

**Reducing Maternal and Child Mortality** through Strengthening Primary Health Care in South Africa (**RMCH**):

RMCH is a three-year national programme (May 2012 until March 2015) funded by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID).

The **main aim** of the RMCH programme is to provide support to the National Department of Health (NDoH) to improve the quality of, and access to, reproductive, maternal and child health services for women and children living in poorer, underserved parts of South Africa.

**The RMCH programme aims to:**

- Support districts to oversee improvement of MNCH services.
- Strengthen delivery of school health, ward-based primary health care, and obstetric and neonatal emergency services.
- Improve demand and accountability for MNCH services.
- Document and disseminate new knowledge to remove barriers to the uptake and access to MNCH services.

**For more information on the RMCH programme contact:**

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<http://www.rmchsa.org/>

"Everyone has the right to have access to health care services, including reproductive health care"

**Section 27 of the South African Constitution**

**Real accountability happens when citizens, communities, and health workers take joint ownership of the health system and its results**

For more information about the Black Sash RMCH Project contact:

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**Strengthening Community Accountability Mechanisms to Improve Maternal & Child Health Services**



**BLACKSASH**  
**MAKING HUMAN RIGHTS REAL**

### ***The RMCH Approach: Creating Demand & Strengthening Accountability***

**Generating increased demand for services** is about making sure that citizens know about and are able to access the healthcare services that they need. Providing citizens with information about services they are entitled to and encouraging them to take responsibility for their health can generate demand.

**Strengthening accountability** is about providing opportunities for people to monitor the performance of health providers and actively participate in decision-making processes about issues that affect their lives.

People need platforms to voice their ideas, needs and concerns. Government has created **community health committees** for this purpose. These structures are made up of members of the community, a local government councillor and the head of a healthcare facility.

**Civil society organisations and other multi-stakeholder forums** also provide safe spaces where people can share their views. They promote education and awareness about people's health needs and access to services.

These various committees, organisations and forums are important structures to improve demand and accountability for **Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) services**, so we must ensure that they are working effectively.



### ***Objectives of the Black Sash RMCH Project***

**The Black Sash** was awarded a grant by the RMCH Programme in partnership with the National Department of Health. The objective of the Black Sash RMCH Project is to develop and test interventions that **promote joint dialogue and problem solving at district level, using multi-stakeholder accountability forums and dialogues.**

The Black Sash's RMCH Project sets out to investigate what the best options for promoting accountability are, and whether linking **community health committees** with a range of **civil society organisations and multi-stakeholder forums** will improve demand and accountability for MNCH services.

The project will promote dialogue between citizens, healthcare workers and government officials to enable them to understand each other's views, problems and constraints, and jointly decide on the best way forward to address MNCH challenges.

#### **Project Implementation Districts:**

- OR Tambo (Eastern Cape)
- uMgungundlovu (KwaZulu-Natal)

#### **Project Dissemination Districts:**

- Pixley ka Seme (Northern Cape)
- Ngaka Modiri Molema (North West)
- Ekurhuleni (Gauteng)
- eThekweni (KwaZulu-Natal)

### ***The Black Sash RMCH Accountability Model***

The Black Sash will test an accountability model in pilot sites in **OR Tambo** and **uMgungundlovu** where we will train a partnership of community health committees, civil society organisations and multi-stakeholder forums and support them to implement a community scorecard process.

#### **Black Sash RMCH Training Programme:**

- The training programme will focus on building capacities and knowledge to enable stakeholders to take action to address MNCH challenges in partnership with communities and health professionals.
- The training will include themes such as MNCH rights and responsibilities and how to implement a community scorecard process.

#### **The Community Scorecard Intervention:**

Black Sash will support representatives from community health committees and civil society organisations and multi-stakeholder forums to:

- Jointly monitor quality of and access to MNCH services for women and children.
- Draw up joint MNCH action plans in partnership with a variety of stakeholders to improve maternal, neonatal and child health.

After assessing the benefits of this model and making the necessary refinements, **key learning and training tools will be disseminated** to priority districts and more extensively through our networks within South Africa and abroad.