



Maternal Outcomes Matter:

How the MOMs Initiative is unlocking new solutions to improve maternal health

About MSD for Mothers

[MSD for Mothers](#) is MSD's global initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die while giving life. Applying MSD's business and scientific expertise, we are working across sectors to improve the health and well-being of women during pregnancy, childbirth and postpartum.

Innovative Financing for Maternal Health

Addressing global challenges requires substantial financing, often far beyond what resources governments in low- and middle-income countries are able to provide. Of the estimated funds needed to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to health, there is a gap of US\$134 billion, expected to grow to \$371 billion by 2030.¹ Of the amount needed to end preventable maternal deaths by 2030, there is a funding gap of \$103.6 billion.² The COVID-19 pandemic has further depleted national health budgets and will increase the overall global health funding gap in the coming years.³

With an estimated \$200 trillion in funding available from global capital markets, mobilizing only 1% of this would address the entire SDG funding gap.⁴ Financing mechanisms that mobilize greater private and public investment in global health are generating significant interest in international development and investor communities.

Our Approach

MSD for Mothers is exploring the application of innovative financing tools to close funding gaps needed to achieve maternal health SDG targets by extending access to capital markets for early-stage entrepreneurs. Our unique positioning as a private sector entity, with deep connections in the philanthropy and global health communities, positions us to understand what it takes to meet a bottom line in business and to advance social good. MSD for Mothers seeks collaborations to mobilize untapped resources to strengthen and improve maternal health outcomes. Often, MSD for Mothers' role in these collaborations is to de-risk investments to allow new investors to contribute funding for innovations in global health. For example, guaranteeing grant funding for a new, breakthrough company to de-risk and encourage larger financing from another investor. private maternity care and no national accreditation to assure the quality of this care.



The MOMs Initiative | Leveraging Catalytic Grant Capital to Unlock The Full Potential of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises to Improve Maternal Care

The MOMs (Maternal Outcomes Matter) Initiative launched in June 2019 with a commitment of \$50 million in debt and grant capital to improve maternal health in regions of the world where there are high rates of women dying from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.⁵

The MOMs Initiative is a collaboration of the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), MSD for Mothers, Credit Suisse and USAID (Center for Innovation and Impact and Office of Maternal Child Health and Nutrition). These funders support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia with the goal to stimulate, advance and scale innovations that contribute to a healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth.

In many countries with poor health infrastructures and outcomes, SMEs and entrepreneurs are an untapped resource for innovation that can accelerate gains in health care using financially sustainable business models. The MOMs Initiative invests in these enterprises that are making a positive impact on maternal health outcomes with a successful track record in one or more of the following areas: health infrastructure, health service delivery, training for health care providers, digital solutions for more efficient and effective care, financial inclusion and supply chain strengthening.



How MOMs Investees Are Improving and Expanding Access to Quality Health Care

Creating a Sustainable Supply Chain to Extend Potentially Life-Saving Care to Underserved Women

Post-partum hemorrhage is the largest single contributor to maternal mortality, constituting approximately 27% of all maternal deaths worldwide.⁶ Access to blood is critical for the survival of women who hemorrhage during or after childbirth, but in communities with underdeveloped infrastructure or hospitals with limited resources, women who need life-saving interventions may not receive them. LifeBank, a Nigerian health-tech company, is increasing access to blood and other vital medical supplies through technologically advanced supply chain management to reduce the number of maternal deaths.

Through the MOMs Initiative, MSD for Mothers and collaborators are providing grant funding and supply chain expertise to LifeBank to strengthen distribution operations, marketing and business development. Leveraging MSD for Mothers' grant funding, LifeBank has scaled operations to provide access to blood and essential medical supplies across all states in Nigeria, as well as regions of Ethiopia and Kenya. Having demonstrated a strong business model using grant funding from the MOMs Initiative, LifeBank is now qualified to raise debt financing from the DFC for continued scale-up of services and expanded geographical reach.

Collaborator: LifeBank



Making Quality Care Accessible and Affordable

Lack of sufficient funds to pay for care and quality health care providers throughout the pregnancy journey, as well as an overstretched maternity care staff contribute to the high rate of maternal deaths in Kenya. Jacaranda Maternity Hospital in Nairobi has achieved recognition for being one of the highest quality maternity care providers in East Africa, a pioneer in affordable, patient-centered care and one of the first providers to successfully demonstrate that affordable maternity care can be financially sustainable.

MSD for Mothers' grant funding through the MOMs Initiative is intended to support Jacaranda's development of a strong proof-of-concept for their business model to unlock new sources of funding. DFC is set to consider additional debt capital to enable Jacaranda to expand to 10 maternity hospitals and additional outpatient facilities across Kenya.

Collaborator: Jacaranda Maternity

Bringing Health Care Products to the Home

Many women in emerging markets, especially in low-income communities, lack access to safe, high-quality and affordable women's health and personal care products. This includes menstrual products, over-the-counter medicines and family planning products. Kasha Global is a unique e-commerce company addressing this problem through a discreet and user-friendly platform, which allows women to purchase and arrange for delivery online or by phone. Kasha has brought over 1 million products to over 130,000 unique customers in Rwanda and Kenya, of whom 63% are low-income.

Through a \$1 million equity investment from the DFC and through grant funding from MSD for Mothers under the MOMs Initiative, Kasha is expanding its product offerings in maternal health. It will leverage its channels to improve access to quality maternal health products, information and services in urban and rural regions of Rwanda and Kenya, with plans for future expansion into more countries.

Collaborator: Kasha Global



Strengthening Health Systems

In sub-Saharan Africa, whether in rural or urban areas, medical referral systems often do not work well. Patients are referred by primary care institutions to unvetted facilities, where they may not receive adequate care for their condition.⁷

Penda Health is a network of medical facilities in Nairobi, Kenya that offer a full range of high-quality, affordable outpatient services for the whole family. As part of the city's primary care infrastructure, Penda Health aims to implement a referral system that creates a continuous pathway of care for all patients, with a special emphasis on connecting pregnant women with high-quality facilities for labor and delivery. Penda Health currently refers about 200 pregnant mothers per month to maternity hospitals and the group expects this number to double annually for the next three years, with further growth planned.

Through a MOMs Initiative grant, MSD for Mothers is supporting Penda Health to improve labor and delivery referrals and maternity care in Kenya. This funding will support Penda Health in developing a data-driven system to refer pregnant women to the quality care they need.

Collaborator: Penda Health

Ensuring Quality Care

The private sector accounts for more than 50% of all health care providers in sub-Saharan Africa.⁸ These private providers are primarily comprised of SMEs that deliver a narrow set of services, maintain inadequately equipped and staffed facilities and do not use a recognized set of quality standards or tools for quality improvement.⁹ Most of these private facilities are owned and operated by medical professionals without broader support or connectivity to the mixed health system.

Through a MOMs Initiative grant from MSD for Mothers, the Medical Credit Fund and its collaborator, [SafeCare](#), are building a technical assistance program for health care facilities offering whole of pregnancy care, as well as neonatal and child health care services in Kenya. The program will combine both digital and offline methods of professional training and support to health care professionals in areas like as clinical audits, developing quality care improvement plans, and more. Filling the knowledge gap among health care providers has the potential to drive positive maternal health outcomes and improve quality of care

Collaborator: PharmAccess Group's Medical Credit Fund



Empowering Health Care Workers to Strengthen Health Systems

For South Africans, public health care facilities are insufficient to meet the growing needs of the population and private health care is largely unaffordable for the 48 million people, 84% of the population, who rely on the government services.¹⁰ The Unjani Clinic Network aims to re-engineer and strengthen the South African health system by creating accessible, affordable, community-based primary care clinics. The Unjani Clinic Network consists of a network of over 90 clinics, each owned and operated by a local nurse, allowing each to serve as a primary care provider as well as a business proprietor. The business model increases the number of practitioners in smaller communities, creates permanent jobs and establishes a sustainable model for providing primary health care and maternal health services while promoting universal health care in South Africa.¹¹

MSD for Mothers is supporting the Unjani Clinic Network through a MOMs Initiative grant to strengthen their organizational structure, enhance their systems and technology and test an innovative finance model that allows the network to scale faster. The network aims to expand at a rate of 100 clinics per year, with a strategic plan to open over 1,000 clinics by 2030.

Collaborator: Unjani Clinic Network

- 1 World Health Organization (2015). WHO estimates cost of reaching global health targets by 2030. <https://www.who.int/news/item/17-07-2017-who-estimates-cost-of-reaching-global-health-targets-by-2030>
- 2 UNFPA. The Cost of the Transformative Results That UNFPA is Committed to Achieving by 2030. <https://sites.google.com/unfpa.org/costing30s/home>
- 3 Economic impact of COVID-19 pandemic on healthcare facilities and systems: International perspectives. Best practice & research. Clinical Anaesthesiology. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpa.2020.11.009> <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7670225/>
- 4 USAID https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/USAID_Private_Capital_508.pdf
- 5 Development Finance Corporation. OPIC Announces Collaboration with USAID, Merck, and Credit Suisse to Improve Maternal Health. <https://www.dfc.gov/media/opic-press-releases/opic-announces-collaboration-usaid-merck-and-credit-suisse-improve>
- 6 The Lancet. Global causes of maternal death: a WHO systematic analysis (2014) [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X\(14\)70227-X/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/langlo/article/PIIS2214-109X(14)70227-X/fulltext)
- 7 BMC Pregnancy and Childbirth (2018). The effect of Kenya's free maternal health care policy on the utilization of health facility delivery services and maternal and neonatal mortality in public health facilities. <https://bmcpregnancychildbirth.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12884-018-1708-2#ref-CR9>
- 8 Unlocking Millions To Shore Up Private Sector Health Care In Africa. <https://skoll.org/2021/01/11/unlocking-millions-to-shore-up-private-sector-health-care-in-africa/>
- 9 UNFPA. The Cost of the Transformative Results That UNFPA is Committed to Achieving by 2030. <https://www.unfpa.org/news/promise-action-ending-preventable-maternal-deaths-kenya>
- 10 World Health Organization (2015). Minimum Data Sets for Human Resources for Health and the Surgical Workforce in South Africa's Health System. https://www.who.int/workforcealliance/031616south_africa_case_studiesweb.pdf?ua=1
- 11 Unjani Clinic (2020). <https://www.unjaniclinic.co.za/home/>