

INTRODUCTION

Despite the remarkable progress made in improving health service coverage in Ethiopia, there is still minimal use of maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) services. USAID Transform: Primary Health Care Activity (Transform) engages local communities to encourage increased uptake of MNCH services. The project meaningfully engages and mobilizes communities to improve health-seeking behaviors and practices, and strengthens their ability to address their own health-related challenges. These interventions take place in four regions of Ethiopia: Amhara; Oromia; Tigray; and, Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region.



Photo Credit: Sala Lewis



ABOUT USAID TRANSFORM

USAID Transform: Primary Health Care is a five-year (2017-2021) Activity that partners with the government of Ethiopia to prevent maternal and child deaths. The program strengthens the country's health system in five regions: Amhara; Oromia; Tigray; Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples (SNNP); and Sidama.

Since 2017, Transform has benefited nearly 56 million people by improving the quality of primary health service delivery, household and community health practices, and health-seeking behaviors.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

USAID Transform: Primary Health Care engages all community members and structures to create an enabling environment for change. Our community engagement strategy is guided by the following key principles:

Household Production of Health: Households are central to health systems. Transform focuses on transferring the right knowledge and skills to households and communities.

Flexibility: Health challenges are complex, and solutions differ depending on time and place, making it impossible to impose effective "one-size-fits-all" action plans. Action plans developed to improve health service delivery respond directly to the needs of each unique community.

Leveraging Multi-sectorial and Social Networks: Transform harnesses existing community structures to encourage people's ownership and accountability for their health outcomes.

Sustainability: Incorporates strategies that are consistent with existing government policy, involving local communities and leveraging existing platforms like pregnant women conferences.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT INTERVENTIONS

The "Her Space" Initiative facilitates the transition from adolescence to adulthood, providing very young adolescent girls (11 to 14 years) with the tools they need to reach their personal, educational, social, safety, health, and financial goals.

"Health Post Open House" Events enable health workers and community members to share ideas, identify barriers to use of health services, promote health services at health post level, reinforce mutual responsibility, and develop action plans to address health care challenges.

Community Mobilization strengthens the ability of communities to identify and address their health-related challenges. It ensures broad community participation, increases people's sense of ownership and responsibility over their health, encourages strategies that respond to local needs, and works to sustain community action. This process entails four stages: community organization, exploration of challenges, action planning and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation.

Partnership Defined Quality (PDQ)¹ is a methodology applied by Transform to improve the quality and accessibility of services through community engagement. Communities are engaged to define, implement, and monitor the quality improvement process, which includes three stages:

1. **Quality exploration:** Transform conducts a quality of care assessment with health facilities and community members separately.
2. **Bridging the gap:** Community members identify issues and gaps with health service delivery and contribute to action plans.
3. **Working together:** Transform works with local communities and health facilities to build the skills they need to improve access to quality health care.

Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI) provides vulnerable populations, especially women and children, access to modern health services² that would otherwise be paid for out-of-pocket. Investments in CBHI are voluntarily pooled by members of a community to offset the cost of health care.

¹ USAID Learning Lab

² Outpatient and inpatient services, surgeries, laboratory and imaging services, prescribed drugs dispensing for common illnesses, and care for childhood illness.

Community Scorecards enable community members to monitor and evaluate the kind of services they receive from health providers. Transform provides community feedback directly to health facilities, increasing accountability and transparency between health providers and clients. This innovative approach improves the quality of care and the performance of health systems.

Pregnant Women Conferences provide a safe space for expectant mothers and women to discuss and learn about pregnancy, delivery, postnatal and newborn care. The conferences are organized by local health facilities on a monthly basis and are led by midwives.

Engagement of Religious Leaders equips them with knowledge on various health issues, including nutrition, family planning, and maternal and child health, so that they can promote healthy behaviors among their communities.

Male Engagement increases the knowledge of, and involvement of men in reproductive and maternal health, since they often hold decision-making power and control financial resources, influencing women's access to life-saving care.

Adolescent & Youth Health Development scales up quality youth-friendly services within public health facilities that maintain the confidentiality, respect, and privacy of young people. Efforts include furnishing and equipping facilities, as well as training and mentoring health care providers and peer educators.

School Engagement equips teachers and school administrators with the necessary knowledge and skills to promote healthy behaviors among students and the wider community.

USAID TRANSFORM: PRIMARY HEALTH CARE RESULTS

2,180

individuals trained on community scorecard interventions.

263

religious leaders oriented in reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health issues.

6,000

very young adolescent girls and youth reached through the "Her Space" Initiative.

262

Health Post Open House events held, with the goal of promoting curative and preventive services available at health posts.

16,100

standardized Pregnant Women Conference facilitation guides given to health providers.

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