



## Community Level Promotion of PMTCT Services

### Goal and Proposed Outcomes

In response to assessed need in Ethiopia, NASTAD Ethiopia, in collaboration with four Regional Health Bureaus (Dire Dawa, Amhara, Oromia, and SNNPR) and other partners, and as a part of the COSM (Community Outreach and Social Mobilization) initiative, developed a program using Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) as volunteers to assist health centers to reach pregnant mothers to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV. The objective of the program was to promote anti-natal care (ANC) and clinic-based delivery to reduce perinatal HIV transmission.

### Strategy and Approach Used

Volunteer Community anti-AIDS Promoters (VCAP) are trained volunteers who travel from house-to-house, sharing information about HIV. NASTAD Ethiopia collaborated with Regional Health Bureaus (RHBs) and regional HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Offices (RHAPCOs) to train TBAs to become VCAPs.

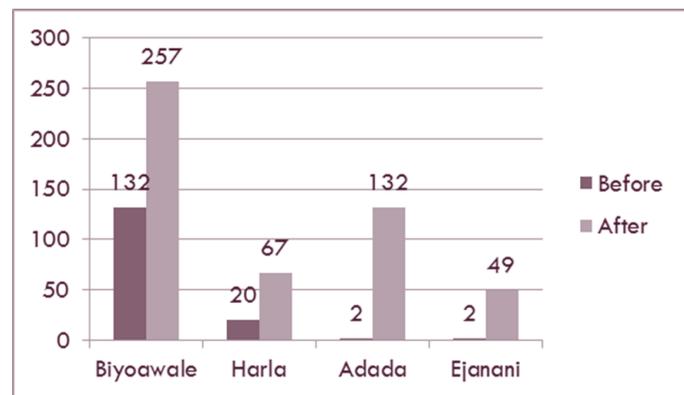
To launch this initiative, a meeting was organized for the TBAs in the presence of religious and community leaders. The TBAs were introduced to clinical staff and health extension workers to strengthen collaboration and coordination.

NASTAD Ethiopia then worked with local implementing partners to train TBAs to visit households in their villages and discuss HIV and the importance of facility based health care for all pregnant women, for both antenatal care and delivery. These TBA/VCAPs registered all pregnant women in their villages to allow for follow-up, referred all pregnant women to the local health centers for ANC and delivery services, and even accompanied pregnant and laboring women to health centers for institutional delivery.

### Results

In the six-month pilot period, TBAs visited more than 3,500 households and referred some 500 pregnant mothers to the nearest health facility for services; ANC clinics saw a significant increase in access to services as a result. Subsequent roll out of this intervention in five regions resulted in 615 traditional birth attendants trained as VCAPs, over 44,800 households visited, and over 6,700 pregnant mothers referred to the nearest health facility.

**Figure: Count of institutional, skilled deliveries in participating health facilities before and after six month pilot intervention in Dire Dawa**



### Summary of Outcomes and Impact

In the woredas where the TBA/VCAP program was implemented, there was an increase in the number of pregnant women accessing antenatal care and institutional deliveries. TBA/VCAP was thus determined to be an effective model for increasing uptake of ANC and institutional delivery services, including HIV testing during pregnancy and other PMTCT services. Today, the TBA/VCAP program has been integrated into the Ethiopian Health Promotion Strategy known as the Health Development Army (HDA) structure.

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