URC—as a leader, a partner, and a technical advisor—assists countries ensure that every woman, child, and adolescent has access to health care. URC is committed to high-impact reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH) care.

We envision a world where healthy women deliver healthy babies, where both mother and child receive quality, respectful care from skilled and equipped health care workers.

URC’s proven quality improvement (QI) and health systems strengthening activities emphasize evidence-based solutions to improve health outcomes for mothers and their children. We work with policymakers, national health systems, facilities, community health workers, local leaders, and families to improve access to and quality of services. We assist governments to roll out international quality guidelines by supporting context-specific adaptations and strengthening government capacity to implement standards at all levels of health systems. And in conjunction with the World Health Organization’s Quality of Care Network, we unequivocally support the core values of quality, equity, and dignity in our work.

CHALLENGES

While maternal deaths worldwide declined by 44% between 1990 and 2015, approximately 800 women still die daily from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. Maternal health is closely linked to newborn survival, as vulnerabilities to illness can pass from mother to child. More than one-fourth of girls and women in Sub-Saharan Africa cannot access family planning (FP) services, leading to unplanned pregnancies and maternal mortality and morbidity.

GETTING RESULTS

To reduce preventable maternal and child death and help every mother and child thrive, URC and our partners support strengthening resilient health systems to improve integrated RMNCAH care across the lifecycle. URC builds institutional, community, and individual
capacity to develop and implement evidence-based interventions to improve the access to and quality of antenatal care, childbirth and postpartum care, reproductive health services, and nutrition services.

- **Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development (HEARD) Project** leverages partnerships to lead implementation science research and evaluation activities. Work focuses on areas such as postpartum hemorrhage, respectful maternity care, violence against children, mental health and psychosocial support, and urban nutrition/WASH in countries across Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and Latin America.

- **USAID Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services in East Central Uganda (RHITES-EC)** supports district health systems strengthening to improve quality, accessibility, and responsiveness of care across the household-to-community-to-facility continuum. Family Life Schools and community-led hygiene and sanitation initiatives have driven improvements in breastfeeding practices and infant and young child feeding, while supporting districts to surpass a national target of 90% coverage for clean and safe latrines.

- **USAID Regional Health Integration to Enhance Services in North, Acholi (RHITES-N, Acholi)** focuses on strengthening the health system to increase access to and use of quality health services. Project work with the DREAMS (Determined, Resilient, Empowered, AIDS-free, Mentored and Safe) partnership resulted in the proportion of adolescent girls experiencing sexual and other forms of gender-based violence decreasing from 49% at baseline to 19.5% and an HIV incidence rate well below the national rate.

- **Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao for Health (BARMMHealth) – Philippines** seeks to bolster the capacity of the MOH-BARMM in facilitating local health solutions in FP, adolescent and youth reproductive health, and maternal and child health, towards self-reliance and sustainability. In year one, 514 adolescent youth received information on responsible practice of sexuality, contraceptive options, and respect, 5,170 community health workers were provided with FP information, and services to address violence against women and children were created.

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**SUCCESS SNAPSHOT**

**USAID Systems for Health** collaborated closely with the Ghana Health Service to carry out evidence-based interventions, including essential newborn care, integrated management of neonatal and childhood illnesses, lifesaving skills, emergency triage, and provision of long-acting reversible contraceptives. Achievements included:

- More than 1,500 midwives trained in IUD and implant insertion and removal;
- Nearly 70% of Community-Based Health Planning and Services clinics offering at least four modern FP methods, a 50% increase since 2015;
- More than double the number of new IUD and implant users, from 44,783 in 2015 to 91,831 in 2018;
- A 22% decline in the neonatal mortality rate in six districts participating in QI collaboratives in the Volta Region; and
- A 38% decrease in institutional maternal mortality ratio in 19 districts in three regions participating in QI collaboratives.

**USAID Applying Science to Strengthen and Improve Systems (ASSIST)** worked with governments of 46 countries, more than 200 partners, and over 4,000 facility and community teams to foster quality improvements in health service delivery resulting in measurable impact on newborn and maternal survival. The project supported high-volume health facilities in three districts in northern Uganda to improve the quality of care for integrated management of health services to address the main causes of childhood and neonatal mortality.

- Quality improvement teams across the continuum of care received bi-weekly coaching and mentorship sessions on how to identify gaps in care, prioritize areas for improvement, and develop, test, and implement change ideas to bring about improvement.

- From the baseline in July 2015 to endline in March 2017, correct assessment of vital and danger signs (e.g., respiratory rate, temperature, etc.) improved from zero to over 80% of sick children. Prescription of unnecessary antibiotics for coughs and colds decreased from 87% to 17%, improving the availability of essential medicines.