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STRENGTHENING UGANDA'S SYSTEMS FOR TREATING AIDS NATIONALLY

~ SUCCESS STORY ~

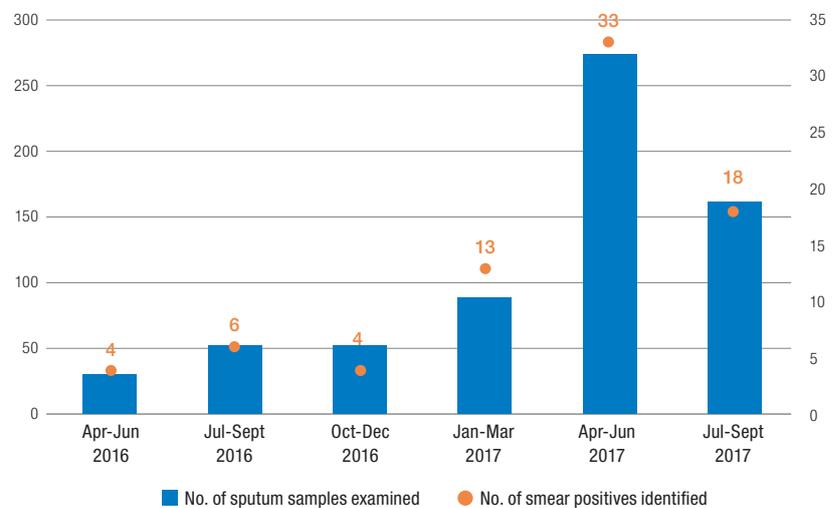
Driving Change for Tuberculosis Screening Through Quality Improvement

Akokoro Health Centre III, a facility in Apac district, receives an average of 2,067 patients a quarter through its Out-Patient Department (OPD).¹ Some of the services provided at OPD include: preventive, promotive, curative, maternity and laboratory services. However, services to screen patients for TB at the OPD were limited due to lack of knowledge at the facility in providing TB services and lack of lab supplies for TB testing such as sputum containers. Therefore, the health center registered an average of only 5 TB cases each quarter verses its target of 21 cases.¹

When the USAID/SUSTAIN project started supporting Akokoro HC III in Oct 2017, they worked with the local council and Sub-County Representative, District Health Management Team (including the TB and Leprosy Supervisor), Beach Management Committee, and facility In-charge to discuss health service delivery including offering improved TB services at the facility. Building on the achievements of the USAID/ASSIST project, the district, local council and sub-county teams were re-activated to continue sensitizing the community; by organizing village meetings to discuss TB signs, symptoms and how the infection spreads. Thirty-six people including Village Health Teams

¹ District Health Information System 2

Figure 1. Trend of number of sputum samples examined at Akokoro HC III, April 2016 to December 2017



(VHT) and health workers (clinical officers, laboratory technicians, nurses, midwives, records assistants) previously trained by the USAID/ASSIST project in February 2017 to screen clients using the Intensified Case Finding (ICF) guide were further mentored in TB screening strategies. With this knowledge in hand, Akokoro HC III developed community and facility approaches to implement active case finding.

The Community Approach

Twenty VHTs were trained in the community to screen and link all presumptive cases identified to Akokoro HC III for diagnostic tests for TB and HIV testing. Presumptive

cases in hard to reach areas of the district assemble on specific days where a health worker collects sputum samples and takes them to the lab for testing. The TB focal person ensures that results of samples collected in the community are returned by travelling back to the community and sharing results with the individuals. The facility also participates in outreaches offering HIV and TB testing to the community. Those identified positive are actively linked to care by their VHT.

The Facility Approach

TB cough monitors were allocated to key entry points (Outpatient department, HIV clinic, MNCH) in the facility to identify patients with TB

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symptoms using the TB Intensified Case Finding screening tool. Patients found with TB are started on treatment immediately. Previously lab staff shunned running TB tests due to lack of appropriate supplies for infection control. URC provided N-94 respirators and patient face masks to ensure workplace safety and identification of one lab staff member to oversee TB testing and ensure sputum samples are tested and the results provided to patients.

Results

These new approaches have saved the lives of people like Sunday Aciwica (real name withheld) a 46-year-old single mother of two children whose husband died of an HIV related illness in 2006 (she is HIV negative). Sunday was coughing for two months before she was tested for TB by microscopy and started on treatment at Akokoro HC III. Four months on treatment, Sunday's health has improved and she is now able to look after her family. Her family members were also screened for TB

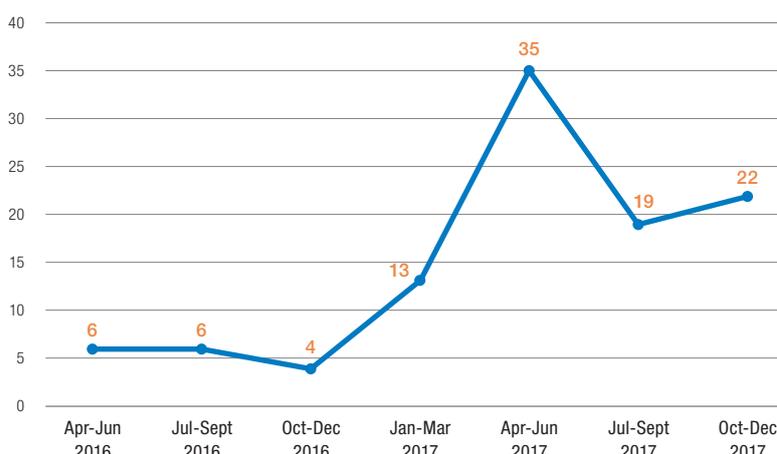
during a contact tracing exercise and were found not symptomatic.

With the increase in number of TB cases identified, Apac District Local Government organized a district TB review meeting where Akokoro HC III shared their approach to improve TB case notification with other health facilities in the district. With support

from Ministry of Health's National TB & Leprosy Program, Akokoro Health Centre III now serves as a learning site for other health facilities across the country and is nationally recognized as a TB model facility.

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Figure 2. Trend of TB case notification in Akokoro HC III, April 2016 to December 2017



TB Case Notification includes both smear positives and presumptive/extra pulmonary cases started on treatment.

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