

Immunization Practitioner Provides Entry Point to HIV Counseling and Testing



At the height of the Sudanese civil war, 18-year-old Jackline Lucia and her family were forced to flee their home for safer lands. They eventually settled in Jambo Town, within Mundri East County in Western Equatoria State. There Jackline took a job with a health-focused nongovernmental organization (NGO), Mundri Relief and Development Association (MRDA). In her new position, Jackline received training on the World Health Organization's (WHO) Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) and began using her new skills to deliver vaccination services to local mothers and their children.

In 2010, FHI 360 carried out a rapid assessment of HIV/AIDS services throughout Western Equatoria State. The assessment revealed significant gaps in HIV/AIDS service delivery and knowledge among health service providers in the region. In an effort to close these gaps, FHI 360 conducted HIV counseling and testing (CT) workshops. Interested in increasing her skills, Jackline became one of the earliest trainees. Through her participation in these workshops, Jackline acquired the skills necessary to provide expanded, sustainable HIV CT services to her local community.

Today, with continued support from FHI 360, Jackline has opened her own counseling and testing site within the Mideh Primary Health Care Centre (PHCC). She still provides routine vaccinations to mothers and children, but now she also mobilizes these clients for CT services. With her integrated HIV CT services, she tests between seven and ten clients daily.

Jackline's success in expanding integrated HIV CT services has been recognized by the regional health authorities. Esther John, Program Coordinator for the County AIDS Commission, recently commended Jackline saying, "Jackline is a dedicated worker who offers services to where they are needed most, and regularly submits her reports to the office. I am very proud of her." As FHI 360 continues to train additional service providers in the Mideh PHCC, Jackline offers a model for others to follow. And still looking to increase her impact, Jackline hopes to expand the geographic scope of her service delivery to benefit more people in her community.