

USAID LPHS-E ACTIVITY BULLETIN



The State Minister for Primary Health, Ms. Hanifa Kawooya, Butaleja District Woman MP, Florence Nebanda, the 3rd Deputy Prime Minister, Ms. Lukia Nakadema and the US Mission Director, Mr. Richard Nelson pose for a photo during the commemoration of the World TB Day in Butaleja.



USAID LPHS-E Technical Director, Dr. Winnie Akoby explains some of the project's milestones at the World TB Day Commemoration.



Baylor-Uganda Executive Director, Dr. Dithan Kiragga, Uganda Health Activity Regional Director for Mbale Region, Dr. Andrew Otero and USAID LPHS-E Project Director, Mr. Alex Mugume pose for a photo during the Commemoration of World TB Day in Butaleja District.



A TB survivor from Tororo District gives testimony during the Commemoration of World TB Day.

MESSAGE FROM THE PROJECT DIRECTOR



Dear Esteemed Reader,

We are excited to bring to you our January – March 2023 Bulletin, which is dedicated to informing you about the strides USAID Local Partner Health Services - Eastern (USAID LPHS-E) Activity is making toward improving the health of Ugandans in the Eastern region by providing comprehensive high-quality person-centered HIV and TB prevention and treatment services.

The USAID LPHS-E Activity is implemented by Baylor-Uganda in 15 districts and one city namely; Budaka, Bududa, Bukwo, Bulambuli, Butaleja, Butebo, Kapchorwa, Kibuku, Kween, Manafwa districts, Tororo, Namisindwa, Sironko, Pallisa and Mbale City in Eastern Uganda.

It's my pleasure to introduce to you some of the key contributions USAID LPHS-E has made during the period January -March 2023, towards achieving HIV epidemic control in Uganda by addressing the critical bottlenecks in HIV testing, retention, and viral suppression.

USAID LPHS-E supported health facilities to provide targeted, high-yield HIV testing and counselling services, and 2,081 newly diagnosed PLHIV were linked to Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART). Cumulatively, 42,889 clients were active on ART by the end of March 2023. In addition, 2,357 TB infected people were initiated on anti-TB treatment.

Needless to say, all these results wouldn't have been registered had it not been for the financial and technical support from USAID, the commitment of project staff, strong partnerships with the Ministry of Health, local governments, USAID-supported IPs, like-minded civil society organizations, and local communities.

We are happy to continue the productive collaborations with all of you as we impact lives and work towards ending HIV and AIDS in Uganda by 2030. I hope you will find this issue useful and informative.

Happy reading.

Alexander Mugume

Project Director – USAID-LPHS-E Activity

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HOSTING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE WORLD TB AND LEPROSY DAY.

The Ministry of Health selected Butaleja District to host the national commemoration of World TB Day 2023 as an event that will raise awareness about the disease in the district and the Bukedi region as a whole. The Ministry of Health, Butaleja district leadership, and implementing partners like Mbale Regional Referral Hospital, Uganda Stop TB Partnership, USAID Social Behavior Change Communication Activity, USAID Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services- Eastern, the USAID Health Activity, USAID TB-Activity worked together to make the commemoration a success.

Without leadership support in the districts, activity implementation is always a challenge. USAID LPHS-E engaged leaders to participate in radio talk shows to rally the communities toward TB prevention and treatment. Routine reviews of 13 hubs were done with the aim of assessing performance and suggesting areas for improvement for challenges identified.

In addition, USAID LPHS-E supported the Butaleja District organizing committee for the Commemoration of World TB Day to hold a Breakfast meeting for Butaleja District Leaders and other stakeholders. The breakfast meeting sought support

from all stakeholders to support the fight against TB in Butaleja and Bukedi as a region. With a tagline: What are you doing to end TB? district and community leaders pledged at the breakfast meeting, to mobilize the masses for the commemoration event that was held at the Boma Grounds on Friday, March 24, 2023. To improve the uptake of TB services, the leaders also pledged to continue mobilizing and sensitizing communities for TB services.



The Butaleja District Police Commander, Robinson Watmon and District Internal Security Officer, George Otingowinyu consult each other about the TB burden among the uniformed officers after the World TB Day launch Breakfast meeting in the Butaleja District.

CAST TB CAMPAIGN IDENTIFIES 305 CASES, 6 FROM SCHOOLS

To contribute to the global target of ending TB by 2030, USAID LPHS-E facilitated health sites to implement a CAST TB campaign in 14 of the 16 districts in the region. Guided by the National TB Program, the Activity conducted door-to-door screening in TB high-burden villages and communities.

Two VHTs per village or hotspot were oriented and supported to conduct door-to-door TB sensitization and screening and sample collection from those presumed to have TB. From 632 hotspots, the health workers screened 47,570 people from the 21,127 households



Community members line up for TB screening by the mobile x-ray van.

they visited. Out of all screened people, 10,565 were presumed to have TB. In total, 283 were diagnosed with TB.

USAID LPHS-E worked with 15 districts to conduct TB awareness in 62 schools. The campaign was done in three to four schools per district. Health workers from the health facilities neighboring the schools conducted the awareness in the

schools. In total, the health workers reached 56,303 learners and school staff with TB awareness messages. Of this total, they screened 47,113 and identified 4,615 as presumptive TB cases. Of the 4,615 presumptive TB cases, 6 TB cases were diagnosed and linked to the health facilities for TB treatment initiation. This activity was jointly supervised by the

DHOs and the DEO's office at the district level. By the end of March 2023, 257/283 (91%) of the notified TB cases of CAST TB had been initiated on treatment. Between October 2022 and March 2023, health facilities notified 2,408 of 2,593 new and relapse TB cases. All cases had a documented HIV status achieving a TB ART of 91% (683/ 753) of the COP 22 target of 753.

COMMEMORATING WOMEN'S DAY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MBALE CITY COUNCIL

In commemoration of International Women's Day, USAID LPHS-E collaborated with the Mbale City Council to hold a dialogue at Mbale Central Market. The dialogue focused on the prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) and how it affects the fight against HIV. The dialogue was headed by the Mbale City Community Officer Ms. Daina Namutosi and the City Health Educator Ms. Zuena Nagudi and counselors. Participants learned about family planning and responsible parenthood where they can teach their children about living responsibly.



City Health Educator Ms. Zuena Nagudi talking during the dialogue at Mbale Central Market.

CONDUCTING DISTRICT YAPS ENTRY MEETINGS WITH MINISTRY OF HEALTH

To further strengthen adolescent HIV care in the region, USAID LPHS-E collaborated with the Ministry of Health to scale up the Young Adolescent Support (YAPS) model during FY23Q2. The YAPS model aims to fast-track the high burden of HIV among adolescents and young people within these districts.



Young Adolescent Support Peers lead a discussion during a movie night organized by USAID LPHS-E. At such meetings, YAPS are free to open up on issues affecting them.

The main purpose of this activity was to introduce the YAPS intervention to district stakeholders and obtain their support for the smooth implementation of the initiative in the districts. Entry meetings were conducted in Bukwo, Kween, Manafwa, Budaka, and Kibuku districts. Ministry of Health resource persons oriented the district leadership and other stakeholders about the YAPS concept. A total of 123 participants drawn from the health department, secretaries for health, DHIV Focal persons, community, police, education, production departments, district leaders, and LCV chairpersons participated in the entry meetings.

During the quarter, USAID LPHS-E in

collaboration with the Ministry of Health conducted YAPS peer attachment following a day of didactic training in Mbale District at Rocy Hotel. The attachment was aimed at establishing the YAPS in their respective health facilities and initiating them into service delivery. The field attachment laid a foundation and ensured that the YAPS roles and responsibilities were clarified, and key working tools and processes initiated. The placement was conducted in Bison HC III, Malaba HC IV, Nagongera HC III, Hospital, Kapchorwa Hospital Centre III, Kamuge Health Centre III, Bushika HC III, Bukigayi HC III, Bududa Hospital, Palisa Hospital, Gogonyo HC III and Muyembe HC IV.

HEALTH MINISTRY ACCREDITS 7 MORE VMMC SITES AFTER JOINT MENTORSHIPS

Between January and March 2023, the Ministry of Health (MoH) accredited nine more voluntary medical male circumcision (VMMC) sites in the region. The nine sites are Kameke HCIII, Kapchorwa General Hospital, Mukujju HCIV, Bukwo Hospital, Tororo General Hospital, Budadiri HCIV, Buwasa HCIV, Bulucheke HCIII, and Nagongera HCIV.

The accreditation follows joint mentorships of 12 sites accredited between October and December 2022 by MoH, USAID LPHS-E, Rakai Health Services, and Baylor Rwenzori. The mentorship aimed at improving emergency care, accurate documentation, client follow-up, and adverse event monitoring.



A group of surgeons performing Safe Male Circumcision at Tororo General Hospital. Safe male circumcision is one of the recommended preventive HIV measures by the World Health Organization.

The joint mentorship revealed at all sites an improvement in data management, teams trained in emergency management, and adequate stock of safe male circumcision supplies. All sites had SMC policy documents and the guideline version 2020. Most sites managed to get a client for the assessment.

Of the 21 sites offering VMMC services, 19 have targets. Between October 2022 to March 2023, LPHS-E supported 22,626 circumcisions in the region at 19 sites.

16 HUB REVIEW MEETINGS HELD TO STRENGTHEN SAMPLES AND RESULTS IN DELIVERY SYSTEM

USAID LPHS-E conducted 16 district-based hub review meetings to foster engagements with different stakeholders and share performance and experiences, and best practices. The meetings aimed to identify areas of improvement in the hub sample

and results in the delivery system. During these meetings, LPHS-E engaged district leadership; tackled the long turnaround time for results, and used viral load calendars for identification of eligible clients and hub riders support services.



Samuel Erelu, a Laboratory Technician at Pallisa General Hospital, Pallisa District investigates a sample. Pallisa General Hospital is one of the hubs that USAID LPHS-E supports in the region.

VOICES FROM THE FIELD

Echogeya moves from anxiety to passion in TB implementation.

In 2021, Joy Echogeya left Apac Hospital to start work in Bison HC III, Tororo District, Eastern Uganda.

At Bison HC III, Echogeya was charged with supporting TB & HIV. And she was chosen to deputize the In-Charge of the TB clinic. Shortly after, the In-Charge was transferred. Echogeya moved up to head the TB clinic.

Recalls Echogeya: ***“At first, I was apprehensive about being in charge of the TB clinic. I was expected to serve patients yet I had knowledge gaps in providing TB care.***

At the time, few facilities were offering TB LAM, or checking for advanced disease in people living with HIV. Before we were doing badly. We were serving about 1000 patients per month but 500 are not presumed.”

Motivated by working in HIV, an area she was conversant with, Echogeya overcame hurdles that came with complicated personalities at work. Life became easier. And she picked up courage and consulted her colleagues. One such colleague was the Laboratory Technician who had been trained in TB activity implementation earlier.

“I was open about my knowledge gap. I also read widely about the subject,” says Echogeya

Soon, Echogeya attended a four-day training in Advanced HIV Disease (AHD) management and Viral load monitoring in November 2022 organized by USAID Local Partner Health Services- Eastern (LPHS-E) Activity. Baylor-Uganda implements LPHS-E in 15 districts and one city in Eastern Uganda. This helped close some of the knowledge gaps that

Echogeya had.

LPHS-E topped up the training with Continuous Medical Education (CME) sessions in the TB area. And with several CMEs, more hands came on deck. Even a layperson at Bison HCIII could conduct TB screening.

“What excited me most was learning about resistance testing and advanced disease. After learning about the importance of giving TPT to contact persons of the index patient, I kept wondering how many people would have been prevented from getting the disease if we have given TPT early to their contacts,” says Echogeya.

The Activity continued supporting the district in TB implementation. When the health centre requested for a TB stamp to be used during screening at OPD, LPHS-E provided it. USAID LPHS-E continues to facilitate the health workers and VHTs to move to communities to conduct contact tracing.

“With the new knowledge, I can now serve clients better. But I would like to learn more about palliative care so that I specialize in this field.”



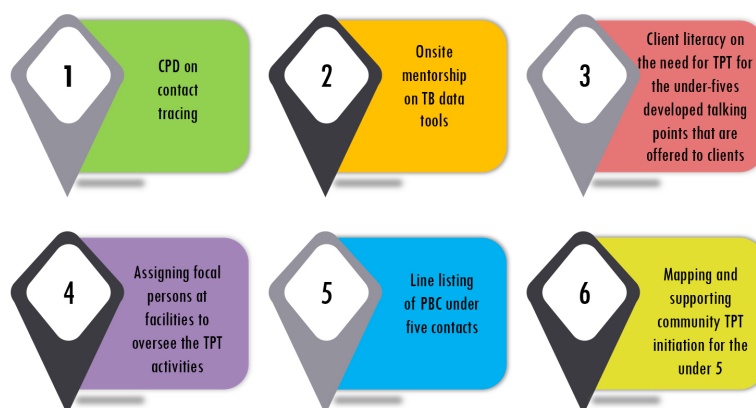
Joy Echogeya attends to a patient in the TB Clinic at Bison HC III, Tororo District, Eastern Uganda.

QUALITY IMPROVEMENT FOR PrEP PROGRAMMING

During the quarter, USAID LPHS-E supported PrEP services at six facilities using a collaborative approach. The facilities supported included; Mbale Regional Referral Hospital, Namakwekwe HCIII, Namatala HCIV, Bison HCIII, Mukujju HCIV, and Tororo General Hospital. The Activity Mentored Work Improvement Teams and enabled the functionality of national QI collaboratives to support PrEP initiation and PrEP continuity.

In FY23Q2, USAID LPHS-E conducted a PrEP harvest meeting in which facility PrEP focal persons from three (3) collaborative facilities of Bison HCIII, Mukujju HCIV, and Tororo General Hospital were invited to document best practices and develop change packages for PrEP initiation, continuity on PrEP and appointment keeping.

Change package for TPT initiation among children under 5 years of age



Change package for screening at OPD



TB/HIV COLLABORATIVE HARVEST MEETING

In Q2 FY23, USAID LPHS-E with support from MOH supported to conduct the TB HIV collaborative harvest meeting to document best practices to guide implementation of TB HIV activities. At this meeting, the facility in charge, TB focal persons, district and regional coaches from Chebonet HCIII, Budaka HCIV, Kiyenyei HCIII, Bumadanda HCIII, Bubolo HCIV, and Bududa Hospital were invited to rank and document tested changes from facilities implementing the TB HIV collaborative. The following best practices were documented.

COLLABORATIONS

Partners move to support Key Populations to receive services.

Engaging key and priority populations (KP&PP) is crucial for the control of the HIV epidemic in Uganda and the world as a whole. Thus, USAID LPHSE-Activity continues to collaborate with various partners to provide KP and PPs with quality health services.

In October 2022, USAID LPHS-E worked with USAID SITES to give KP technical assistance in the KP Identification Code (KPIC) in Malaba HC IV and Busiu HC IV. The support was intended to improve accurate data management.

After the partners' visit, the facilities, USAID LPHS-E procured 05 filing cabinets and distributed HMIS tools to KP services. In collaboration with USAID Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services- Eastern (RHITES-E) and the Ministry of Health, USAID LPHS-E trained 30 KP peers for five days in the Enhanced Peer Outreach (EPOA).

“Before we had a gap in documentation. But LPHS-E mentored us in the use of the audit tool and how to fill it. We are now working with the right people and reaching the real KPs through hot spot mapping.” says Olivia Namujjumbi, the KP Case Management Officer, at Namakwekwe HC III, Mbale District.

By the end of March 2023, USAID-LPHS-E reached 7,220 KPs with prevention interventions. Its engagement with KP peers enabled the health facilities and Drop-In Centres (DICs) to provide risk reduction counseling, condom promotion, sexually transmitted infections (STI) screening, and referrals for KP. In total 6,807 KPs received HIV testing, of which 109 were identified

as positive and linked to care. Out of the 10,399 clients screened for PrEP, 97% (10,068/10,399) were enrolled on PrEP resulting in an overall KP_PrEP CT of 4,290 (151%).

Further, Makerere University School of Public Health's Integrated Bio Behavioural Survey for 1,449 female sex workers in Mbale and Tororo supported referrals for prevention services, including PrEP, ART, and STI management.

LPHS-E participates in entry meetings with UHA.

To increase USAID's regional presence, USAID LPHS-E collaborated with the USAID Health Activity (UHA) to organize the latter's entry meetings. Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), district chairpersons, cultural and religious leaders, district heads of departments, and other key regional implementing partners attended the inception meeting held at Mbale Resort Hotel in April 2023.

The Project Director, Mr. Alex Mugume, and the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Director, Mr. Frehd Nghania represented LPHS-E in this regional meeting. Nghania presented an overview of the Activity's performance and commitments to districts.

Soon after 16 district individual meetings followed, in which the Activity senior management team and Cluster-based staff participated. The LPHS-E shared cluster and district contexts regarding its HIV and TB mandate in the Bugisu and Bukedi health sub-regions.

The UHA entry meetings aimed to introduce to district stakeholders the new Activity, its scope of work, intervention areas, approach, implementation methodology, roles, and responsibilities in the region.

They aimed also to create a common understanding of key gaps in the region and strategies aligned to UHA's scope of work, areas of collaboration, and synergy. The meetings helped highlight the process of transition of USAID RHITES-E activities to UHA and other implementing partners in the region; finalize the signing of memoranda of understanding and conduct micro-planning for the next six months.

The LCV chairpersons, RDCs, District Police Commanders, Chief Administrative Officers, District Health Officers, District Education Officers, members of District Executive Committee, other District Health Team members, LC III

chairpersons and representatives of • Senior Assistant Secretary, cultural and religious leaders, other IPS and some Health Information Assistants attended these meetings.



A health worker attends to a female sex worker during a clinic day visit in Namakwekwe HC III, Mbale City.

The districts applauded USAID LPHS-E implemented by Baylor-Uganda for efforts to fight HIV and TB in the region.

"I am thankful and confident that Baylor will deliver having worked in districts where it has operated before," said Harriet Nakamyia, the RDC of Kibuku District.

The LPHS-E leadership committed to strengthening the systems by offering technical assistance so to achieve targets.



The District Health Officer, Dr. Godfrey Buyinza leads a discussion on UHA priority areas in the region.

ABOUT USAID LPHS-E

The USAID Local Partner Health Services Eastern (USAID LPHS-E) Activity is a five-year initiative that builds on USAID investments and national advances in the region to increase access to and use of high-quality integrated services that accelerate the ability and capacity of health services to respond to health needs of the area residents. USAID LPHS-E is implemented by Baylor Uganda and supported by the Uganda Muslim Rural Development Association (UMURDA), Mbale Area Federation of Communities LTD (MAFOC), and Kagumu Development Organization (KADO) to strengthen HIV/TB health services penetration in the targeted communities.



Objectives

- To improve the health of Ugandans in the eastern region by supporting the achievement of the USAID Mission's following sub-purposes:
- Quality facility-based HIV and TB prevention services provided to scale.
- Quality, targeted, high yield, facility-based HIV testing and counseling services provided to scale
- All diagnosed people living with HIV and TB promptly initiated on ART/TB treatment.
- All diagnosed people living with HIV and TB who are on treatment achieve viral suppression.
- And, the target districts have the institutional capacity to sustain epidemic control and maintain the response.

Districts of operation:

In Eastern Uganda, USAID LPHS-E operates in 15 districts and one city. The districts are grouped in clusters as follows:

Cluster 1: Bududa, Manafwa, Mbale, Namisindwa , Tororo and Mbale City,

Cluster 2: Bulambuli, Bukwo, Kapchorwa, Kween, and Sironko,

Cluster 3: Budaka, Butaleja, Butebo, Kibuku and Pallisa