



Fund for Innovation and Transformation

Fonds pour l'innovation et la transformation



OGOW HEALTH

Improving Child, Adolescent and Maternal Health Outcomes in Somalia by Using Innovative Community-Centric Approaches

Context

In Somalia, mothers and caregivers face major barriers to accessing healthcare for themselves and their children. At 1,400 per 100,000 live births, Somalia's maternal mortality rate is among the highest in the world. Access to maternal health services is low with only 44% and 38% of births in Somaliland and Puntland (respectively) attended by skilled birth attendants (UNFPA, 2016). According to UNICEF, one out of every eight children in the region will die before they turn five. Currently in the country, Penta 3 immunization coverage remains as low as 43% (which is among the lowest globally) followed closely by measles coverage at 49%.

The Innovative Solution

Supported by FIT, OGOW Health and World Vision Somalia tested an innovative solution aimed at improving health outcomes for Somali children using an electronic medical record and information management system. It also sought to re-instill trust in the medical system by giving mothers and caregivers agency over their child's health. The system connected Somali caregivers with healthcare services and tools like SMS appointment reminders, delivered health education and introduced a dashboard for tracking patient information and statistics. OGOW also delivered two informational/confidence-building workshops for 40 mothers/caregivers, two informational/gender sensitizing workshops for 10 healthcare workers, two dashboard trainings for 10 healthcare workers and three administrators, and held multiple high-level meetings with key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, to improve the program and system interoperability.

Advancing Gender Equality

During the testing period, mothers were engaged in SMS nudge development. Their feedback about the best time and place to host the workshops was taken into consideration to ensure ease of participation. Transportation and childcare services were provided and participant compensation was increased, considering the challenging situation including drought and COVID-19 pandemic. Gender equality training for healthcare workers at the Shafici and Kalkaal health facilities



COUNTRY

Somalia

AMOUNT

\$239,904

TESTING PERIOD

13 months

Ended June 2022

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



GENDER RESPONSIVE (GE2)

THEME: HEALTH & NUTRITION

as well as for OGOW Health staff was also provided to meet the gender goal of improved awareness of gender barriers among staff. The Gender Programme Officer ensured training content was adapted to local context and worked one-on-one with healthcare staff to develop contextualized gender-sensitive materials.

Testing Framework

During the testing period, formal and semi-formal data collections tools were used, including structured and semi-structured key informant interviews, focus group discussions, formal and informal surveys, quantitative surveys, structured and unstructured observation. World Vision had recently conducted a baseline study in the targeted area, which was used to set baseline indicators. Somali enumerators collected gender-disaggregated qualitative and quantitative information from all target groups. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS, which analysed data from the field surveys and information from the dashboard against several indicators.

Results and Impact

The results of the innovation were promising. A total of 2059 mothers/caregivers and 1821 children under 1 have been on-boarded onto the SMS program as of April 30, 2022. For each child, an individual immunization calendar was created based on their date of birth. At endline, patients demonstrated a 99.1% adherence rate to SMS appointment reminders and were on track with their child's immunizations. All mothers/caregivers surveyed (40/40) indicated that SMS nudges and individualized child schedules make it easier for them to remember their child's health. Of the 10 healthcare workers and three administrators trained to use the system, all provided positive feedback on the application's efficacy and ease of use. They reported major time savings (freeing up time to provide other services for patients), as well as a reduction in error and improved data accuracy. OGOW plans to replicate the existing program with 8 newly on-boarded facilities and 28 workers.

Key Lessons

1. Mothers/caregivers expressed interest in audio SMS nudges for their routine immunization reminders. Accordingly, a broadcast/ interactive virtual response (IVR) nudge was developed with technical input from the Ministry of Health and other stakeholders.
2. Integrating a section on the permissibility of vaccines in Islam into the workshop curriculum was done in order to adapt to the local cultural context. Workshops and calls were scheduled in culturally and gender sensitive ways to ensure beneficiaries could participate in prayer, celebrate holidays and manage household needs.
3. Mother/caregiver feedback has been considered and integrated in the testing process to improve accessibility such as increasing the workshop budget, decreasing the duration and including over-the-phone surveys, including more interactive contextualized components.

“Before the OGOW application, I did not know my children's vaccination schedules and why they needed to get vaccinated. Now, I receive SMS reminders regarding my children's appointments, which is helpful because now I know why they need the vaccinations, and I can plan ahead and make sure we get to the clinic as needed.”

- Somali mother

PARTNER ORGANIZATION

World Vision Somalia

TARGET PARTICIPANTS

1,825 mothers/caregivers, 2,059 children under one year of age and 10 healthcare workers (9 women; 1 man).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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ABOUT FIT

The Fund for Innovation and Transformation supports Canadian small and medium-sized organizations (SMOs) testing innovative solutions that advance gender equality in the Global South.



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