

The Key Messages

- 1 Participatory action research is an effective tool in maximizing community participation and ownership, and strengthens capacity of local stakeholders.
- 2 Male champions play a significant role in engaging men in maternal and child health.
- 3 Women's groups and participatory action research empower women and enhance decision-making.
- 4 Linking women's groups and community health workers has helped improve maternal and child health.



The Project

HealthBridge Foundation of Canada worked in the Kilolo and Mufindi districts in the Iringa Region of Tanzania, with the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Dar es Salaam, to implement a maternal and child health project.

Innovating for Maternal and Child Health in Africa (IMCHA) in the Iringa region of Tanzania



The Aim

The aim of the project was to increase demand and use of maternal and child health services in rural Tanzania, using participatory research approaches with the community.

The Impact

↑ 24%

increase in women starting antenatal care within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy in Kilolo District.

↑ 14%

increase in women assisted by skilled birth assistants in Mufindi District.



Community-led solutions such as emergency fund for transportation to health facilities.



Increased awareness about maternal health in the community.



Increased participation and involvement of women during meetings with stakeholders.

The Interventions



Participatory action research engaged members in identifying and addressing key issues in maternal health.



Women's groups identified pregnant women and provided health education about maternal and child health.



Male champions delivered key health messages and raised awareness in the community and at public events.



Health governing committees addressed facility-related barriers.