Merck for Mothers is Merck’s $500 million global initiative to help create a world where no woman dies giving life. We deploy the company’s business and science expertise to infuse private sector approaches that could help solve the longstanding challenge of maternal mortality. We do not accept business as usual and push ourselves and our partners to invest in new and creative ideas that disrupt the status quo and that can sustain gains in women’s health for years to come. Over the past several years, Merck for Mothers has helped improve access to quality maternity care and modern contraception for more than nine million women in over 45 countries around the world.

**Estimated Maternal Mortality in the Region**

- **110 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births**
- **66% reduction in maternal mortality since 1990**
- **1 in 380 chance of a woman dying in pregnancy and childbirth**

**Challenges:** Regional disparities in healthcare coverage; high levels of healthcare and economic inequity

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**Programs and Partners**

- **Australia** | The Australian College of Midwives is developing a country framework for improving the quality of maternity care among indigenous communities – as outlined in the National Maternity Services Plan – through midwife trainings and awareness-building campaigns. The project is contributing high-quality evidence that demonstrates the efficacy of traditional, culturally appropriate models of maternity care.

- **Cambodia** | World Vision is strengthening knowledge and practice of women in maternal healthcare and child health, including training mothers on the prevention and management of common childhood illnesses and equipping them with improved nutrition practices.

- **China** | Project HOPE is increasing access to maternal health services and reducing obstetric threats for pregnant women with risk factors – including those of advanced maternal age – by strengthening clinical practice among health care providers, increasing women’s ability to seek appropriate care, and improving routine and emergency care at health facilities. The program targets areas with high maternal morbidity and mortality rates within the West China region.

- **Indonesia** | Jhpiego is researching the barriers and facilitators to offering the full range of family planning methods in the immediate post pregnancy period. The study is informing the design and implementation of a package of interventions to advance post-pregnancy family planning and improve the quality of counseling and service provision in both the public and private health sectors.

- **Myanmar** | The Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning is reducing maternal mortality in the Ayeyarwady Region by helping women to overcome socio-cultural and decision-making barriers in accessing family planning and maternal health services.

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These programs are funded by Merck for Mothers, Merck’s $500 million initiative to help create a world where no woman dies giving life. Merck for Mothers is an initiative of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, NJ, USA.
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Thailand | UNICEF is reducing risks of maternal morbidity and mortality among 15-19 year-old women by increasing access to youth-friendly health service packages that include comprehensive care before, during, and after birth. By promoting expanded use of digital forums and online platforms to access age-appropriate information, services, and consultation on sexual and reproductive health, UNICEF is reducing unintended pregnancies among adolescents.

Vietnam | Population Services International is broadening contraceptive options for Vietnamese women and their partners by registering underused methods, distributing multiple methods through channels accessible to underserved women including private clinics and hospitals, and integrating family planning counseling into antenatal and post-pregnancy care. The program is also educating women on the full range of contraceptive choices to allow women to choose an appropriate method based on their individual needs and preferences.

**Partner Spotlight**

Philippines | Through the United Nations Foundation, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and Accenture, Merck for Mothers is supporting business participation to increase access to family planning services by developing a business case for investment and creating a country-level toolkit for stakeholders to use in engaging businesses to commit to family planning. In 2019, this work will scale to reach more than 2 million employees.