

Kenya a year without USAID. *Devex*, 13 March 2026

Aid gap bites

A year after the Trump administration's stop-work orders upended the aid landscape, [Kenya is getting the bitter taste](#) of what happens when the foreign funding that long cushioned its social sectors starts drying up.

For years, external financing underpinned key services — especially health, writes *Devex* reporter Ayenat Mersie. Between 2020 and 2025, **USAID committed roughly \$2.5 billion to Kenya**. Now, as those flows shrink, the strain is showing up in drought-hit counties, stretched clinics, and household budgets already under pressure.

“As we speak, about 40% of the population cannot afford \$3 a day,” says **Bernard Njiri**, a public finance analyst at the Nairobi-based Institute of Public Finance.

In northern counties such as Isiolo, the pressures are easy to see. Weak rains have shrunk pasture and crashed livestock prices. Programs that once helped buffer drought shocks — from irrigation canals to solarized pumps — stalled when [USAID](#) funding stopped.

“**There was no adequate preparation in terms of withdrawal. No systems,**” says **Guyo Haro**, an Isiolo-based governance and peacebuilding specialist who worked with USAID. “It’s so abrupt that you could see panic within the NGO staff and the local communities.”

The fallout is also reaching health clinics. A recent study found **steep declines in essential reproductive health supplies** in Isiolo’s public facilities.

“That now puts the country **at risk of losing the gains that we have made so far** in the fight against HIV and AIDS, in the fight against TB, in the fight against malaria,” Njiri says. “The human face behind it is that there are women and girls who now cannot use the method of choice,” **Walter Obita**, the Kenya country director at [MSI Reproductive Choices](#), tells Ayenat.

Read: [A year without USAID — in Kenya, the shock reaches herders and hospitals](#)