SCRIPT FOR "The Vitamin and Mineral Powders Journey in Namutumba District, Uganda"

<https://vimeo.com/244668712>

Namutumba is one of the eight districts of Uganda that are characterized with high incidences of micronutrient deficiencies. To address the challenge, SPRING/Uganda together with other partners supported the Ministry of Health to roll out the Vitamin and mineral Powders pilot project in Namutumba District.

SPRING/Uganda engaged several partners at different stages of the pilot project, through a series of coordination activities.

The pilot objective in Namutumba district was to identify the most cost effective way of delivering vitamin and mineral powders by testing two delivery mechanisms; health facility and community arms.

Both arms started their operations at the health facility. In the health facility arm, all caretakers of children aged 6-23 months, that reported for health services, in different facilities, received a packet of vitamin and mineral powders from either trained health workers or facility based village health team commonly referred to as VHTs. The powders were given in addition to the treatment package for any underlying illnesses. In the community arm, caretakers of children aged 6-23 months received their packet of powders from one of the identified VHTs.

The project kickstarted its operations by sensitizing teams at all levels such as; district, sub-county and village and training VHTs and health workers on use of essential materials and supplies.

In turn, trained village health teams and health workers passed on knowledge to community members through education sessions in communities or at health facilities.

The district was divided according to the delivery mechanism; Caretakers in the sub-counties of Magada, Kibaale and Namutumba received their powders from the nearby health facility. Those in the sub-counties of Bulange, Ivukula and Nsinze got their powders from village health teams within their villages of residence.

To continuously drive demand, refute myths and ensure continuous sensitization of stakeholders and beneficiaries, SPRING ran an intensive communications campaign that involved a number of activities.

At village level, drama groups held edutainment sessions in several villages and town centers and these were supplemented by an intensive mass media campaign that involved spot messages, radio talk shows, vignettes, DJ mentions to mention but a few.

Men were targeted through local cinemas popularly known as “*bibanda.*”

Routine monitoring visits, spot checks and monthly data collection was done throughout the project lifecycle using monitoring and evaluation tools that were developed.

Mothers that received Vitamin and Mineral Powders were enthusiastic. The children whose food was mixed with the powders reported an increased appetite, were happy, healthy, strong and appeared brighter than other children who did not take any powders.