



## **Executive Summary**

### **Summary**

In an effort to reduce maternal morbidity and mortality on a global scale, we aim to use qualitative and quantitative research methods to identify:

- a. specific barriers to implementing safe, effective and affordable interventions in resource-poor settings
- b. potential solutions to these barriers

Our mission is to make community-level actors the major protagonists in identifying and solving the barriers to preventing unnecessary maternal deaths. By providing midwives, nurses and doctors across Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East with a direct global voice we will harness their combined experience and insight to kick-start a revolution in the local provision of evidence-based maternal healthcare.

This will be achieved through an innovative online survey and crowd-sourcing exercise seeking the perspectives of, and pragmatic input from, ten thousand maternal healthcare providers in the developing world. The unprecedented scale of the survey will give new weight to the views of those on the frontline, strengthening their voices on the international stage and deepening their involvement in the global fight to reduce maternal mortality.

### **Context and Purpose**

Over the last decades, the scientific community has developed and tested safe, effective and affordable interventions which, when implemented successfully, have resulted in significant reductions in maternal morbidity and mortality. However, these best practices have not been consistently used to improve maternal health in developing countries, particularly in regions with the highest morbidity and mortality rates. Despite considerable debate and discussion, little has been achieved: it is simply unacceptable that over 500,000 women are dying every year.

Input from providers at a local level has rarely been sought and has not been sufficiently considered in planning global efforts to improve maternal health. The proposed project will attempt to fill this gap in a major departure from traditional approaches to the problems. This is possible because internet-based technology can: a) reach out to providers that never have been consulted; b) allow consultation on a global scale; and c) facilitate rapid responses and suggestions for implementation that can be disseminated within weeks of completing the survey.

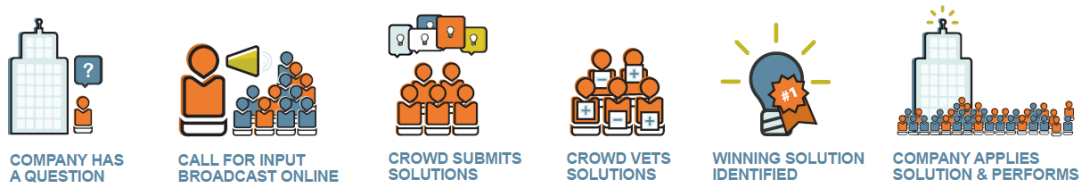
### **Project Design and Implementation**

Over 4 months, we shall conduct a large-scale, global consultation, via an interactive website containing a survey and discussion forum. 10,000 healthcare providers from developing countries will be invited to participate in this exercise. Any facility-based maternal healthcare provider in the developing world will be eligible to complete the survey, and then gain access to select results, the Forum and the online resources page.

The process, known as 'crowdsourcing', is a well-established method in the corporate sector to explore problems and identify solutions, from a large online community (the crowd), rapidly and at minimal cost. This is an ideal way to seek the views of large numbers of interested parties, whilst ensuring they feel that their voice has been heard and they have a sense of ownership over the finished product. It has been suggested that such collaboration and peer production on a global scale *"will harness human skill, ingenuity, and intelligence more efficiently and effectively than anything we have witnessed previously"*.<sup>1</sup>

### Crowdsourcing – The Process

Crowdsourcing invites crowds to submit, discuss, refine and rank ideas or other contributions via the web to arrive at what have been proven economically as the most-likely-to-succeed solutions.



The survey itself will contain compulsory questions about the participant, the facility in which they work and the antenatal care services available. Respondents will then be randomly allocated to one of 5 surveys on the management of common obstetric complications in their facility: postpartum haemorrhage, sepsis, unsafe abortion, obstructed labour and pre-eclampsia/eclampsia. These sections will contain questions about specific medical interventions, their frequency of use and the barriers that impede their routine implementation. At the end of the section they will have the opportunity to put forward any solutions they can think of to the problems identified.

After completing the survey, participants will be invited to take part in an innovative crowd-sourcing discussion forum where we will put forward proposed solutions from the surveys for voting and further debate, as well as seeking further suggestions of new and innovative solutions to overcome obstacles that have been identified during the survey. This will be the first time that these research methods, which are well established in commerce, have been used in the healthcare sector on a global scale.

### Project results

A summary of the survey results will be shared with all participants via the website, as well as being distributed widely amongst the international health community. The results will be written up for worldwide distribution, publication in scientific journals and presentation at international meetings. Some of the data from the study may be included in the MSc thesis of one of the researchers.

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<sup>1</sup> Tapscott & Williams (2006) *Wikinomics*. ISBN 1591841380