

Saving Lives at Birth in Rural Afghanistan

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With 327/100,000 live births, Afghanistan has one of the highest maternal mortality ratios in the world. Due to environmental and social unrests such as conflict, it is very difficult to deploy adequate skilled birth attendants and services to many Afghan villages. We propose a midwife-centered community based rural telemedicine hub connecting CHWs to midwives. An Initiate-Build-Operate-Transfer (IBOT) will be used to install and implement telemedicine programs. Direct and safe communication will be maintained between CHWs, midwives, and patients for prompt response to emergency/complicated cases without any delay. The objective of this pilot project is to improve maternal, child, and newborn health in rural Afghanistan utilizing midwife-centered telemedicine technology and staging CHWs as frontline providers. The end point is to establish a telemedicine hub between communities and health centers for better communication, service delivery and monitoring and evaluation. Long-term impact of the project will save lives and reduce morbidity in the target communities. Linking midwives to CHWs through telemedicine technologies has never been tested at community level thus it is an innovative approach.