

CARE and Columbia University Address Emergency Obstetric Care

In recent years, [CARE's maternal health program](#) has broadened to include critical activities that strengthen the delivery of emergency obstetric care. This work has largely been made possible through collaboration with [Columbia University's AMDD program](#).

Supported by the Gates Foundation, the program operates through partnerships with organizations that have field operations in areas where CARE works. As one of the partners with an extensive field programming presence, CARE has participated in the AMDD program via its FEMME project (Foundations to Enhance Mechanisms for Management of Maternal Emergencies). CARE's FEMME project has operated in 18 district hospitals in five countries — [Ethiopia, Peru, Rwanda, Tajikistan, Tanzania](#) — over the past three years.

The overall goal of this collaboration is to improve access to quality emergency obstetric care (EmOC) by enhancing the capacity of health facilities and their staffs to effectively manage obstetric complications. The AMDD program also provides technical resources and support to the various CARE field sites. As a result, CARE has realized significant changes that are having a positive impact on safe motherhood in various country settings around the world.

CARE's role as facilitator has improved the management of obstetric emergencies at hospitals and health centers. Some key changes include:

- Minor renovations and repairs were made to maternity units to improve the functional capacity for providing quality care. More than 18 facilities have been renovated to improve access to and use of obstetric services.
- International standards and guidelines for obstetric care have been developed and disseminated for professional use. In Rwanda, CARE supported the development of clinical guidelines that have they soon became a technical reference and draft protocols to support the reproductive health policy in the country.
- CARE worked with both international and local partners to conduct competency-based trainings, creating a critical mass of health professionals, that have this skills, knowledge, and confidence to address complications, and save women's lives. In Tajikistan, CARE has facilitated he development of training team that's used extensively in the country by local and international agencies to train midwives for obstetric care delivery.
- The establishment of partnerships with ministries of health, district health bureaus and local community groups helped leverage increased resources for safe motherhood. In Peru, the local police and army medical staff have been

involved with the health staff in finding local transport and offering their radio bases to facilitate communication between local health centers and main referral hospitals.

- CARE supported the integration of human rights principles in maternal health. In Peru, and Rwanda, project interventions have resulted in heightened awareness among health care providers and community members regarding rights of pregnant women.