

From Monitor Online

Ruhiira brings hope to pregnant mothers

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Isingiro

She woke up on July 29 feeling labour pains and told her husband that she needed to go to Ruhira Health Centre in Isingiro for medical attention.

Ms Lovence Tindimwebwa, 25, of Nyakimuri village in Ruhira Parish, Isingiro and a mother to three was going for the fourth delivery. Her husband organised a boda boda cyclist to take her to the health centre 15 kms away. Where she arrived at a around 8.30 am.

On arrival, Ms Tindimwebwa was rushed straight to the delivery room and gave birth to a boy. Daily Monitor found Ms Tindimwebwa in a very neatly made hospital bed with smiles of joy for both her son and the comfortable conditions at the centre.

" I'm very grateful that I have delivered normally because I have been visiting the health centre for antenatal care," Ms Tindimwebwa said "Above all I cannot believe I have delivered deep in the village considering the remoteness of our area."

Ms Tindimwebwa says she was grateful to find doctors and medical personnel at the health centre were very polite and helpful unlike in the past where this kind of attitude was unheard of.

Provision of health services is one of the millennium development goals that is progressing in Ruhira.

A visit of the CEO of Millennium Promise, Mr John McArthur and Ruhira millennium villages' team to the health centre on a fact finding tour of millennium villages in sub-Saharan Africa in countries like Rwanda, Kenya, Tanzania in East Africa among others.

The team found Ms Tindimwebwa happily lying on the bed with her child unlike last year where a woman who had gone to deliver at another health centre in the area found no staff and was forced to deliver in the bush.

The head of the health department, Dr Martins Okongo says: "We found this area full of very many challenges including mothers being forced to deliver from their homes due to lack of health services,"

He says scenarios like these are long gone because the project is extending to Sub-counties as far as Nyakitunda and Kabuyanda.

"We have increased health awareness among the communities through education of health workers in detection of TB, immunisation, treatment of malaria, antenatal and postnatal treatments and visits," Dr Okongo says.

All health facilities in the two sub-counties are operating normally and the residents no longer have to travel about 60 km to Mbarara for treatment.

"Communities now have access to clean water, drugs, medical workers, an ambulance and communication has improved with mobile phones and the mortality rate has tremendously improved," Dr Okongo says. Since the refurbishment of the theatre, the resident doctors operate between 40 to 50 patients per month.

Mr McArthur was impressed with the progress of the whole project and urged the district leaders to take the lead in implementing the millennium vision so that it succeeds by 2015. Millennium Promise fundraises for the millennium villages in Africa and works with UNDP and Colombia Earth Institute USA.

had to deliver in their homes because there were no health centres," Mr McArthur said "Today I have just witnessed a pregnant mother deliver her fourth child in a very nice health centre."

Before the implementation of the project only five per cent of pregnant mothers could deliver in health units, there was inadequate supply of basic drugs and medical supplies. The malaria endemic was at 30 per cent and infant mortality of children below one higher than the national average of 8 per cent.

Mr McArthur is currently on an African tour of all millennium villages and says the rate at which Ruhira is moving in implementing the goals is amazing and this shows that with commitment the goals can be achieved by 2011.

By giving the health centre bicycles and mobile phones Mr McArthur challenged residents to collect data and disseminate information for betterment of their communities.