

Improving Service Quality: *A Few Coins in the Right Hands at the Right Time*

Katusiime Ruyema Vanice, the Mbarara District Nursing Officer, and her team identified a critical need for better communication between health workers and their clients to improve the quality and use of health services in the district.

She found that many people did not use health facilities for fear of:

- stinging tongues of the 'bosses';
- rude instructions in a different language;
- long waits as health workers, both public and private, chose when to be available irregardless of posted working hours;
- negative attitudes among health providers such as 'I know it all and what you know is not relevant to me'; 'I am very busy but you have all the idle time', 'You owe me an apology but I am always right' 'I give information and services what happens thereafter is your business' and many others.

The need to improve communication as a means to improved quality of care had remained unaddressed due to lack of money and competing district priorities. Ms. Katusiime received local government grant funds from USAID through the UPHOLD Project for a workshop on interpersonal communication to address the health workers' attitudes and communication skills.

Fifteen health workers learned and practiced new skills in communication. The workshop was a success because it addressed a real need, it assisted providers to diagnose problems and develop their own solutions. Participants made action plans for themselves that will form the basis for follow-up on the training.

Participants felt that all health workers should be trained because they found it very useful, practical and a way to quickly improve service delivery and utilization.

Workshop Slogan

Remember:-
the client is not an interruption to our work; s/he is the reason for it.

Workshop Special Thought

Most smiles begin with
another smile



*Reported by Lois Kateebire and
Benon Webare on October 4, 2004*



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

