

## Strengthening the pneumonia response in Ethiopia

### Developing an action plan for the integrated management of newborn and childhood illnesses

#### Background

Pneumonia is the leading infectious cause of death in children under five, globally. According to the Global Burden of Disease estimates, 672,000 children under five died of pneumonia in 2019, equating to almost two fatalities every minute of every day — more than diarrhoea, malaria and measles combined.<sup>[1]</sup> The vast majority of those killed by pneumonia live in poverty in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), and just 10 countries in south Asia and sub-Saharan Africa account for 60 percent of pneumonia deaths worldwide.<sup>[2]</sup>

Ethiopia is the second most populous country in Africa, with an under-five population of over 14 million children, mainly in rural communities.<sup>[3]</sup> Despite the country's progress in improving the health status of children under five over the last decade, the Every Breath Counts (EBC) Coalition has still identified Ethiopia as one of its top 10 countries of focus. Pneumonia is responsible for over 18 percent of all deaths in children under five in Ethiopia.<sup>[4]</sup> The country's 2016 national health survey further indicated that only 31 percent of suspected pneumonia cases in under-fives were taken to a health facility/provider.<sup>[5]</sup>

#### Country

Ethiopia

#### Donor

Malaria Consortium U.S.

#### Length of project

January 2022 – February 2023

#### Partners

Federal Ministry of Health, Ethiopia

## Project outline and objective

Drawing on our extensive experience in conducting large-scale studies, this project aims to address pneumonia case management in Ethiopia through understanding the current methods and systems used to manage cases at different levels of the health system, and to develop and operationalise a suitable strategy to support this.

In discussion with the Maternal, Child Health and Nutrition directorate of the Federal Ministry of Health (FMoH), we will develop an action plan for the integrated management of newborn and childhood illnesses (IMNCI), focusing on pneumonia and diarrhoea, to support the existing newborn and child survival strategy and child health roadmap.

This work builds on EBC's successful experience in Nigeria in developing a national childhood pneumonia strategy, which was completed in 2020 and endorsed by the FMoH.

Our key objectives are to:

- lead the development and costing of the IMNCI action plan through an MoH-led platform for all key stakeholders (under the EBC umbrella) to contribute to the process
- work with the MoH and stakeholders to operationalise the strategy components
- understand the lessons learnt from developing the action plan, supporting its integration into national health system planning and thereby contributing to sustainability and improved case management.

## Activities

To achieve these objectives, Malaria Consortium will:

- conduct engagement and advocacy with the MoH to secure high-level endorsement of the action plan and support the creation of a platform for its development through staff placement within the MoH
- provide technical assistance to the MoH to provide a coordination and leadership role and develop a two-year work plan that addresses the key components of the IMNCI action plan
- carry out a kick-off and preliminary research including desk research; mapping of case management initiatives and key stakeholders; and interviews with priority individuals to identify barriers and opportunities
- develop the IMNCI action plan in collaboration with EBC, including drafts, review cycles, revision and finalisation of documents; this will involve MoH validation and official launches
- capture lessons learnt through key informant interviews with stakeholders, using findings to raise awareness and drive commitment to an improved pneumonia and diarrhoea response, and continued engagement with the action plan
- continue to seek new donors to secure additional funding to support the design and implementation of the total PneumoTransform proposal, a large-scale health systems implementation evaluation focused on improved pneumonia case management in Chad, Ethiopia and Nigeria. Activities include donor relationship management and ongoing leadership of the Every Breath Counts Research Group by Malaria Consortium.



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MINISTRY OF HEALTH, ETHIOPIA

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Cover image: Child undergoing pneumonia diagnosis using a RAD-G device.



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