



Mothers rest outside the maternity ward at Kibuku Health Centre IV. Photos by Daniel Edyegu

Kibuku district moves to curb teenage pregnancies

LIRA

By Daniel Edyegu

With about two of every 10 mothers seeking antenatal services being teenagers, Kibuku district leaders have turned focus on finding alternatives to reduce teenage pregnancies.

Ahmed Bumba, the Kibuku district health officer, observed that many teenagers are vulnerable because they have to fetch water from boreholes and wells that are far from their homes.

"Most teenage girls here either conceive at boreholes or are defiled by men at these points. We have the community water management

committees at each point where there is a water source. These committees should regulate the time at which teenagers fetch water at boreholes. No teenage girl should be allowed at the borehole beyond 6:30pm," Bumba stressed.

He said while the district is making efforts in curbing teenage pregnancies, the campaign must start with the communities if significant impact is to be realised.

"There are two kinds of teenage mothers who visit our health units – those who conceived while at school and those out of school.

"For those who conceived at school, we encourage them to go back to school after delivery. For those who

conceived out of school, we encourage them to attend all the four antenatal visits and deliver at health units since they are high-risk mothers," Bumba said.

He was speaking during a scorecard consultative meeting organised by Makerere School of Public Health at Kibuku town council on Friday.

The community scorecard in Kibuku, under the Future Health Systems scheme, seeks to find out barriers to maternal and newborn health, with an aim of enhancing service delivery and accountability.

A community scorecard is a two-way participatory tool for assessment, planning, monitoring and evaluation of services. The scorecard brings

together service providers and users to jointly analyse issues concerning service delivery problems and find a common and shared way of addressing arising issues.

Dr Elizabeth Ekirapa-Kiracho, the team leader Future Health System, explained that the scorecard is collecting views from the communities, political leaders and medical staff.

"We are meeting each of these groups separately. There are a lot of concerns on problems surrounding maternal health in Uganda. You cannot blame a single person or stakeholder. You have to hear from all sides.

Medical workers have their

concerns and so do the mothers. Husbands have their issues and so do the political leaders. We are seeking a workable solution from all these people," Ekirapa said.

Immaculate Mudhanga, the officer in charge of Kadama Health Centre, said whereas they initially mixed all mothers together in dispensing antenatal services, they have lately separated teenage mothers from the rest to specifically cater for their needs.

"At times, teenage mothers shy away from sharing their issues with us if mixed up. So we attend to them separately to enable free sharing of information and counseling," Mudhanga said.



A midwife attends to a mother at the health centre

Appreciation