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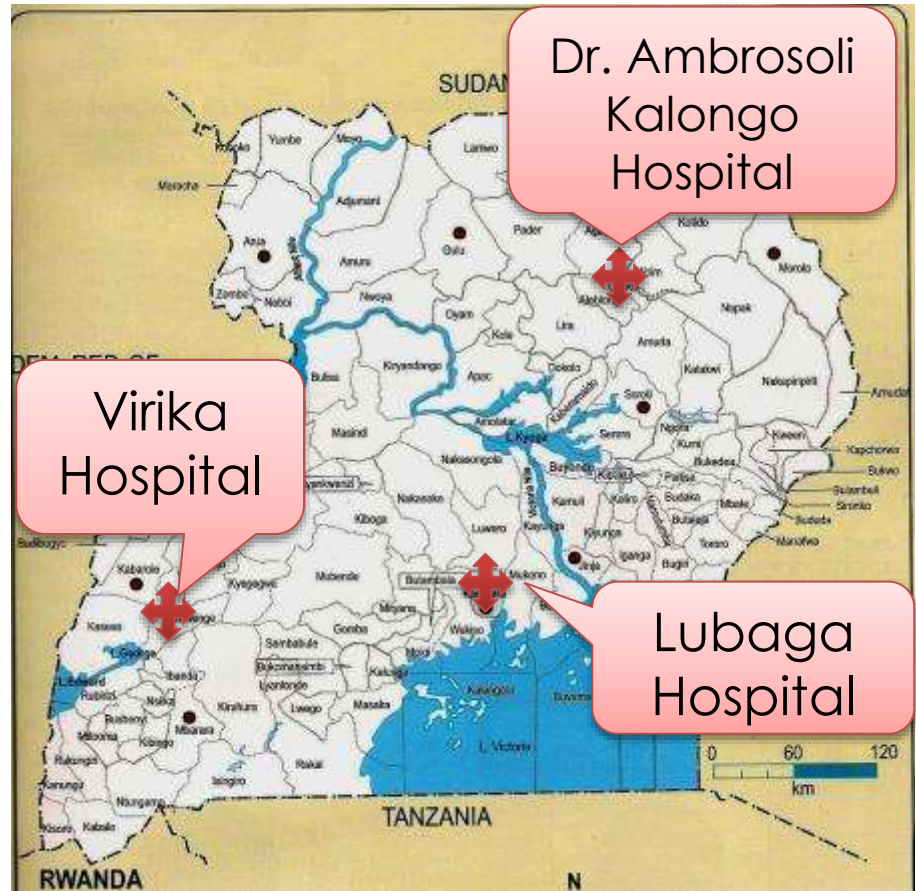
**Faith-Based Communities in Africa : An Integral Part of Improving
Family Planning and Reproductive Health
Natural Plan Project (NPP), Uganda**

Objectives of grant

- Quality couple-friendly fertility awareness-based method (FAM) services are utilized by women and their partners
- Couples communicate effectively about family planning

Dates of the Grant:

January 2014 - June 2015



Problem

- Ugandan 5y National Development Plan (2010-15) acknowledges that limited access to FP hinders development, women in particular.
- 44% of women who conceive would have wished to either delay or postpone the pregnancies
- Unmet need for family planning among currently married women: 34%
 - Unmet need for spacing (21%)
 - Unmet need for limiting (14%)
- Reasons for the unmet need:
 - Fear of side effects and health concerns (36%)
 - Postpartum/Amenorrhea (29%)
 - Opposition by spouses or religious prohibition (19%)

How NPP Addresses the Problem

- Women need options that suit their individual situations and local context. The **inclusion of FAM options within a FP/RH service package allows health systems to address the diverse needs** of its population and expand access to safe, low cost FP methods.
- NPP is expanding access to FAM at the facility and community level ; **UCMB coordinates and serves 32 Hospitals i.e. 25% of all Hospitals in Uganda, 57% of all PNFH Hospitals and 251 Lower level Units**
- FAM package includes: Lactational Amenorrhea Method, Standard Days Method with CycleBeads (new), TwoDay Method (new), and Billings.
- Strengthening couple communication through tested curriculum: The Faithful House.

FAM Methods in NPP

METHOD	EFFECTIVENESS WITH CORRECT USE
Standard Days Method (SDM)	95%
TwoDay Method (TDM)	96%
Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM)	98%
Billings Ovulation Method	98-99%

Implementation Team

Implementing Organization:

Uganda Catholic Medical Bureau (UCMB)

- 3 UCMB Lead Health Facilities (Referral Hospitals)
- 19 Lower Level Health Facilities (Level II-III health centers)
- 5 FBOs/CBOs, e.g. Ndeeba catholic parish, voice of salvation church Kalongo and Montunte women group
- 40 Expert couples trained in The Faithful House and FAM service provision



Technical Assistance Partners:

Catholic Relief Services (CRS)

Institute for Reproductive Health (IRH)



Implementation Activities

Training & Service Delivery

- Providers equipped to inform and counsel clients on FAM options at the facility and community level
- Referrals for further medical support to Health facilities and Hospitals

Supervision

3 Lead Health Facilities coordinate, support and supervise expert couples, lower level health units, CBOs/FBOs through:

- On-site supportive supervision with the Knowledge improvement Tool (KIT)
- Monthly support meetings with providers



Expert couple counsel on SDM with CycleBeads



Supervision visit with healthcare workers and expert couples

Implementation Activities

Awareness Raising

- Expert couples sensitize community through home visits and health talks at group gatherings
- Radio spots introduce new FAM and where to find services
- Care campaign: IEC campaign targeting the couple relationship provides personalized voice and SMS feedback to potential and current FP users

Creating a supportive environment

Improving male involvement in family planning decision making through the couple communication strengthening of The Faithful House curriculum



Care Campaign poster



TFH/FAM Beneficiary workshop

Progress to date

- 45 healthcare workers and 40 expert couples from selected project sites trained in FAM, Virika and Lubaga had providers trained in Billings methods.
- 20 additional healthcare workers trained from other sites across Uganda due to increased interest
- Recruited 2,319 new FAM users in year 1 (compared to the project target of 1,080 clients)
- Generated demand for FAM services in the communities and health facilities over 14,000 people reached
- Joined Maternal Life Technical Working Group of MoH



**FAM
training
for
health
care
workers**

Quarterly Uptake of FAM, 2014

Total number of new FAM users in 2014: **2,319 users**



Male Involvement

NPP has placed a strong emphasis on male involvement and couple communication. The majority of FP counseling is done with both the woman and her partner.

No. of male partners accompanying their spouses to access FAM services

Year 2014	Site 1: Kalongo	Site 2: Lubaga	Site 3: Virika	Total
July-Sept.	247	75	116	438
Oct-Dec.	211	50	439	700



Special messages

- NPP slogan "The **smart , Responsible and couple centered choice**" spot messages running over local radio stations, T-shirts, and Tyre covers enables the community generate conversions about FP
- **Benefits of Natural Family Planning, scientific effectiveness of modern FAMs, their availability and free accessibility** at Lubaga, Kalongo and Virika Hospitals through radio talk shows
- CARE Campaign posters i.e. **Couple Relationship assessment campaign**, with questions aimed at quick **evaluation of one's relationship** and whether they are informed about FAM displayed in public places
- One of the defining attributes of FAM is that men must be involved. FAM counseling and TFH workshops **prioritize reaching out to men** and inviting their participation alongside their partner.
- The Natural Plan Project Goal: improve FAM utilization through **enhanced couple communication** and expand access to simply FAM services, LAM, Standard Days Method® (SDM) & TwoDay Method



Challenges

Challenges	Possible solutions	Lessons Learnt
Few trained providers compared to client demand and geographic coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Train more providers at facility and community level, even outside project sites-Include FAM in curricula for healthcare workers (starting with nursing schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Need buy-in from facility management to value FP services as part of full package of health services-Well informed and equipped providers are crucial in effective FAM promotion
Lack of FAM awareness & misconceptions about effectiveness	<p>Continue awareness creation and effective service provision</p>	<p>FAM is acceptable and appreciated by many users once accurate information and quality services are available</p>
Delays in project start-up & short implementation timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Explore self-study training for expansion after project ends- Advocate with MoH and JMS to ensure CycleBeads availability	<p>Ensure project design allows for rapid start-up when implementation timeline is short</p>

Tools

Training & Supervision

- FAM Provider training manual for healthcare workers
- Faithful House & FAM provider training curricula
- Knowledge Improvement Tool (KIT)
- Expert couple quality performance checklist

Service Delivery

- Family Planning Service Provision Reporting Tool
- FP method job aids and client cards
- CycleBeads

Awareness Raising

- FAM posters and flyers
- Care Campaign posters and flyers
- Faithful House IEC materials and job aids



Interventions Planned

- Continue to strengthen capacity of FAM providers and Faithful House facilitators through supportive supervision
- Implement Knowledge Improvement Tool (KIT) to strengthen capacity of FAM providers and assess counseling capacity
- Develop capacity to serve as a center of excellence in FAM for other programs in Uganda interested in FAM integration
- Conduct meetings with stakeholders to share project results
- Continue advocacy efforts with MOH, donors, and UCMB leadership to ensure FAM integration



Meeting with MOH District Health Team

Scale-up Possibilities

- After discovery of a large demand for FAM options and Faithful House workshops, services should be expanded across the UCMB network and other Uganda health facilities/communities.
- Sensitization for decision makers to ensure that FAM is well integrated into the national family planning strategy
- Increased efforts in awareness raising
- Strengthen behavior change activities to support FP uptake and correct/continued use by reducing alcoholic tendencies, strengthening couple communication, reducing GBV



Community awareness raising

Thank you!

