



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 childbirth leads to a lifetime of benefits, both for a woman’s 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**.” Working with collaborators across sectors, we’re making the Mom Effect a reality for communities across the globe.



Global Grants Sites across Latin America & The Caribbean:
Argentina; Brazil;
Colombia; Costa Rica;
Dominican Republic;
Ecuador; Haiti;
Jamaica; Mexico; Peru;
Puerto Rico; Venezuela

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. Applying Merck’s business and scientific expertise, we are working across sectors to improve the health and well-being of women during pregnancy, childbirth and the months after. Our grantees and collaborators have reached over 19 million women in more than 60 sites around the world to support healthier pregnancies and safer childbirths, contributing to the global effort to help end maternal mortality and morbidity.

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.



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 launching, the program has supported over 70 projects across more than 45 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 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 health care units to enhance providers' knowledge and skills to improve maternity care.

Brazil | UNICEF is mobilizing managers at national, state and local levels, raising awareness and training health care workers to promote women's health during prenatal, childbirth and postpartum, and help reduce maternal mortality rates.

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 Bolívar, Cauca and Córdoba. The program focuses on consistent technical assistance, information technologies and decision-making support.

Colombia | The International Organization for Migration is strengthening institutional capacities for the provision of maternal and perinatal health and sexual and reproductive health services, through the training of health professionals in the implementation of guidelines and protocols for maternal-perinatal care with high quality standards.

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-institutional response to the high rate of child and adolescent pregnancy, from a human rights perspective, to reduce maternal and infant mortality.

Dominican Republic | UNICEF is reducing maternal and neonatal mortality by improving the quality and humanization of public health services for the promotion, prevention and care of maternal health and nutrition of vulnerable populations - focusing on migrants and populations living in extreme poverty and/or in hard-to-reach communities.

Ecuador | UNICEF is working to strengthen the health care of pregnant women and adolescents, through personalized accompaniment, awareness-raising, education and capacity building, along with the prevention of teenage pregnancy and processes to improve timely access to prenatal care.

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 about 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.

Mexico | Pro Mujer is addressing gender-based violence that prevents women and girls from accessing family planning education and services as well as violence-free obstetric and gynecological care.

Peru | Pathfinder International is conducting obstetric and neonatal trainings and providing technical assistance to improve supply chain and strengthen electronic medical records for 100+ facilities in 12 health networks. 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.



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.

1 [WHO's Trends in Maternal Mortality Report \(2017\)](#)

2 [Overview of the Situation of Maternal Morbidity and Mortality: Latin America and the Caribbean December 2017](#)