



FACT SHEET

MDGs 4 & 5: Supporting the Reduction of Maternal and Under-Five Mortality

Beginning in FY2014, the USAID Primary Health Care Project in Iraq (PHCPI) has focused its technical assistance on helping the Iraqi Ministry of Health (MOH) meet its Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4&5 targets of reducing maternal and child mortality in the project target areas (see Figure 1 and 2, Iraq's MDG Progress to Date). The project developed a package of low-cost, high-impact interventions for improving maternal, neonatal, and child health (MNCH) and is currently rolling out the package throughout Iraq. Using the project's capacity building strategy honed during the first two years of the project, PHCPI, in partnership with the MOH, has updated a number of clinical guidelines related to MNCH, including antenatal care, emergency obstetrics and newborn care, maternal and child nutrition, and maternal mortality surveillance and reporting. These guidelines are

being introduced to primary health care (PHC) service providers through the cadre of trainer-of-trainers developed by PHCPI in each province. The project's MNCH initiative is further strengthened by the local health committees (LHCs) working within the catchment areas of each of the project's target clinics. These LHCs are working in partnership with clinics to increase demand for and use of PHC MNCH services, particularly among vulnerable populations.

Pre-Pregnancy Care Package

This package includes broader initiatives such as women's education and empowerment, and more targeted health interventions such as premarital counseling and provision of essential laboratory tests. Pre-pregnancy care provides opportunities for behavioral interventions that will have a sustained impact on both women's lives and the lives of their children in future.

Pregnancy Care Package

This package focuses on improving the coverage, quality, and utilization of essential pregnancy care. Activities are aimed at providing complete and effective antenatal care services, including counseling women on danger signs.

Childbirth Care Package

This package promotes skilled attendance for normal childbirth and increased access to emergency obstetric care. Skilled care at birth and immediately after birth can determine the survival and health of both the mother and baby. USAID/PHCPI developed a joint strategy with the MOH to involve traditional birth attendants (TBAs) in MNCH

What are the MDGs?

The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) – which range from halving extreme poverty rates to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by the target date of 2015 – form a blueprint agreed to by all the world's countries and all the world's leading development institutions. They have galvanized unprecedented efforts to meet the needs of the world's poorest. USAID/PHCPI is targeting MDG 4: Reduce the Under Five Mortality Rate by Two-Thirds and MDG 5: Reduce the Maternal Mortality Ratio by Three Quarters.

<http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

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Iraq's MDG Progress to Date

Figure 1. Deaths per 1,000 live births

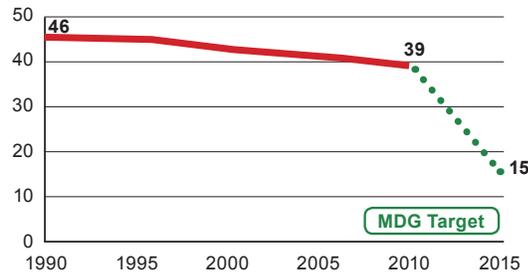
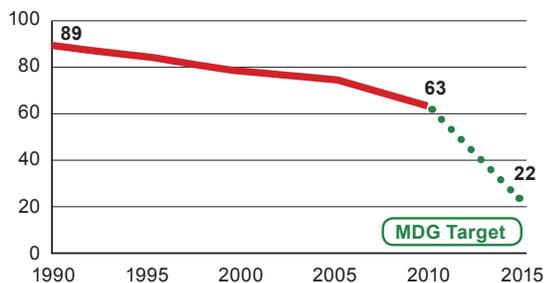


Figure 2. Deaths per 100,000 live births



care. TBAs are often the most accessible health care providers available to women. By expanding their skills beyond childbirth, this broad and trusted network is playing an important role in supporting the health care system and providing early referral.

Postnatal Care and Newborn Package

This package focuses on interventions that will improve care for sick newborn children. Over 50% of all under-five mortality occurs in the first month of life. USAID/PHCPI is working with the MOH to promote appropriate immediate newborn care at health facilities where deliveries take place or by TBAs at the community level, including postnatal home visits in the first days after birth when risk is highest.

Child Care Package

For older children, high coverage of preventive child health care interventions, such as immunization, has advanced global progress for child survival. However, nutrition in particular continues to be a major risk factor

for child mortality. USAID/PHCPI is working to improve child nutrition through promotion of breastfeeding, micronutrient supplementation, and proper case management of severe childhood illnesses, including diarrhea, pneumonia, and meningitis.

USAID/PHCPI MDG Achievements to Date

During FY14 Quarter 1 (October – December 2013), USAID/PHCPI:

- Conducted a Bottleneck Assessment in July 2013, identifying key programmatic factors that contribute to the continued high levels of maternal, newborn, and child mortality in Iraq. The results of this assessment have been used by USAID/PHCPI, the MOH, and other stakeholders in developing plans to accelerate MDG 4&5 achievements throughout Iraq.
- Updated a clinical guidelines related to MNCH, including antenatal care, emergency obstetrics and newborn care, maternal and child nutrition, maternal mortality surveillance and reporting, and the integrated management of childhood illness (IMCI).
- Developed information, education, and communication (IEC) materials and promotional materials to raise awareness among PHC staff, community outreach groups, and PHC clients as to the importance of MNCH care.
- Trained 185 PHC staff from 97 clinics on updated guidelines for premarital counseling.
- Trained 29 master trainers on rollout of the antenatal care training program.
- Trained 114 PHC staff from 80 clinics on maternal and child nutrition.
- Trained 19 PHC physicians on emergency obstetrics and newborn care at a training course held at the Maternity Hospital in Sulaimaniyah.
- Updated guidelines and training curricula for TBA to integrate them more fully into the wider PHC system. Revised guidelines include recognition of danger signs during pregnancy, promotion of antenatal care, referrals, preparations for emergency transport, use of birthing kits, and breast feeding promotion.