



Village Health Partnership

2018 IN
REVIEW



Dear Friends:

This has been an exciting year for Village Health Partnership (VHP). We continue to foster deep relationships with communities in rural Ethiopia. Local leaders are taking an active role in implementing programs. With our community based approach, projects are launching in inclusive and sustainable ways. We are creating systems of care that interface with Ethiopian government projects and, together, we are beginning to impact maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality in some of the most remote areas in Ethiopia.

In 2017, VHP treated 175 women with gynecologic complications of childbirth and obstetric fistula through our Screen, Transport and Treat (STT) Program. This year we are on track to repeat these numbers and plan to do the same in 2019. Data collected at the time of admission to Aira Hospital and then in the field following surgery, confirms that the Program is laying the foundation for a system of care in Western Ethiopia that breaks down barriers to seeking, reaching and receiving medical assistance. Not only are women being successfully treated, they report that their lives have changed for the better. With greater trust in the healthcare system, they are referring other women in for family planning and birth control, pre-natal care and skilled assistance at the time of delivery to prevent gynecologic injury and even death. The program is generating a ripple effect that supports prevention efforts.

Following the December/January trip to Ethiopia with us, award winning journalist Susan Barnett detailed the issues that the STT Program targets in her article entitled Family Planning Is Crucial For Those In The Developing World. Mecca, who is featured in the article, was successfully treated through the VHP STT Program. Read more here: <http://thehill.com/opinion/international/396719-family-planning-is-crucial-for-those-in-the-developing-world>

While the STT Program works to reach women in remote impoverished areas where medical care is inaccessible, in other parts of rural Ethiopia, the government's national strategy to reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality has begun to trickle down. Health extension workers are encouraging pregnant women to come into health centers and hospitals for skilled assistance at the time of delivery. Unfortunately, medical facilities are ill prepared to provide the assistance that is needed. A 2016 VHP survey of rural health facilities revealed that few had basic infrastructure for labor and delivery, most had no access to clean water, latrines were inadequate, open defecation was common, instruments weren't being sterilized and there was no place or patients and providers to wash their hands.

To read more, see the article by Susan Barnett entitled Healthcare Facilities Centers of Infection that uses VHP as a case study: <https://www.faithsforsafewater.org/centers-of-infection.html>

With VHP's ongoing experience in the field we could no longer ignore the connection between access to clean water and attention to sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and safe delivery. We devised a pilot project in the Bench Maji Zone that is focused on five healthcare facilities: one district hospital and four health centers. Working in partnership with the Ethiopian government, the Ethiopian NGO Afro Ethiopia Integrated Development and others, we are constructing maternity waiting areas with kitchens, showers and concrete pit latrines, cleaning compounds and facilities, implementing fenced bio hazard areas with incinerators and placenta pits, improving access to clean water, putting in hand washing stations and educating rural healthcare providers on the importance of clean and safe delivery practices. The pilot project is well underway and is scheduled for completion in April of 2019. We anticipate that the five targeted health facilities will become models for what is possible in the rest of the Zone and, with adequate funding, we will expand the program.

As women come into health centers and hospitals for safer delivery, they face an additional problem. Healthcare providers feel ill prepared to provide skilled assistance with labor and delivery. To remedy the situation, VHP is working in partnership with the Mizan Tepi University, the Mizan Tepi University Teaching Hospital and the Ethiopian Nurse Midwifery Association to train rural healthcare providers in emergency obstetric care, neonatal resuscitation, the identification and transport of high risk pregnant women and clean and safe healthcare practices. This year, we trained 100 nurses and nurse midwives on neonatal resuscitation using the American Academy of Pediatrics Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) curriculum. In addition, we trained 60 nurse midwives in emergency obstetric and neonatal care using the Jhpiego Basic Emergency Maternal Obstetric And Neonatal Care (BEMONC) curriculum. Finally, we are supporting 12 village women with 3 year scholarships to certified nurse midwife training programs. We plan to continue these education efforts next year. To make programs sustainable, we are working to build relationships between medical providers in regional referral hospitals and medical providers in health centers. Our goal is to create a strong and confident provider work force.



As we launch projects, integrate VHP efforts into the Ethiopian healthcare system and work to sustain all that we are doing in rural Ethiopia, we must also focus on fundraising. We need your help. Certainly, we need your ongoing financial support. We can't continue to provide programming to reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality without it.

We also need your connections. We could use your help opening the doors to foundations small and large who might be willing to support us. Please share your contacts with us.

Finally, we are targeting Rotary for their help with the WASH and Maternal Healthcare Initiative in the BMZ. If you have any Rotary connections, with either individuals or with clubs who might be willing to champion our cause, please share this information with us.

Peter VanArsdale, Director African Initiatives and Adjunct Professor, Josef Korbel School of International Studies, University of Denver recently commended VHP by stating that VHP is:

- * A practical, viable health outcome-oriented organization.
- * Extremely well organized, a fact demonstrated in its annual report and other written materials.
- * Targeting high-risk women, including those with fistula, who might not be served otherwise.
- * Equitably targeting women representing a diverse array of tribes and ethnicities, who reside in a challenging rural environment.
- * Building on established Ethiopian government and Rotary mandates and connections, and in so doing, strengthening them.
- * Creating a service network, including WASH, that is truly sustainable.
- * Featuring monitoring and evaluation, such that outcomes are both data-driven and humane.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to VHP. Your support has allowed us to build programs and to successfully work for safer motherhood in rural Ethiopia.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Margaret "Migs" Muldrow, MD
Founder and Chair, Board of Directors
Village Health Partnership



VILLAGE HEALTH PARTNERSHIP
safer motherhood in rural Ethiopia

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<https://www.villagehealthpartnership.org>

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