

USAID donates bicycles to village health teams

BUGIRI

By Charles Okalebo

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has donated 967 bicycles to Village Health Teams (VHTs) in five districts in the east.

The bicycles are meant to ease the VHTs' work and connect the healthcare providers and the community.

The donation was handed to beneficiaries by the USAID Uganda mission deputy director of health/HIV officer, Michelle Lang-Alli, at Bugiri district headquarters on Thursday.

Lang-Alli said the American people were concerned about rural areas where the young people living with HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) cannot access treatment.

"On behalf of the American people, we are very grateful and impressed by the work done by VHTs in improving health services in the rural areas of Uganda," she said.

She added that the Americans, through USAID, want to improve availability and utilisation of quality health services for individuals and households in the communities.

Lang-Alli said in support of UNAIDS' 90-90-90 strategy, VHTs are using improved contact tracing and highly targeted community-based testing to identify more HIV-positive individuals.

The USAID chief of party, Dr Nathan Tumwesigye, said the donation was made possible by the generous support of the American people through USAID's Regional Health Integration to enhance services in East-Central Uganda activities, which are implemented by University Research Company in collaboration with the AIDS Support Organisation, Youth Alive, Insight Health and Communication for Development Foundation Uganda.

One of the beneficiaries, Lovisa Kagoya, said the facilitation will help the locals to reduce the spread of HIV and TB in the districts of Busoga and Bukedi regions.

Godfrey Wandera of Bulesa sub-county, who has worked for over 10 years as a VHT, said the bicycles will save many lives in the rural areas because most of the people have been failing to do the work due to lack of transport.

Bugiri LC5 chairperson Malijani Azarwa thanked the American people for helping African countries improve health and asked them to also invest in the fight against cancer, which has killed many Ugandans.

Azarwa said most organisations have invested heavily in the areas of HIV, TB, immunisation, nutrition and prevention of malaria, neglecting cancer, which he said had become a major killer.