



Helping Babies Breathe –
2018 Progress Report

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1 CONTEXT

1.1 The Need

According to the World Health Organization, 6.6 million children under five died in 2012. Almost 75% of all child deaths are attributable to just six conditions, one of which is neonatal causes.

Across Ghana, the lack of access to qualified medical aid and absence of skilled midwives during child birth, particularly in rural areas, have resulted in high rates of maternal and neonatal mortality. The former Minister of Health, Sherry Ayitey stated "Even though Ghana is largely on track to achieve most of the Millennium Development Goals, it is unlikely that the 2015 target on MDG 4 will be met unless coverage of effective child survival interventions is increased."

In fact, assessments by the UNDP in 2015 showed that despite great progress in other areas, Ghana did not meet its Millennium Development Goal targets in respect to child and maternal health. With the adoption in 2015 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the United Nations recognised the ongoing needs in this arena, and established as a target within SDG 3 for health and wellbeing, the goal to, "By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age, with all countries aiming to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1000 live births".

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



Whilst Ghana has gradually reduced its neonatal mortality rate, as at 2016 it still remained more than two times higher than the Sustainable Development Goal target. For comparison, Ghana is on par with the level achieved by the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and lags behind those classified as low and middle income.

It is widely acknowledged that supervised delivery reduces the risk of complications and infections during childbirth, thereby decreasing both neonatal and maternal mortality. Ensuring care provided by skilled professionals during pregnancy and childbirth is a critical intervention for safe birth and motherhood. The 2012 Ghana Demographic Health Survey shows that three quarters of all maternal deaths occur during birth and the immediate post-partum period as a direct result of low levels of skilled birth attendance. More importantly, a significant equity gap exists across and within regions in Ghana with clear disparities between urban and rural locales.

1.2 The Initiative

In 2015 and 2018, Golden Star Resources implemented an initiative entitled Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) with a longtime partner, Project C.U.R.E. Golden Star Resources has a long history of partnership with Project C.U.R.E., a North American NGO that is the largest provider of donated medical supplies and equipment to developing countries around the world. Project C.U.R.E. is the recipient of the GuideStar Exchange Platinum Seal, the Charity Navigator Four-Star Rating and is ranked by Forbes as one of the 20 Most Efficient Large U.S. Charities.

The two phases of the initiative have been made possible by contributions by Golden Star Resources, local communities through the Golden Star Development Foundation (Wassa East), Project C.U.R.E., the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), Ghana Health Services and private donors.

The core of the Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) initiative is a neonatal resuscitation curriculum for resource-limited circumstances. It was developed on the premise that assessment at birth, and simple and immediate newborn care, are essentials that every baby deserves. The techniques taught in the HBB training have been demonstrated as having dramatic, positive impact on new born survival.



Figure 1: Participants practicing neonatal resuscitation

The Helping Babies Breathe training program focusses on teaching local nurses, midwives, and birth assistants how to save a newborn’s life in the first critical minute after birth. Helping Babies Breathe adopts the ‘Train-the-Trainer’ model, where through the partnership with the Ghana Health Services, personnel are trained to provide ongoing training to other personnel within the host communities. Participants are equipped with resuscitation and suction kits as well as resource kits for future training exercises.

The target outcomes of the program are an increased level of local capacity, access to appropriate equipment, a sustainable model for ongoing training and skills development, and ultimately, increased newborn survival.

2 HELPING BABIES BREATHE

Every day, mothers and newborns die needlessly due to a lack of adequate medical equipment, supplies, and training. Saving newborns one minute at a time – is the catch cry of Helping Babies Breathe a neonatal resuscitation training program to bring the necessary capacity and equipment to locations where it is needed.

Project C.U.R.E. describe Helping Babies Breathe as “a training course geared towards teaching local nurses, midwives, and traditional birth attendants in developing countries the most successful ways to save a newborn’s life in the first critical minute after birth, known as The Golden Minute. HBB is a Train-the-Trainer model, where U.S. trained facilitators travel to developing countries to train all who attend the births of babies. The end result is leaving them with the skills and education to train others in their communities, resulting in a sustainable program that repeats itself for years to come”.

The core of the Helping Babies Breathe (HBB) initiative is a neonatal resuscitation curriculum for resource-limited circumstances. It was developed on the premise that assessment at birth, and simple and immediate newborn care, are essentials that every baby deserves. The techniques taught in the HBB training have been demonstrated as having dramatic, positive impact on new born survival (www.projectcure.org).

3 METHODOLOGY

The program is delivered only to recognised medical professionals, such as medical doctors, midwives and birthing assistants.

Each facility involved in the program is provided with equipment (resuscitation and suction kit) and skills training to ensure capacity to undertake neonatal resuscitation. In addition to these kits, each District Health Directorate is also provided with a training kit for subsequent training. It is targeted to have skilled birth attendants available throughout the Golden Star catchments at the conclusion of the program.

Throughout the main training program, a selection of the participating medical professionals are selected and then trained as HBB Train the Trainers to enable the program to be sustained into the future and for a broader audience.

4 PHASE 1 (2015)

4.1 Overview

In the Phase 1, conducted in May 2015, three HBB trainers visited Ghana to conduct the four day train the trainer session with thirty-one (31) participants from the Golden Star catchment communities, covering the Mpohor, Tarkwa Nsuem and Wassa East Districts. The participants, were qualified health care professionals, included medical doctors, midwives and birthing assistants.

The cost of the Phase 1 program was in the order of \$40,000 including in-kind expenses (in country transport, meals and accommodation).

Each participant in the first phase was provided with equipment (resuscitation and suction kit) and skills training to ensure capacity to undertake neonatal resuscitation. Participants also received a certificate of participation. Each of the 31 participants were expected to train 12 others in subsequent phases of the program.

Mr. George Amankwah-Kumi, the Group and Community Health Coordinator of Golden Star, encouraged the participants and District Health Directorates to take ownership of the program and ensure that it is sustained. He indicated that the initiative will be extended to Golden Star catchment communities in the Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality and urged them to continue with the subsequent training so that more skills will be developed for safe delivery in the Western Region and the country as a whole.



Figure 2: Participants at Daboase showing their certificates

In addition to the individual kits, each District Health Directorate was also provided with a training kit for subsequent training. It is targeted to have skilled birth attendants available throughout the Golden Star catchments at the conclusion of the program.

The District Chief Executive of Wassa East, Hon. Anthony Emmanuel Aggrey, presented the certificates to the participants and praised Golden Star for the initiative. The District Director of Health Services, Ms. Priscilla Amoah, also commended Golden Star and its international collaborators for the efforts towards attaining the

MDG 4. Both government officials said the participants need to put to use the skills they have learnt in order to ensure safe delivery.



Figure 3: Wassa East DCE presents a certificate to a participant in the presence of trainers from Project C.U.R.E.



Figure 4: Golden Star Group and Community Health Coordinator presents a certificate to Dr Tivolen of International SOS



Figure 5: Participants at Wassa Akyempim proudly display their certificates

4.2 Impact

Post-natal mortality is a significant health challenge for Ghana and in 2015, the country was far behind the post-natal mortality target that was set as part of the then Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically the MDG 4 target for reducing mortality in under 5yrs olds. According to District level data, post-natal mortality is a particularly pressing challenge in our catchment communities.

As well as the direct benefits to neonatal survival in the catchment communities, the program was expected to have flow on benefits by providing a model in support of Government's efforts to achieve the MDGs and the new Sustainable Development Goals. Despite some improvements by Ghana, the United Nations reported that Ghana did not achieve the 2015 targets.

The 2015 phase 1 program effectively taught local nurses, midwives, and birth assistants how to save a newborn's life in the first critical minute after birth. The provision of training and equipment resulted in increased levels of local capacity, access to appropriate equipment, a sustainable model for ongoing training and skills development, and ultimately, increased newborn survival.

After the program implementation Mrs. Comfort Yamoah, Physician Assistant and Head of Ateiku Sub-District Health Directorate reported, *"The neonatal resuscitation training was a tremendous opportunity to upgrade my skills in handling deliveries and new born babies. The supply of resuscitation kits was timely as most of our health facilities lack these kits. As a result of the program there has been a reduction in referrals to higher level health facilities and improved neonatal survival."*

In support of Mrs. Yamoah, District Public Health Officials have confirmed that even in the short period since the conduct of the training in early 2015, the neonatal death rate in the District decreased from 1.1% in 2014 to 0.06% per 100 live births in 2015.

In the period from 2015 to the present day, in the Wassa East District, it is estimated that some 27 health care professionals were trained in the HBB program by participants of the original phase 1 program. These individuals represent 100% of the healthcare professionals in the District involved in midwifery – a district with a nurse to patient ratio of 1:575.

5.1 Overview

With the objective of bringing the valuable neonatal resuscitation training to our other catchment communities, in 2018 Golden Star again partnered with Project C.U.R.E., Ghana Health Services and the Ministry of Health to deliver the invaluable Helping Babies Breathe Program.

With the support of Geodrill Ghana, Orbit Garant Drilling Ghana, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and private donors, the Helping Babies Breathe program was conducted from 5th to 15th March 2018, for 72 midwives, community health nurses and birthing assistants from the Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality and the Wassa Amenfi East District. The participants were trained as HBB train the trainers by four HBB trainers from the US. Each participant involved in the program was provided with equipment (resuscitation and suction kit) and skills training to ensure capacity to undertake neonatal resuscitation. Participants also received a certificate of participation.



Figure 6: Participants practicing neonatal resuscitation with their trainers



Figure 7: Project C.U.R.E facilitators for the 2018 program



Figure 8: Participants in a training session

One significant feature of this training program was the selection of six (6) trainees from the 72 participants who were trained as Master Trainers. These Master Trainers were provided with HBB training manuals, training kits, resuscitation manikins and pre-test manuals to be able to train and also organize future and refresher programs for health professionals.



Figure 9: Master trainers in a demonstration session with their trainees

Over the duration of this initiative, expected to be concluded in 2020, a total of some 500 health professionals, within Prestea Huni-Valley and Wassa Amenfi East municipalities, are targeted to be trained on neonatal resuscitation and issued with certificates by master trainers.

The cost of the Phase 2 program was discounted by Project C.U.R.E. to \$10,000 under a partnership arrangement with Golden Star Resources whereby Golden Star provided in country transport, meals and accommodation. The \$10,000 was raised through donations from a number of business and private donors including Geodrill Ghana and Orbit Garant Drilling. In addition, the GIZ provided financial support to the program for training associated costs, materials and trainee allowances. The total program value contributed by the partners was some \$25,000.

The Municipal Chief Executive of Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality, Hon Mozart Kwaku Owuo; Municipal Chief Executive of Wassa Amenfi East Municipality, Hon Helena Appiah; and Bogoso Divisional Chief, Nana Akwasi Sompseh; presented certificates to the participants and praised Golden Star for the initiative. The District Director of Health Services, Mr. Emmanuel Kofi Tamakloe also commended Golden Star and its international collaborators for the efforts towards attaining the SDG 3. Both government officials said the participants need to put to use the skills they have learnt in order to ensure safe delivery.



Figure 10: Prestea Huni-Valley MCE with the Project C.U.R.E. team and Golden Star Health Coordinator



Figure 11: Participants at Prestea Huni-Valley showing their certificates

In concluding the program with participants, Mr Robert Gyamfi, Community Relation and Social Responsibility Manager of Golden Star, encouraged the participants and District Health Directorates to take ownership of the program and ensure that it is sustained. He urged them to continue with the subsequent training so that more skills will be developed for safe delivery in the Western Region and the country as a whole.

5.2 Impact

5.2.1 Immediate Impact

The commitment by Ghana Health Services as a program partner is obvious in the provision of over 70 health professionals to undertake this leading practice skills enhancement. Professionals from Wassa Akropong Government Hospital, Prestea Government Hospital, Esikuma Community-based Health Planning and Services (CHPS), Insu Siding CHPS, Aboso Health Centre, Himan Health Centre and Bogoso Health Centre participated, with Master trainers also selected from amongst these locations.

5.2.2 Sustainable Benefits

In fact, the commitment by these groups goes even deeper, as within less than a month the Master trainers at the Bogoso Health Centre had already conducted 'second generation' training to the wider staff group from the Centre. Municipality wide, a further 50 additional midwives and birth attendants had been trained by September 2018. The ongoing train the trainer aspects of the program are on track to achieve the expected capacity building for a further 500 people by the end of 2020.

Philipa Varris, Golden Star's Vice President, Corporate Responsibility conducts periodic reviews of all partnership programs to check the ongoing sustainability of the initiatives. She was thrilled to confirm a major aspect of the program sustainability, *"When conducting one of my reviews I was able to meet some health centre staff that had been trained under the phase 1 Helping Babies Breathe initiative. I asked one young nurse what he thought and rather than saying how valuable the program was, he just pointed to a small toddler under a nearby tree. I shrugged my shoulders as if to say "what do you mean?" and before I could finish, he said "I saved that baby's life because of your program!" His declaration brought tears to my eyes. A precious life saved! Even more importantly, he was a second or third generation trainee – he had not been trained by Project CURE, but had been trained by one of the Ghana Health Services HBB trainees! That is sustainability!"*

George Amankwah-Kumi, Group and Community Health Coordinator has met with many participants from the 2015 program, who reported major longer-term flow on improvements to the own lives from the program *"When I met with participants from the 2015 program they disclosed to me that before the training, if they were called to respond to a birthing emergency they would not go. They knew that if they attended the birth, they would not know what to do, they would not have any equipment to help, and if the baby died, then culturally, the death would be considered to be on their hands – the burden and guilt of this would be untenable. Following the training, having the skills, knowledge and equipment to provide real assistance during birth, was an enormous relief, confidence booster and matter of pride for them. Their status in the community had risen significantly, and their own mental health and state of wellbeing had also dramatically improved."*

Most meaningfully, the Municipal Director of Health Services, Mr Kofi Tamakloe has reported that the Prestea Huni-Valley Municipality health directorate has recorded a decrease of about 25% in neonatal mortality already in just the 2nd and 3rd quarter of 2018, following the HBB training! That is babies' lives saved!

5.2.3 Impact to Participants

Participants to both the phase 1 and phase 2 programs have been interviewed by Golden Star and independent third parties as part of the sustainability reviews of the initiative. These interviews provide valuable feedback from those people involved on the many indirect benefits that also flow from the initiative – the quality of life improvements for medical professionals, reduction in referrals as well as confidence and self-worth enhancements.

Participants in the 2018 program provided the following feedback.

Wassa-Akropong Government Hospital



Evelyn



Margaret



Bernice



Zakia



Millicent

“I have attended workshops but this workshop is a very key and important area. Neonatal mortality in the district and Ghana is still high. This training has really made an impact on me and I know it will have a great impact on my community. I really appreciate Golden Star and its partners.”

“I am really impressed and excited having learnt a lot and improved my skills. I believe it will go a long way to improve the way we go about things and I am very grateful.”

“This is one of the best and most powerful workshops I have ever had.”

“This workshop has been very educative and has enlightened me on some of the best practices I didn’t know and has opened my eyes to the bad ones we practice. I thank Golden Star and their partners for a well-considered program and a job well done.”

“It was a very interesting and helpful program to me as an individual and my clients. The training made me realize that we were doing so many things in the wrong manner. Now that we know the standard and best practice, we will do our best to make all changes implemented.”

Bogoso Health Centre



Sarah



Daphne

“Being a master trainer has helped and benefited me in so many ways and I am very thankful that I was selected. In fact it has shaped and improved my skills and it has also helped my facility because I have been able to train some of our staff. Soon the others will follow and every worker in my facility will be ambassadors of helping babies breathe!”

“As a Master trainer my learning is more intense and I am aiming to create a safe and positive learning environment like I had. We are teaching birth attendants how to care for newborns to reduce neonatal mortality.

Practice they say enhances perfection. I thank my facilitators and Golden star as well and we promise to be neonatal live savers”

Prestea Government Hospital



Jonathan



Linda

“The program has been very effective and purposeful and I have learnt a lot of new skills. Though we were doing things expected of us in our facilities, they were not the best and standard practice especially how to ensure skin to skin contact of the mother and the baby, to ensure warmth for six hours before bath and even the way to even treat and talk to our clients. Well done Golden Star.”

“The training taught me a lot of things and with this knowledge acquired, I trust that I will be able to impact the knowledge to others as well. As a master trainer this will help me train the staff and organize refresher trainings for them most especially those of us in the maternity unit so that we keep ourselves updated all the time as a facility.”

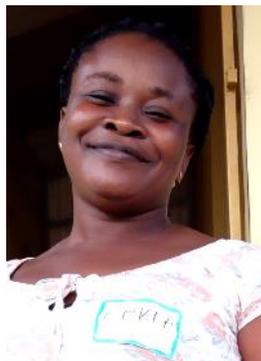
Esikuma CHPS, Insu Siding CHPS, Aboso Health Centre, Himan Health Centre



Wisdom



Helena



Rakia



Mercy



Helena

“I thank the organisers and our facilitators for equipping some of us with these important and educative best standard practices.”

“As a master trainer I have acquired a lot of knowledge and potential that will help me train my colleagues and keep our babies alive. Being part of the master trainers has built my confidence so much and is an opportunity to help others as well. I am grateful to my instructors and Golden Star and I promise to implement what I have learnt.”

“This training is very educative and has taught us how to prepare for emergency plan during delivery to help us manage cases without panicking.”

“I am grateful and happy as a master trainer. It has improved my skills in neonatal resuscitation and things have been put in place to train the rest of the workforce in and outside our district. Thank you Golden Star for always having us at heart.”

“I have seen this training to be very necessary and important. I didn’t know that not every baby needs suctioning and this has empowered me to do more and to address specific needs for each baby.”

6 CONCLUSION

Whilst Ghana has gradually reduced its neonatal mortality rate, it still remains well above the Sustainable Development Goal target, attributed in a large part to low levels of skilled birth attendance experienced in the country.

The Golden Star Helping Babies Breathe initiative conducted in collaboration with Project C.U.R.E. brings neonatal resuscitation capability and capacity to communities where it is most needed. The initiative has integrated sustainability elements, which have resulted in real and lasting impact on neonatal survival in our host communities. The program, now conducted over two phases, would not have been possible without our valued and generous donors and partners. This report on program success is a tribute to the value the program partners place on newborn survival.