

Jhpiego in Africa:

Continuing a Tradition of Excellence and Innovation



Since conducting our first training sessions in Kenya and Tunisia in the early 1970s, Jhpiego has worked on the front lines throughout Africa to help save and enhance the lives of women and families by increasing access and reducing barriers to high-quality health care services. Africa has faced enormous challenges during this time: diseases such as malaria, HIV/ AIDS and tuberculosis, as well as high rates of maternal and newborn mortality, have devastated countless lives and placed an increasing burden on already strained health care systems and a dwindling health work-force. Jhpiego has responded to these challenges by drawing from its well-recognized expertise—building countries' capacity to educate, train and support health care personnel to provide high-quality services for maternal and child care, family planning and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS prevention and care, infection prevention and cervical cancer prevention. Our ultimate goal in this work is sustainability—leaving behind a well-prepared network of health care professionals and a strong foundation that they can build upon when we are gone.

Currently, Jhpiego has programs in 20 African countries, maintains two sub-regional offices in **Burkina Faso** and **Kenya**, and field offices or representatives in **Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda** and **Zambia**. In some countries, we are building on past successes, while in others, we are moving into exciting new directions. For example, in **Malawi**, under the auspices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Jhpiego is partnering with Howard University in Washington, D.C., to develop a laboratory technician curriculum that focuses on HIV testing. Jhpiego is also working through the CDC in **Ethiopia** to support public sector efforts to implement services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Reducing Barriers to Care

Jhpiego has learned, in large part due to our work in Africa, that barriers to high-quality care may exist at any level of the health care system. In response to this reality, we have developed expertise in a **broad range of interventions** aimed at reducing such barriers, as described in the following examples.

- *Effecting policy change:* Through its Maternal and Neonatal Health (MNH) Program Jhpiego's work in **Burkina Faso** helped effect changes in policy at the regional level around malaria during pregnancy. Results of our initial assessment were used to stimulate national policy dialogue. This dialogue resulted in the implementation of a district-based pilot intervention aimed at managing malaria during pregnancy and helped prompt wide-scale change in policy for reducing the burden of malaria in pregnancy in the region.

“Jhpiego has solutions that can be implemented in the most remote rural areas in developing countries—solutions that do not require investment of a lot of resources.”

—Dr. Alain Damiba,
Vice President for Global Business
Development and Communications,
Jhpiego

- *Developing and disseminating health care guidelines based on internationally recognized best practices:* In **Zambia**, Jhpiego supported the Central Board of Health in the development and production of the first national infection prevention guidelines, which are applicable to all levels of the health system and incorporate the latest principles of infection prevention. To date, 25,000 copies of the guidelines, which were approved by the Ministry of Health, have been distributed, and approximately 300 health care providers have been trained in infection prevention. And in **Mozambique**, we are working with the Ministry of Health to develop performance.
- *Promoting education and training as the keys to ensuring a continual supply of health professionals:* To help integrate family planning into services for HIV counseling and testing in Kenya, Jhpiego developed an orientation package on family planning for HIV counselors, which received official approval from the Ministry of Health. Jhpiego collaborated with the Ministry of Health on development of the official national strategy for integration of these services. In **Malawi**, Jhpiego has worked with the Ministry of Health and Population to implement a national program to strengthen the quality of undergraduate education and inservice training in family planning and reproductive health. Jhpiego has assisted the Ministry in developing a core group of trainers who now serve as a national training resource for the country.
- *Strengthening performance throughout the health care delivery system:* Jhpiego improved the quality of reproductive health services at four national teaching hospitals in **Guinea** and **Burkina Faso** using a performance and quality improvement process. Assessments at sites in both countries showed a substantial improvement in quality and in the number of performance standards that were met. In **South Africa**, Jhpiego is working with in-country partners to strengthen services for HIV/AIDS prevention, care and support, focusing on improving training in voluntary counseling and testing, building clinical competence in antiretroviral therapy and rolling out a treatment program.

What we're doing works...

Ghana: Between 250 and 300 midwifery students graduate from competency-based education programs every year as a result of Jhpiego's large-scale program to strengthen education at 18 midwifery and nursing schools. In a study of the program, these graduates were shown to have better knowledge and skills than midwives in the comparison group.

Tanzania: Through our Maternal and Neonatal Health Program, Jhpiego worked with partners to develop guidelines including management of malaria during pregnancy. These guidelines were used to strengthen antenatal care in Tanzania through development of standards and orientation/training of providers. According to the Tanzania National Malaria Control Program, treatment of malaria with the most up-to-date methods increased from 29% in 2001 to 65% in 2003.

Zambia: To enable national scale-up of programs, Jhpiego supported the government in developing national, standardized learning resource packages and groups of trainers for antiretroviral therapy, management of opportunistic infections and prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. As a result, more than 500 clinicians have been trained in these content areas, and more than 40 service delivery sites for antiretroviral therapy have been opened.

Uganda: Jhpiego worked to strengthen nursing and midwifery education in nine schools by improving teaching of reproductive health services, including counseling, infection prevention and family planning. An evaluation showed that the quality of services improved at the clinical training sites, and that the number of clients served increased by 160% over the 4-year project.

“Human resources are key to addressing problems in the field, focusing on quality of training to providers in a way that women want, and want to come to our services. JHPIEGO excels in this area. And as a result of our collaboration, women do come, and women are saved.”

*—Dr. Johnmark Opondo,
Safe Motherhood Technical Advisor for
Family Health International in Kenya,
Tanzania and Burkina Faso*



Photo by: Jhpiego/Ghana

Partnerships for Health

Our work in Africa has helped us appreciate the enormous power of **collaborations and partnerships** with individuals and organizations that complement, support or build upon our capabilities. Jhpiego has worked with universities, ministries of health, private sector corporations, nongovernmental organizations, cooperating agencies, health care facilities, and faith-based and community organizations to improve the quality and accessibility of health care. For example, through its MNH Program, Jhpiego has been a participant in the **Roll Back Malaria** partnership, and is also a partner in the USAID-funded **Malaria Action Coalition**, which includes the World Health Organization, the CDC and the Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus project. Jhpiego has also participated in the development and activities of the **Malaria in Pregnancy East and Southern Africa** Coalition, which includes representatives from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zambia, and the **West Africa Network against Malaria during Pregnancy**, which includes representatives from 12 countries.

Innovation and Creativity

While Jhpiego is continually defining and refining its approach based on lessons learned, we always leave room for **innovation and creativity**, such as devising practical, low-cost solutions to problems limiting the delivery of high-quality health care services, and using innovative technologies and approaches for training and human capacity development. For example:

- Through the Alliance for Cervical Cancer Prevention funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Jhpiego conducted a demonstration project in **Ghana** to assess the safety, acceptability, feasibility and programmatic effort of the “single visit approach” to cervical cancer prevention. In this approach, trained and supervised nurse-midwives provide screening using Visual Inspection with Acetic Acid (vinegar), followed by the offer of immediate cryotherapy treatment for women with a positive test result. Results indicate that this approach is safe; acceptable to women, male partners and providers; feasible in low-resource settings; and cost-effective.
- Jhpiego has several human capacity development initiatives in **Malawi**. We collaborated with the Ministry of Health and Population to implement a Training Information Monitoring System (TIMS®). This system houses information on family planning/reproductive health training of approximately 900 service providers throughout Malawi, as well as on the distribution of trained providers by district and facility. In addition, Jhpiego helped the Nurses and Midwives Council of **Malawi** to implement an electronic nurse registry to track nursing and midwifery personnel throughout the country. Used in tandem, these two systems are providing the government with previously unavailable information that it can use to plan and monitor human capacity development initiatives.

Expertise in Action

- The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) selected Jhpiego as one of 10 university-affiliated global organizations to provide technical assistance for its Global AIDS Program. Jhpiego serves the program in seven of the 30 countries overseas in which the CDC works, and leads a Johns Hopkins University Consortium that includes the Schools of Medicine, Nursing and Public Health.
- The CDC chose Jhpiego to review the World Health Organization and UNAIDS curriculum “Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission,” which is used throughout the world. Jhpiego is seen as an authority on this subject in part because of staff member Dr. Jean Anderson’s editorship of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services publication *A Guide to the Clinical Care of Women with HIV*.
- To support our global programs in HIV/AIDS, Jhpiego is able to draw on world-renowned clinicians from the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine. Dr. John Bartlett, head of infectious diseases at the School of Medicine and a world leader in HIV care and treatment, is one of a cadre of experts who work closely with Jhpiego.
- In the maternal health arena, the U.S. Agency for International Development recently selected Jhpiego to receive a 5-year, \$75 million award for ACCESS (Access to Clinical and Community Maternal, Neonatal, and Women’s Health Services). Jhpiego, as the lead agency, is partnering with five other organizations to implement ACCESS—the United States flagship program to provide improved care for women and children.

Building for the Future

Through our experiences in many African countries over more than 30 years, we have seen that **sustainability** is an attainable goal. For example:

- In **Kenya**, Jhpiego partnered with several in-country organizations to pioneer the development and implementation of an integrated clinical training system. Between 1993 and 2001, almost 16,000 students and health care providers were trained under this system, which continues to be sustained even after Jhpiego’s involvement in the project has ended.
- In **Burkina Faso**, Jhpiego worked in the Koupéla District to improve competency of providers in infection prevention and maternal and newborn health skills. Results of the final supervisory visit showed that 86% of the providers continued to be competent in maternal and newborn health skills.
- In collaboration with the National Quality Assurance Task Force, Jhpiego implemented a performance and quality improvement initiative to strengthen provider performance in infection prevention at seven hospitals in **Malawi**. The assessment of this initiative 17 months after implementation revealed dramatic improvements in infection prevention practices at all seven hospitals. Since 1998, Jhpiego has worked with several other organizations to strengthen the Regional Centre for Quality of Health Care at Makerere University in Kampala, **Uganda**. We have provided technical assistance in policy, training and course development, including creation of a graduate diploma course in Quality of Health Care. Through such efforts, the Centre has become an important training and advocacy institution, responsible for spearheading quality of health care initiatives throughout East and Southern Africa.
- Jhpiego worked with **Ghana** Health Services to create a sustainable supply of community health officers for the country. In collaboration with the government, we developed a supplement to the undergraduate curriculum, strengthened teachers’ skills and designed a system for students to gain clinical experience in their villages. As a result of these efforts, 400 students who will graduate this year will be able to serve as community health officers without the government or a donor having to pay for extra, expensive inservice training courses.