

Safe Motherhood Pillar People @STM GALA in Canada

All you Game Changers, thank you for your support. It was a great moment on 9 Nov 2023 in Canada. Dr. Jean Chamberlain Froese was the guest speaker.

"It was a night to celebrate and a night to remember: to celebrate the amazing things that have been done through the graduates and students of the STM program in East Africa."

Dr. Jean on her Facebook page



Thank you for coming to the Save the Mothers Dialogue

#Celebrate the Change

#Cultivate the Future

For more news on the STM dialogue, look out for our next issue.



Game changers at STMEA dialogue on 28 Nov at Uganda Christian University, Mukono



Congratulations gamechangers

Save the Mothers East Africa (STMEA) was honoured to be part of the 24th Uganda Christian University graduation ceremony on 13 October 2023. Congratulations to the Master in Public Health Leadership (MPHL) graduates: Jude Onwueme Chekwemeka (Nigeria), John Thon Riak (South Sudan), Alwong Rose (South Sudan), Taban Geoffrey (South Sudan) & Nimusiima Anita (Uganda). These game-changers are empowered to serve as safe motherhood pillar people in their respective spheres of influence.



Addressing the graduates, Dr. Edward Mukooza, STMEA interim Executive Director and Head of Department Public Health urged the graduates to share the MPHL news to their networks and work as Save the Mothers ambassadors to promote the program. *"Talk about STM out there and the value of the MPHL."*

Dr. Mukooza reminded the graduates that the intention of the MPHL is to contribute to the well being of mothers.

"Each of you can contribute in your own way, in your own profession to contribute to reducing at least one of the 3 delays like the delay at home so that the mothers around you can be healthier." In a special way Dr. Mukooza invited the South Sudan graduates to promote safe motherhood since it has one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. **To page 3**

MPHL 2024 INTAKE Save the Mothers is now receiving applications for a Masters Degree in Public Health Leadership at Uganda Christian University **SHARE THE NEWS**

Improving the health of communities slowly

By Selevano Thembo - MPHL alumna
Community Communications Link for Africa Development (COCLAD) is an Optimist club registered at Kagadi district Uganda and Optimist International in US. It aims at bringing the best out of the communities by building hope and positive vision.

One of the communities COCLAD is working in is Ndaiga Sub county, Kagadi district. It has a population of 12000 people and is a hard to reach community with 8 fishing villages. Ndaiga is surrounded with a steep escarpment. Of the 8 villages, it is only one village that can be accessed by a strong vehicle. The rest of the villages are accessible by foot or water.

Recently, COCLAD visited Ndaiga and conducted health dialogues on emergency preparedness with village leaders, women and Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs). Among the issues raised were children not being immunised, mothers not getting Antenatal Care (ANC) and not delivering at the health facility. We agreed with leaders to have a dialogue with the pregnant mothers and TBAs.

COCLAD carried out a health education on ANC which women always miss due to the high cost of boda boda - 20,000/- (5 USD) to Ndaiga HCII and the steep escarpment that is hard for the women to climb during pregnancy or while in labour. The alternative means of transport to another health facility, in Ntoroko district is by a boat which does not commute regularly to the health facility. On days when the women catch the boat, the long waiting time at the facility results into the boat leaving before the women have received services.

These challenges drive pregnant women in Ndaiga to get services from TBAs. Fatuma is one of the TBAs who has been serving the women for over two decades. The women believe that Fatuma is their savior. They run to her for check up during pregnancy and labour.

Fatuma does not want to proceed with



Ndaiga village



COCLAD team gets a photo moment with pregnant mothers and the leaders after the health dialogue.

TBA services. She is aware that government prohibits TBAs from providing MCH service. But due to the demand from women, Fatuma is forced to serve.

For emergencies, Fatuma refers women and the local leaders ring a bell to collect assistance to attend to the emergency.

To address these challenges, we agreed that the village leaders will provide a boat with an engine, and mothers will contribute 5000/- (1.5 USD) for fuel. COCLAD club pledged to provide and support a

midwife to attend to the women. The club is further working with the TBA to join the positive change to refer mothers to skilled health workers. Because the mothers know their problem, it was easy for them to embrace the idea of contributing money for fuel to seek safe motherhood services.

A few days after the health education, Ndaiga health facility received 58 pregnant mothers for the first time after 15 years and of these 45 received ANC. COCLAD will support the completion of the ANC visits.



Boat trip to Ndaiga Health Centre

Maternal and newborn deaths: The community had just experienced a maternal and newborn deaths before COCLAD's visit. One of the mothers got labour pains and went to a clinic. She delivered a healthy baby. But the mother started bleeding heavily after delivery. Her husband who is a casual labourer, mobilised his friends to make a local stretcher. But the bleeding was too much and climbing the escarpment worried them. It would also require hiring a car to move her fast to Kagadi Hospital(50km) and this would cost 200,000/- (54 USD). Climbing the escarpment would take them over two hours. The mother died while the community was still thinking of solutions. Two weeks after the death of this mother, her baby also died.

Another case was on 19 October 2023. While at the ANC clinic, a mother developed antepartum haemorrhage.

The facility did not have the supplies to handle the case. The midwife referred the mother to Ntoroko Health Centre IV, where she could be transported by boat. But the mother didn't have money to hire a boat. She also did not have anyone to take care of her children at home. Her husband who is a fisherman had gone to the lake for 5 days to fish. The mother was waiting for funds to be collected so that she is moved to the referral point for further management. The following day she was moved to the referral point. Unfortunately she lost her baby.

COCLAD club is committed to serving the women in this hard to reach village. The work has started and will continue to promote maternal and child health.

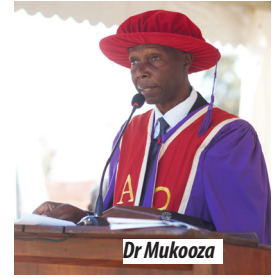


Thembo with Fatuma



Thembo Selevano MPHL 2013, Kagadi district Disease Surveillance Officer & COCLAD Kagadi President

Graduation ceremony in pictures



MPHL graduands assemble at the Uganda Christian University graduation grounds and proudly walk down the red carpet as Dr Edward Mukooza (top-right) reads their names at the graduation ceremony.



Graduates and their family members



Cake-cutting



Mealtime

John Thon -South Sudan

The MPHL is a unique program. With the cooperation of the faculty, we managed even through the difficult COVID-19 times.

Anita Ninsiima-Uganda

I thank my mum, classmates, faculty and my supervisor, Dr Pius Okong for supporting me. I hope to use the MPHL skills to save lives.

Taban Geoffrey-South Sudan

I thank my supervisor who supported me. The pandemic complicated things and we didn't know the way forward. But today, we graduate. We shall work as champions to save mothers.

Rose Alwong-South Sudan: STM is a unique program that uses multisectoral approach to save the lives of mothers. S-Sudan maternal



Thorn



Anita



Taban

mortality is very high. Using the skills gained on the program, we have already started working.

Jude Chukwuemeka Onwueme-Nigeria:

I am the happiest person. I was welcomed at STM warmly and this made me camp here. I thank God for the grace to complete. I am entirely grateful to STM for the support towards my tuition. Personally, I am endeared to Save the Mothers MPHL program because I am one whose mother died while I was a year and 10 months. She died at a very young age of 27, the death attributable to one or more of the three delays.



Rose Alwong



Jude

Josephine Namyalo, MPHL Academic Coordinator congratulates the graduates



Academic updates

Advent semester is on-going with online lectures for module 2, 3 and 4 students. **Exams begin** on 4 Dec and the semester ends on 15 Dec. **Vivas:** Academics office is now receiving student's dissertations in preparations for vivas in Feb 2024.

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