



Integrated Family Health Program Closeout
Remarks by USAID Deputy Chief of Mission Ramona El-Hamzaoui
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(as prepared for delivery)

Indemin aderachu and good morning! I am so happy to be here. You know, the Integrated Family Health Program was one of the first programs I was able to get out and see after arriving in Ethiopia about a year and a half ago....

There were several Members of Congress visiting Ethiopia, and we all went to the village of Mikewa in Oromia, to see a community transformed through the incredible work of USAID's Integrated Family Health Program.

We visited a health post that had clearly become the center of the community. The warm affection that the local women had for their health extension workers was obvious and it was also clear that the affection was mutual.

We visited the home of a community health leader. She shared some homemade *arakee*, which was VERY strong, and made us some coffee. And then she told us about how much her work with young mothers has inspired her.

She spoke about the incredibly positive changes that she had experienced personally, like having a latrine in the back of her house after going her whole life without one, learning how to cook nutritious meals for her family and seeking family planning services at the nearby health post. She also proudly showed us the immunization cards for all her children who she made sure we knew were all happy and healthy and going to school.

Not only were our visitors from Washington blown away, but I was also truly humbled as well. This community had been truly transformed through the revolutionary health extension program.

We all know that Ethiopia has made tremendous progress in terms of reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health outcomes, including reducing maternal and child mortality and increasing use of contraceptives.

Bringing health services closer to communities through the Health Extension Program has greatly contributed to these successes.

USAID has been with the health extension workers EVERY step of the way by providing support to improve the quality and range of services.

The Integrated Family Health Program has been USAID's flagship family planning and maternal and child health program since June 2008. It was working in 300 *woredas* (districts) benefiting about 37.8 million people, or just over 37 percent of the total population of Ethiopia.

Thirty-seven percent of the population sounds impressive, doesn't it? But that's not all. The program's work at the national and regional levels has resulted in positive policy changes which impact every Ethiopian, outside of their *woredas* as well.

The program has provided capacity building support to the health workforce and all levels of the Ethiopia's health system. Health providers in participating facilities are now better skilled to deal with common childhood illnesses and maternal complications during labor and delivery.

And, to sustain these gains, health offices are now better equipped to implement management approaches and practices.

The Integrated Family Health Program has met its set targets in terms of increasing service utilization. We have observed an increase in women using contraceptives from 27 percent in 2008, to 56 percent in 2016. And now, in the 300 *woredas* where the program was implemented, 66 percent of families are using health facilities for maternal and child health services. This is up from just seven percent in 2008!

We also know that this program has substantially contributed to the national progress and achievement of the national reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health targets and goals of reducing maternal deaths from 16,000 to 10,000 and child deaths from 178,000 to 123,000 just in the past five years. This was reflected in the 2016 Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey.

We've also learned a lot from this program. The innovative integrative approach, program coordination and in-built monitoring were just a few of the best practices applied during the course of the implementation.

But listen to me.... I sound like I'm speaking at a funeral, giving a eulogy for a dearly departed friend! Yes, the program has closed out, but it is still VERY MUCH alive in our new Transform awards.

The new \$120 million USAID Transform: Primary Health Care activity, also implemented by Pathfinder and John Snow, will be working in 300 new *woredas*.

It will build on the lessons learned from the Integrated Family Health Program, taking *woredas* that have dramatically improved their health outcomes as examples and using them to teach others, which lag behind.

The USAID Transform: Primary Health Care activity was not created in a vacuum. USAID, our partners, regional and national health experts—many of you in this room—all came together to build this new activity from the ground up, creating an impressive roadmap to support the implementation of the Ministry of Health's visionary Health Sector Transformation Plan.

So, as we listen to the lessons learned today, remember that the suggested solutions and action items will not just sit on a shelf. They will be studied and applied by the Transform awards.

On behalf of USAID, I want to thank the Ministry of Health once again, and their regional health bureaus, for their visionary leadership that has made Ethiopia such a positive global model for community health.

Amasegenalehu!