



ETHIOPIA

ANNUAL REPORT

2021

 **maternity**
FOUNDATION

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INTRODUCTION

In 2021, the direct and indirect effects of the Covid-19 pandemic continued to be felt throughout the world and across all sectors of society with health systems being particularly impacted. While the full extent of pandemic's impact on health care systems and the populations that rely on them is not yet clear, a recent study which reviewed the existing evidence of Covid-19's impact on healthcare systems on the African continent highlighted insufficient resources and equipment, a lack of available health services needed for the pandemic and a general decrease in utilization of some types of health care services (1).

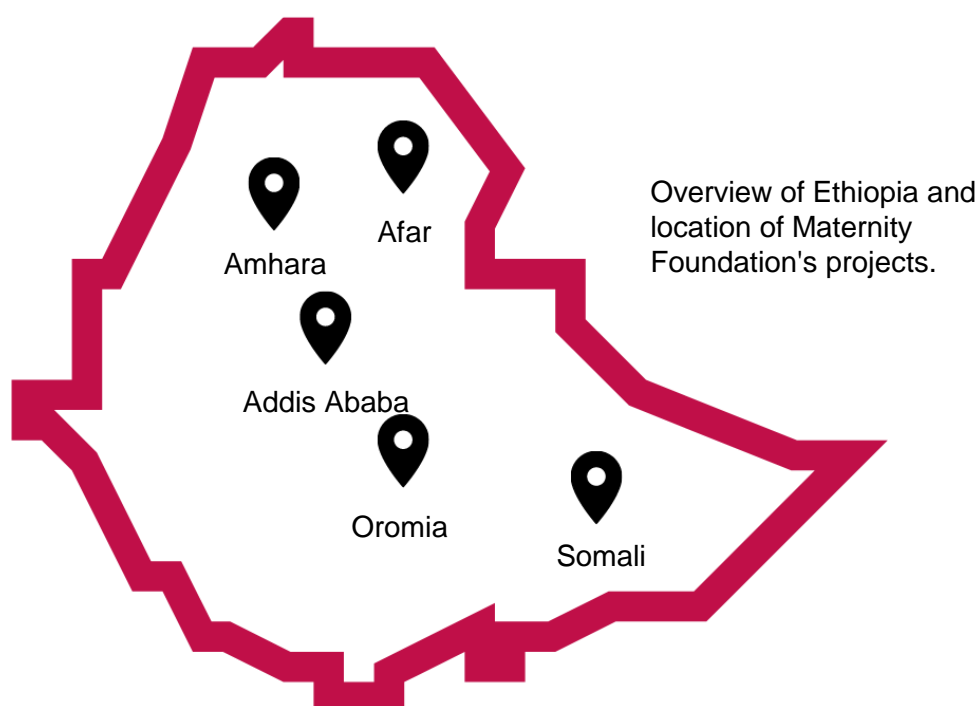
In Ethiopia, a study assessing one referral hospital during the time where Covid-19 preventive measures were implemented, points at a decline in uptake of family planning services by up to 98%, while uptake of antenatal care dropped by 50% compared to pre-pandemic trends (2).

In Ethiopia, the Covid-19 pandemic added to an increasingly dire situation in 2021 with forced displacement due to conflict and climate, drought, flooding and health challenges. As per the mid-year review of the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan for Ethiopia, humanitarian needs increased across the country during the first half of the year. In parts of Ethiopia, this disrupted health service delivery, created shortages of qualified health staff and a need to rapidly

rehabilitate, re-staff and restock facilities that were damaged by conflict, floods, and other causes (3). In such situations women often find themselves particularly vulnerable, as their access to essential sexual and reproductive health care services is limited or prevented entirely, despite their need to access such services continuing and often intensifying. The inability of women to access care during a humanitarian crisis can have profound and irreversible impacts on their lives and that of their babies and children.

In response to this, the Maternity Foundation team in Ethiopia worked throughout 2021 to secure continued access, utilisation and quality of maternal and newborn health care services through rolling out the Safe Delivery App to health care workers, ensuring implementation of clinical trainings and mentorship programs, whilst continuing to closely coordinate and collaborate with health authorities.

With the support of partners such as the Federal Ministry of Health, the Ethiopian Regional Health bureaus in relevant regions, the Ethiopian Association of Midwives, UNICEF, and UNFPA, we continued our efforts to build the professional capacity of midwives to ensure safer births for women and their newborn, and in this report, we provide an overview of the key activities and results in 2021.



2021 HIGHLIGHTS

- Partnering with Laerdal Global Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics, Maternity Foundation carried out a pilot study on remote capacity building of health care providers in Ethiopia in 2021.
- Through Maternity Foundation activities in Ethiopia in 2021 more than 350 health care workers from close to 70 health facilities have received a clinical training to enhance their clinical knowledge and skills.
- Through trainings on Covid-19 and distribution of personal protective equipment, Maternity Foundation continued to support the effort to prevent and manage the spread of Covid-19 in Ethiopia. Across projects, 45 facilities in total received various personal protective equipment, including capes, masks, gowns, aprons, and hand sanitizer.
- In collaboration with four universities in the Amhara and Oromia Regions of Ethiopia, Maternity Foundation has pilot tested the integration of the Safe Delivery App into the midwifery curriculum. In 2021, 141 graduating students took part in the pilot.
- Based on the year-long experience developing and rolling out catchment-based mentorship programs in Ethiopia, Maternity Foundation developed a policy brief on this topic in 2021. The policy brief has been shared with stakeholders in the Safe Motherhood technical working group and going forward, it will inform our continued work on mentorship programs in the country.

ENC NOW! REMOTE CAPACITY BUILDING

PROJECT CARD

“ENC Now! Remote Capacity building of health workers in Ethiopia – a pilot study”

TIME: May – October 2021

PARTNERS: Laerdal Global Health, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health

FOCUS: Remote training of health care workers.

18 health facilities and 58 health care workers included in the study.



As part of an effort to further explore and document the potential and feasibility of remote trainings for health care professionals, Maternity Foundation partnered with Laerdal Global Health and the American Academy of Paediatrics to roll out a study to test and compare different modalities of remote training in Ethiopia.

Remote capacity building of health care providers holds the potential to secure continued learning and development of health care professional's skills in a more flexible and less disruptive manner. It holds the potential to reach a large number of health care workers using only limited resources, and as health care staff and trainers do not need to meet face-to-face, remote trainings also offer a more Covid-19 safe training method during the pandemic. There can, however, also be various challenges associated with e.g. securing adequate tech equipment and a stable internet connection to ensure a smooth training experience. Similarly, it is

crucial that the quality of the training is not compromised.

The pilot study carried out in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia in 2021 sought to further explore remote learning as an approach for capacity building of health care workers – and to document the impact, feasibility and related challenges. In total, 58 midwives across 18 health facilities took part in the study where they were all taken through the same content on Essential Newborn Care (ENC Now!) developed by Laerdal Global Health and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

The trainings were delivered either as a 1-off intensive training or as shorter training modules spaced out over time, and all were accompanied by self-directed learning and skills-based practice facilitated by onsite-facilitators. Additionally, two groups had the Safe Delivery App integrated into their training content, whereas the two other groups did not.

All four groups were closely followed and monitored to assess the different training modalities over a 6-month period, and health care workers and facilitators were furthermore interviewed and asked to provide their reflections on the training modality.

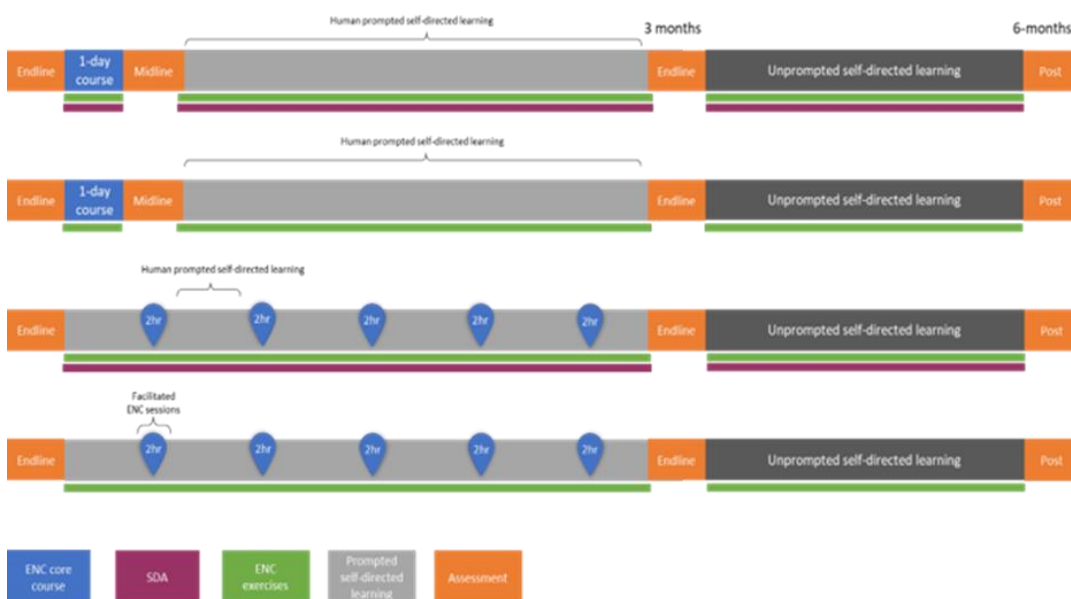
Overall, results at the end of the study period showed an increase in health care workers' knowledge, skills and confidence after the completion of the training as well as a good retention of the enhanced knowledge and skills three months later.

For the remotely delivered ENC Now! training the health care workers and facilitators interviewed seemed to prefer the spaced training model over the more intensive one-off training. Sitting in a full day of Zoom lectures, despite breaks for exercises, was found to be tiring. The component of self-directed learning was well-received amongst interviewed health care workers who reported that they found it both useful and motivating, and encouraged them to practice repeatedly

until they could perform the exercises well. As all training sessions were conducted remotely, health care workers were able to receive the training from their respective health facilities saving both travel time and cost. According to the interviewed health care workers, this aspect furthermore allowed for broader participation from each facility and ensured that all staff were taught the same content and procedures. However, taking the training from the health facility also posed a challenge to attendance on the days where the caseload in the facility was high and work pressure did not allow for full participation in the training. It was recommended by both participants, facilitators and facility manager to make sure participants have dedicated time off to participate in the trainings, or, possibly giving the trainings on weekend days. Those participants who were introduced to the Safe Delivery App generally reported that it was a helpful tool that is easy to use.

Over the coming period, the results and learnings from the study will be disseminated in various fora and shared with key stakeholders.

FIGURE 1: Overview of study design outlining the four arms of the study



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ 58 midwives across 18 health facilities were reached with a training package on Essential Newborn Care.
- ✓ Extensive data collection throughout the pilot study documented important learnings on remote training of health care providers.
- ✓ Through the remote training programs, health care workers increased and retained their professional knowledge and skills over the study period.



“

When faced asphyxiated newborn there was fear and difficult to resuscitate before.... now the training helped us to manage complication".

Training participant

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COVID-19 RESPONSE AND QUALITY HEALTHCARE

PROJECT CARD

“Strengthening the Prevention and Management of COVID-19 and provision of quality maternal and child health care in Addis Ababa”

TIME: November 2020 – December 2021

PARTNERS: Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health and Addis Ababa City Administration

FOCUS: Capacity building of health care providers and management of Covid-19

14 health facilities and 81 midwives were reached with capacity building activities.



In collaboration with Addis Ababa City administration, Maternity Foundation has in 2021 concluded the one-year project “*Strengthening the prevention and management of Covid-19 and provision of quality maternal and child health care in Addis Ababa*” supported by the Novo Nordisk Foundation. During the project, 4 hospitals and 14 health centres in the Addis Ababa area took part in capacity building activities and received essential equipment.

During the Covid-19 pandemic when the capacity within health care systems in many countries has been challenged by competing priorities and scarce resources, it has remained crucial to keep a strong focus on maternal and newborn health. To ensure high quality maternal and newborn health care services, Maternity Foundation

provided clinical trainings and a 6-month mentorship program for health professionals from selected health facilities in and around Addis Ababa.

81 midwives took part in clinical trainings on Covid-19 and infection prevention, post-partum haemorrhage, management of hypertensive disorders and essential newborn care.

15 mentors received a more in-depth training that built their training capacities and equipped them to act as onsite facilitators throughout the project and to ensure that mentorship activities were carried out as planned.



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The training of health care staff was provided remotely to ensure compliance with Covid-19 recommendations and safety measures, and health facilities were equipped with the needed tech setup and training equipment to facilitate effective and smooth online trainings. While the project did face challenges related to for example turnover of staff and a low number of midwives combined with a high work intensity at some

facilities – the project results also show that the remote trainings and mentorship were successful in increasing the health care workers' clinical knowledge and skills over the project period.

Upon the completion of the project, a dissemination workshop was held in Addis Ababa to share key results and learning with relevant partners and stakeholders

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ 81 midwives from 14 health facilities took part in clinical trainings on Covid-19 and infection prevention, management of post-partum haemorrhage, hypertension and essential newborn care.
- ✓ 63 midwives participated in a 6-month mentorship program to enhance their professional skills.
- ✓ Covid-19 prevention items, i.e. personal protective equipment (PPE) distributed to 14 health facilities.
- ✓ Survey data from before and after the training program show a substantial increase in both clinical knowledge and skills amongst the midwives participating in the project.
- ✓ Upon the completion of the project, a dissemination workshop was held in Addis Ababa to share key results and learning with relevant partners and stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, Addis Ababa City Administration Health Bureau, Ethiopian Association of Midwives, and the Ethiopian Society of Obstetrics and Gynaecologists.

UNFPA & MATERNITY FOUNDATION PROJECT

PROJECT CARD

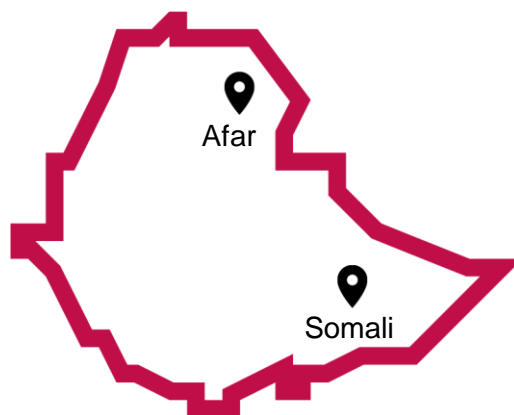
“Towards SRHR in Somali Region” and “Integrated project on sexual and reproductive health, GBV and Covid-19, among women, adolescent and youth in Afar Region”

TIME: January – December 2021

PARTNER: UNFPA

FOCUS: Capacity building of health care providers, community mobilization and education, management of Covid-19

14 health centers and 160 health care workers were involved in the project activities.



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2021, the collaboration with UNFPA continued through projects ongoing in Somali and Afar regions.

As part of the activities, health care workers at 14 health centres in the two regions participated in capacity building activities including trainings in relevant clinical areas and mentorship programs to enhance their clinical knowledge and skills to deliver obstetric and neonatal health care services. In order to further ensure the quality of health care services and prevent the spread of Covid-19, health facilities were supplied with personal protective equipment (PPE), training equipment and ultrasound equipment. Additionally, health education sessions were provided to communities in target areas to increase awareness and inform health behaviour specifically with regards to maternal and child. The collaboration with UNFPA will continue in 2022.

- ✓ In total, 14 health centers, 160 health professionals have been reached through the collaboration with UNFPA in 2021.
- ✓ Health education on maternal and child health reached around 2000 community members.
- ✓ Mentorship was conducted in all 14 facilities, reaching 50 health professionals working in maternal and child health (MCH) units.
- ✓ Capacity building trainings in relevant clinical areas delivered to approximately 110 health professionals.
- ✓ Supply of equipment including PPE, training equipment and ultrasound to improve antenatal care for pregnant women.

UNICEF & MATERNITY FOUNDATION PROJECT

PROJECT CARD

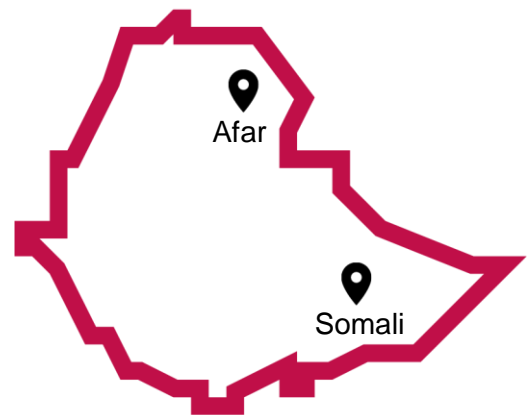
“Strengthening quality maternal and child health services through catchment-based mentoring” and “Strengthening maternal and child health services through catchment-based mentorship in Somali and Afar regions, Ethiopia”

TIME: February – June 2021 and October 2021 – February 2023

PARTNERS: UNICEF, Somali & Afar Regional Health Bureaus

FOCUS: Capacity building of health care providers

10 health centers and 28 midwives were involved in project activities.



Building on previous collaboration, the joint work with UNICEF continued in 2021 where the project “*Strengthening quality maternal and child health services through catchment-based mentoring*” was implemented in the Somali Region.

Through this project, maternal and child health care staff across 10 health centers participated in catchment-based mentorship to develop their professional skills and strengthen the quality of maternal and child health services provided for mothers and children. Utilizing the approach of catchment-based mentorship, staff from hospitals perform the mentorship program and roll it out to smaller health centers within their catchment area.

In 2021, the collaboration with UNICEF additionally expanded, and together we have embarked on a new 18-month project that started implementation towards the end of 2021 and will continue until 2023. Building on previous collaboration in the Somali Region, the joint work will continue there and furthermore be expanded into the Afar Region.

The project will be undertaken in collaboration with Somali and Afar regional health bureaus, Somali and Afar Bureau of Finance and Economic Development, local health authority offices, UNICEF, and Maternity Foundation.

During the project period, a total of 55 health facilities across the two regions, selected in consultation with the respective regional health authorities, will be trained and capacitated in Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

and Gender Based Violence in Emergencies (GBVIE) and supported through catchment based clinical mentorship (CBCM) to respond to obstetric and neonatal emergencies.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ 22 health professionals across 10 health centers reached with clinical training to enhance their capacity to respond to obstetric and neonatal emergencies
- ✓ 28 midwives participated in mentorship program
- ✓ Implementation of a new 18-month project in collaboration with UNICEF has been initiated, and a number of health centers and professionals were reached with initial activities in 2021.



Healthcare workers practising midwifery skills, using the Safe Delivery App.

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ENHANCING MATERNAL AND NEWBORN HEALTH

PROJECT CARD

“Enhancing Maternal and Newborn Health in West Wollega”

TIME: January 2021 – December 2021

PARTNERS: Ethiopian Federal Ministry of Health and the Regional Health Bureau

FOCUS: Capacity building of health care providers

12 health centers and 32 health care workers were involved in project activities.



Healthcare workers examine a pregnant woman, using the Safe Delivery App.

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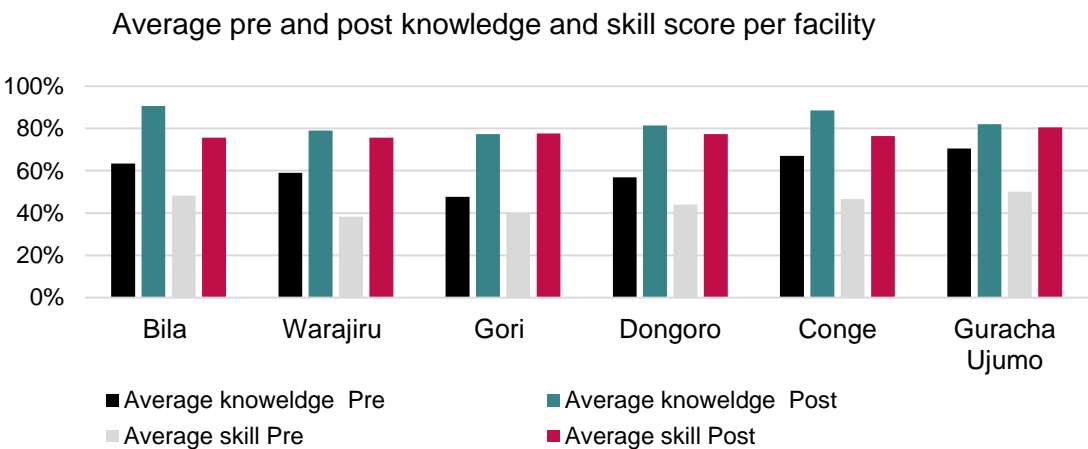
The Maternity Foundation presence in West Wollega in the Oromia Region builds on year-long experience and interventions across several districts, health centers and facilities. Since 2006, Maternity Foundation has been implementing integrated maternal health projects in the region to address two core challenges: low utilization of health services and poor quality of health care. Over the years, we have covered 18 out of West Wollega’s 21 districts with targeted activities to increase the quality

and utilization of maternal and newborn health care services. Between 2016 and 2020, the third phase of the project was implemented reaching around 200,000 people either directly or indirectly by project activities.

In 2021, the intervention in the area continued with focus on enhancing the quality of maternal and newborn health care at the targeted health centers.

DATA RESULTS

FIGURE 2: Results from base line and end line on knowledge and skills



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ 32 midwives across 12 health centres enhanced their clinical knowledge and skills through catchment-based clinical mentorship in collaboration with four local hospitals.

PILOT: PRE-SERVICE INTEGRATION

PROJECT CARD

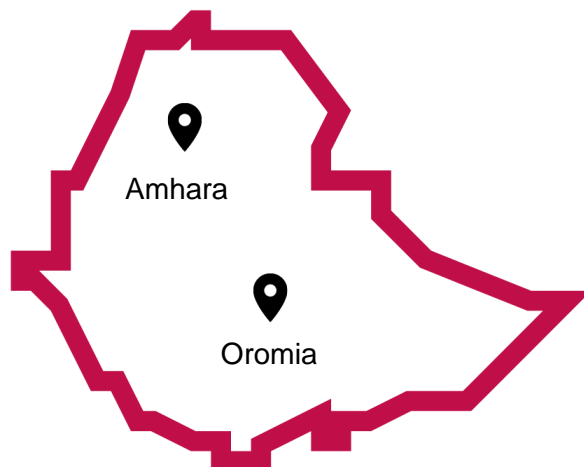
“Pilot: Integration of the Safe Delivery App in midwifery education”

TIME: January 2021 – December 2021

PARTNERS: University partners (Wollega, Mettu, Bahir Dar and Debrebirhan)

FOCUS: Testing integration of the Safe Delivery App in pre-service (midwifery education)

141 midwifery students were involved in project activities.



In order to further strengthen the midwifery cadre in Ethiopia and the quality of maternal and child health services, Maternity Foundation has been collaborating with the midwifery teaching institutions and Ministry of Health since 2018 to strengthen the midwifery education in Ethiopia. In collaboration with four universities in the Amhara and Oromia Region, Maternity Foundation is piloting the integration of the Safe Delivery App into the midwifery curriculum with the aim to improve the quality of both teaching and learning.

At the universities, the App was introduced in classroom teaching, skills lab, exercises

and clinical practice where it has provided midwifery students with instant and easy access to up-to-date clinical guidelines. With features such as videos, practical procedures and MyLearning, the App provides easily accessible clinical content and through the MyLearning platform, students can practice, revise and refresh their knowledge through quizzes.

The pilot project has assessed and documented knowledge and skills of the midwifery students, and results will provide a basis for further study and ongoing discussions on integration of the Safe Delivery App in pre-service midwifery curriculum.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- ✓ A total of 141 graduating class students have participated in the assessment conducted in 2021.

POLICY BRIEF: CLINICAL MENTORING

Maternity Foundation has many years of experience on how to effectively conduct catchment-based mentorship for health professionals across several regions of Ethiopia. In 2021, the year-long experience and expertise in this area was consolidated into a policy brief on mentorship: *“Strengthening Catchment Based Clinical Mentoring in Ethiopia”*. The brief reflects on Maternity Foundation’s experience implementing Catchment-based clinical mentoring (CBCM) and other mentorship programs, shares lessons learned and makes

recommendations for further refinement of the guidelines and associated CBCM manual and their implementation. The policy brief aims to capitalize on existing initiatives and maximize cross-project learning.

Following the development of the policy brief, Maternity Foundation will continue to collaborate with the Federal Ministry of Health in Ethiopia, UNCIEF, UNFPA and other partners to expand and strengthen catchment-based mentorship programs.



Ethiopian family

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The entire team at Maternity Foundation wishes to express our sincere gratitude to all partners and donors who have supported our program in Ethiopia in 2021.

With your support, we can continue to leverage our presence on the ground in Ethiopia and contribute to the ongoing work to improve the quality of maternal and newborn health care services in the country.

We wish to thank our strong partners on the ground in Ethiopia: Ethiopia's Federal

Ministry of Health, Ethiopian Midwives Association, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

We wish to express our gratitude to our supporters and donors: Det Arnstedtske Familiefond, Hesse Ragle Fonden, Novo Nordisk Fonden, William Demant Fonden, and a number of non-disclosed donors and supporters.

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