

# Health, Nutrition, and Population



**Goal:** To promote health and wellbeing for all and reduce the burden of health problems on vulnerable populations, particularly mothers and children.

27%

Reduction in child mortality  
among children under five

6

Countries reached

50  
thousand

Community health workers  
trained

BRAC understands that poverty exists on a shifting scale of severity, which leads the most marginalized communities to receive limited access to quality health care.

Healthy, educated, and empowered mothers make better decisions for themselves and their children. A woman's health and nutrition during pregnancy also has a profound impact on the long-term trajectory of her child's life. The first 1,000 days, from conception to the child's second birthday, is a window of opportunity that determines the child's ability to learn, grow, and develop. As a result, maternal, neonatal, and child health care is one of the best investments with the biggest impacts.

## Background

BRAC ensures some of the world's most remote communities in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Uganda can access affordable and quality health care. Our groundbreaking model of community-based health care brings health services and information directly to the doorsteps of the poor.

Among these services are maternal, neonatal, and child health; nutrition; infectious diseases; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and family planning.

## Opportunity

According to UNICEF, of those who die from avoidable causes such as measles, diarrhea, and malaria, nearly 10 million are children under five. These diseases are easy to treat and prevent, but access remains a challenge.



*A community health worker visits a patient in her community in Uganda. ©BRAC/Alison Wright*





*Shahina (right), a community health worker in Bangladesh, helps a mother ensure her newborn baby is healthy.*

## Approach

Through education, research, prevention, and treatment, BRAC works to create a world where no one dies from preventable causes.

BRAC's holistic model improves preventive and curative health services at the community level with a focus on the most marginalized people, particularly mothers and newborns. BRAC offers reproductive, maternal, neonatal, and child health care to improve the nutritional status of women and children and reduce the burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases on vulnerable populations.

At the heart of BRAC's health programs are trained and dedicated community health workers (CHWs) who provide essential health care services. These include a tailored portfolio of services for mothers and children; including malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV education and prevention; nutrition; sanitation; safe drinking water; and hygiene promotion.

CHWs deliver care door-to-door, recognize symptoms, refer patients to local clinics or hospitals, and ensure treatment and therapy compliance. They also sell health products such as birthing kits, sanitary pads, and malaria medication to sustain their own livelihoods.

## Why BRAC?

BRAC's role as a provider and promoter of health care has had a remarkable impact in the communities where it works. Following successful implementation in seven partner countries, BRAC aims to expand its health programming. Expansion will ensure that more people receive quality, affordable care in more countries. With a vision to operate as a sustainable social enterprise, BRAC prioritizes government partnership as a key to strategically strengthening primary care systems.

Because BRAC believes that maternal health is one of the best investments in the future, it will also continue to expand its community health worker model within existing partner countries. This will include the provision of essential health care, including integrated community case management (iCCM), as well as strategic government partnership to ensure that quality and affordable health care is provided to all.

“**My country, Bangladesh, has seen a health revolution in my lifetime,”** says Sir **Fazle Hasan Abed, BRAC Founder and Chairperson.** **“Maternal mortality has decreased by 75 percent since 1980, infant mortality has more than halved since 1990.”**”