Grand Challenges Canada (GCC), to scale up the Crisis Response Team (CRT) programme, which was initially rolled out across the Southern region in 2018. The programme applies a multi-sectoral approach to protect sex workers against gender-based violence and the risks of possible infection of HIV and other STI's as a result of sexual abuse. The support received from GCC will be used to significantly upscale CRT activities across both the East and Southern African regions, and will build on the work delivered to date, which has provided an effective safety mechanism for sex workers, to strengthen and support their Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights.

Meanwhile in Uganda, we were extremely pleased to receive confirmation from USAID on the approval of a nine month extension of the Cross Border Health Integrated Partnership Project (CB-HIPP), which is managed by Family Health International 360 (FHI360). This will build on the lessons learned and best practices in the mobilisation of additional resources from other funders, and will be extended to both the Busia and Namayingo districts, including the islands, as well as continuing in the Tororo (Malaba) area, where the project was previously being delivered.



In August, North Star registered in Tanzania as a Non-Governmental Organisation, which is a significant step that will strengthen our position and capacity to mobilise resources from a greater number of partners, funders and suppliers within the country. In the meantime, we also began the process of streamlining local board structures and hosted the first meeting with the new format in December, with some of the professional volunteers who had supported North Star in expanding its Tanzanian operations.

North Star Tanzania continues to deliver its Health and Safety project along the Dar transport corridor, supported by Trafigura Foundation, PUMA Energy Foundation, as well as the Impala and Puma businesses, who also joined us in organising the

annual Road Safety Day event in Tunduma. In addition, we also hosted a partner meeting in Dar at the end of the year, in which we brought together forty local representatives from a range of transport companies.

Further support for the East African region was received through the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP), for outreach activities at the Modjo Dry Port, approximately 64 kilometres from Addis Ababa City. The implementation of this short-term project which began in March 2019, was delivered by the Federal Transport Authority (FTA) with technical support from North Star Alliance.

In July, a team comprising of the UNWFP and FTA visited Kenya to observe and further understand North Star Alliance's operations along the transport corridors, as well as learn about the management of our Roadside Wellness Centres (RWCs), with a view to potentially replicating the model in Ethiopia.

We sustained strong partnerships in the three countries across the region in which we operate, which included further support from Ministries of Health, who continued to provide vital medical supplies to our Blue Box clinics. We also welcomed a number of important guests from partner organisations including GCC, Aidsfonds and the UN World Food Programme, who came to see for themselves, the valuable work we deliver in the field and on the frontline.



In spite of several challenges faced earlier in the year, not least stemming from the realignment of donor support across Kenya, we're optimistic that the region is now in a stabilised position to move forward and build upon the progression that's being made in a wider capacity. We continue to identify opportunities to work with new partners and are very much looking forward to further advancing our more recently established partnerships, as well as developing and progressing our relationships with our longer term donors and supporters. Whilst doing so, we shall at all times be seeking to strengthen the support and access to vital healthcare provision for the marginalised and vulnerable communities we serve across the region.