

## **The Influence of Group Antenatal Care (G-ANC) on Adherence to the Recommended Antenatal Care Visits: Initial Findings from the Mlinde Mama Project in Geita.**

Alen Kinyina<sup>1</sup>, Abubakari Munga<sup>1</sup>, Frank Phiri<sup>1</sup>, Augustino Hellar<sup>1</sup>, Raymond Bandio<sup>1</sup>, Yusuph Kulindwa<sup>1</sup>, Hamid Mandali<sup>1</sup>, Isaac Lyatuu<sup>1</sup> Omari Sukari<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup>Prime Health Initiative Tanzania (PHIT).

<sup>2</sup>Regional Secretariat (RS)-Geita region.

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### **Background**

In Tanzania, although most women attend at least one Antenatal Care (ANC) visit (90%), only 61% attend at least four visits. The WHO recommends each pregnant woman attend at least eight ANC contacts. Group Antenatal Care (G-ANC) is an innovative service delivery model wherein women with pregnancies of similar gestational age (GA) convene for ANC sessions, incorporating information sharing and peer support. G-ANC service approach is implemented in the Geita region as an innovative service delivery model to assess its impact on quality of services and frequencies of ANC attendance. The aim of this project is to determine the contribution of G-ANC in realization of the recommended ANC contacts in Chato and Geita Districts.

### **Methodology**

Pregnant women with GA below 24 weeks attending ANC at selected 6 health facilities are invited to form a group consisting of 8–15 women. These women engage in a series of five 90-minute sessions spaced at an interval of 2-4 weeks apart. Meetings are facilitated by 1-2 healthcare providers (HCPs) using interactive approaches such as small group work, games, songs, and illustration cards that engage women in discussions on pregnancy care.

### **Results**

The baseline findings showed that only 49% of pregnant women attended at least four or more ANC visits through the routine ANC. Over a period of one year, about 2,924 pregnant women were recruited in the G-ANC cohorts in both districts through the study sites. Among these pregnant women, 2641 individuals (90%) completed a minimum of four or more ANC visits.

### **Conclusion**

The GANC model demonstrates effectiveness in increasing the frequency of ANC visits in Chato DC and Geita DC. Findings from the implementation of this project support a scale-up of this model beyond the Geita region as an approach to completing the number of visits recommended by the WHO and provision of quality ANC services.