World Vision’s Mother and Child Health projects are saving lives. Between October 2018 and March 2019, 255,289 women and children in Somalia, Uganda, and Zambia gained access to maternal and child health and nutrition services at local clinics and through community health workers. In Somalia, 22 health facilities received support through training for staff, donated pharmaceuticals and supplies, and new equipment. Through similar support in Uganda, infant deaths in project areas have dropped by an estimated 27% since 2016. We’re also excited about an increased number of births taking place in Ugandan health facilities with skilled medical staff in attendance, from just 56% in 2016 to 85% today. In Zambia, 75% of women in World Vision project areas now seek prenatal care during the first half of their pregnancies, up from 42% in 2016. Your support is making a lasting difference for mothers and babies.

UGANDA

Renovations improve healthcare services

Since October 2018, in response to support for improved access to healthcare, 12,029 women in Uganda have delivered their babies at a health facility with skilled nurses or midwives. This occurred in part due to renovation of existing health clinics.

World Vision worked alongside health facilities to make necessary improvements to gain accreditation as a Baby Friendly Health Initiative facility. Such facilities meet standards set to provide quality mother and newborn care. So far in the first six months of the current fiscal year, 11 facilities in the target area have gained this status, against a target of eight.

To improve safety, World Vision helped 33 health facilities gain access to a water source on the premises, against a target of 34 for the year. In addition, 27 health centers installed handwashing facilities.

Some of the improvements were the result of advocacy by 280 members of Citizen Voice and Action (CVA) groups. Under this approach, communities learn how to lobby local government for improvements and services. Related changes included:

- Construction of a well at Mparagasi Health Center.
- Renovation of a maternity ward at Kikuube, including installation of a solar-powered water system, electricity, and new equipment.
- Renovation of maternity facilities at Kigorobya Health Center IV, along with a pledge by government officials to add a new water reservoir to help eliminate water shortages.
ZAMBIA
Residents helping clinics expand

Support for improvements at health clinics in Zambia contributed to better healthcare for thousands of women and children in the first half of World Vision’s current fiscal year.

When World Vision started a health project in Zambia in 2016, only 42% of women in targeted communities sought prenatal care during the first half of their pregnancy, but that has increased to 75%. Another impressive result is a 97% recovery rate for malnourished children enrolled in community-based nutrition programs that teach parents how to prepare nutrient-dense meals.

These achievements are due in part to the involvement of neighborhood health committees (NHCs). So far this year, 54 committees have received support and training on their roles and responsibilities, resulting in the following improvements:

- In Musosolokwe, an NHC mobilized construction of bricks for a mother’s shelter and maternity wing at a health facility. Such shelters are vital in attracting expectant mothers to the facility for delivery, since many travel long distances and need accommodations until their babies arrive.

- In Chikomeni, three NHCs support nutrition volunteers as they enroll malnourished children in a program to teach mothers and caregivers how to prepare the most affordable, nutritious meals for them. So far this year, 243 malnourished children have been enrolled in the program, and 210 have been successfully treated and brought to a healthy weight. The NHCs also are leading efforts to make bricks to construct buildings to house immunization activities targeting young children.

Meanwhile, community-level advocacy efforts are bearing fruit. In Katete, a Citizen Voice and Action group began advocating for adequate staffing at the local health center. To accommodate new staff, the community organized to mold nearly 2,500 cinder blocks for a two-unit staff house for the health center.

World Vision’s corporate partners have been furnishing vital equipment, pharmaceuticals, and supplies that enable clinics in Zambia to offer better care. So far this year, donations have included:

- For families and volunteers—soap for families with children younger than 5, men’s and women’s underwear, men’s T-shirts, women’s sweaters and long pants, and feminine hygiene pads.

- For health facilities—stethoscopes, vitamin A, albendazole (for tapeworm), sterile gloves, cord clamps, mucous suckers, delivery beds, tables, linens, pillows, office chairs, shelves, bookcases, file cabinets, floor mats, curtains, cups, paint and paintbrushes, and desks.