

# Advising and Counseling mothers to improve child health outcomes

unicef   
for every child

© UNICEF/UNI197921/Schermbrucker

# Health care workers need skills to advise and counsel caregivers

- Care seeking
  - Responsive caregiving
  - Feeding
  - Recognizing illness, managing illness
  - Etc.
- 
- Caregivers of vulnerable children, children with chronic illness etc. will require additional support

# Advice versus Counseling

## Advice

- Suggesting a person **what** they should do

## Counseling

- Providing assistance/guidance on **how** to resolve a problem
- More interactive
- Problem solving, creativity

**Both are important!**

# Community IYCF Counselling package





# Home based records

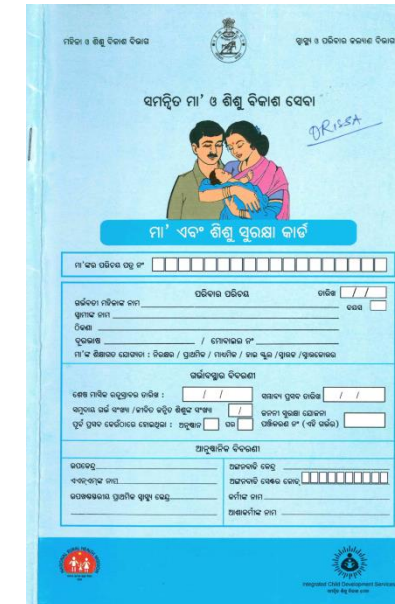
*A home-based record is...*

- ✓ a record of an individual's health status and their history of health services received (primarily MNCH), including:
  - health, growth and development status
  - visits to a health care provider
  - vaccinations received.
- ✓ kept in the household by the client (e.g. a woman holds a maternal health record) or by the caregiver (e.g. the parent/guardian holds the infant's health record)



# There are many different types of home-based records

- Antenatal notes
- Vaccination-only cards/booklets
- Vaccination-plus cards/booklets
- Child health books
- Integrated maternal and child (MCH) health books



Clockwise from top/middle: Colombia circa 2014;  
Senegal circa 2014;  
India (Orissa) circa 2013;  
Saudi Arabia circa 2014  
Source: <https://www.technet-21.org/en/topics/home-base-records>



# Recommendations on home-based records for MNCH

## ***Recommendation 1***

The use of home-based records, as a complement to facility-based records, is recommended for the care of pregnant women, mothers, newborns and children, to improve:

- care-seeking behaviours,
- male involvement and support in the household,
- maternal and child home care practices,
- infant and child feeding, and
- communication between health providers and women/caregivers.

*(Low-certainty evidence)*



# Family connect, Uganda

- targeted life cycle-based messages via SMS to pregnant women, mothers, heads of households, including male partners, and caregivers
- information on what they can do to keep themselves and their babies in good health
- Focus on 1000 days







**PREGNANCY REGISTRY:** Pregnant women are registered in a national client registry and grouped by household. FamilyConnect leverages the national ID system as the individual unique identifier, helping to track individuals across multiple systems and points-of-care.

**LIFE CYCLE-BASED MESSAGES:** Based on the stage in a woman's pregnancy, she and the head of household will receive targeted SMS messages, available in at least six different local languages.

**SERVICE RATING:** To improve service provider accountability, mothers will rate the services they receive at their clinic and from their community health worker. These satisfaction ratings will be used to identify bottlenecks affecting the use of health care services.

**HELP DESK:** Mothers, heads of households and community health workers can reply to any of the messages they receive with questions, compliments or complaints. A central Ministry of Health help desk replies, using pre-written and approved responses. All compliments and complaints are forwarded to district focal people who have two weeks to respond.

**SYSTEM-WIDE INTEGRATION:** FamilyConnect will be integrated with other Ministry of Health-approved tools and will feed into a reproductive, maternal, newborn and child (RMNCAH) health scorecard (a decentralized monitoring system).

# Feedback

## **VHTs**

- Increased appreciation and acknowledgment from the communities about their work.
- Increased trust from the community. The information the VHT is relaying is validated by the SMS from Ministry of Health.
- Decreased use of TBAs.
- Increased phone ownership among VHTs.

## **Mothers**

- Increased male involvement.
- Increased motivation and knowledge about the importance of delivering at a health facility.
- Increased practice of taking children to health facility instead of for example self-medication.
- Excitement about the messages being so individual and knowing the mothers stage of pregnancy.



unicef   
for every child

Thank you

© UNICEF/UN074437/Domino