

Overcoming the Distance Challenge in Zambia: The Maternity Waiting Homes Alliance

GEOGRAPHIC AREAS: 8 districts across Zambia (Lundazi, Mansa, Chembe, Kalomo, Nyimba, Pemba, Zimba, and Choma)

SCALE: 24 maternity waiting homes linked to high quality health facilities

TIMEFRAME: June 2015 – May 2018



In Zambia, many women live miles from the closest health facility with few, if any, affordable and safe transportation options, making it difficult for them to receive the quality, timely care they need during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum. **The Maternity Waiting Homes Alliance aims to overcome this distance challenge by building and strengthening maternity waiting homes — residences near health facilities where pregnant women can stay until they go into labor and immediately after childbirth.** The goal is to make these homes sustainable by empowering local communities to both effectively manage them and generate income to support their operations through creative entrepreneurial activities, therefore ensuring the homes and the services they provide are available for the long term.

KEY FEATURES OF THE INITIATIVE



Quality care before, during and after delivery

Each home is located near a quality health facility equipped to manage life-threatening emergencies that can arise during pregnancy or childbirth. The homes offer a range of educational resources and income generating activities for pregnant women to participate in during their stay, as well as space to accommodate women who require extended postpartum care. Safe Motherhood Action Groups (community health workers) conduct local outreach to encourage pregnant women to use the homes and plan for a safe delivery, including saving for transportation and supplies for childbirth.



Community driven management

Community-elected governing committees work with maternity home managers and health facility staff to ensure smooth day-to-day operations and effective linkages to other services, such as postnatal care, postpartum family planning and health education.



Laying the foundation for financial sustainability

The partners are exploring a variety of community-driven, income generating activities to provide a consistent source of revenue to ensure the long-term sustainability of the homes.



Building evidence for scale up

The Alliance will conduct a robust impact evaluation to help determine whether maternity waiting homes can be both an effective and sustainable solution to overcoming the distance barrier to high quality care for women from remote areas. The evaluation will produce actionable findings to inform efforts to scale up maternity waiting homes in Zambia and beyond.

The Maternity Waiting Homes Alliance is part of *Savings Mothers, Giving Life*, a public-private partnership among the U.S. Government, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, Every Mothers Counts, Project C.U.R.E and *MSD for Mothers* to reduce maternal mortality in sub-Saharan Africa.