

Restoring Hope and Dignity: Healing Hand Birth Injury Camp Transforms Lives at Nawanyago Health Centre IV

By Catholic Religious Sisters Health Care Initiative Uganda



21 women treated	4 scheduled for further management	19,500 people in facility catchment	Aug 2026 next camp planned
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A Mission of Healing in Kamuli

For many women living with untreated birth injuries, pain is only one part of the burden. The deeper wound is often the silence that follows: shame, isolation, fear and the loss of confidence to take part in ordinary family and community life.

At Nawanyago Health Centre IV in Buzaaya Sub-county, Kamuli District, the Fourth Edition of the Healing Hand Birth Injury Camp offered a different story. Organized by the Catholic Religious Sisters Health Care Initiative Uganda through its Tororo Province branch, the outreach provided free screening, specialist surgical care, nursing support, counselling and post-operative follow-up for women affected by childbirth injuries.

By the end of the week-long camp, 21 women had received life-changing treatment. Four others remained under medical observation and were scheduled for further management during the next birth injury camp planned for August 2026.

Why Nawanyago Health Centre IV Was Chosen

Nawanyago Health Centre IV serves a catchment population of nearly 19,500 people. The facility, managed by the Daughters of Mary Sisters, also known as Banabikira, was selected because of the growing need for specialized maternal health services in the surrounding communities.

The camp responded to a real and urgent gap. Many women still face barriers to skilled delivery, timely referral and specialized treatment after childbirth complications. For some, the cost of transport and related expenses delays care. For others, fear and misinformation keep them away from health facilities until their condition has worsened.

The camp showed why maternal health care must combine treatment, prevention, counselling, community education and economic support for vulnerable women.

Responding to Preventable Birth Injuries

The outreach highlighted the continuing impact of preventable birth injuries, including obstetric fistula and severe childbirth tears. These injuries often arise when labour is prolonged, obstructed or managed without timely access to skilled emergency obstetric care.

Health workers at the camp noted that several women who came for care were young, with many below the age of 35. This points to the wider challenge of early pregnancy, delayed referrals and limited access to skilled maternal services in some communities.

The team also observed that some expectant mothers still rely on Traditional Birth Attendants. While these attendants may be trusted locally, complicated labour requires timely professional care. Delays can leave women with injuries that affect their health, dignity and social life for years.



Religious Sisters and health workers walk with beneficiaries through treatment, counselling and recovery.

Restoring Confidence for Women and Families

Behind every medical result is a human story. Women who arrived at the camp carried different experiences of pain, failed referrals, fear of surgery, lack of money and years of discomfort. Some had lived quietly with severe tears or fistula. Others had delayed treatment because they did not know where to find specialized care.

The free services provided at Nawanyago gave beneficiaries a chance to recover without the heavy financial pressure that often blocks access to treatment. For many, the camp meant more than surgery. It meant being listened to, examined with dignity, treated with compassion and prepared for life after recovery.

Beneficiaries left the facility with renewed hope and a stronger message for other women: childbirth injuries are treatable, and no woman should suffer in silence when help is available.

Fighting Myths with Clear Health Education

The camp also exposed the damage caused by myths and misinformation. In some communities, obstetric fistula and severe childbirth tears are wrongly associated with witchcraft, curses, traditional herbs or unrelated medical procedures. These beliefs discourage women from seeking care and deepen stigma.

Specialist medical guidance during the camp helped correct these misconceptions. The key message was clear: most obstetric fistula cases are preventable. Timely skilled delivery, early referral and access to emergency obstetric care can protect women from injuries that should not happen.

Community sensitization remains essential. Surgery repairs existing injuries, but education prevents future suffering. Families, community leaders, men, young people, Traditional Birth Attendants and local health structures all need accurate information about safe delivery, early warning signs and available treatment.



Care that restores dignity

The camp combined specialist surgery, nursing care, counselling, follow-up support and community education.

Moments from the Nawanyago outreach: care, recovery, accompaniment and renewed confidence.

The Role of Catholic Sisters in Health Care

The Healing Hand Birth Injury Camp also demonstrated the quiet but powerful contribution of Catholic Religious Sisters in Uganda's health sector. Through their presence in health facilities, communities and pastoral structures, Sisters reach people who are often overlooked by mainstream services.

Their work combines professional health care with compassion, faith and human dignity. At Nawanyago, this mission was visible in the way beneficiaries were received, treated and supported through recovery. The camp strengthened the public witness of consecrated women as frontline contributors to maternal health, social protection and community well-being.

Partnerships that Make Care Possible

The camp was made possible through the coordination of the Catholic Religious Sisters Health Care Initiative Uganda, Tororo Province branch, with support from the Hilton Foundation and the leadership of the Initiative's National Coordination. The outreach brought together medical professionals, Religious Sisters, volunteers, local authorities and facility staff.

This partnership model is important. Birth injury care requires more than a single facility. It needs mobilization, screening, surgery, transport support, counselling, follow-up, data collection and future referral planning. When partners work together, women who had lost hope are reached and restored.

What Must Happen Next

Strengthen community sensitization Use churches, local councils, VHTs, schools, radio and women's groups to teach communities about safe delivery and treatable birth injuries.	Improve early referral Encourage families and Traditional Birth Attendants to refer complicated labour early to skilled health facilities.
Support vulnerable mothers Address indirect costs such as transport, food and accommodation that prevent poor women from seeking timely care.	Sustain specialist camps Continue birth injury camps while strengthening facility-based follow-up and future treatment pathways.

A Renewed Call to Restore Dignity

The Fourth Edition of the Healing Hand Birth Injury Camp at Nawanyago Health Centre IV left behind more than clinical outcomes. It restored confidence. It gave women a pathway back to normal life. It reminded families and communities that birth injuries are medical conditions that deserve compassion, treatment and support.



For the Catholic Religious Sisters Health Care Initiative Uganda, the mission continues. Each camp is a practical expression of faith in action: reaching vulnerable mothers, reducing stigma, promoting safe maternal health care and restoring the dignity of women who have suffered quietly for too long.

The message from Nawanyago is simple and urgent: no woman should be left to suffer silently from a childbirth injury that can be treated. With skilled care, community education and sustained partnership, healing is possible.

Beneficiaries recovering after treatment during the Nawanyago Birth Injury Camp.

Catholic Religious Sisters Health Care Initiative Uganda
Healing, dignity and hope for vulnerable mothers and families