



## Maternal, Newborn and Child Health

### The Integrated Health Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC-IHP)

has been working since 2010 to improve the health of the Congolese people in 78 health zones in four provinces. Funded by USAID and led by Management Sciences for Health, with partners International Rescue Committee and Overseas Strategic Consulting, Ltd. (OSC), the project focuses on maternal, newborn, and child health; family planning; nutrition, malaria, and tuberculosis; HIV and AIDS; and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH)—applying many proven, low-cost, high-impact innovations on a large scale.

DRC-IHP stresses low-cost, high-impact innovations that can be used by providers at all levels of the health system. This project has improved health services for more than 12 million people—17 percent of the Congolese population. Data modeling shows that DRC-IHP interventions saved the lives of more than 150,000 children over just three years.

Now replaced by DRC-IHPplus, the project has recently been expanded to 83 health zones through June 2016, with partners OSC and Pathfinder/Evidence to Action (E2A).

### Integrated Health Project in the Democratic Republic of Congo



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

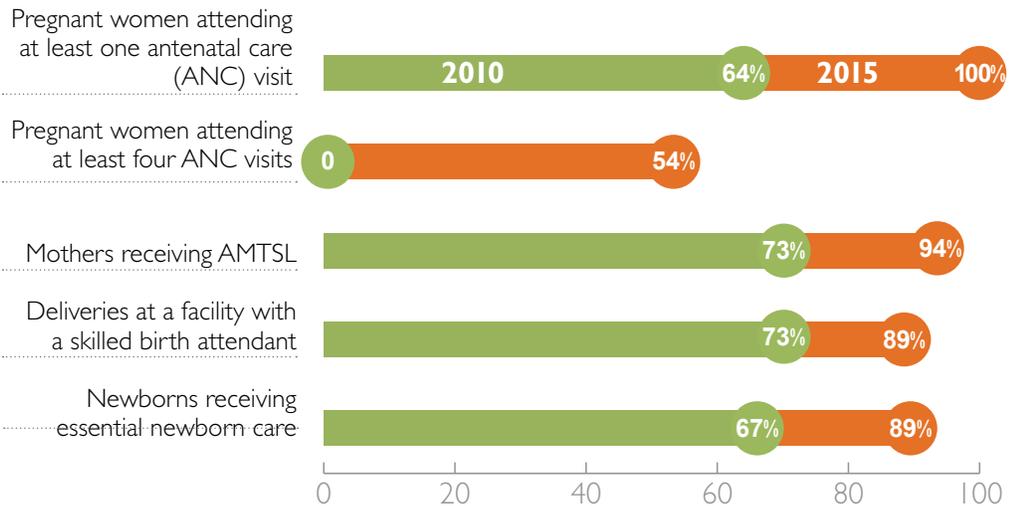


### STRATEGY

Across 78 health zones, DRC-IHP has prioritized a set of low-cost, high-impact interventions that 1) make birth significantly safer for mother and newborn, and 2) dramatically reduce childhood illness and mortality.

### RESULTS

According to the DRC DHS, 2013–14:



**7,400** newborns saved in 78 DRC-IHP health zones

**3.6 million** children under five with diarrhea treated with oral rehydration solution (ORS) or ORS plus zinc

**97%** children under one year in target areas who received basic childhood vaccinations (DPT-HepB-Hib3)

**DRC-IHP**

Contact Chief of Party: Ousmane Faye  
E-mail: [ofaye@msh.org](mailto:ofaye@msh.org)



# Maternal and Newborn Health

**Challenges:** Maternal mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is still high, at 846 deaths per 100,000 live births. Infant mortality, while dropping in recent years, is also high: 58 per 1,000 live births.

**DRC-IHP response:** In close collaboration with the Ministry of Health, DRC-IHP designed and implemented an intensive, three-week, skills-based training package for health providers at all levels—so they can use the most effective life-saving strategies for mothers and their babies in the DRC context. Supplemented with extensive follow-up, it was rolled out in 78 health zones. The project’s maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH) package provides skills in:

- Managing difficult births and obstetric emergencies;
- Active Management of the Third Stage of Labor (AMTSL) to prevent hemorrhage;
- Family planning, since spacing births places less stress on a mother’s body;
- Malaria prevention, including sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP) and bed nets for pregnant women, who are particularly susceptible to malaria;
- Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) to resuscitate newborns;
- Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) for premature babies.

## Innovative health-systems analysis highlights low-cost, high-impact services

DRC-IHP uses a seven-step health systems analysis to select the right health intervention for the right context (for instance, KMC for facilities without electricity) and synergize with other services to improve and expand maternal and neonatal health care.

A key component is the Lives Saved Tool (LiST), which prioritizes a package of low-cost, high-impact interventions. The package includes active management of third stage of labor and newborn resuscitation (HBB), in addition to KMC.

With the MOH, IHP provides training and supportive supervision of health care providers in addition to essential commodities and equipment. After four years of a range of low-cost, lifesaving interventions, IHP estimates it has contributed to saving more than 150,000 children—including more than 7,400 newborns. ■

## Examples of simple but powerful DRC-IHP methods:



### KANGAROO MOTHER CARE

Premature and other low birth weight babies face an increased risk of health issues. Instead of an incubator, providers teach mothers and fathers how to wrap their infant next to their body for constant contact. The kangaroo method helps keep an infant’s body temperature stable, as well as promoting bonding and breastfeeding.

### HELPING BABIES BREATHE

Helping Babies Breathe is a simple but powerful technique to start breathing in struggling newborns during their first minute of life, a critical period known as the “Golden Minute.” Taught using inflatable dolls and performed with a hand air-pump, the resuscitation method can be used by anyone who helps with deliveries, including doctors, nurses, midwives, and traditional birth attendants.

Photo by Todd Shapera