

# Pilot mHealth project in Zambia



NUTRITION



HEALTH

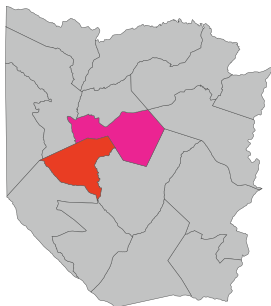


HYGIENE

**Mama Info** 1000 days campaign messages brought to cellular phones by People in Need- Zambia

Pilot Districts for Mama Info in Western province

District  
● Mongu  
● Nalolo



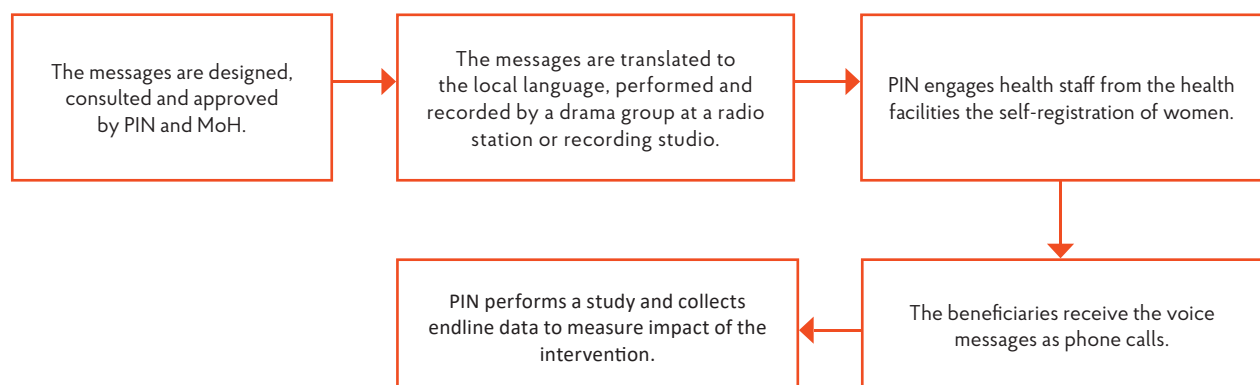
Data source: baseline and end-line (Dec 2021 - Jan 2022)

People in Need (PIN)'s mHealth project implemented in cooperation with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and Zambia Telecommunications Company Limited (ZAMTEL) is an innovative and one-of-a-kind intervention in Zambia.

The project uses voice recorded messages to overcome illiteracy barriers and to improve maternal and child health and nutrition outcomes, influence attitudes and enhance knowledge and skills of women about the importance of key health and nutrition behaviours. The messages were incorporated into dialogues performed by a local drama group that created culturally appropriate characters to provide an educative, engaging and entertaining service, effective at changing people's behaviours. These dialogues were designed typically around specific topics such as health, nutrition or hygiene. The set contains key messages related to maternal health and nutrition as well as nutrition and health of children aged 0-6 and 7-24 months.

The messages were designed to cover the most important behaviours in order to provide timely information that supports the mother to provide the best possible start to their child's life during the first 1000 days most critical days (from the inception until the child is 2 years old). The pilot project targeted 100 women in Mongu and Nalolo districts in Western Zambia and aimed to prove that the concept is relevant and effective in the Zambian context.

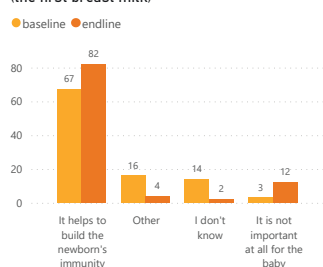
## How does it work (STEP BY STEP)



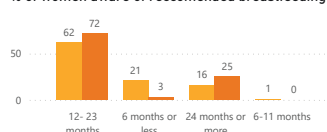
## Main results

- At endline, **89% of target women** were aware that the recommended birth spacing is 2-3 years compared to 81% at baseline.
- After the mHealth intervention, **82% of women** were aware of the importance of colostrum (first breastmilk) for new-born's immunity compared to only 67% at baseline.
- Furthermore, after they received the voice-recorded messages, **99% of women** were aware of exclusive breastfeeding and its significance compared to 81% before the intervention.
- After they received the mHealth service, **72% of women** were aware of the recommended length of breastfeeding (12-23 months) compared to only 62% at baseline.
- At endline, **88% of women** were practicing vitamin A supplementation compared to 80% before the start of the intervention. Moreover, **74% of women** were taking pregnancy supplements every day at endline compared to only 60% at baseline.

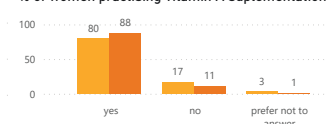
% of users aware of importance of colostrum (the first breast milk)



% of women aware of recommended breastfeeding



% of women practising vitamin A supplementation



**100%** participating women were satisfied with the service and would like to continue receiving the voice messages.

## Challenges and way forward

- 7.7% of beneficiaries mentioned that the messages were not relevant for them. PIN is currently working to improve the call flow so that women receive messages according to their current condition.
- The technical setup of PIN IVR platform and Zamtel telecommunication infrastructure took longer than originally expected.
- PIN is working on strengthening the visual identity of the service and improving user experience by allowing self-registration and creating a webpage with key information about the service.
- Considering the project was a pilot, the health staff from the health facilities were not involved as much apart from mobilization of beneficiaries. In the second stage, health staff should be oriented on the service to support self-registration of women and promote its usage.
- Based on the pilot stage implementation, number of new technical features will be introduced incl. self registration and automation of the call flows.
- People in rural areas tend to have smaller access to mobile phones than in urban areas.

## Conclusion

- The study found that the mHealth intervention has had a significant impact on knowledge, attitudes and practices of women with regards to maternal and infant nutrition and health. The level of satisfaction suggests that the service fills an important gap, is effective at changing behaviours and is highly relevant in the Zambian context. The results suggest that the intervention contributed to improved maternal and child health outcomes and led to changes in key nutrition behaviours. With several upgrades and improvements, which are currently underway, the project indicators may improve further.



Please contact us if you want to learn more about People in Need in Zambia at [piotr.sasin@peopleinneed.net](mailto:piotr.sasin@peopleinneed.net)

Plot 3813 Martin Mwamba Road,  
Olympia Park, Lusaka, Zambia