

Climate4Health Project



A health facility on Bussi Island, Uganda that Pathfinder engaged through the HoPE-LVB Project.

Photo: Maren Vespia

Uganda was a signatory to the recent COP28 UAE Declaration on Climate and Health recognizing the urgency of taking action on climate change, and noting the benefits for health from deep, rapid, and sustained reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Pathfinder Uganda has previously championed a landmark project addressing climate and health - Health of People and the Environment on Lake Victoria Basin (HoPE-LVB), which made a tremendous positive impact on the young women and men in the communities. In collaboration with the Government of Uganda and partners—and in alignment with COP28 declarations—Pathfinder seeks to address the impact of climate and health by:

- Raising awareness and strengthening implementation of the Uganda National Climate Policy to maximize health gains as a country
- Addressing the environmental determinants of health
- Improving the ability of Uganda's health system to anticipate and implement adaptation interventions against climate-sensitive disease and health risks
- Promoting steps to curb emissions and reduce waste in the health sector.

Pathfinder Uganda, together with partners, intends to build climate-resilient health facilities in Uganda that are prepared to adapt to and mitigate the effects of climate change on the health sector.

The focus of this project is on health facilities most affected by climate change in the regions of **Rwenzori, Bugisu, and Karamoja**.

Activities for the Climate4Health Project include the following:

1. National-level engagements on climate policy
2. Guidelines for climate-resilient health facilities
3. Multi-sectoral surveillance and response systems
4. Orientation of health providers
5. Orientation of community health workers
6. Awareness raising



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Joshua Busiinge, Partnership Manager
joshua.busiinge@ufpa.org
 +256 775104811



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Healthy Timing and Spacing of Pregnancies



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

With a fertility rate of 5.2 births per woman, and an average age of marriage of 17.9 years, there is continuous need to support healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies if families are to grow economically, sustain the environment, and support the development of their communities.

Since 2020, under Pathfinder's leadership and in close collaboration with Uganda's Ministry of Health, the USAID/Uganda Family Planning Activity (FPA) continues to support the Government of Uganda to accelerate progress toward its FP2030 commitments and Vision 2040 strategy objectives on healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies.

Together with local partners, Pathfinder Uganda has reached over 1.9 million community members and increased family planning uptake by over 910,000 through FPA alone, by:

- Promoting health system strengthening approaches
- Championing district-led programming
- Conducting competency-based health worker mentorship
- Community mobilization
- Supporting supply chain of family planning commodities

Pathfinder Uganda seeks to scale up its interventions to the districts with the highest need, including Karamoja, Busoga regions, and refugee hosting districts so that the young women in these areas can stay healthy, thrive, and live their lives to the fullest potential.

ABOUT KARAMOJA

- Total fertility rate is 7.9 births per woman
- 61% of the 1.2 million population live in absolute poverty
- Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) is 6.5; compared to Bugisu and Kigezi, with a CPR of 43% each.

ABOUT BUSOGA

- Total fertility rate is 6.1 births per woman
- 14.5% of people in Busoga live in absolute poverty



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Pathfinder's Girl Empowerment Program



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

In Uganda, 1 in 4 girls aged 15–19 is either pregnant or has a child. This accounts for 22.3% of school dropouts among girls aged 14–18, yet only 8% of the girls that drop out receive a second chance to re-enroll. Throughout 2021, about 31,566 teenage girls and 250 children under the age of 15 became pregnant each month.

Since 2010, Pathfinder Uganda has been working with schools and communities to counter teenage pregnancy through its *Pathfinder Girl Empowerment Project (PGEP)*, with targeted interventions for different communities.

PGEP creates a linkage between health and livelihood by addressing the drivers of teenage pregnancy in schools and at the community level. Target communities include the fishing communities around the Lake Victoria Basin and other hard-to-reach areas around the country.

COMMUNITY INTERVENTIONS INCLUDE ENGAGING...

- Women and Girls out of school
- Men and boys out of school.
- Local authorities
- Religious and cultural leaders.

SCHOOL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE

- Life skills module trainings
- Menstrual Health Management (MHM)
- Development and strengthening of active Population, Health, and Environment (PHE) clubs
- Learner/Teacher engagement on gender-equitable attitudes and behaviors

Pathfinder Uganda seeks partners to support this initiative so as to reach more schools and their surrounding communities to empower girls stay in school, thrive, and live healthier lives.

Pathfinder Uganda is targeting Busoga, Lango, and Tooro sub-regions, which have some of the highest rates of teenage pregnancies.



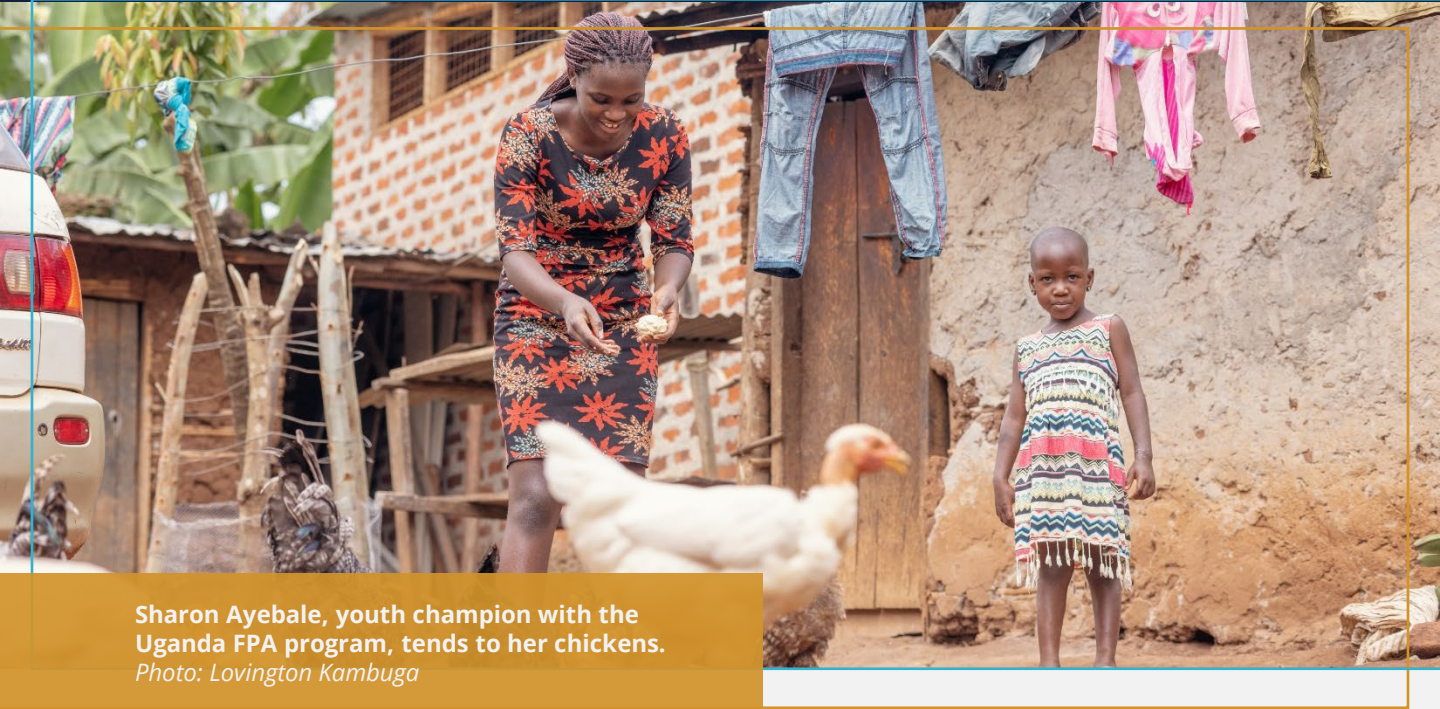
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Pathfinder Skill-Up Project



Sharon Ayebale, youth champion with the Uganda FPA program, tends to her chickens.
Photo: Lovington Kambuga

There is a growing need to equip adolescent girls and young women in vulnerable communities in Uganda with life skills. In Uganda, 25% of girls engage in sex for material support, and 1 in 4 girls aged 15-19 is either pregnant or is a mother.

It is projected that about 60% of these teenage mothers will end up in peasant agriculture work with poor agricultural practices if no action is taken.

The Skill-Up project, led by Pathfinder Uganda aims to train out-of-school teenagers and first-time parents on income-generating skills and provide start-up packs so that they can financially sustain themselves to avoid being subjected to early or forced marriages in pursuit of basic needs.

Pathfinder Uganda works in partnership with accredited training centers and organizations to train selected teenagers on their identified needs and skill teenage mothers to support their babies better.

Through this project, we have provided skills training to over 487 out-of-school teenagers and teenage mothers.

To date, several partners have come together to address the unmet needs. Pathfinder seeks additional partners to support skilling of girls in Busoga, Rwenzori and Lango regions.

Skill up endeavors to provide training in some of the following income-generating skills.

- Tailoring
- Hairdressing
- Bee keeping
- Soap making
- Baking
- Crop and animal production

The skills taught are based upon a clear understanding of the market environment and the demand of those skills/services in the communities.



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Addressing Health Provider Bias

Uganda has one of the youngest and most rapidly growing populations in the world, with a total fertility rate at 5.2 children per woman—among the highest in the world. Of Uganda's total population, 57% are under 19 years of age. The teenage pregnancy rate is also high, with 25% of girls under age 19 having already started bearing children. Rural areas report 25% of unintended pregnancies, and urban centers follow closely at 21% (UDHS 2022).

Multiple barriers prevent young people from accessing high-quality sexual reproductive health information and services, including provider bias.

Health providers' backgrounds, beliefs, attitudes and biases influence their approach to providing adolescent SRH services, often hindering services.

Pathfinders' Beyond Bias model, developed through a human-centered design process involving extensive research, prototyping, iteration refinement, and evaluation, disrupts the status quo above. The model is grounded on the premise that bias is a behavior that can be changed.

Pathfinder Uganda rolled out the Beyond Bias strategy under the Uganda Family Planning Activity (FPA).

FPA engaged over 310 health workers from 164 health facilities in the Rwenzori, Albertine, and Central regions.

From its inception, Pathfinder has observed a notable trend of young people (10-24 years) taking up SRH services, from 95,852 in 2020, 150,407 in 2022 to 154,759 in 2023 across the 11 districts of implementation.



Health worker Rukia Mugambe, trained through FPA, prepares a contraceptive implant for insertion. Gombe Hospital, Butambala

Photo: Lovington Kambugu

Pathfinder Uganda, together with its partners, intends to scale up this strategy to other districts, including the Wakiso and Busoga region which have some of the highest teenage pregnancy rates (DHIS 2022).

Addressing and eliminating provider bias is a key step toward achieving equitable and inclusive sexual and reproductive health care.

The Beyond Bias strategy enables providers to deliver respectful and high-quality care to young people—including providing accurate information, offering a range of contraceptive methods, respecting young people's autonomy in decision-making.



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