Merck for Mothers in Latin America & The Caribbean
Responding to Local Maternal Health Needs

It all starts with a mother—she’s the beginning of a much bigger story. A healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth lead to a lifetime of benefits, both for her own health and prosperity as well as that of her children, family, community and nation—for generations to come. We call this the “Mom Effect.”

About Merck for Mothers
Merck for Mothers is Merck’s global initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die while giving life. We provide support for transformational and sustainable solutions that strengthen health systems to deliver high-quality maternity care services that benefit women and their communities. Through 2020, Merck for Mothers has reached over 13 million women in over 48 global sites through programs promoting safe, high-quality, respectful care.

Estimated Maternal Mortality in the Region¹
- 73 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births
- 30.9% reduction in maternal mortality since 2000
- 1 in 640 chance of a woman dying in pregnancy and childbirth
- Challenges²: Conflict, poverty, weak infrastructures, lack of reporting and monitoring and disparities in health coverage are barriers to improving maternal health outcomes in this region.

Global Sites:
Argentina; Brazil; Colombia; Costa Rica; Haiti; Jamaica; Mexico; Peru; Puerto Rico; Venezuela
Programs and Collaborators in Latin America

In 2012, we launched Merck for Mothers Global Grants — a corporate grant program that enables Merck offices around the world to support organizations that are improving maternal health. The Global Grants program is designed to be responsive to local women’s needs and extends our reach and impact to many more countries across the globe. Since we launched, the program has contributed over $40 million, supporting over 60 projects across more than 40 global sites.

A selection of grants we have made in Latin America and the Caribbean includes:

**Argentina, Colombia, Mexico** | The Pan American Development Foundation developed a policy toolkit on maternal mortality to inform the work of key stakeholders and foster greater collaboration on maternal health issues in the region. The foundation identified pilot projects in Mexico, Colombia and Argentina to apply the policy toolkit and test best practices.

**Argentina** | UNICEF is promoting the rights of pregnant women by increasing community participation and intercultural engagement in maternity care with a focus on adolescents from indigenous communities in three provinces (Misiones, Chaco and Salta).

**Brazil** | The Sociedade Beneficente Israelita Brasileira Albert Einstein is establishing a virtual quality improvement collaborative across hospitals and primary healthcare units to enhance providers’ knowledge and skills to improve maternity care.

**Colombia** | Sinergias Alianzas Estrategicas para la Salud y el Desarrollo Social is helping to assure comprehensive prenatal, labor, postpartum and newborn care in 40 of the most vulnerable municipalities of Bolivar, Cauca and Cordoba. The program focuses on consistent technical assistance, information technologies and decision-making support.

**Costa Rica** | The Paniamor Foundation is strengthening the institutional capacity of a large national women’s hospital and its service network to offer a robust, inter-institution, human rights-centered response to the high rate of child and adolescent pregnancy.

**Haiti** | Centre de Coopération Internationale en Santé et Développement is increasing access to quality maternal healthcare by strengthening three health facilities in the Artibonite region.

**Haiti** | Health Equity International (formerly St. Boniface Haiti Foundation) is working to reduce maternal mortality in Southern Haiti by expanding access to high-quality peripartum care, including surgery, labor and delivery, pre- and postpartum care, family planning and clinician training.

**Jamaica** | INMED Partnerships for Children is tackling maternal mortality and morbidity among high-risk adolescents in rural Jamaica through peer-to-peer outreach and educational campaigns.

**Mexico** | Sociedad Mexicana de Salud Publica is working to increase knowledge of reproductive and maternal health among adolescents and women over 35 years of age through integrated community interventions.

**Mexico** | Grupo de Información en Reproducción Elegida (GIRE) is increasing women’s access to information about their rights during and after pregnancy, with focus on respectful care, free from physical and psychological abuse or discrimination.
**Peru** | Pathfinder International is conducting obstetric and neonatal trainings and providing technical assistance to improve supply chain and strengthen electronic medical records. This program is strengthening links from the community to the formal health sector to increase uptake in services and decrease delays in seeking maternal health care.

**Puerto Rico** | Puerto Rico Obstetrics & Gynecology (PROGyn) is providing physician training programs and patient education programs on the prevention and early identification of hypertension and preeclampsia.

**Venezuela** | Universidad Central de Venezuela is creating an e-health platform (SOS Telemedicine for Venezuela) and conducting distance learning trainings to build the capacity of health workers in maternal health.

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**Project Spotlight**

**Brazil** | The National Supplementary Health Agency, Albert Einstein Hospital and the Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s “Projeto Parto Adequado” identified innovative and viable models of high-quality care during labor and delivery, incentivizing vaginal delivery for uncomplicated births and reducing medically unnecessary Cesarean delivery (C-section) rates in maternity hospitals. The program has reached more than 320,000 women in over 100 different cities across Brazil. Additionally, around 450 health workers were trained and 113 maternity facilities strengthened their quality of care provision through this project. In over 18 months, the rate of vaginal birth increased from 21.6% to 38% in 26 hospitals.

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2. Overview of the Situation of Maternal Morbidity and Mortality: Latin America and the Caribbean December 2017

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