Jhpiego in Uganda

Background

Jhpiego has worked in Uganda for more than 30 years, beginning in the early 1980s with a project funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to train faculty from Makerere University’s Department of Obstetrics/Gynecology in reproductive health. In the late 1990s, Jhpiego focused on increasing the capacity of the Ugandan nursing, midwifery, clinical officer and medical schools under the USAID-funded Delivery of Improved Services for Health Project. Jhpiego also helped to establish the Regional Center for Quality of Health Care in Uganda. From 2004 to 2007 through the University Technical Assistance Project award from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Jhpiego worked to establish and develop a local nongovernmental organization (NGO) called Protecting Families against AIDS, or PREFA, to scale up services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. In 2006, the USAID-funded ACCESS Program, through Jhpiego and IMA World Health, collaborated on a pilot program in the Kasese District with three faith-based organizations to increase uptake of intermittent preventive treatment to prevent malaria in pregnancy. Jhpiego also provided technical support as a subawardee to Management Sciences for Health on the five-year Reproductive Health, Family Planning and Child Survival (STRIDES for Family Health) Project, and expanded access to high-quality HIV prevention, care and treatment services for the Ugandan military under a subaward with RTI International.

More recently, from 2008 to 2010, the General Electric (GE) Foundation funded Jhpiego to conduct an infection prevention and control project to reduce the risks of clients, their families and health workers acquiring and transmitting potentially life-threatening infections, including HIV, through accidental exposure to blood and body fluids or contaminated objects. From 2008 to 2010, the GE Foundation also supported an initiative to address maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality at five health facilities in southwest Uganda through high-impact, evidence-based interventions known to reduce maternal and newborn mortality. Based on the success of this work, the GE Foundation made an additional award to Jhpiego to scale up best practices to the rest of the facilities in the district. A total of 27 districts were reached in the scale-up phase.

Current and Recent Projects

Family Planning

With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and in partnership with Marie Stopes International, Jhpiego is implementing a two-year project aimed at expanding family planning choices through high-quality contraceptive implant services in Kabale, Rubanda, Ntungamo and Rukungiri Districts.

Quick Facts

- Estimated total population: 36.6 million
- Maternal mortality ratio: 310/100,000 live births
- Infant mortality rate: 53/1,000 live births
- Under-five mortality rate: 69/1,000 live births
- Total fertility rate: 5.8
- Contraceptive prevalence: 30% (modern methods), 34% (all methods)
- HIV prevalence: 7.2%
- Births with skilled provider: 57.4%

Sources:
1 Population Reference Bureau 2016 World Population Data Sheet;
2 UNICEF website, 2017 statistics.
The project uses a unique training model—the low-dose, high-frequency (LDHF) approach—to strengthen the capacity of public sector health care providers to offer high-quality implant insertion and removal services. The project pairs theoretical training delivered by dedicated district trainers with mobile outreach visits to locations with high client load to optimize competence.

With support from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Jhpiego worked with the Ugandan Ministry of Health (MOH) to expand family planning services for women by strengthening the capacity of health care providers in 15 priority districts to deliver high-quality postpartum family planning services with an emphasis on the immediate postpartum period. The project employed a unique approach that targeted midwifery institutions and in-service providers to equip them with skills and basic supplies to kick-start service provision. Village Health Teams were also trained on providing timely referrals and demand creation for services.

Malaria

Under the five-year, USAID-funded Malaria Action Program for Districts, Jhpiego Uganda is working with the Malaria Consortium and other national partners, including the MOH, to reduce childhood and maternal mortality and morbidity due to malaria. The project covers 43 districts in the Central, Mid-Western and West Nile regions of Uganda. It supports effective malaria prevention programs implemented in concert with the National Malaria Control Strategy, and builds national and local capacity to effectively manage and sustain malaria activities.

Through the Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program (MCHIP), Jhpiego Uganda was asked to support the re-invigoration of malaria in pregnancy services in the country. This included coordinating key efforts and meetings with key stakeholders. In addition, Jhpiego led the process of updating malaria in pregnancy guidelines to align with the World Health Organization’s global guidelines.

Innovation

With support from the Barr Foundation, Jhpiego worked with the MOH and three Ugandan NGOs to apply the LDHF training approach in the technical areas of pediatric HIV, postabortion care and integration of family planning into HIV care. Together with the MOH, the three local NGOs piloted the LDHF approach in these technical areas to provide insights into the optimal operational processes, costs and factors for success of scaling up the LDHF training approach in Uganda.

Through a three-year operational research program funded by the Saving Lives at Birth (SL@B) consortium, Jhpiego and partner organizations worked with the Ugandan MOH to reduce postpartum hemorrhage and birth asphyxia. To address these two killers simultaneously, SL@B employed the LDHF training methodology to build the capacity of frontline providers who attend births in prevention and management of postpartum hemorrhage and neonatal asphyxia, with the ultimate goal of reducing maternal deaths.
Through a 20-month project, Jhpiego is applying lessons from its regional adolescent programming to improve the health outcomes of pregnant adolescents, adolescent mothers (up to one year postpartum) and adolescents receiving postabortion care in Uganda. The project seeks to meet the sexual and reproductive health and maternal needs of this segment of the population and promote healthy timing and spacing of births by using a unique integrated approach, which includes building providers’ capacity, improving health facility friendliness and using peer guides to improve uptake and acceptability of services. The project is being implemented in Tororo and Bukedea Districts in Eastern Uganda.

Maternal, Newborn and Reproductive Health

- With support from the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), Jhpiego worked in the Karamoja Region to develop long-term resources in maternal and newborn health (MNH) by strengthening training sites and preparing district health trainers to train other frontline providers at lower levels.
- With funding from the GE Foundation, Jhpiego worked in close partnership with the MOH and the local government to save the lives of women and babies in Isingiro District by delivering high-impact, evidence-based interventions. This project built on the momentum and impact of two previous GE Foundation-funded projects and scaled up support from five health facilities to 27 in Isingiro. The project supported Isingiro in becoming a model demonstration district for best approaches in MNH, and also provided targeted support to Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital.

Opportunities

Under the Millennium Development Goals, Uganda made significant progress in reducing child mortality; however, it did not achieve its goals to reduce maternal mortality. Moving forward, reducing maternal mortality and ensuring that women have access to safe, effective family planning services are prioritized under the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and Uganda Vision 2040. As a leader in improving the health of women and families, Jhpiego will continue to support the MOH and other partners to improve the lives of Ugandan women and their families.

Key Accomplishments

- Under the GE Foundation-funded project in Isingiro District, the quality of MNH services at the sites improved significantly, with average performance compared against MNH standards at partner facilities increasing from 45% at baseline to 78% at the second assessment. These improvements led to a marked increase in demand for services.
- Through SL@B, 604 health care providers trained in Helping Mothers Survive: Bleeding after Birth and Helping Babies Breathe are changing the outcomes at facility-based births in remote and district-level facilities in Uganda. Overall, there was a 62% reduction in newborn deaths, 34% reduction in fresh stillbirths, 7% reduction in postpartum hemorrhaging and 47% reduction in retained placenta in participating districts.
- With support from the Barr Foundation, Jhpiego worked with the MOH and other stakeholders to generate additional and sufficient local evidence on the benefits of the LDHF training approach and on how to implement it effectively.
With funding from UNPFA, Jhpiego championed the introduction of postpartum family planning, specifically the postpartum intrauterine contraceptive device, in Uganda. By improving knowledge and skills in modern family planning methods for over 100 health care providers at 160 health facilities, Jhpiego strengthened the providers’ capacity to provide high-quality and timely postpartum family planning services to the population in 15 districts.

Using the Jhpiego-developed Standards-Based Management and Recognition (SBM-R®) approach to performance improvement, Jhpiego provided technical assistance to UNICEF to create the required environment for high-quality MNH services in the region. This effort included training providers in SBM-R and equipping facilities with necessary materials and supplies to implement high-impact interventions to help mothers and babies to survive.

**Partners/Donors**

- In Uganda, Jhpiego currently receives funding from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Previous donors include the GE Foundation, Barr Foundation, UNICEF and UNFPA.
- Jhpiego collaborates closely with the Ugandan MOH to build the health system capacity at the national and district levels.

**References**
