

**EMPOWERING WOMEN THROUGH SELF HELP
SAVING GROUPS TO IMPROVE ON THEIR
HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

MBALE DIOCESE

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Background

- My MPHL study done in 2012: The role of the community in increasing facility based deliveries
- Objective to explore the active role of women, men, families and communities and how their empowerment can remove the barriers to facility based deliveries.
- Results: Capacity at the individual level for self-care, care seeking behavior and to a limited extent in birth and emergency preparedness.

cont

- A number of women attended ANC although a few delivered from health facilities
- Adequate knowledge on birth preparedness with some undertaking a number of small activities to prepare for birth.
- Capacity for the community's role in strengthening linkages for social and financial support between women, men, families and the health delivery system was lacking both at the individual and the community level

Mbale Diocese Christian Women Development Union

- Poverty has a negative effect on maternal health
- **Mbale Diocese Christian Women Development Union** was formed to alleviate poverty amongst households in every parish in Mbale Diocese with the theme of Empowering women through their own initiative savings.
- Members have a common spiritual, moral and social-economic goal of improving house hold livelihoods
- Target: By 2021, every family will have saved sufficient funds to start an income generating project.

Our Work

- An empty mineral water bottle with a slot cut into it, money inserted, a minimum of 100/- daily.
- This bottle is the family bank.
- Each week the money is removed, 65% in the archdeaconry bank account, 35% at parish for maternal emergencies.
- Sensitization of mothers to join is done during church services and community meetings.
- Teenage mothers and expectant mothers identified through home cell fellowships by mother care attendants who refer to health facilities to ensure that expectant mothers receive timely services.

Implementation Strategies

- The union takes advantage of the Bishop pastoral work during his line of duty, participate in saving operations and ensure that they work together, use his pulpit to mobilize couples.
- Take advantage of religious gathering to pass relevant information to Christians
- Make use of Church radio programs to talk about women empowerment through savings for maternal health.

Project Achievements

- Eight savings groups in the diocese
- 20M UGX saved in one year.
- Teenager and expectant mothers have joined the union and participate in the activities being implemented
- There is marked improvement in self care, self seeking behavior, birth and emergency preparedness.



Project challenges

- Absence of training equipment and materials such as a projectors and computers to ease the training sessions.
- Transport facilitation for mothers to nearby health facilities
- Inadequate funds to purchase basic requirements for expectant mothers such as mama kits, mosquito nets, beds and blankets.

Lessons Learnt

- Empowering women strengthens delivery in health institutions and increases women knowledge about basic maternal health care.
- Women status and financial security can be improved through community savings
- Training of women in entrepreneur skills and attitude change promotes savings and preparedness.
- Community mobilisation and involvement of stakeholders to raise awareness
- Mobilising local leaders to carry out community meetings at all levels on women rights advocacy.



**Thank You
For
Listening**