STRENGTHENING THE EMERGENCY CARE SYSTEM FOR MOTHERS, NEWBORN BABIES AND CHILDREN
IN THE GAMBIA

THE 3 DELAYS
Over half a million women die in pregnancy & childbirth each year.
The poorly resourced world accounts for 99% of these deaths.
50% of the deaths occur in Africa.
Gambia – Africa’s smallest country has high maternal, neonatal and child mortality rates.
3 main factors influence this:
• DELAY IN DECISION TO SEEK CARE eg. Patient, carer or helper not recognising danger signs
• DELAY IN REACHING CARE eg. poor roads, poor/no transport, river crossings
• DELAY IN RECEIVING CARE eg. Poorly resourced hospitals, inadequate medical supplies, lack of trained staff, no operating theatre

PARTNERSHIP
Since 2006, partnership between the Gambian Ministry of Health, WHO, Maternal and Child Health Advocacy International and the Advanced Life Support Group has led to many initiatives to strengthening the emergency healthcare system from village through to hospital

REFERENCES
http://www.who.int/whosis/whostat

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EMERGENCY AMBULANCE SYSTEM
Piloted in Brikama region
Emergency ambulance donated by President and staffed 24 hours a day by midwives with emergency kit
Between 2007-2010 109 patients, mostly pregnant women, stabilised and transported to hospital
All mothers survived

ACTIONS
• Renovation of hospitals
• Provision of essential medical devices, essential drugs and medical/surgical supplies
• Emergency ambulance / Operating Theatres
• Training programmes based on new education techniques involving scenarios, skill stations, workshops and lectures for all healthcare staff (including TBAs, Village Health Workers, Cleaners, midwives, nurses and doctors) re: emergency care including major trauma
• Educational Resources manuals, pocketbooks, CDs, pictorial guides
• Evaluation using logbooks to document resuscitations undertaken by each trained provider of emergency care

Completed pages of log book

‘one preventable maternal death is too many; hundreds of thousands are simply unacceptable – this is the 21st century.’ Secretary General of the United Nations, 2010

‘Women are not dying because of a disease we cannot treat. They are dying because societies have yet to make the decision that their lives are worth saving’ Mahmoud Fatallah. President FIGO 1997