

Obstructed Labour plus Obstructed Transport ~The Road to Ruballe and Katunga~

The roads are very poor especially during the two wet seasons. Flash flooding and runoff from the mountains can wipeout villages very quickly. Ruballe and Katunga are small villages which are regularly isolated during the rainy season. One of the main contributors to maternal mortality is obstructed transport. Mothers frequently face significant life-threatening delays in accessing medical assistance in childbirth - long distances often covered by foot or on poor roads.



Sr Lincy, Head Sister of St Joseph of Tarbes, recently sent details of one preventable maternal death to illustrate the need for MaterCare to provide essential rural obstetrical services.

A mother was in obstructed labour; the baby was too big and was stuck in the pelvis. A motorcycle taxi was called and the mother was carried to the road to meet it. Due to heavy rain and poor roads, The taxi took an hour to arrive, then was unable to proceed. Sadly the mother was lost due to a ruptured uterus.

Total Budget Summary (5 year estimate) \$US

1. Operating	\$500,000
2. Construction (all buildings)	\$249,000
3. Equipment	\$202,160
4. Training	<u>\$30,592</u>
Total	\$ 981,752

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Photos on cover:

1. Mothers and infants attend outpatient clinic
2. MCI needs assessment team with the Sisters of St Joseph of Tarbes, in Nyabwina, Uganda
3. Midwife checks pregnant mother



MaterCare International is an organization of Catholic health professionals dedicated to the care of mothers and babies, both born and unborn. It provides new initiatives of service, training, research and advocacy, which aim to reduce the tragically high rates of maternal mortality, morbidity, and abortion.

MaterCare's mission is to serve the Culture of Life where it is most at risk- in those crisis areas and 'hotspots' where mothers and their children are neglected or abandoned outright.

MCI is a registered charity in Canada.

MCI is the Obstetrical Division of the World Federation of Catholic Medical Associations (FIAMC).

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"The sun should not rise or set twice on a labouring woman" —African proverb

Project Mbarara

MCI's essential Obstetric services for Mbarara Region, rural Uganda



Help us help mothers!

www.matercare.org

A Project For Essential Maternity Care Services Nyabwina, Sheema District

Background

The Sisters of St Joseph of Tarbes, requested that MCI help them to improve maternal health in the Sheema District in remote rural Uganda; due to the extremely limited services currently available. MCI had previously worked with the sisters on a successful maternal health project in Kenya, for over 14 years.

Nyabwina is the main village in the Sheema District, situated in Archdiocese of Mbarara 60km from Mbarara town and 490km from Kampala city.

It is beautiful with lush green jungle surrounded with scenic mountains running along the entire region.

The Sisters help run St. Claret Health Center, along with a small dedicated team comprising a midwife, nurse practitioner, pharmacy dispenser and nurses. The building, a disused church, is in bad condition and maternity facilities are very poor. The Health Centre serves four parishes with a population of approx. 10 000.

Some of the services provided by health care team:

- maternity (pregnancy, labour and post natal care)
- Natural Family Planning
- outreach services
- immunisations
- health education and promotion, HIV/AIDS programmes
- medication dispensing



3 international members of MCI conducted a “needs assessment trip” to East Africa in February 2020. They were able to gather information and identify solutions to improve maternal health care in this region.

Key findings at St Claret Medical Centre

- Lack of adequate equipment. One tiny delivery room with only one bed and no lighting. No foetal monitors, digital scales, etc.
- Inadequate number of trained staff
- Limited laboratory equipment
- Limited patient accommodation
- Lack of transport options to hospital from remote villages



Delivery room

Mothers in rural Uganda

- Around 70% of women in the Sheema District, deliver babies at home by traditional birth attendants (TBAs)
- The maternal mortality rate in Uganda is 1 in 250 (likely higher in Mbarara region) mainly from infection (including STDs), post partum haemorrhage and malnutrition
- Approx. 30% of women are delivering their babies at the St Claret Health Care Centre, and are cared for by nurses
- Despite best efforts, the health centre still has 1 maternal death every 3 months due to lack of trained professionals, equipment, and/or medicines.



Patient ward

Outreach clinics

As there are no proper facilities to conduct outreach clinics, the Diocese permits use of local churches. They are usually hot and unfurnished. The Church is divided into different sections; however it lacks privacy.

Many superstitions and prejudices still arise, and women are afraid to deliver in hospital, though attendance at health clinics is improving as trust in modern medicine increases. Large efforts of a lovely group of Community Health Care workers, encourage locals to participate in health care programmes; and for pregnant women to attend pre natal checks.



MaterCare Project (Project Mbarara)

It will provide trained staffed and a well equipped maternity centre in Nyabwina. It will construct some small outreach/ maternity centres in remote villages, including Ruballe and Katunga, where there are no antenatal services.

MaterCare will renovate an unused school next to the Sisters' residence and construct an additional maternity ward. The maternity unit will be well staffed with trained nurses and midwives, along with functional life-saving equipment.

Communication within the region is quite good with most families having access to mobile phones. However, emergency transport between the maternity centre and surrounding villages is rather poor especially during and after the rainy season. Specially designed maternity motorcycle ambulances in each village will improve transport for high-risk mothers, and reduce the time required to access life-saving care.

The project will also improve the referral system. MaterCare will provide training to the TBAs and community health workers to identify high-risk mothers as they near their due date. It will also enhance family preparedness as the due date nears, which should be a 'happy and exciting' time.