

## *Transforming Youth in Western Uganda*

*A boda boda driver's involvement with a youth group helps him change his behavior and abstain until marriage.*

On Wednesday, Steven spent the day at Katosa Church in Kyenjojo preparing for his marriage. As his friends attest, Steven would not have attended such a meeting a few years ago, but in 2005 Steven joined a youth group that helped change his life.

People in his village describe Steven as a normal youth who dropped out of school. For boys like him, he explains, there is not a lot of hope. He says, "You wake up in the morning, go sit by a bar and watch the day go by...I belonged to groups that were not very helpful."

Steven joined a community youth group, and today he is the group's leader. Using music, dance and drama, the youth group both entertains and sensitizes the community. The members talk to their peers about abstinence, being faithful, and using condoms. After joining, Steven made the decision to practice secondary abstinence. Today, as he prepares for his marriage, he tells his friends, "It is possible to abstain. I had a good life when I abstained." Now working as a boda boda driver, Steven has bought a small plot of land for his new family and says he looks forward to the future.



*Steven at a meeting*

With thirty members, Steven's group is expanding quickly and new groups are being formed in the sub-counties. As he continues to reach his fellow youth, Steven hopes many others will follow his lead.

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