



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**Maternal and Child  
Survival Program**



Photo: Jnpięgo/Indrani Kashyap



# HEALTH SYSTEMS STRENGTHENING

USAID invests in health systems strengthening (HSS) to promote country ownership and sustainability, scale-up solutions, and promote greater efficiencies in investments.

By undertaking system strengthening activities that directly support delivery of high impact RMNCH interventions, USAID's flagship Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) will leave behind managers at national, sub-national, and facility levels more capable of mobilizing available resources and addressing existing and future system bottlenecks to achieve sustained quality and coverage. Strengthening the health system does not just mean working in one of the six health system building blocks – achieving sustained health system improvements requires changing how the system works. HSS means going beyond building block inputs to purposely managing interactions between different parts of the system, and changing policies, organizational structures, and behaviors that drive system performance to improve equity, coverage, quality, and efficiency.

Because MCSP is focused on improved RMNCH outcomes, its approach to HSS focuses on barriers that directly affect service delivery. By assisting managers to harness system-wide HSS initiatives to support RMNCH objectives and piloting

## KEY FACTS

- 400 million people currently lack access to one or more essential health services (WHO)
- Every year, 100 million people are pushed into poverty and 150 million people suffer financial catastrophe because of out-of-pocket expenditure on health services (WHO)
- 83 countries face a health worker crisis and are unable to meet the basic threshold of 23 skilled health professionals per 10,000 people (GHA and WHO)

HSS approaches that are important to RMNCH performance, MCSP identifies and prioritizes addressing the system weaknesses that can have the maximum impact on RMNCH outcomes.

MCSP assists countries to provide high quality sustainable RMNCH services at scale by:

- Assisting district health managers to identify — and alleviate — system bottlenecks that constrain high-quality services;
- Ensuring decision-makers understand the cost of high-impact RMNCH interventions, encouraging them to allocate sufficient resources to sustain high coverage and quality at scale; and
- Strengthening health worker motivation, support and accountability systems to complement innovative capacity building methods, ensuring health workers are not only well-trained, but also motivated and supported to provide high-quality services, and held accountable to managers and users.



**Photo:** Young mother carries her baby on her back on a visit to a health center near Mtwara, Tanzania. (Jhpiego/Kate Holt)

## ABOUT MCSP

The Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) is a global, USAID Cooperative Agreement to introduce and support high-impact health interventions with a focus on 25 high-priority countries with the ultimate goal of ending preventable child and maternal deaths within a generation. The Program is focused on ensuring that all women, newborns and children most in need have equitable access to quality health care services to save lives.

MCSP supports programming in maternal, newborn and child health, immunization, family planning and reproductive health, nutrition, health systems strengthening, water/sanitation/hygiene, malaria, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and pediatric HIV care and treatment.

[www.mcsprogram.org](http://www.mcsprogram.org)

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