

# Women and Children First

## Improving reproductive, maternal, and newborn health (MNH) and reducing mortality in Uganda



Communities supported  
**200**

Lives saved  
**64**

Women, children and adolescents benefiting  
**31,223**

### Problem

Oyam, Northern Uganda, is at peace now, but was ravaged by a long conflict until 2006. As a result the region faces many challenges, including in maternal, adolescent, and child health. In the country, 1 in 277 births ends in a woman dying in pregnancy, childbirth or shortly after birth.

### Approach

#### Community Mobilisation through WCF Life course tool

- 200 PLA groups established with 20,703 members: 14,623 women (incl. 5,333 adolescent girls), 6,080 men.
- 200 Adolescent Champions trained to provide peer support on sexual and reproductive health matters.

- Developed local answers including: clearing of mosquito breeding sites; awareness raising on importance of using bed nets, maternal and newborn danger signs and importance of healthcare seeking; establishing health saving funds.

### Health systems strengthening

- 182 volunteer health teams supported and 24 health workers trained in youth friendly service provision.
- Provision of medical equipment and supplies, training and supportive supervision to 9 health facilities.

### Advocacy

- Project staff routinely shared evidence from the project and lobbied with key decision-makers raising community concerns.

### Covid-19

The project supported Covid-19 response, incl. supply of PPE to health facilities, awareness raising.

Of 800 women surveyed, one-third declared that Covid-19 reduced their use of MNH services.

### Results

- Improvements in care-seeking: antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, postnatal care, contraception uptake (see Fig. 1\* & 2\*\*)
- Improvements in service quality: 93% perceived the health centres to be of excellent quality at endline (Fig 3\*\*).
- 27%\*\* reduction in women facing many barriers to accessing healthcare.
- 12,574 adolescent girls and boys reached by Adolescent Champions.

### Lessons learned

- PLA groups are a relevant and effective way to stimulate community action on maternal, newborn and adolescent health.
- Adolescent Champions are relevant for mobilising adolescents. However, more collaboration is needed with sectors beyond health, such as the education and judicial sectors.

### Partner

Doctors with Africa CUAMM

### Funder

Comic Relief, Big Lottery Fund, Vitol Foundation

### Dates

2017 - 2020

### Project population

111,566

Oyam District, Uganda (Myene, Ngai, Abok and Otwal sub-counties)



Figure 1: % change in intervention and control areas in Myene & Ngai

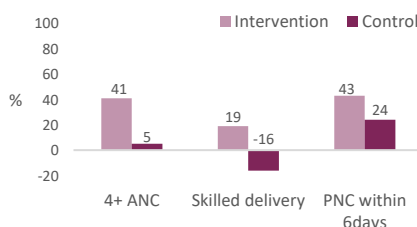


Figure 2: Change in care and care-seeking practices in Abok & Otwal\*\*

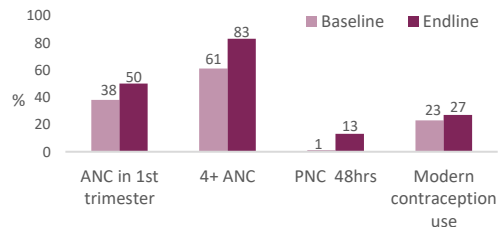
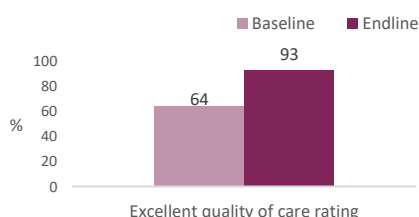


Figure 3: Improvements in quality of care in Abok and Otwal\*\*



*"Miriam was constantly hot, yellow eyes, vomiting. [...] I thought she wouldn't survive."* Agnes, who has an 8-month old baby Miriam, learnt about malaria from her local volunteer health worker, trained by the WCF project.

*"I decided to bring Miriam to the hospital. My baby was admitted in the ward and treated with injections. She's now alive and playing well!"*

Agnes, PLA group member

\*Results based on data analysis of routine Health Management Information System (HMIS) in Myene and Ngai sub-counties. The analysis focuses on observed trends rather than exact data points due to issues with HMIS data quality.

\*\* Results based on baseline and endline survey in Abok and Otwal sub-counties.