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 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.” Working with partners across sectors, we’re making the Mom Effect a reality for communities across the globe.

**Maternal Health in Kenya**

Although maternal mortality has declined by nearly half globally, the ratio has been almost stagnant in Kenya. The Government of Kenya is developing policies and financing schemes that ensure women have access to quality and affordable maternal health care services. Recently, the government also recognized the need for better quality care as a key solution for improving maternal health outcomes.

Innovation is at the center of Kenya’s development strategy. The widespread availability and utilization of digital technology, paired with a strong national health insurance program, make Kenya an ideal testing ground for innovative solutions that can reduce maternal mortality in Kenya and beyond.

**What We’re Doing**

*Merck for Mothers* is working in close collaboration with multi-sectoral partners, including social entrepreneurs, non-profit organizations, government, and academia, to ensure women have access to two of the most powerful ways to prevent maternal mortality: quality maternity care and access to modern contraception. We are investing in innovations that:

- **Empower women** with the information, choice, and voice needed to access the health care they want
- **Equip health providers** with innovative products and platforms to offer better quality care
- **Strengthen health systems** with new models to better financing and deliver quality care

### EMPOWERING WOMEN

**Nivi**

We are working with social entrepreneurs to develop and deploy Nivi—a simple, mobile phone-based service that uses SMS and other communications platforms like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger to help women learn about their family planning options, identify the method[s] they want, and find local providers who offer quality services and have their preferred options available. Over 50,000 users have engaged on the Nivi platform and used it to answer questions about reproductive health and contraception.

These programs are supported by funding from Merck, through Merck for Mothers, the company’s $500 million initiative to help create a world where no woman dies giving life. *Merck for Mothers* is known as MSD for Mothers outside the US and Canada.
The goal is to make these homes sustainable by empowering local communities to both effectively manage them and generate income to support their operations through creative entrepreneurial activities, ensuring the homes and the services they provide are available for the long term.

In Zambia, many women live miles from the closest health facility with few, if any, affordable and safe transportation options, making it difficult for them to receive the quality, timely care they need during pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum. The distance challenge is particularly acute for women in rural areas, where the goal is to make these homes sustainable by empowering local communities to both effectively manage them and generate income to support their operations through creative entrepreneurial activities, ensuring the homes and the services they provide are available for the long term.

The Maternity Waiting Homes Alliance aims to overcome this distance challenge by building and strengthening 24 maternity waiting homes linked to high quality health facilities in 8 districts across Zambia (Lundazi, Mansa, Chembe, Kapiri Mposhi, Chilubi, Lundazi, Mansa, and Chembe). The homes offer a range of educational resources and income generating activities for pregnant women to use the homes and plan for a safe delivery, including saving for transportation and supplies for childbirth. Health workers conduct local outreach to encourage pregnant women from remote areas. The evaluation will produce actionable findings to inform efforts to scale up maternity waiting homes in Zambia and beyond.

**EQUIPPING HEALTH PROVIDERS**

**Project iDeliver**
With support from Merck for Mothers, Vecna Cares, M4ID, and Johns Hopkins University are designing, developing, and implementing Project iDeliver—a digital tool that helps maternity providers consistently offer quality care. The solution captures routine data from admissions to discharge which health care providers can use to inform quality improvement efforts.

**Post-Pregnancy Family Planning (PPFP) Choices**
In collaboration with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation we are working with Jhpiego to gather evidence from public and private providers on best practices for implementing the revised WHO Family Planning Medical Eligibility Criteria, which expand the family planning methods available to postpartum women.

**Project CHAMPION**
We have forged a unique collaboration with World Health Organization and Ferring Pharmaceuticals to advance a heat-stable drug, carbetocin, that has lifesaving potential to prevent women from hemorrhaging after childbirth. Project CHAMPION’s 30,000-women clinical trial took place across 10 countries, including Kenya.

**STRENGTHENING HEALTH SYSTEMS**

**M-TIBA**
In partnership with the PharmAccess Foundation, we are expanding M-TIBA to include maternal health services — designing a care pathway for pregnant women to access quality care. M-TIBA is a mobile phone-based solution that efficiently and transparently links patients, providers, and payers to improve the financing and delivery of care.

**Global Financing Facility (GFF)**
In 2017, we became the first private sector partner in the Global Financing Facility (GFF). As part of the GFF partnership, we are exploring catalytic investments and private sector engagement opportunities that align with our commitment to reducing maternal mortality.

**SDG Partnership Platform**
We are also a member of the SDG Partnership Platform, which aims to strengthen primary healthcare and accelerate progress towards achieving universal health coverage in Kenya. The Platform brings together leaders from the public and private sector to address gaps in human resources, healthcare financing, access to medicines, and technology. Partners include Philips, the Government of Kenya, and the United Nations. Merck for Mothers’ contributions to the platform includes our partnership with Jhpiego and the Kenya Red Cross Society, the G-Amini Project, that bolsters innovative contraceptive service delivery models for adolescents.