

# Tanzania

## Mobilizing Maternal Health (M-Mama)

### Background

Two-thirds of all maternal deaths around the world occur in sub-Saharan Africa. Thousands of women throughout the region do not have access to the care they need or experience extreme delays in seeking care. In Tanzania, maternal and neonatal mortality remains high, with 556 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births and 25 newborn deaths per 10,000 live births.<sup>1</sup>

Pathfinder's M-Mama program works to address the 'three delays' that contribute to maternal and newborn emergencies. These 'three delays' are:

- The delay in making the decision to seek care
- The delay in identification of—and transport to—a medical facility
- The delay in receipt of adequate, and appropriate, treatment

### Approach

M-Mama has a three-tiered approach to removing delays in access to care. These include engaging the community; providing emergency transport for mothers; and strengthening local health systems so when women arrive at a health facility, they receive the quality care they need.

### What we do

- Make sure even the hardest-to-reach women with high-risk pregnancies and obstetric emergencies are transported to hospitals without delay.
- Stop preventable maternal deaths by making sure women can access quality, respectful maternal care at every point—from their homes to the health facility.
- Train and mentor community health workers, so they can recognize risk factors during pregnancy early on and refer women for lifesaving care.
- Pioneer the use of digital technology to transform the way health care is delivered and create a lifeline for people who live far from a health facility.



A community taxi driver. (Photo courtesy of Vodaphone Foundation).

### Mobilizing Maternal Health (M-Mama) (Phase II)

#### Funders:

Vodaphone Foundation, USAID, The ELMA Foundation, Touch Foundation

**Dates:** October 2017-September 2021

#### Reach:

**Phase III (2021-2017):** Scale up to 14 regions of Tanzania

**Phase II (2017-2021):** Scale up to six districts of Shinyanga

**Phase I (2015-2017):** Pilot in two districts in Mwanza and Shinyanga



## Focus 1: Engaging the community

M-Mama developed 'Community Care Groups' to facilitate engagement in the mobile transport program, and to build awareness on maternal and newborn health. Facilitators conducted monthly meetings with groups of pregnant and postpartum women.

Facilitators ensured that all women had access to the toll-free number developed for the emergency transportation system and identified women who were exhibiting 'danger signs' during their pregnancies. Community Care Group facilitators also distributed learning materials containing critical maternal and newborn health messages across the region, building awareness and promoting the use of emergency transport system.

## Focus 2: Creating dispatch centers and providing transport

M-Mama developed dispatch centers, which included developing a mobile application, setting up toll-free numbers for users and drivers, and recruiting and training dispatchers. M-Mama also coordinated emergency transportation options, for ambulances and private taxis, and set up systems so private taxis were reimbursed properly. M-Mama developed a network of local taxi drivers and community drivers in places where ambulances weren't readily available.

Expectant moms—or their families and neighbors—can make toll-free calls 24/7 to a local dispatch center, where call handlers assess the patient's condition using the "M-Mama App," which was designed to determine what kind of care the patient needed.

To ensure the best outcomes, M-Mama program staff trained dispatchers on maternal and newborn health and triaging difficult cases. If it is determined that care is required, the nearest ambulance driver or community taxi driver is identified on the app, and they receive a request to take the woman to the closest health facility. The program facilitated payments to taxi drivers immediately, which increased participation of local drivers.

## Focus 3: Strengthening local health systems

Pathfinder trained local health care providers in 15 health facilities so that they can provide quality care to mothers. To ensure that these trainings translated into real-world scenarios, M-Mama tailored supportive supervision, linking health care providers to clinical mentorship that ensured they had the right skills to provide quality care. These skills included managing pre-eclampsia and eclampsia and ensuring availability of essential medicine and supplies and the correct use of the partograph, a graphic record of key data recorded during a woman's labor.

## Results

### Dispatcher and community taxi driver trainings

- Established dispatching centers in 6 districts of Shinyanga.
- Established four toll-free numbers, with 10 billboards displayed in the region; 30,000 leaflets and 800 posters to build awareness.
- Supported 5,769 emergency transportations—25% by ambulances and 75% by community taxi drivers.

### Community engagement and sexual and reproductive health

- Reached 7,931 women (including 4,182 who were pregnant and 3,749 postpartum) with sexual and reproductive health information.
- 3,180 (97%) of 3,290 mothers who attended information sessions delivered at health facilities.

### Health systems

- Recorded 141,806 deliveries at 15 supported health facilities.
- Trained 220 healthcare workers on basic emergency obstetric and newborn care, comprehensive emergency obstetric and newborn care, and neonatal intensive care.

## 2021 - 2027: Phase III Expansion to 14 regions

Over the next six years, M-Mama will be scaled up to 14 regions of Tanzania

**Pathfinder International is driven by the conviction that all people, regardless of where they live, have the right to decide whether and when to have children, to exist free from fear and stigma, and to lead the lives they choose. As a global health organization with locally led, community-driven programs, we support women to make their own reproductive health decisions. We work with local partners to advance contraceptive services, comprehensive abortion care, and young people's sexual and reproductive rights in communities around the world—including those affected by poverty, conflict, climate change, and natural disasters. Taken together, our programs enable millions of people to choose their own paths forward.**

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