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Maternal and Child
Survival Program



Photo: Kate Holt/Inpego

WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

Handwashing is the single most cost-effective intervention to prevent pneumonia and diarrhea in children, and reduces infections in mothers and children during pregnancy and childbirth. Newborn infections, pneumonia and diarrhea are three of the leading causes of death for children under five years old.

USAID's flagship Maternal and Child Survival Program (MCSP) supports countries in increasing coverage and utilization of evidence-based, high-quality reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health interventions within households, communities and facilities. At all levels of care, MCSP's aim is to prepare for a clean and healthy birthing and newborn experience, reduce infections to mother and newborns during the peri- and postnatal periods, and reduce stunting and diarrheal disease in children.

The Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) program works to support three broader MCSP teams—Maternal, Newborn and Child Health. MCSP's maternal health work seeks opportunities to support mothers, influencers, community workers, and clinic-level health care providers to ensure clean and safe conditions are provided for birth and a healthy, hygienic newborn period. In the area of newborn care, the Program focuses primarily on reducing infection on the day of birth and during the first month of life through improved

KEY FACTS

- Every year, there are nearly 1.7 billion cases of diarrheal disease, causing an estimated 760,000 child deaths (WHO)
- An estimated 10-15% of maternal deaths are due to infections linked to unhygienic conditions during labor and poor hygiene practices during the six week postpartum period (WHO/PMNCH)
- Use of clean cord care kits during umbilical cord cutting can result in a twofold reduction in the odds of cord site infections (WHO/PMNCH)

handwashing by those coming in close contact with the newborn. In relation to child health, MCSP works to reduce stunting in children under two years of age and prevent diarrheal disease in children under five by integrating with other technical sectors, most notably nutrition.

MCSP develops and utilizes nontraditional messaging models that reflect country-specific behaviors and social norms, and employ counseling, demonstration and practice at all stages of the maternal, newborn and child health continuum of care. Examples of this include: instructions on the construction of handwashing stations, such as tippy taps; development of handwashing corners; and household-level demonstrations of water treatment, safe water storage containers, and treatment methods. In addition, MCSP is working to change behaviors and integrate WASH into facility-based care, addressing gender-related barriers and giving specific attention to the role of men in maternal, newborn, and child health.



Photo: Preceptor, Enefa Anani is washing her hands before a procedure at the HoHoe Midwifery Training School in Ghana (Karen Kasmauski/MCSP)

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 24 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

MCSP

1776 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Suite 300
Washington, DC 20036
United States
tel: +1 202.835.3100
info@mcsprogram.org
Director: Koki Agarwal
Koki.Agarwal@mcsprogram.org

 www.mcsprogram.org

 facebook.com/MCSPglobal

 twitter.com/MCSPglobal

USAID

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20523
United States
tel: +1 202.712.0000
AOR: Nahed Matta
nmatta@usaid.gov