

AREA OF FOCUS

Enhancing health for mothers and children

PATH delivers innovative solutions to save lives and support strong families

Though maternal and child health indicators are improving globally, women and children continue to die needlessly from illnesses that are treatable or preventable. For more than 30 years, PATH has worked to improve maternal and child health and nutrition in the world's poorest communities, where most of these deaths occur.

Our work focuses on the full continuum of care for mothers and children, beginning with a woman's pregnancy and extending through labor, birth, and the critical early months and years of the child's life. We introduce high-impact strategies and develop innovative new technologies and interventions to address the leading causes of maternal and child deaths and to support better nutrition for women and children. PATH's integrated approach includes conducting formative research, shaping policy, and implementing affordable, appropriate, and sustainable solutions to achieve a lasting impact on health.

PROTECTING WOMEN DURING PREGNANCY

An estimated 342,000 women die each year during pregnancy, childbirth, or the six weeks following birth—mainly in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Pregnancy presents an important opportunity to help improve a woman's health and prepare for the birth of her baby.

PATH's Sure Start project in India works to reduce barriers to lifesaving health services by mobilizing community leaders and health workers, teaching families about the importance of skilled care during pregnancy and birth, and helping policymakers scale up proven approaches. Our mobile midwife project uses a tool designed for mobile devices to give minimally trained health workers guidance on health care decisions, access to maternal education videos, and help with data collection.

ADVANCING SAFE LABOR FOR MOTHERS

Postpartum hemorrhage, or excessive bleeding after childbirth, is the single greatest cause of maternal mortality. We emphasize community-based approaches, strengthening the skills of birth attendants, and shaping supportive policies to expand the practice of active management of the third stage of labor (AMTSL), a proven, effective method to prevent many cases of postpartum hemorrhage. We are also working to develop lifesaving technologies to control blood loss in mothers experiencing postpartum hemorrhage, such as a cost-effective balloon tamponade that could effectively stop postpartum bleeding within minutes.

SUCCESS STORIES

Promoting innovative approaches and technologies

PATH is a pioneer in developing and implementing innovative behavior change strategies, such as the use of feeding buddies to support mothers in safe infant feeding. We also advance technology innovations to improve maternal and child health, including technologies to prevent postpartum hemorrhage, rapid diagnostic tools, noninvasive anemia testing, and low-tech human milk banks.



PATH/Cabe Blenczycki

Empowering communities

In India, PATH's Sure Start project has trained more than 7,700 frontline community health workers on strategies to make pregnancy, labor, and delivery safer and to improve newborn health. The project supports thousands of mothers' groups and has reached an estimated 24.5 million people with strengthened services and information.

We are building evidence for the safe use of the drug oxytocin, a key component of AMTSL, and advancing its use in the prefilled, autodisable Uniject™ injection system developed by PATH as a simple, affordable way to deliver the drug outside of hospitals. We are also lending our expertise to efforts to develop affordable tools for diagnosing common infections and illnesses among new mothers.

CARING FOR NEWBORNS AND YOUNG CHILDREN

A child's first days and weeks of life are a critical time for safeguarding health. PATH employs breakthrough tools, technologies, and interventions that protect young children and help sustain them as they grow.

PATH collaborates with ministries of health and other partners to reduce maternal, neonatal, and child deaths and malnutrition through the Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program. We work with health programs to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV by promoting counseling, testing, and optimal infant feeding practices. Our community-led mothers' groups advise women and families on simple practices to keep babies healthy. The Window of Opportunity project, a PATH-led initiative in Mozambique and South Africa, is working to reach 750,000 pregnant women and young children with expanded services and improved antenatal and newborn care, infant nutrition, and child development practices.

PATH also advances affordable technologies to improve child health, including vaccines that protect against diarrheal disease, pneumonia, and other common childhood illnesses, and household water treatment and storage products to ensure families have access to safe drinking water.

PROMOTING GOOD NUTRITION

With our partners, PATH encourages healthy feeding practices and works to strengthen child nutrition services. We help shape national policies, train health workers, and provide comprehensive technical assistance to combat malnutrition. We also introduce behavior change communication strategies to support improved child nutrition. And we conduct research on nutrition interventions such as heat treatment of breast milk and use of human milk banks to ensure infant growth and survival.

Our work includes integrating vitamin A-rich, orange-fleshed sweetpotatoes into health service delivery programs in Western Kenya to improve the nutritional status of pregnant women and young children. PATH also developed the Ultra Rice® fortification technology, a rice-like "grain" fortified with key micronutrients that is mixed with local rice for enhanced nutrition. Rice fortified with the Ultra Rice technology has reached thousands of schoolchildren through school lunch pilot programs in Brazil, Colombia, and India.

BOLSTERING HEALTH SYSTEMS

Our efforts to improve maternal and child health depend on strong health systems. Through the MEASURE DHS project, we provide expertise to collect and analyze health data that help policymakers and program managers understand the health status of populations and determine which health interventions are working and which are not. We help strengthen governance, enhance policies, build health information systems, procure supplies, and train and supervise health workers. Our work aims to expand the scope, quality, and availability of services for mothers and children everywhere.

Improving nutrition

PATH has led groundbreaking work in 15 countries to improve nutrition among mothers-to-be and young children. With our partners, we promote evidence-based nutrition interventions, help countries develop tailored national nutrition policies, train health workers on infant and young child feeding and maternal nutrition, and create a collection of resources to strengthen community nutrition programs.



PATH/Amy Maciver

Supporting breastfeeding

With support from PATH and others, South Africa changed its policy on infant feeding to promote exclusive breastfeeding, scale up human milk banks, and stop providing free infant formula at hospitals and clinics, and Nigeria updated its national nutrition guidelines to instruct health workers to promote breastfeeding among HIV-positive mothers.



PATH is an international nonprofit organization that transforms global health through innovation. We take an entrepreneurial approach to developing and delivering high-impact, low-cost solutions, from lifesaving vaccines and devices to collaborative programs with communities. Through our work in more than 70 countries, PATH and our partners empower people to achieve their full potential.

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