

Efforts to tackle malnutrition receive boost

By [David Njaaga](#)

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Glenmark, a global integrated pharmaceutical company, will spend Kshs5 million this year on a three-year programme to address malnutrition in Nairobi's Kibera slums.

Speaking during the launch of the programme in Kibera, Jessica Mbochi of the Division of Nutrition in the Ministry of Health said that about 35% of children below the age of five are malnourished and called for more efforts to address nutritional needs of underprivileged families.

Chinnappa Reddy, senior vice president and head of Glenmark's Africa, Russia and Asia operations said the first phase will target 10,000 households in three villages in the slums.

"The objective of the first phase is tracking and recovering Severely Acute Malnourished (SAM) children below five years old. The thrust of this project will be to provide adequate nutrition, complete vaccination and ensuring proper sanitation practices," said Reddy.

The pharmaceutical company through its Child Health Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Programme seeks to make a difference in the lives of underprivileged women and children by addressing malnutrition, hygiene and sanitation in the area.

Speaking on the occasion Kibera MP, Ken Okoth, said "Malnutrition is a major concern in Kibera and I am delighted with this community initiative to address nutritional needs of young children. It's only with concentrated efforts that we can make a difference."

The Child Health project is guided by Glenmark's global philosophy of 'Enriching lives to create a Healthier and Happier World.' Glenmark has tied-up with Carolina for Kibera, an organisation focused on participatory grassroots development, to implement the project.

Introducing the Nutrition Education Centre

Glenmark also announced the inauguration of Nutrition Education Centre in Gatwekera village of Kibera formed with an objective of recovering Severe Acute Malnourished (SAM) children and educating the local community about the issue of malnutrition.

Hillary Omala, executive director at Carolina for Kibera described the project as a novel initiative that will increase

awareness on malnutrition in the community.

Malnutrition or undernourishment is regarded as the biggest child killer and the World Health Organisation (WHO) states that globally about one third of all child deaths are linked to malnutrition. 'Save the Children' organisation notes that sub-Saharan Africa is losing slightly above 1.5 million children under the age of five annually due to malnutrition.

Glenmark has adopted Child Health as its flagship Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) cause and has impacted over 300,000 lives worldwide till date through its various intervention projects.

"We are confident that with the support of the Government of Kenya and the local population, Glenmark's Child Health project in Kibera, Nairobi will set transformation benchmarks in the years to come," said Reddy.

Enriching lives

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A community health worker measures the nutrition grade of a child during the launch of a Nutrition Education Centre by Glenmark in Kibera. Sub-Saharan Africa is losing slightly above 1.5 million children under the age of five annually due to malnutrition.

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