



Merck for Mothers in Africa and the Middle East

It all starts with a mother—she’s the beginning of a much bigger story. A healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth lead to a lifetime of benefits, both for her own health and prosperity as well as that of her children, family, community and nation—for generations to come. We call this the “Mom Effect.”

About Merck for Mothers

[Merck for Mothers](#) is Merck’s global initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die while giving life. We provide support for transformational and sustainable solutions that strengthen health systems to deliver high-quality maternity care services that benefit women and their communities. Through 2020, Merck for Mothers has reached over 13 million women in over 48 global sites through programs promoting safe, high-quality, respectful care.

Estimated Maternal Mortality in Sub-Saharan Africa¹

- **542 maternal deaths** per 100,000 live births
- **38% reduction** in maternal mortality since 2000
- **1 in 37 chance** of a woman dying in pregnancy and childbirth
- **Challenges²:** Lack of access to care due to poverty, distance of services, lack of information, inadequate services and cultural practices

Estimated Maternal Mortality North Africa and Middle East³

- **57 maternal deaths** per 100,000 live births
- **50% reduction** in maternal mortality since 1990⁴
- **1 in 570 chance** of a woman dying in pregnancy and childbirth
- **Challenges⁵:** lack of awareness about maternal health issues, persistent gender inequalities and increasing maternal health disparities between and within countries in this region



Global Sites:

Democratic Republic of Congo; Egypt; Ethiopia; Jordan; Kenya; Lebanon; Malawi; Morocco; Mozambique; Rwanda; South Africa; Tanzania

Programs and Collaborators in Sub-Saharan Africa and The Middle East

In 2012, we launched Merck for Mothers Global Grants — a corporate grant program that enables Merck offices around the world to support organizations that are improving maternal health. The Global Grants program is designed to be responsive to local women's needs and extends our reach and impact to many more countries across the globe. Since we launched, the program has contributed over \$40 million, supporting over 60 projects across more than 40 global sites.

A selection of grants we have made in Africa and The Middle East includes:

Democratic Republic of Congo | Organización Navarra Ayuda entre los Pueblos is improving access to antenatal care and strengthening health worker's ability to manage complications during pregnancy and childbirth. Medics Without Vacation is supporting medical missions to train local health workers on maternal health and safe motherhood practices.

Egypt | Pathfinder is increasing access to quality family planning (FP) services by improving health system capacity in select districts of Souhag Governorate, to increase demand for and availability of FP (including postpartum FP), with a focus on improving services for young married women and first-time parents.

Ethiopia | Doctors with Africa CUAMM is conducting community outreach in rural Ethiopia to increase demand for facility-based maternal health care and strengthening the referral network in case of obstetric emergencies.

Jordan | The King Hussein Cancer Foundation is developing a patient-centric approach to increase uptake of women's health services among pregnant women and new mothers with a focus on family planning, breastfeeding and breast cancer screening.

Kenya | Jhpiego and the Kenya Red Cross Society are demonstrating an innovative, sustainable and scalable model of contraceptive service delivery for adolescent girls and young women. Based on the success in Mandera and Migori counties, the Kenyan government has adopted the G-Amini Project model to provide youth-focused sexual and reproductive health services.

Lebanon | The Lebanon Family Planning Association for Development and Family Empowerment is organizing trainings for midwives, field workers and local leaders to improve safe motherhood practices.

Malawi | Concern Worldwide is supporting a program aimed to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity through a package of community and facility-based interventions. Mothers2mothers is addressing key issues including the delay of pregnant women seeking antenatal care and the lack of follow-up of pregnant women and mother-infant pairs in the continuum of HIV/AIDS care.

Morocco | The Lalla Salma Foundation is providing therapeutic education about maternal health for women living with cancer, while also increasing health care provider awareness of the importance of effective monitoring and support of pregnant oncology patients.

Mozambique | Comunità di Sant Egidio is integrating HIV and AIDS care with antenatal services in health facilities while also training healthcare workers to provide antenatal care, deliveries and services to prevent maternal-child transmission of HIV.

Rwanda | Health-e Foundation is improving reproductive and maternal health by increasing antenatal care attendance and strengthening the skills of community workers and midwives through electronic learning courses that are localized for the targeted communities.



South Africa | The Foundation for Professional Development is improving quality of emergency care for mothers experiencing obstetric emergencies and reducing maternal and neonatal mortality through standardized care and management of inter-facility maternal transportation.

South Africa | UNICEF is improving access to maternal health interventions by strengthening the capacity of national and provincial governments, as well as primary healthcare outreach teams.

South Africa | University of Pretoria is improving quality of obstetric care in midwife-led obstetric units and referral district hospitals by providing high-quality respectful clinical care to improve the acceptability and utilization of primary-level services.

Tanzania | The Swiss Tropical & Public Health Institute is improving access to care and treatment for HIV-infected pregnant women, their partners and their children living in the Kilombero district. UMATI is increasing the utilization of sexual and reproductive health services and safe motherhood services in four districts in Tanzania through community-based activities as well as training community health workers on obstetric care. The World Lung Foundation is developing an e-learning platform to support the delivery of comprehensive emergency obstetric care in rural and remote health facilities in Tanzania.



Project Spotlight

South Africa | The Foundation for Professional Development (FPD) and University of Pretoria developed and implemented a training program for emergency medical service staff, nurses and local clinicians to improve their skills, knowledge and quality of services they provide to pregnant women, emphasizing respectful care. In three years, they have trained nearly 700 professionals in Eastern Cape. Additionally, there was a 16-20% increase in knowledge of how to manage obstetric patients and identify and respond to complications. The project was endorsed by the government and has since contracted FPD to continue the program using the same model — FPD has agreed to train an additional 2,000 health professionals.

1 [WHO's Trends in Maternal Mortality Report \(2017\)](#)

2 [WHO Regional Office for Africa: Maternal Health Overview](#)

3 [WHO's Trends in Maternal Mortality Report \(2017\)](#)

4 [UNICEF Middle East and North Africa - Health Overview](#)

5 [Sexual health and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa 2015](#)

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