

MULTI-FUNDER INITIATIVE

Innovating for maternal and child health in Africa

Half of the world's maternal, newborn, and child deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa, mainly due to poor healthcare access. These deaths are needless: most can be prevented by strengthening health systems on the frontlines, where primary health care is provided. In recent decades, gains have been made in reducing death rates globally, but critical knowledge gaps remain.

The Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa program seeks to address these gaps. It will improve maternal, newborn, and child health by using primary health care as an entry point to strengthen health systems, ensuring they are more equitable. The program will support research and two African health policy and research organizations whose role will be to ensure evidence informs decision-making and strengthens health systems.

Twenty research teams, composed of leading African and Canadian researchers and African decision-makers, will develop practical, cost-effective solutions to health system challenges. The aim is to generate new knowledge about how interventions work, for whom, and under what conditions, to ensure that mothers and their children have better access to the care they need. Researchers will also explore how successes can be scaled up to improve health equity for women and children. The program will focus on four priority research themes:

- high impact, community-based interventions;
- quality facility-based interventions;
- enabling the policy environment to improve healthcare services and outcomes; and
- human resources for health.

To promote the uptake of research findings so that they influence national and regional policies and practices, each team will work closely with one of two regional health policy and research organizations:

- the West African Health Organization (WAHO), based in Burkina Faso; and
- a consortium of the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC), based in Kenya; the East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC), based in Tanzania; and Partners in Population and Development (PPD), based in Uganda.

Toward a brighter future for mother and child

- Worldwide, some **800** women die every day from causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.
- In 2013, **6.3 million** children died before reaching the age of five.
- In sub-Saharan Africa, children under the age of five are **15 times** more likely to die than in high-income countries.
- **99%** the world's maternal deaths occur in developing countries.
- Maternal mortality dropped by roughly **50%** between 1990 and 2013.

Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa reflects Canada's top development priorities and commitment to reducing preventable deaths and improving the health of mothers, newborns, and children. By focusing on sub-Saharan Africa, this program will have a lasting impact on the lives of mothers and children, where the need is greatest.

Funding: CA\$36 million

Duration: 7 years; from 2014 to 2020

Geographic scope: sub-Saharan Africa, with a focus on Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda



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