

Impact. The World Bank's support to the Uganda Health Services Strengthening Project is improving the quality of life in rural areas.

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Bank enabling Ugandans access quality health care

The World Bank is also supporting the capacity of the government of Uganda to provide better health services to its people.

For instance, the World Bank has injected \$130 million in Uganda's health sector through the Uganda Health Services Strengthening Project. The funding is expected to rehabilitate nine regional hospitals, 26 health centre IVs and train health personnel in selected parts of the country.

According to Dr John Tumwesigye, the project coordinator, the money was meant for the period starting 2012 to 2017.

Dr Tumwesigye says within this period, health workers have been trained reproductive health while trucks for the National Medical Stores, 19 ambulances, pickups and motor cycles have been procured for the health centres.

The World Bank also provided additional financing for the project to deliver the Uganda National Minimum Health Care Package (UNMHCP) to Ugandans, with a focus on maternal health, newborn care and family planning.

The additional credit covered the funding shortfall to renovate health facilities under the original project.

"The project ensured basic functionality of the facilities and scaled up services for maternal care. With the adoption of output based aid financing approach, it promoted results-based and demand-side financing in the sector and contributed to improved utilisation of safe delivery services in rural and underserved areas," Dr Tumwesigye adds.

The project restructuring involved revision of the project development objective for improved clarity, revising the results framework, introducing output based aid financing under the improvement of maternal, neonatal and family planning services component.

The World Bank is also financing the Uganda Reproductive Health Voucher Project which is aimed at increasing access to skilled care among poor women living in rural



The World Bank support also includes on focus on maternal health. PHOTO BY FRANCIS MUGERWA

areas during pregnancy and delivery has also been implemented with support from the.

This project comprises two components: packaging safe delivery services to poor pregnant women; and capacity building and project management. The first component has a goal of providing 132,400 pregnant women access to a defined package of safe delivery services from contracted private and public providers.

The component was implemented through a voucher scheme administered by a Voucher Man-

agement Agency (VMA). The voucher entitles pregnant women to access a defined package of safe delivery services from contracted service providers, which are expected to provide the specific services and submit claims along with the appropriate voucher coupons to the VMA for settlement on the basis of the negotiated fees.

The second component is aimed at supporting project management functions and building national capacity to mainstream and scale up implementation of the safe delivery voucher scheme in the health sec-

tor.

The project supports poor mothers in rural and disadvantaged areas of eastern and southwestern Uganda to access a package of reproductive health services through a subsidised voucher scheme, including four antenatal care visits, deliveries with skilled medical attendants, postnatal care, treatment and managing selected pregnancy-related medical conditions and complications and emergency transport.

The package also includes services for elimination of mother-to-

child transmission of HIV, as part of antenatal care.

According to World Bank Group's Country Partnership Framework 2016/2021, the voucher scheme is fully operational in all 25 districts.

As of March 2017, the project had assisted a total of 43,042 safe deliveries and 64,454 antenatal visits.

With the additional funding and the initial delays experienced by the project, the project's closing date will be extended from December 29, 2017 to December 15, 2019. This means the project's targets will also be revised.