

## Amref Health Africa Leads TRANSFORM: Health in Developing Regions



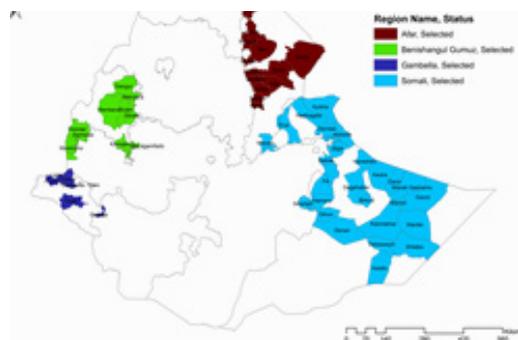
Prof Yifru Berhan, Minister of FMOH and Michael Raynor, US Ambassador to Ethiopia at Transform HDR information booth during the USAID Transform Launch, Sheraton Addis Hotel, Addis Ababa. @Amref Health Africa/Kenaw G

Amref Health Africa was awarded Transform: Health in Developing Regions in May 2017, as part of the US Agency for International Development's (USAID) support to reduce maternal and child death in Ethiopia. This five year project, to be implemented in Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Ethiopia Somali and Gambella regions, is expected to increase the numbers of healthy mothers with successful birth outcomes; to expand access and uptake of family planning; to increase numbers of healthy newborns; and to sustain gains already achieved in reducing under-five mortality.

The project will implement its activities through women, children and girls-centered lens, under a three pronged strategic approaches focusing on i) Increased access to integrated quality high impact MNCH/FP services; ii) Increased health seeking behavior enhanced by reduced gender inequalities; and iii) Improved evidence-based decision making and programme learning; all with the overall goal of strengthening the regional health systems.

Amref Health Africa will implement this project in collaboration with IntraHealth International, Project HOPE and General Electric (GE), led by its Chief of Party, Yoseph Burka.

Well positioned to implement this award, this consortium brings complementary skills and experiences from within the developing regional states in Ethiopia and other African countries, as well as a unique approach of a public-private partnership model with GE (continued on page 6).



### Note from Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia's Country Director

2017 has been a successful year for Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia! With our win of Transform: Health in Developing Regions and several new projects, we are adapting to changes to meet our new growth and exciting responsibilities. Through this five year USAID funded program, we are able to expand our programmatic reach within Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Somali working towards ending preventable maternal and child death and supporting the Government of Ethiopia's health sector transformation plan (see article on the cover page).

We continued to renew our partnership with our government, other international NGOs we work in consortium with and our donors. GlaxoSmithKline and Packard Foundation are two of our corporate and private foundation partners respectively. You will find in this edition highlights what such collaborations have brought in health systems strengthening and quality health service delivery at the health post level (see articles page 2 & 4). We find it also very important to check in with our beneficiaries. At the end of the day, they are our main clients and we need to ensure we hear their concerns and their visions of health and wellbeing. Highlights of the communities' voices provide us with an in depth insight, which we will share with you on an annual basis (see page 5). Lastly, Semhar Debru, our staff in procurement, shares with us her experience in meeting our beneficiaries in Afar (see page 6). Sometimes, when we do our day to day routine, we forget about the big picture of working towards "Lasting Health Changes in Ethiopia"—our organization's vision. Semhar reminds us our purpose.

In the last four months, we have been working on our new five years strategy that will start in January 2018. A consultative process with our staff, stakeholders and advisory council has taken place and we are now in the process of finalizing our directions of the next five years. We look forward to sharing it with you! Most importantly, Amref Health Africa celebrates its 60<sup>th</sup> year and various activities and celebrations have taken place around the world.

-Misrak Makonnen, Country Director-

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# Improving Health Service Quality at Health Post Is Not Expensive: Amref Health Africa's Experience

Health posts are built mainly to provide community level health services that include vaccinations, antenatal care, family planning, child growth and monitoring, hygiene, sanitation and nutrition services, which are lifesaving through outpatient services and outreach activities to the communities. These interventions are expected to have an acceptable quality service. Defining acceptable and setting standard of services for health posts is a work in progress for the Federal Ministry of Health and its implementing partners, expected to be maintained and sustained through the new Ethiopian Primary Health Care Alliance for quality (EPAQ) initiative. Models of health care quality documented in various literatures give much focus on the structural and functional aspects of health care settings as one of the dimensions of quality improvement.

According to Amref Health Africa's health posts assessment made in Jimma and East Wolega zones of Oromia region conducted in February 2017, findings reflected that more than half of health posts had expired medical supplies and drugs; lacked clean examination room, waiting area, latrine and other basic sanitation facilities; and had disorganized management of patients' registration books. Such an environment puts patients at risk of contracting infectious diseases, and threatens health workers' safety. But how expensive is addressing these issues and improving the quality of health posts and their services for our communities?

Amref health Africa, through its Enhancing Reproductive Health Care Quality project funded by Packard Foundation, has implemented an intervention that could change the situation of 160 health posts in Jimma and East Wolega zones. As one of the strategies to address this challenge, Amref organised a consultation and learning by doing experience sharing forum in which health extension workers and their supervisors, Primary Health Care Unit directors, Woreda health offices and Kebele leaders participated. During the consultation, Amref Health Africa and their Stakeholders identified quality related gaps, assessed what it would take to improve and prepared quality improvement action plan to address the problems. The team proposed simple and affordable measures to improve the quality of the health care settings that did not require rebuilding or renovating health posts. Using a combination of Kaizen's 5s - System, Sort, Set in order, Shine, Standardize and Sustain, Clean and Safe Health Facility (CASH), and community health information system (CHIS) methodologies, our approach showed how to change the existing physical setup of the health posts to have an acceptable quality with no costs incurred.

"We supported health extension workers to identify the quality gaps observed at the health posts they have been working in, particularly problems linked to the physical setting: their cleanliness, examination room setting, drugs and medical equipment handling, recording and reporting system and patients' data presentation and utilisation," said Zelalem Adugna, Amref Health Africa's project manager of this initiative.

Buyo Kechaema health post, in Seka Chokorsa Woreda of Jimma zone, was the pioneer to start this quality initiative supported by Amref health Africa. Struggling under dire circumstances, this health post faced many problems, similar to ones identified during our assessment. Through active involvement of the health post's stakeholders during the learning by doing forum, most of these bottlenecks were addressed on the spot. The health post has now become more customer friendly for patients and exemplary of quality service delivery.

Endalew Melaku, Family Health Coordinator of the Woreda, emphasized the importance of scaling up such initiative across other health posts. "We never thought the rooms of our health post could be as spacious and clean as we see them now. Everything from medical equipment and rosters of our patients to office utilities are in order. All required data are now easily accessible. We are now working hard to scale up this initiative in all our health posts."

Amref Health Africa has implemented this quality initiative in one health post per PHCU, with the responsibilities of the leading health post to expand this approach to neighboring health posts. Accordingly, nine health posts under their respective PHCU in Sekachokorsa are covered through this quality intervention. The PHCUs have also scaled up this initiative to 24 additional health posts in their catchment, making the process owned by the PHCU and easily scalable. Currently, with all Sekachokorsa Woreda health posts implementing this initiative, community members are beginning to recognise and acknowledge the changes.

Amref health Africa, with its continuous support from Packard Foundation, will work further to scale up this initiative into new areas, as well as build this model in other existing Amref supported RMNCH programmes in other regions. A culture of continuous consultation and learning exchange has shown to lead to a sustainable model giving ownership of the process of change to the health posts and their communities.



Health extension workers at project intervention health post, Jimma.

# Behind our Achievements Stand Our Partners and Donors

## Amref Health Africa and GlaxoSmithKline Partnership in Ethiopia



Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia and GSK partnership meeting June 2017. @Amref Health Africa/Kenaw G

Amref Health Africa stands at the forefront of community health system strengthening initiatives that empower health care providers in improving the health of their community. Filling the skill and knowledge gaps of health workers is one of the most critical components in addressing maternal and child health challenges in the most remote and pastoralist regions of Ethiopia, including Afar, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella and Somali regions. These interventions are aligned with the Government of Ethiopia's priority agenda of meeting equity reflected in the Health Sector Transformation Plan. GlaxoSmithKline (GSK) has been partnering with Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia, strengthening human resources for Health and increasing reach of health services for the last six year.

Working in close collaboration with all regional health bureaus and Health Science Colleges, Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia, with the support from GSK, contributes to the continued decline in maternal and child morbidity and mortality. The health systems strengthening interventions are implemented nationally supporting the Federal Ministry of Health Human Resource for Health (HRH) Directorate in providing technical and financial assistance to the Health Extension Program, with additional focus in Afar, Benishangul, Gambella and Somali regions.

Amref Health Africa plays this instrumental role through the provision of a series of capacity building training for health extension workers (HEWs) and midwives, and thereby contributing to the increase in the number of skilled female birth attendants, who competently provide grassroots health services that impact the lives of women in remote communities. Positive results of the training have already been recognized in the community as the trainees have been able to effectively assist pregnant women in antenatal care, labor, delivery and postnatal care.

This support is complemented in selected regions through the expansion of training centers for health science colleges, including fully equipping skill laboratory rooms, and building of health posts – all through initiatives supported by GSK.

Sedik Ahmed, Dean of Semra Health Science College in Afar, applauded the Amref Health Africa - GSK's training initiative of midwives and HEWs as this support makes a difference in maternal and child health services in the most remote parts of the country.

"Previously, you could hardly see Afari mothers going to health facilities to receive any

health care services because of lack of nearby access to health facilities; even those who had access refused to go because they were not comfortable to receive pregnancy and birthing related services from a male health workers as it is culturally improper; there were no skilled female birth attendants in the health facilities. Women are now using more health facilities as there are female skilled birth attendants whom they are comfortable with. Amref's contribution to this effect is commendable,"

Sedik said. Amref Health Africa has been working in strengthening the capacity of Semera Health Science College for the last five years through the HEWs and midwives training. As a result of this initiative, 157 midwifery and nursing students have graduated and assigned to different health facilities of the region, providing health services to the community.

Rahma Salih, 25, is one of the midwives, who received the first round training organized by Amref Health Africa with a financial support from GSK at the Semera Health Science College. Rahma was passionate about giving health services to women, particularly during pregnancy. This is why she joined the health workforce as a midwife nurse. She grew up witnessing pregnant women in Afar region refusing to go to health centers just to avoid any physical contact with male health workers during labor and delivery.

"I was worried about the lack of appropriate health care providers for women in my community. Even with my limited knowledge, I was aware of the consequences of not giving birth at the health centers." Rahma recalled.

Rahma began to search for opportunities that could make her dream a reality; she wanted to pursue her education and become a midwife. She later learnt Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia provides financial support to women candidates for midwifery training in Afar. Fortunate enough, Rahma became one of the candidates who got the chance to join Semra Health Science College. "Had it not been for Amref, my dream of becoming a midwifery nurse and serving my community, especially women, could not have been a reality.

This is the success Amref Health Africa has to celebrate," said Rahma, who has been selected by Afar Regional Health Bureau to work at Dupti Woreda as a Mobile Health Team member. Misrak Makonnen, Country Director of Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia recognizes GSK for its unwavering support to strengthen the Human Resources for Health in pastoral regions of Ethiopia and stands behind Amref's commitments and achievements in addressing the health challenges of these pastoral communities.

"The Global Amref Health Africa - GSK partnership has been ongoing for the last 27 years focusing on health systems strengthening, improving human resources for health, as one of the key building blocks. In Ethiopia, this partnership started in 2012 supporting the FMOH's Health Extension Programme and the training of health officers, midwives and nurses in the most remote parts of the country.

"We are now seeing these benefits of this partnership, as we see graduates such as Rahma supporting their community in nearby health centers. Now, women around Dupti do not have to walk long distances to seek women health service providers they need for themselves, their children and their families. Such support in Afar, Benishangul, Gambella and Somali regions, improving the quality of health workforce, addresses one of the critical priorities of the Government of Ethiopia and the needs of the population in developing regional states, ensuring equity, by reaching the unreachable." (continued on page 7)

# Where Are We in Our Health Interventions? A glimpse of Perceived Change among Our Primary Beneficiaries

Over the years, Amref Health Africa has made a growing contribution to the Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) of women and in creating a healthy environment for young women. This will remain our organization's focus in its upcoming new strategy 2018 - 2022. By making use of our community networks and knowledge, resources and capacities, Amref Health Africa aims to improve the health status of young African women and thereby impact on health in Africa as a whole.

In order to gather more insight about the impact of our work and to improve knowledge about young women's health, Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia has looked into the perceptions, needs and concerns of young women and their communities in Ethiopia on health and behavior.

This study, conducted in partnership with Amref Flying Doctors in the Netherlands, is implemented in Gullele Sub City in Addis Ababa, Tarmaber in North Shoa, Fentalie in Afar, and South Ari in Omo, using a quantitative and qualitative method. Amref Health Africa will use the findings of this research to define future interventions and adapt strategies to our new programs for improved impact and connections to the lives of the women we target.

The quantitative part of the study will be repeated annually for a period of five years. This highlight presents the health interventions and changes seen over the past twenty years and actors responsible for the changes, as well as concerns and directions for the future.

## Key Findings

Young women in the study areas have seen significant changes over the past twenty years in health and healthcare services. Rural areas are connected to places with better infrastructure and have more access to health facilities and services. This access improved people's health as well as their knowledge and awareness about health issue, which increased significantly through the interaction and communications with health extension workers. The changes also include the construction of health centres, youth centres, latrines and the implementation of the Health Extension Programme (HEP). Through the expansion of health centers, young women have now better access to services, and they have seen a decrease in the use of traditional birth attendants.

The health change with the most perceived impact is increased awareness on health issues at the community level including personal and environmental hygiene and maternal health, as well as awareness about Female Genital Circumcision, for example. Interestingly, these perceived areas of improvement by the community correspond to the interventions focused on by most of the development actors including Amref Health Africa.

The second health change seen is the construction of latrines by the government, the community, but also by non-government organisations such as Emmanuel Development Association and Amref Health Africa. The availability of latrines, in combination with health communications interventions, has increased awareness on the health benefits of latrine use. Similarities between the regions are seen in health facilities which have been constructed, ambulance services which became available and knowledge and awareness about health issues have increased. This shows that the HEP and their interventions are extended even in rural areas and improve people's health awareness and status.

Community members, as well as women and children, benefited most from these changes and interventions. Additional beneficiaries found in Gullele Sub City included elders, youth, HIV positive people and people with mentally and physically disabilities.

## Development Actors behind the Interventions and Changes

When looking at the actors, it is very clear that the government and community have been responsible for most of the changes according to the participants (the young women). Non-government development partners, including Amref Health Africa Ethiopia, have also significantly contributed to the positive changes happening on the ground.

## Expectations and Concerns for the Future

Participants were overall positive about the future of their health and that of the healthcare system. Exceptions were seen in Gullele, where both male and female participants brought concerns. The increased workload of health extension workers, who are not paid well, the increased number of inexperienced health workers, an unhealthy diet, unsafe drinking water and the increasing cost of healthcare could have the potential to avert the ongoing positive changes.

In North Shoa, an exception was seen as male participants were concerned about the future of their health and also mentioned the pressure on health extension workers and the increased rate of diseases. The regional differentiation on health concerns also reflects the increased awareness of communities in urban areas versus rural areas.

## What Do the Findings Mean to Amref Health Africa's Future Interventions?

The findings of this study provided valuable information which enabled Amref Health Africa to validate the significance of its programs in meeting the needs of women and their communities. These changes of life and wellbeing of our beneficiaries serves as a strong encouragement of our organization in contributing to the government's health priorities and goals through improved and targeted programming.



# You Are behind Their Happiness



Semhar Debru, procurement staff. @Amref Health Africa/  
Kenaw G

Semhar Debru, a procurement staff of Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia, deals with the day-to-day procurement operation that often keeps her busy mainly with paperwork. Her daily activities are very much routine: she receives purchase requests from project staffs, does a check if the requests are approved; contacts suppliers and ensures the purchases are delivered to the warehouse from which they are dispatched. The nature of the task confines her to the office with no interactions with Amref Health Africa's beneficiaries.

I never had the opportunity to go out to the field and at least interact with our beneficiaries. Until recently, I have not had any sense of the use of services, supplies and equipment we purchase every single day and send out to project areas do really matter to the lives of the community we work for. I just do my daily routine," said Semhar.

In February 2017, in order to strengthen the resilience of agro-pastoralist communities and address food crisis through Amref's initiative, Access to water, agriculture production and risk prevention, Amref Health Africa with the support of Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation, was able to support livelihood related interventions in Afar Regional State. Even though Amref Health Africa focuses on development activities, beneficiaries in the area we work are affected by drought. Therefore, in close collaboration and communications with our donor and Afar regional health bureau, we shifted our interventions to address the priority needs of the communities. As a result, Semhar was engaged in the procurement of 90 high breeding goats to be given to women members of income generating cooperatives selected in collaboration with pastoral and agriculture development office of Henelie kebele in Asayita woreda. This intervention aimed to improve and strengthen the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable women, who are the poorest of the poor, and support to the women's income generating groups and cooperatives formed a major part of the project's objective.

Semhar was able to participate in this livelihood initiative by travelling to Asayita. There, she went through an inspiring experience that influenced the way she thinks and does her procurement work. She recalls the happiness and enthusiasm she saw on the faces and gestures of women when the goats were delivered to them. She witnessed how the organization for which she has worked for the last five years values

the community and vice versa.

"I asked myself 'Is this how our beneficiaries feel whenever we reach them with our services?' It was an unforgettable moment for me to see them feel like that. I never felt this level of satisfaction and gratification from my work like I did in Asayta where I led the purchasing and delivery of the goats. This makes you feel proud as a staff, and I am proud to be part of this service. It was really overwhelming," said Semhar. Beneficiaries and local authorities are equally satisfied. 'Amref' Health Africa's investment is rewarding. We hope to see positive return as we strongly believe our women can make it. What matters most was the opportunity created. Thanks to Amref, the opportunity has now been created," the Woreda Administrator said.

Now, Semhar has a better sense that behind the paper works she daily grapples with, are the services that help change the lives of many in the field through Amref Health Africa's supported interventions. In the past, she barely cared whether the medicine, construction of water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, construction materials and lots of other services she purchased in the name of Amref Health Africa could reach the beneficiaries and help relieve their pains, make their water safe, keep their environment clean, and impact on their lives at all.

"I must admit, I never thought of this until my latest travel to Afar," she said, "I am now totally changed. Our beneficiaries will always be on my mind whenever I initiate and process any purchase. I am well aware what the purchases I am involved in means to the poor and vulnerable community who struggle to improve their lives and livelihood I will, thus, care about the quality and timely delivery of whatever items, be it small water cans or bigger construction material we purchase for our beneficiaries."



Semhar at goats handing over event, Afar. @Amref Health Africa/Dessie D

# Amref Health Africa Leads TRANSFORM... *continued from page 1*

Amref Health Africa has started the implementation of Transform: Health in Developing Regions, working closely with the Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) and the respective four Regional Health Bureaus. As part of its start-up, the organization held a consultative meeting in July 2017, with government partners, USAID, and international and local NGO partners to introduce the goals and the expected results of this five-year program targeting 58 woredas and 468 health selected government health facilities in these four regions. Federal and Regional level familiarization meetings have also been held to align the work plan and discuss the details of the program's implementation with the respective regions.

The Government of Ethiopia and USAID Ethiopia jointly launched this activity with other Transform awards, including Transform PHCU, Transform WASH and Transform MELA in October 2017. In order to ensure success and meet expectations, Amref Health Africa will continue aligning its interventions with existing government systems, build on the government's political will and investment, coordinate and collaborate with key RMNCH stakeholders, leverage the predominantly cultural and religious leadership structures and harness resources from the private sectors and other local and international sources.

In order to ensure success and meet expectations, Amref Health Africa will continue aligning its interventions with existing government systems, build on the government's political will and investment, coordinate and collaborate with key RMNCH stakeholders, leverage the predominantly cultural and religious leadership structures and harness resources from the private sectors and other local and international sources.

Amref Health Africa strongly believes that this investment will also contribute towards the achievement of the FMOH's Health Sector Transformation Plan, and address the health systems gaps of these regions while making a difference in children and women's lives in Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, Gambella and Somali Regional States.



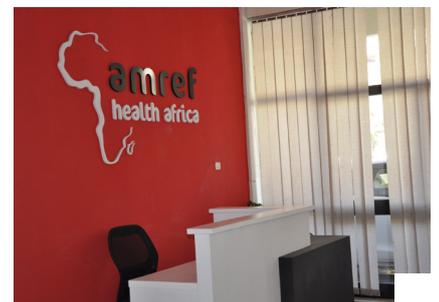
Yoseph Burka, Transform HDR Chief of Party at USAID Transform launch, October 2017. @Amref Health Africa/Kenaw G

## We Have Moved to A New Location

**A**mref Health Africa in Ethiopia moved to a new building, which is located close to Bole International Airport, near Bole Medhanialem Church in July 2017.

The new building offers facilities with a focus on employees and our visitors' comfort and wellness. It provides sufficient space and good working environment. Most importantly, it opens new doors to improving our operation and helps encourage proactive work and positive feelings for the organization.

Please visit us in our new location!.



Right: External and internal parts of the new building. @Amref Health Africa/Kenaw G

# Behind our Achievements... *continued from page 3*

In June 2017, Dr Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO of Amref Health Africa and David Pritchard, GSK VP for Africa, Developing Countries & Asia recommitted their willingness to continue this partnership to support the human resources for health challenges of the Government of Ethiopia, working closely with the FMOH and other key stakeholders. Lessons learned from this partnership, scaling successful interventions and innovative technology driven approaches will be the building blocks of future directions of the GSK-Amref Health Africa partnership.

## Photo Gallery



Hand washing demonstration at Amref Health Africa supported Global Handwashing Day 2017 event, Addis Ababa.  
@Amref Health Africa/Kenaw G



Mobile Health, Amref Health Africa supported services, North Shoa.  
@Amref Health Africa/Jeroen Van Loon



Advisory Council of Amref Health Africa in Ethiopia consulted on the organization's 2018-2022 strategy.  
@Amref Health Africa/Kenaw G



Amref Health Africa handovers Ambulance to Afar Region Health Bureau, Semera.  
@Amref Health Africa/Kenaw G



School WASH facility constructed by Amref Health Africa, Addis Ababa.  
@Amref Health Africa/Thomas G



Amref Health Africa supported comprehensive sexual education trainees giving counseling, North Shoa. @Amref Health Africa/ Jeroen Van Loon



*A woman right after delivery at Armania Health Center, North Shoa. @Amref Health Africa/Jeroen Van Loon*

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