

## SUCCESS STORY

Abigail Lamah is one of 26 women who visited the Duo Tiayee health clinic in Nimba County, Liberia, for her first antenatal care (ANC) visit in April 2013. She walked one hour and thirty minutes, with two of her friends, carrying her one year and nine month old child on her back. Abigail made the journey since she is now almost four months pregnant and her community trained traditional midwife (TTM) had been urging her to visit the health clinic for an ANC exam. The TTM is also encouraging Abigail to plan on delivering this baby at the clinic even though she delivered her last child at home.



### A TTM assisting with delivery

The Duo Tiayee health clinic serves a catchment population of 17,865 people from 22 different towns. At Duo Tiayee health clinic, Abigail met Rachel Khowon, a certified midwife (CM) who welcomed her to the clinic by giving her a Mother Health Card and spending twenty minutes examining her and providing pregnancy advice. Rachel and her fellow clinic staff were trained in nutrition (ENA: Essential Nutrition Actions), in February 2012 by the Liberian Agricultural Upgrading Nutrition and Child Health (LAUNCH<sup>1</sup>) project, in order to improve the delivery of nutrition services at health facilities.

The LAUNCH project aims to reduce food insecurity in Bong and Nimba counties and focuses on reducing chronic malnutrition by intervening in the first 1000 days of a child's life (from conception to age two). The first 1000 days of a child's life is considered a vital window of opportunity for developing irreversible health and nutritional outcomes<sup>2</sup>. The ENA framework, adopted by the Liberia Ministry of Health and Social Welfare

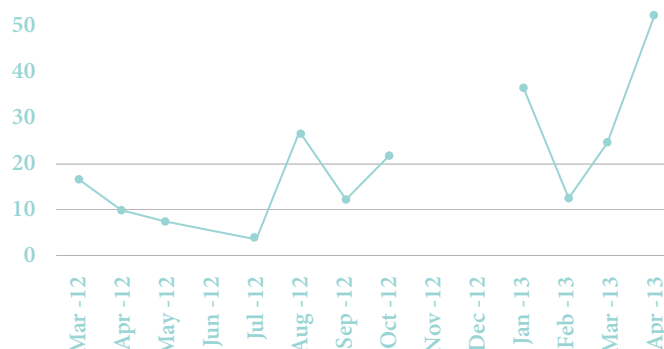


### The CM during ANC

(MOHSW), works on the principle of promoting key actions for improved nutrition by delivering messages and interventions through community health volunteers and health facility staff. ENA is delivered to pregnant women, new mothers, and family members at every possible contact point, including ANC, growth monitoring, sick child, family planning, immunizations, and community or church meetings.

## DUO TIAYEE HEALTH CLINIC:

### Number of women for 4th ANC visit each month





From September 2012 to March 2013, LAUNCH trained 754 TTMs in ENA, promoting ANC, facility delivery and family planning. In 2012, LAUNCH had already trained 89 health providers in 13 facilities and 180 general Community Health Volunteers (gCHVs). At the community level, TTMs provide ENA counseling and encourage pregnant women to go for the first early ANC visit, which initiates the first of several health facility contact points for mothers and children in the first 1000 days. During delivery at health clinics, the TTM is present with the CM, and together they are prepared to conduct clean and safe delivery and refer dangerous cases to hospitals.



*The vaccinator using a growth chart to counsel a mother on feeding practices before giving vaccines.*



*Abigail beginning her walk home with her new mosquito net*

Many of the women in Duo Tiayee area are beneficiaries of the LAUNCH program and participate in monthly health education meetings facilitated by gCHVs and volunteer Lead Mothers who deliver ENA messages at the community level. When women come to Duo Tiayee, the clinic staff, in addition to providing clinical services, takes time to ask each woman what they are eating and how they are feeding their children—reinforcing ENA at every contact point. With the influx of ENA messages and interventions during more frequent visits to the health clinic, beneficiaries receive more support to improve health and nutrition practices. In March 2012, 17 women came for their fourth ANC visit to Duo Tiayee while in April 2013, 53 came for their fourth ANC visit.

At her subsequent ANC visits to the Duo Tiayee clinic, Abigail will continue to receive ENA support from the staff including reminders to take daily Iron and Folic Acid supplements and eat additional and more diverse food. When she delivers her baby at the clinic, she will also receive support on early initiation of breastfeeding, proper breastfeeding positioning and attachment, and feeding frequency for exclusive breastfeeding. When Abigail brings her newborn to the clinic for vaccines, the vaccinator, Mr. Joe Wonkormah, will weigh her child and monitor its growth, and continue to provide counseling on child feeding and maternal nutrition. If Abigail needs to bring her children to the clinic for treatment of sickness, the screener, Emmanuel Marthen, provides counseling on feeding sick children and proper hygiene and handwashing, and ensures regular deworming and Vitamin A distribution for children under five. All of these interventions will help her children develop physically and mentally and prevent them from experiencing chronic malnutrition.



*The TTMs and CM celebrating the birth of a newborn at Duo Tiayee clinic*

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1. LAUNCH is implemented by ACDI/VOCA in collaboration with PCI, JSI, and Making Cents International.

2. Dr Marie T Ruel PhD, Harold Alderman PhD, the Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group: Nutrition-sensitive interventions and programmes: how can they help to accelerate progress in improving maternal and child nutrition? The Lancet - 6 June 2013

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