

MARCH 2024

Pathfinder Uganda

Sharon Ayebale, a youth champion with the USAID Uganda Family Planning Activity (FPA) program.

Photo: Lovington Kambugu





Welcome to Pathfinder Uganda!

A Message from the **Country Director**

Greetings to you all. I would like to thank you for taking this opportunity to read about our work.

As we work toward achieving our mission, we invite you to join us in making a positive impact on the lives of the most vulnerable populations and hard-to-reach communities in Uganda.

Our commitment is unwavering as we strive to champion impactful and transformative programs for adolescents and young women in Uganda.

Through a holistic approach, we aim to empower them to lead healthy lives, enabling them to realize their full potential. Your partnership is instrumental in driving these initiatives forward.

Thank you for considering collaboration with Pathfinder Uganda. Together, we can create meaningful change in the lives of those who need it most.



Dr. Ritah Waddimba, Country Director

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Ritah Nakigudde Waddimba serves as the Country Director for Pathfinder Uganda and Chief of Party for the USAID/Uganda Family Planning Activity (March 2020-March 2025).

She is a Public Health Management Specialist with a wealth of experience in delivering development programs in Uganda and the Africa region, focusing on HIV/AIDS prevention, care and treatment, Reproductive Health and Rights, nutrition and health in humanitarian crises; working across, NGOs and bilateral agencies, and collaborating with Government and multilateral agencies within the national health system.

Our Story

For more than 50 years, Pathfinder has worked across every region of Uganda to support women’s agency over their health and lives.

Pathfinder’s work is anchored in the principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and human rights. We champion adolescent and women-led innovations and initiatives, especially in the most vulnerable communities—including refugee-hosting districts and fishing communities—to address teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence.



FPA district activity officer John Kazibwe mentors a drug shop operator.
Photo: Lovington Kambugu



Our Vision

We envision a future where everyone, even in the most challenging environments, has what they need to **be healthy, thrive, and live their lives to the fullest potential.**



Harriet and John, a couple Pathfinder reached through the HoPE-LVB project.
Photo: Maren Vespia

Our Mission

We support an enabling environment where everyone, even in the most challenging situations, can **build resilience and capacity to improve their health and wellbeing.**



FPA Youth Champion Deizy Nakku educates a fellow young person in Kanoni Health Center III, Gomba.

Photo: Lovington Kambugu

Program Interventions

Pathfinder Uganda works to address key issues affecting **adolescent girls and young people from the most vulnerable and hard-to-reach communities.**

A family planning education session with Kyangoma Girls' group members.
Photo: Lovington Kambugu



Areas of Intervention

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR)

- SRH information and services
- Contraception and family planning
- Maternal, neonatal, and child health interventions
- Gender and social Inclusion programming
- Advocacy at the national and sub-national levels

WOMEN-LED CLIMATE RESILIENCE (WLCR)

- Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) programs
- Biosafety and environmental protection
- Energy conservation
- Afforestation/reforestation

ADOLESCENT AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

- Practical skills training
- Skills incubation hubs
- Start-up funding

COMMUNICABLE AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE CONTROL

- HIV/AIDS prevention and care
- Cervical Cancer screening and prevention
- Nutrition
- Communicable and non-communicable disease prevention programs



Fausta works at a nursery on Bussi Island.
Photo: Linda Suttentfield

Our Approach

COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIP

Pathfinder Uganda's work is anchored in strong collaboration and partnerships with key stakeholders.

(From left to right) Dr. Ritah Waddimba and Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, Minister of Health.
Photo: Uganda Ministry of Health



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We champion a unique approach of community engagement to reach out to adolescents and youth and address climate and health issues.

SCHOOL INITIATIVES

Pathfinder Uganda champions the development and growth of health and environmental clubs in schools as a sustainable model.

HEALTH FACILITY SUPPORT

Pathfinder Uganda works to enhance skills and competencies of health care professionals to deliver high-quality services.

Kyangoma Girls' group members attend a family planning education session.
Photo: Lovington Kambugu



AT A GLANCE

Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights



Mothers gather for family planning health education in Kibibi Nursing Home, Uganda.
Photo: Lovington Kambugu

Pathfinder Uganda works to improve access to and utilization of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) services for communities. Through a systems strengthening approach, with communities and local governments taking the lead, adolescents and young women are empowered to make informed SRHR decisions.

ADDRESSING REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CHALLENGES (Source: UDHS22)

- High fertility: 5.2 births per woman
- High maternal mortality: 189/100,000 live births
- High teenage pregnancy: 24%
- Unmet family planning (FP) need: 22%

STRATEGIES

- Advocacy at the national and sub-national levels
- Social and behavior change
- Beyond Bias approach to reduce provider bias and promote responsive care toward family planning
- Health systems strengthening
- Cultural and religious leaders' engagement

SUCCESSES IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Pathfinder Uganda continues to register tremendous progress and success in SRHR initiatives.



1,306,952 community members engaged through interpersonal communication.



1,019,430 individuals received counseling on FP method mix.



583,500 adolescents and young people under age 25 received contraceptives.



1,924 teenage mothers (ages 13–19) reached with information on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancy.



244 maternal deaths averted.

PROJECT

Addressing Provider Bias

Pathfinder's Beyond Bias model focuses on addressing provider bias and behavior that creates barriers to young people's access to high quality contraceptive counseling and services.

PROJECT SUCCESSES

Based on six principles of unbiased care, the Beyond Bias model offers a framework for providers to deliver unbiased care for their clients through providing a safe and welcoming space.



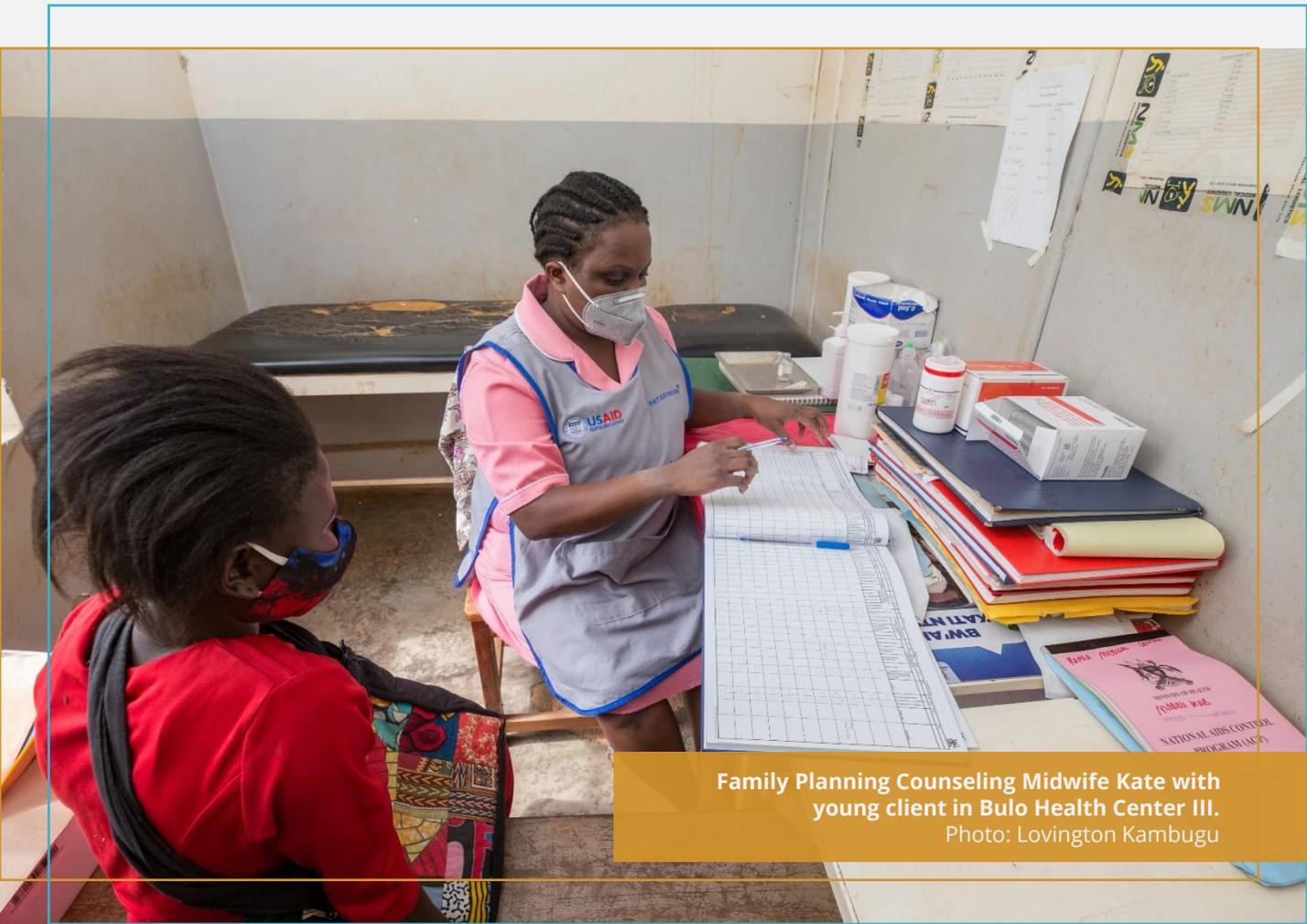
146 health facilities awarded for outstanding service.



282 health workers trained on the Beyond Bias model.



527,524 adolescents and young people took up a contraceptive of choice (2020–2023).



Family Planning Counseling Midwife Kate with young client in Bulo Health Center III.

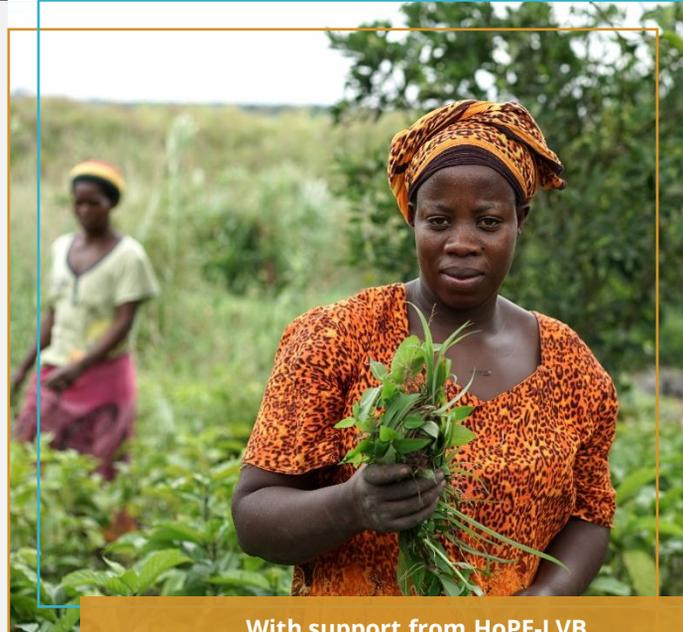
Photo: Lovington Kambugu

AT A GLANCE

Women-Led Climate Resilience

Pathfinder Uganda uses the Population, Health and Environment (PHE) Model to address climate issues. Our initiatives promote health, equity, and inclusivity, which enhances the wellbeing and empowerment of women and girls at the household level.

Our programs empower communities to lead more resilient lives by implementing local climate solutions. We also collaborate with health facilities to enhance their ability to address challenges stemming from climate change.



With support from HoPE-LVB, Fausta uses sustainable agriculture skills to earn an income. Photo: Maren Vespia

CLIMATE CHANGE: IMPACT ON WOMEN AND GIRLS IN UGANDA

- Frequent disease outbreaks, such as Malaria, threaten maternal and child health
- Low agricultural productivity, coupled with low income, contribute to increased teenage pregnancies, early marriages, and domestic violence
- Climate-related migration negatively affects food security and thus leading to poverty.

STRATEGIES

Pathfinder Uganda takes a locally led, gender-transformative approach to climate resilience.

- Build climate-resilient health facilities
- Strengthen the capacity of local organizations to champion climate-resilient approaches
- Raise awareness of the relationship between climate change and health among communities and the health workforce
- Support women's engagement and leadership in local resilience planning and implementation

SUCCESSES IN CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Pathfinder Uganda continues to register tremendous progress and success in Climate initiatives.



856,000 trees planted in model households, health facilities, schools, beaches, and other public places.



17,319 cookstoves constructed to be more environmentally friendly, healthier to use, and energy-efficient.



Over 12,000 participants engaged through environment and health advocacy events.



60 by-laws on environment and health developed and implemented by fishing community members along the Lake Victoria basin.

PROJECT

Health of People and Environment in the Lake Victoria Basin (HoPE-LVB)

Pathfinder's HoPE-LVB project focused on holistically meeting the needs of the fishing communities of Bussi and Jaguzi Islands in Lake Victoria. Pathfinder worked with the communities to identify the interrelated challenges affecting them. These included a rapidly growing population, poor access to health services, unplanned land management, deforestation, and overfishing. All these factors contributed to the depletion of natural resources and an uncertain future for the next generation.

PROJECT SUCCESSES



3,369 new users of family planning contraceptives were registered in just one year.



49% improvement in WASH (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) indicators.



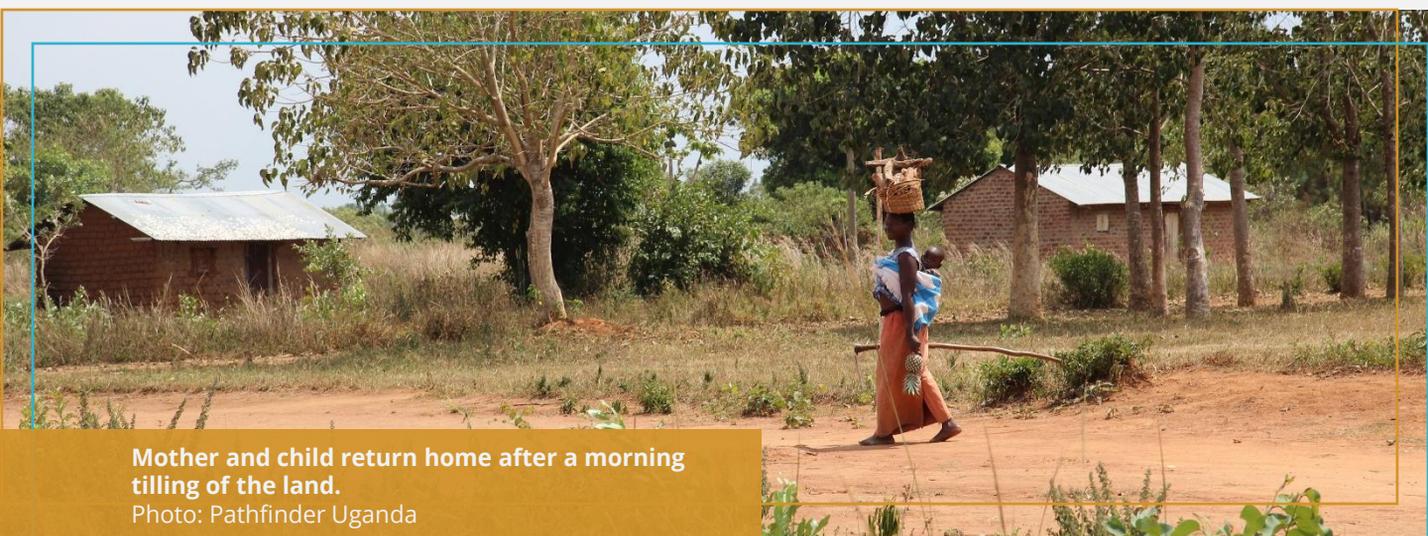
A total of 16 demarcated fish breeding grounds adopted sustainable fishing practices, and began to patrol for illegal fishing



Improvement in health status, especially for children under five, due to sustained immunization programs by the project.



Lessons were adopted and documented by the government of Uganda through the PHE manual to inform scale-up to other communities.



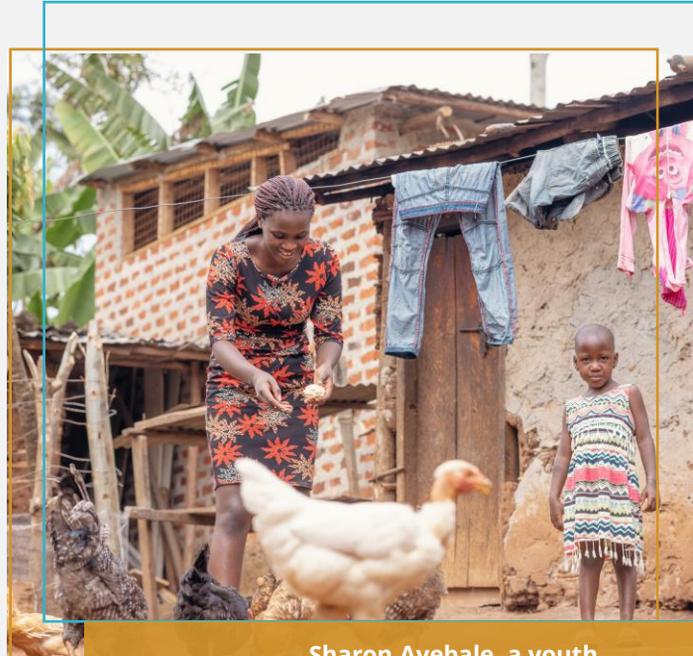
Mother and child return home after a morning tilling of the land.

Photo: Pathfinder Uganda

AT A GLANCE

Adolescent and Youth Empowerment

By championing integrated, multi-sectoral approaches and staying cognizant of the environment, we are addressing the holistic needs of young people. We target pregnant teenagers, first-time adolescent parents, and young people facing financial challenges in rural, urban, hard-to-reach, and refugee settings to promote climate-smart skilling. These life skills empower young people to manage their finances and effectively pool resources, which contributes to the reduction of barriers to health care access.



Sharon Ayebale a youth champion and her daughter rearing Chicken .
Photo: Lovington Kambugu

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN YOUTH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- Over 60% of young people under age 25 are unemployed
- Poverty is one of the leading causes of gender-based violence in Uganda
- About 60% of teenage mothers end up in peasant agriculture work
- Lack of skills in other income-generating activities leads to deforestation in search of land to cultivate

STRATEGIES

- Climate-smart skilling
- Setting up skills incubation hubs
- Supporting community champions of change to transfer skills to young women
- Providing start-up funding to trained young people

SUCCESSES IN YOUTH EMPOWERMENT



273 community schools engaged in supporting girls' education, health, and the environment.



782 model households trained in alternative livelihood skills, including (commercial nursery tree planting, energy-efficient stove production, bee keeping, weaving, and more.



Over 4,481 new latrines established across Uganda.



9,220 households influenced in hand washing practices.

PROJECT

Gender Roles, Equality, and Transformation (GREAT)

GREAT was a set of participatory activities to engage adolescents and adults in discussion and reflection on growth into healthy adults who live in communities free of violence and gender inequality.

GREAT activities encouraged equality between women and men and focused on life course transitions—for example, women and men entering marriage and individuals becoming new parents.

PROJECT SUCCESSES

- ✓ **Created opportunities for young people to debate important topics.**
- ✓ **Met the needs of young people at their various life stages—** from very young adolescents to married and parenting adolescents.
- ✓ **Supported community leaders and parents** to take part in training to end harmful gender norms and become GREAT champions.
- ✓ **Engaged young people using scenario roll plays, a serial radio drama, activities, and flipbooks—**so they had fun while transforming their thinking.



Students taking place in a GREAT activity.
Photo: Linda Suttentfield

AT A GLANCE

Communicable & Non-Communicable Disease Control

Communicable and non-communicable diseases disproportionately affect people in low- and middle-income countries, accounting for more than 75% of global NCD deaths. Pathfinder Uganda—using a district-led, health systems strengthening approach—works with vulnerable communities and high-risk populations in hard-to-reach areas, including refugee settings, to control and prevent non communicable diseases.

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES IN COMMUNICABLE AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL

- Two-thirds of all new HIV infections occur in adolescent girls in Uganda
- Rapid increase in spread of NCDs

STRATEGIES

- Support for policy development
- Community mobilization to reduce stigma
- Training for care givers and support for treatment adherence
- Integration of counseling and testing for NCDs in antenatal care and maternal and child health care



A community home-based counseling session conducted through USAID Uganda Family Planning Activity. Photo: Lovington Kambugu

SUCCESSES IN COMMUNICABLE AND NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASE PREVENTION & CONTROL



Developed a comprehensive home-based care training curriculum for community health workers, which was adopted by the Ministry of Health.



Supported the Family Life Education Program (FLEP) to grow from a small community project to a registered NGO and a major training resource in family planning and reproductive health education.



Introduced an innovative approach of home-based care to support people living with HIV/AIDS.

PROJECT

Family Life Education Program (FLEP)

FLEP aimed to increase access to and availability of comprehensive reproductive health care and child survival services.

These services included family planning, sexually transmitted infection prevention, HIV/AIDS-related support services, antenatal care, delivery, post-natal care, immunization, and nutrition education.

PROJECT SUCCESSES

- ✓ **Provided services** at 49 static clinics and 160 immunization outreach sites.
- ✓ **Delivered outreach services** with 176 village health workers; 8 information, education, and communications teams; and 18 sexuality educators.
- ✓ **Raised awareness among men** through targeted distribution of information, education, and communications materials on STI and HIV/AIDS prevention. Other activities included the showing a film on family planning.
- ✓ **Reached over 3,000 people** with reproductive health messages during health fairs.



Community health workers at
Bulu Health Center.
Photo: Lovington Kambugu

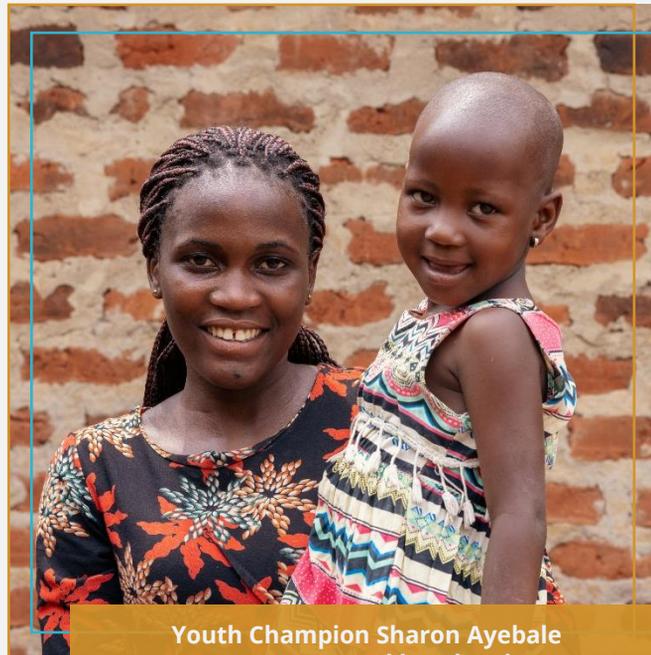
SUCCESS STORY

Youth Advocate Leads the Way for Reproductive Health

In the Kyenjojo district of western Uganda, youth champions are driving change in reproductive health awareness. Sharon Ayebale, a 20-year-old community health worker and teenage mom, is leading the change. Sharon experienced early pregnancy at age 14 and was forced to drop out of school.

Now, she educates fellow young people on contraception as a youth champion with the Uganda Family Planning Activity, which empowers young people with accurate information to dispel myths and misconceptions about family planning.

To date, Sharon has reached over 700 young people, ensuring access to reproductive health services. Sharon's journey from teen mom to advocate showcases the transformative power of knowledge and the commitment to a brighter future.



Youth Champion Sharon Ayebale and her daughter.

Photo: Lovington Kambugu

“I tell [youth] my story as a teenage mother and encourage them to use family planning to avoid experiencing the same... They understand me and believe me.”

—Sharon Ayebale, age 20
Youth Champion

SUCCESS STORY

Breaking Barriers: Enhancing Youth Access to Family Planning Services through Beyond Bias Strategies

Pathfinder Uganda is dispelling health provider biases towards the reproductive health services for young people through the Beyond Bias approach.

Florence Kansiime, a midwife at Kyenjojo Health Center III, once had hard reservations about extending family planning services to the youth. Today, her mindset transformation reflects a larger success story emerging from Pathfinder's Beyond Bias strategy.

“We have integrated family planning into all our service delivery points. We used to give family planning methods only to those who have given birth. Now we give everybody who comes and needs the service.”

—Florence Kansiime
Midwife

Midwife Florence Kansiime
at Kyenjojo Health Center III.
Photo: Lovington Kambugu

