Report: ‘Shs 63bn World Bank maternal health project is a huge failure’

By Henry Mugenyi

A whopping sh63bn that the World Bank had provided to help poor Ugandan women access maternal health services was grossly abused with most of the money just benefitting project officials and their wealthy clients, a new report has revealed.

A report by Initiative for Social and Economic Rights (ISER) shows that in concocting accountability, officials of the project that was executed through Marie Stopes services ended up reporting that they served 170,000 of the targeted 130,000 patients, a bizarre claim that is yet to be deciphered.
The $17.3 million Uganda Reproductive Health Voucher Project was supposed to roll out in 25 badly-off districts, but Buhweju was the only one of the earmarked districts that was reached and the money was diverted to 24 wealthier districts where 'better clients' mostly in non-extent hospitals could be found.

The Uganda Reproductive Health Voucher Project Funded by World Bank thus failed to extend maternal health services to vulnerable groups as expected, the ISER report concludes.

Through the project, the less privileged were entitled to access vouchers which in this case is a coupon that a mother exchange for specified services from approved health facilities.

Field research conducted by ISER between November 2019 and March 2020 found that in areas where the project was present, 68% of the beneficiaries were paying either middle class or rich and only 32% could be classified as poor.

Allan Kembabazi, the programs director of ISER, notes: “The report shows that some mothers were paying up to 100,000 Uganda shillings to access vouchers instead of 4000 shillings”

Salim Namusobya the executive director of ISER said even the districts covered by the project are not among the poorest communities in Uganda.

At the few private health facilities where the few poor women with vouchers went, they were according to Namusobya, forced to undergo C-section so that big monies could be claimed from project funders.

ISER operations manager Angella Kasule appealed to the government to monitor donor funds seriously and to bring those who steal them to account.
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BY JONAH KIRABO  August 6, 2020  0

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