

Improving the Delivery of Health Services Worldwide



Never before in history have low- and middle-income countries faced the complexity of population health contexts as they do today. The rising threat of chronic and non-communicable diseases against the backdrop of persistent infectious diseases like malaria and HIV/AIDS, coupled with resurgent outbreaks of Ebola, measles, and multidrug-resistant tuberculosis presents a huge burden on scarce resources. Abt Associates is working with government agencies at every level to **strengthen systems and build capacity** of health ministries and the private sector to manage available resources, deliver services more effectively and efficiently, and improve health outcomes.

Abt combines multifaceted expertise, practical experience, and innovative models to strengthen the delivery of health services to people all over the developing world, particularly to vulnerable populations. We work with governments, nongovernmental organizations, faith-based organizations, and community groups to identify and address constraints to service delivery in the public and private sectors.

By using an integrated approach to health system strengthening (HSS), Abt's experts address a variety of widespread issues impacting service delivery, including: systematic quality improvement; supportive supervision, monitoring and accountability; planning and management; human resources; resource distribution, financing, pharmaceutical supply; mobile technology to improve coordination and processes, two-way referral systems; and community engagement and mobilization.

Addressing Family Planning Needs in Jordan

Jordan's population growth rate continues to place a significant burden on the country's resources and development. The 2009 Jordan Population and Family Health Survey



Efficient, effective maternal, newborn and child health services in Enugu State, Nigeria

shows that the country's total fertility rate and modern contraceptive prevalence rate have been virtually static for the past decade. About 25 percent of births in Jordan are either unwanted or mistimed. The USAID-funded **Strengthening Family Planning Project** ("Ta'ziz Tanzim Al Usra" in Arabic) is a five-year project designed to address Jordan's most pressing family planning challenges, including high rates of discontinuation and unmet need for family planning. Activities include technical assistance to the private sector, with a focus on the Jordan Association of Family Planning and Protection and a network of private providers. Ta'ziz is increasing demand for family planning through extensive community outreach and national media campaigns. In addition, the project is enhancing service quality by training staff on clinical standards, client-oriented counseling, and supportive supervision. Through an outreach program, Ta'ziz reached over half a million low-income women with family planning messages, and saw an increase of more than 70,000 new users of modern family planning methods in all 12 governorates of the country.

Improving Maternal Health in Nigeria and Mali

In Nigeria and Mali, post-partum hemorrhage is a leading cause of maternal mortality. The DfID-funded **Partnership for Transforming Health Systems II (PATHS2)** Project in Nigeria delivers high-quality competency-based trainings on the active management of third stage of labor (AMTSL) to frontline health workers in rural areas. PATHS2 provides life-saving standard operating protocols, job aids, and regular on-the-job integrated supportive supervision for health workers. The project also works with communities and the private sector to supply free transport to women with pregnancy-related complications to higher level care through the Emergency Transport Scheme as part of its broader efforts in improving referral systems. In 2013-14 alone, 6,450 pregnant women received emergency obstetric care by engaging the transport service in PATHS2-supported states. PATHS2 contributed to saving a total of up to 185,497 lives between 2008 and 2014, of which 90 percent were estimated to be children under five years.

In Mali, the USAID-funded **Assistance Technique Nationale Plus (ATN Plus)** Project trained 755 qualified providers and 938 auxiliary midwives to improve the systematic application of AMTSL during all deliveries at community health facilities. An AMTSL skills and technique assessment showed that auxiliary midwives scored 96 percent, essentially the same as the skilled birth attendants. This task shifting resulted in significantly increasing access to life-saving interventions for mothers during a critical period of delivery as well as enabling health care providers to counsel patients on the use of modern family planning methods during the postpartum period and beyond.

Combating TB in Kyrgyzstan

Until recently, finding a doctor in Kyrgyzstan who fully utilized evidence-based medicine to diagnose and treat TB was difficult due to the absence of up-to-date guidelines for TB care. In 2011, through the USAID-funded **Kyrgyzstan TB Program**, Abt began working with the Kyrgyzstan National TB Program to improve the country's standards for TB diagnosis and treatment. Abt also worked with the Evidence-based Medicine Unit to train policymakers in evidence-based medicine and the development of clinical practice guidelines. Kyrgyzstan now has four new clinical, user-friendly, practice guidelines for physicians. With the support of Abt, educational institutes developed a curriculum for physicians based on the new guidelines, and health care facilities are now being empowered to monitor their progress in using the new guidelines.

Improving HIV Services in Mozambique

HIV prevalence in the central provinces of Sofala, Manica, Tete, and Zambezia was as high as 26.5 percent in the mid-2000s, significantly higher than the national average of 16.2 percent. Late in 2010, Abt launched the USAID-funded **Clinical HIV/AIDS Services Strengthening Project in Sofala, Manica, and Tete (CHASS-SMT)** to improve HIV clinical services within a strengthened primary health care system. In addition to direct training of health personnel and improving antiretroviral therapy (ART) availability through peripheral sites, the project employed the Graduation Path toolkit, an integrated HSS tool that systematizes and monitors technical assistance to achieve sustainable, high impact results. This tool measures causal links between HSS interventions and service delivery outcomes. The Graduation Path helped improve District Health Directorate management capacity and quality of HIV/AIDS service provision at points of care. CHASS-SMT resulted in an increased number of HIV positive pregnant women receiving Option B+ (from 43 percent to 77 percent); an increase in the number of HIV positive pregnant women receiving Cotrimoxazole (CTX) Prophylaxis (from 33 percent to 64 percent); and an increase in the number of TB/HIV patients on ART (from 52 percent to 77 percent). The HIV prevalence is also on a downward trend to 10.8 percent in 2013.

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Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.

