

# A poster for change: HAI's Snakebite First-aid poster is now available in Swahili

It all started in 2018 with the idea of sharing our knowledge on snakebite first-aid with people living in snakebite endemic rural communities all over [Kenya](#), [Uganda](#), and [Zambia](#). With this, we wanted to prevent common mistakes made in the crucial moments after a snakebite, such as applying a tourniquet or cutting the wound after snakebite, which can worsen the situation. We also aimed to encourage health seeking behaviour that can mean the difference between life and death. In particular, this means going immediately to a health facility, and NOT to a traditional healer or using traditional methods, as is often the case in rural communities.

Our major aim was to make the material as accessible and compelling as possible. This included thinking about how to make the materials easy to reproduce, as well as on how we can enable people who have low literacy to understand important first-aid measures. Communities were directly involved through focus group discussions to ensure the illustrations were appealing and relatable to our target audience.

**DO**

**DO** stay calm and reassure the bitten person.



**DON'T**

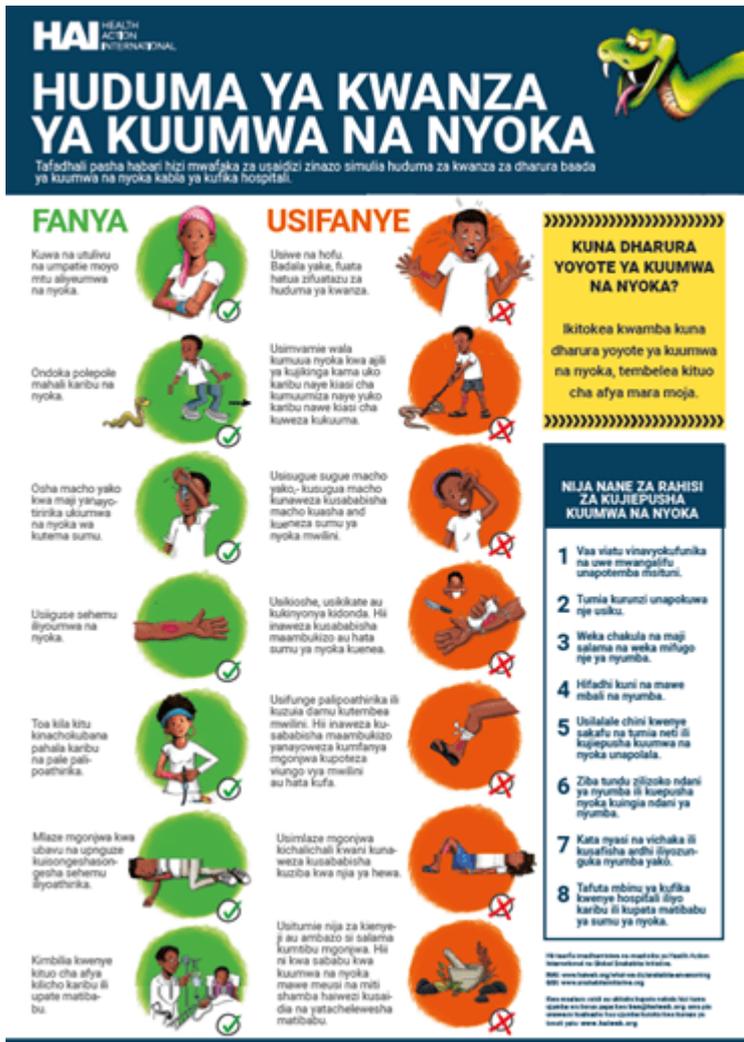
**DON'T** panic. Instead, calmly follow these first aid steps.



Comic style chosen by the focus group.

Based on this knowledge, we developed the Snakebite First-aid poster, which was launched in July 2018. Since then, we have printed and distributed over 1000 posters in 7 counties of Kenya.

But we wanted to increase access to this information even more. While English is one of the two official working languages in Kenya, there are still more speakers of Swahili—especially in rural communities. Although we think that the illustrations communicate the integral elements of snakebite prevention, the Swahili translation enables those who can read and speak Swahili to access the content more easily than with the English version.



HAI's first-aid poster in Swahili.

At the end of June, our in-country partner Dorothy Okemo from MeTA Kenya was finally able to launch and distribute the Swahili version on a fieldtrip to Kajiado County. We produced two-hundred posters, as well as five-hundred handouts for people to take home. The health facilities we visited were happy to receive copies of the poster in Swahili. The Clinical Officer from Singiraine health facility said: "The English version of the poster was mounted on the wall of Entasopia Health Center and Mile 46 Dispensary. The posters were placed strategically either at the facility notice boards, in the waiting area, or in the pharmacy as most people visiting the facility would be likely to see the posters from these vantage points."

The nurse in charge at Singiraine and the head of the Community Health Units (CHAs) both indicated how important the messaging on the posters had been to support their own localised community education on snakebite prevention and first aid. The result has been an increase in persons seeking health care for snakebites. The Clinical Officer from Singiraine health facility continued, "We talked to several victims who indicated their 100% belief that health facility care was the best way to get treatment for snakebites. In previous years the community members used a lot of tourniquets and people used to go to traditional healers, first."

This was echoed by Saruni Duya, a CHV linked to Entasopia Health Center and Lawrence Kision, the head of community health strategy at Entasopia who emphasised, “The message on the poster to go to a health facility immediately after snakebite is now stuck in their heads. I think the Swahili poster will have even more impact”.



**English poster on a wall of Mile 46 Health facility.**



**The community mobiliser Robert and Lawrence Kisosion, head of community health strategy at Entasopia receiving a copy of the Swahili version of the poster as part of the batch for wider dissemination in the households.**

We were also able to distribute 100 handouts to community members. Their reactions were positive. Mzee Stephen Kakunya said the poster had provided valuable information on snakebite treatment and prevention—he did not go to school and so having this in Swahili was very useful. He reiterated that Kajiado is very dry with a lot of snakes, “The snakes are not going anywhere and we cannot eliminate them. We therefore need such information to be able to better take care of ourselves in case of a snakebite, especially since the health facilities are so far away.”



**A group of men from Singiraine area discussing the recommended prevention and first aid measures highlighted in the Swahili Snakebite First-Aid handout.**

In the upcoming months we will continue distributing the posters and hope to help even more people taking the right steps in the event of snakebite.