

## fast facts

**Project:** Integrated Maternal and Child Health Care Delivery and Training for Community Health Teams in the Philippines (eAKaP)

**Lead Organization:** ACCESS Health International - Philippines

**Country:** Philippines

**Budget:** 29,600.00 AUD



## situation

Despite focused efforts to improve maternal and child health in the Philippines, the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) in the country increased from 162 to 211 out of every 100,000 live births between 2009 and 2011. This increase has been attributed to the limited medical training and skills of community health workers and nurses, as well difficulty in accessing medical resources including life-saving procedures. Typically, newly trained health practitioners have no access to training materials at the point of care and do not have an easy way to consult with trainers or specialists who are not co-located with field health practitioners.

## solution

The eAKaP (electronic-Aksyon Para Sa Kalusugan Pangkalahatan or electronic-Action for Universal Healthcare Coverage)mProject is an integrated maternal and child healthcare (MCH) delivery and training system for community health teams (CHT) that aims to contribute to the reduction of MMR and child mortality. The project team recognized two root causes of maternal mortality: 1) poor medical skills and associated training for frontline health providers such as community health workers and nurses, and 2) lack of access to healthcare information that educate mothers on prevention and mitigation of health risks. eAKaP addresses these causes through the iCHT (automated Community Health Team) - a mobile application that builds the capacity of frontline health workers to deliver vital healthcare services and improve household members' knowledge about health risks and available healthcare services in the community.

eAKaP provides mobile tablets and trains CHTs on the use of iCHT to expedite the development of individual household profiles, create personalized health-use plans for household members, and help deliver standardized multimedia health messages to household members, with a focus on pregnant mothers. The iCHT also address many of the challenges that CHTs face in their day-to-day work which include the lack of forms used in their profiling, and the considerable time spent on manually consolidating and processing paper-based household information. The iCHT also helps workers manage follow-up and tracking of household members' progress with health-use plans, and facilitates electronic reporting on the health status of target households to the City Health Office, healthcare facilities, and national government agencies such as the DOH and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD). The iCHT system further helps in the storage and management of health information.

The goal of the project was to train 150 Community Health Teams (CHTs) to better serve over 3000 households in selected Gawad Kalinga (GK) communities in Barangay Bagong Silang, Caloocan City. (GK is a non-profit organization that supplies housing to poor communities.) While there are several healthcare facilities in Caloocan City, there is still a very high rate of home births. During pregnancy, there is also hesitation from expectant mothers to go to health centers due to privacy, time, and cost concerns, even though antenatal check-ups are free, as most people do not have the time to go to health stations, do not want others to know that they are pregnant, and do not recognize the importance of antenatal care.

The goals of this project include:

- *Increased knowledge and capacity of Community Health Teams (CHTs) in risk assessment and delivering healthcare messages; and of local health care professionals (midwives and nurses) in identifying and managing health risks.*
- *Improved health-seeking behavior of mothers.*
- *Increase in general population's awareness of health risks as well as services available, such as the free antenatal care services.*
- *Development of comprehensive training materials and courses that can be replicated to scale to additional GK communities as well as other NGOs providing care to mothers and children throughout the Philippines.*

In order to train CHTs on the iCHT system, ACCESS hosted focus groups, consultations and trainings with community health workers, who provided important suggestions that lead to improvements in the project design and implementation. As part of this effort, ACCESS compiled and authored relevant reference materials in a variety of online and offline formats for CHT use. Additionally, ACCESS developed two assessment tools to gauge CHT training and comprehension.

There were several challenges that the ACCESS team navigated through the project, namely limited human resources, systems development challenges, and the difficulty of starting the project in an election year – when most public officials were focused on election preparations. Another challenge included the heavy workload of CHTs, all of whom were responsible for 50-60 households. To build on the gains of the project, sustain its implementation and ensure the adoption of other project sites, the ACCESS team is developing a diaspora-based funding campaign that targets GK local and international donor networks.

ACCESS worked with several partners to achieve its vision – the GK program, local and national government units, the Department of Health, volunteer nurses and doctors, and several technology providers. ACCESS also partnered with BridgeCom, Globe Telecommunication's Corporate Social Responsibility division, which provided 25 mobile devices and internet connectivity to the three selected health stations in the project area. ACCESS is also one of the lead conveners of the *162 to 52 Coalition* - a multi-sector coalition of organizations committed to achieve Millennium Development Goals; a list which includes the matter of which maternal and child health as one of their stated concerns. As part of this work, ACCESS team has entered into formal collaborations with institutions and key partners from the community, technology industry and local government to leverage resources and ensure the relevance of the project's outcomes.



*iCHT demonstration with health workers*

## outcomes

- Held three training workshops for 130 CHT partners, who are responsible for a total of 5000 families
- Presented the iCHT at the Philippine mHealth Forum

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