



Merck for Mothers in Africa and the Middle East

Responding to Local Maternal Health Needs in Communities Around the World

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.”** Working with grantees and collaborators across sectors, we’re making the Mom Effect a reality for communities across the globe.



Global Sites:
Algeria; Democratic Republic of Congo; Egypt; Ethiopia; Israel; Jordan; Kenya; Lebanon; Malawi; Morocco; Mozambique; Nigeria; Rwanda; South Africa; Tanzania; Türkiye

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. Applying our Company’s business and scientific expertise, we are working across sectors to improve the health and well-being of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the months after. Our grantees and collaborators have reached over 30 million women in more than 70 countries around the world to support healthier pregnancies and safer childbirth, contributing to the global effort to help end maternal mortality and morbidity.

Estimated Maternal Mortality in the Sub-Saharan Africa Region

- **545 maternal deaths** per 100,000 live births¹
- **Accounted for 70%** of global maternal deaths in 2020²
- **33% reduction** in maternal mortality rate since 2000³
- **Challenges⁴:** Lack of access to care due to poverty, distance of services, lack of information, inadequate services and cultural practices

Estimated Maternal Mortality in the North Africa and Middle East Region

- **56 maternal deaths** per 100,000 live births⁵
- **50% reduction** in maternal mortality between 1990 and 2017⁶
- **Challenges⁷:** Lack of awareness about maternal health issues, lack of access to care due to poverty, transportation and communication challenges, shortage of health care providers, and conflict-related inequities



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 to support organizations that are improving maternal health around the world, beyond Merck for Mother's focus countries India, Kenya, Nigeria and the United States. The Merck for Mothers Global Grants program is designed to be responsive to local women's maternal health needs and extends our reach and impact to many more countries across the globe. Since we launched, the program has contributed over \$46 million, supporting over 85 projects across more than 45 global sites.

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

Algeria | Association AIDS Algeria is improving access to prevention services for mother-to-child transmission of HIV for pregnant women and women of reproductive age.

Democratic Republic of Congo | Organización Navarra Ayuda entre los Pueblos improved access to antenatal care and strengthening health worker's ability to manage complications during pregnancy and childbirth.

Ethiopia | Doctors with Africa CUAMM conducted community outreach in rural Ethiopia to increase demand for facility-based maternal health care and strengthened 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.

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

Liberia | Last Mile Health is establishing mother-to-mother peer support groups to strengthen communication, information sharing and referrals among pregnant women and women of reproductive age.

Malawi | Concern Worldwide supported a program aimed to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity through a package of community and facility-based interventions. Mothers2mothers addressed 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 education about maternal health for women living with cancer, while also increasing health care provider awareness of the importance of effective monitoring and support for pregnant oncology patients.

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

Rwanda | Health-e Foundation improved 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 | Solina Centre for International Development and Research, in collaboration with Clinton Health Access Initiative, is aiming to enhance the quality and efficiency of sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health care across all levels of the health system by building clinical capacity, improving the availability of resources and strengthening data systems.

Tanzania | The Swiss Tropical & Public Health Institute worked with several country partners to enhance healthcare access for HIV-infected pregnant women, partners, and children in the Kilombero district in Southern Tanzania.

Türkiye | TAPV is addressing the maternal health needs of the region impacted by the 2023 earthquake.

Uganda | Doctors with Africa University College for Aspiring Missionary Doctors (CUAMM) increased the accessibility and utilization of emergency obstetric for mothers and their newborns by improving referrals at district hospitals and health centers and providing transportation for emergency services.



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 870 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 (2023) [Maternal mortality](#)
2. WHO (2023) [Maternal mortality](#)
3. WHO (2023) [Maternal mortality](#)
4. WHO African Region (2023) [Maternal Health](#)

5. World Bank (2023) [Maternal mortality ratio](#)
6. UNICEF MENA Region (2023) [Health](#)
7. BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth (2022) [Maternal mortality in the Middle East and North Africa region - how could countries move towards obstetric transition stage 5?](#)