



## Saving Women's Lives with Misoprostol: Tanzania & Zanzibar Program

*In Tanzania women have a 1 in 23 lifetime risk of dying from maternal causes<sup>1</sup>; an estimated 3,000 mothers die each year due to excessive bleeding after childbirth, or postpartum hemorrhage (PPH), and the majority deliver at home. Complications of abortion also contribute to the high rate of maternal death.*



VSI aims to facilitate a reduction in maternal deaths in Tanzania and Zanzibar by setting up systems to ensure widespread access to misoprostol and information on its effective use in women's health, focusing on **policy** development, **training** and **distribution** through the public and private sectors.

### Highlighted Activities

- Technical assistance in registration of misoprostol for PPH (achieved September 2007) and treatment of incomplete abortion (achieved January 2011)
- Revision of national essential medicines list, standard treatment guidelines (2007) and national clinical guidelines (2008) to include misoprostol for PPH
- Support in policy revision of Zanzibar's standard treatment guidelines to include misoprostol for PPH and treatment of incomplete abortion and miscarriage (2009)
- Community-level research demonstrating that trained traditional birth attendants (TBAs) can safely administer misoprostol for treatment of PPH after home births<sup>2</sup> and subsequent evaluation of long-term use of misoprostol for treatment of PPH at the community level<sup>3</sup>
- Operations research testing safety and feasibility of misoprostol distribution at antenatal care visits for prevention of postpartum hemorrhage among women who deliver at home; over 12,000 women educated on safer delivery with misoprostol
- Training of trainers to educate doctors, nurses and midwives on misoprostol for PPH and treatment of incomplete abortion and miscarriage
- Pharmacy detailer education on misoprostol for PPH

**VSI works in collaboration with many partners in Tanzania and Zanzibar.**

Ministries of Health and Social Welfare of Tanzania and Zanzibar, ByTrade, Association of Gynaecologists and Obstetricians of Tanzania, Private Nurse Midwives Association of Tanzania, Tanzania Registered Midwives' Association, Ifakara Health Institute, Danida, EngenderHealth, PSI and UC Berkeley Bixby Center for Population, Health and Sustainability.

<sup>1</sup> World Health Organization. Trends in Maternal Mortality: 1990-2008, Geneva: WHO, 2010.

<sup>2</sup> Prata N, Mbaruku G, Campbell M, et al. Controlling postpartum hemorrhage after home births in Tanzania. *International Journal of Gynaecology and Obstetrics* 2005;90(1):51-5.

<sup>3</sup> Prata N, Mbaruku G, Grossman A, et al. Community-based availability of misoprostol: Is it safe? *African Journal of Reproductive Health* 2009;13(2):117-28.

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