

MAMI COLOMBIA



MAMI
Safe, informed,
shared pregnancy.

BACKGROUND

MAMI, Mothers More Involved (Mamás Más Involucradas) made its debut on May 4th, 2013, at the “Co-Crea Colombia” Hackathon organized by the World Bank under the Smart Cities Program and the Colombian Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology. The event featured innovative solutions to challenges related to citizen security, transportation, education and health and was attended by local and international experts in ICT. MAMI was chosen as one of three prestigious winners.

MAMI is based in Manizales, a city in central Colombia. It is the capital of the Department of Caldas in the Paisa region. According to the Center of Information and Statistics of Manizales, in 2011 the maternal mortality rate was 109 per 100,000 live births, under-five child mortality was 13.4 per 1,000 live births and infant mortality was 10.7 per 1,000 live births. Manizales is fairly representative of the national indicators for maternal, child and newborn health- the maternal mortality rate for Colombia is 92, the infant mortality rate is 15 and under-five child mortality is 18.¹

While MAMI is based in Manizales, and has immediate plans to scale up within Caldas, it has long term plans to achieve a much greater, national reach. Despite improvements in overall poverty rates, Colombia remains one of the most unequal countries in one of the most unequal regions in the world. Large disparities in income, wealth, and living standards persist between different regions and socioeconomic groups. For example infant mortality rates in Chocó, the Colombian department with the worst social indicators, are similar to the national average 20 years ago.²

MAMI points out that in addition to national disparities, disparities amongst countries in the region of Latin America are striking. For example, in 2012, 510 pregnant women died in Colombia, a rate ten times higher than in Chile; and 9,580 infants

1. World Bank Data 2013

2. World Bank, “Colombia: Poverty Assessment Report” 2011



under one year died, a rate 14 higher than in Cuba. These inequalities motivate the MAMI team to continue to come up with innovative solutions and localized content to improve maternal and newborn health in the Colombia.

USE OF MAMA MESSAGES

MAMI is an educational, empowering and shared pregnancy platform for mothers from low to middle income settings in Colombia. Women from in these groups have difficulty gaining access to health care, and face obstacles such as distance and lack of resources. MAMI is a tool that works to promote healthy pregnancy, encourages preventative care seeking behaviors and enables women to make informed decisions throughout pregnancy. MAMI's health and education strategy is aimed directly at reducing maternal mortality (MDG 5) as well as under-five child mortality (MDG 4) and to improve the lives and over-all well-being of those involved in the program.

MAMI's messages are personalized and use the “ages and stages model” to send women messages in accordance with their gestational stage. MAMI sends pregnant women three messages per week, and their supporting companion (these may be husbands, mothers, or whoever the pregnant woman trusts, relies on and spends most time with) one message per week. The messages fall into three categories: early identification of warning signs and risk factors, growth and development of the baby, and messages that foster empowerment and a healthy environment.

PROGRAM SPECIFICS

EARLY PROGRESS

From June to July of 2013 MAMI completed its first pilot with 50 mothers and 50 supporting companions in Manizales, Villamaría, Medellín, and Bogotá. The pilot was launched with assistance from the Health Secretary of Manizales to identify pregnant women in these locations. During the pilot, 1,600 messages were sent.

Survey results were collected during the pilot to assess user friendliness, relevance of content, and user perceptions of the messages. Of the 50 expectant mothers surveyed, 94% reported that the program was “Very good” and 75% reported that the program made them feel “Very motivated/ supported” upon receiving the messages. In addition, 85% of supporting companions reported the program to be useful and helpful in becoming more involved in care-giving through-out pregnancy.

TESTIMONIALS

Mother

“The messages are important in keeping attentive and informed. Sometimes [in my pregnancy] I that overlook things, but the messages constantly remind me to be careful and pay attention. I feel important because its feels like someone is interested in me and my child, and wants everything to be okay.”

Supporting companion, Husband

“The messages have been very special to me. Because of work I had not been able to actively participate in assisting my wife's health. Right at the moment where I received the MAMI message, I had just decided to take time off to accompany my wife to her medical exam. It made us both smile because it was such a coincidence.”



Supporting companion, Mother in Law

"The messages made me feel more engaged in my daughter's pregnancy. They also helped a lot, because for example she didn't believe me when I told her about the importance of certain things during pregnancy such as vitamins. The messages told her that she had to take the vitamins, supporting what I had told her was important."

In addition to the survey, MAMI carried out field work in Manizales and the surrounding areas. During these site visits, the MAMI team analyzed the ways in which poverty, inadequate education, and lack of reproductive knowledge among youth pose significant barriers to planned and healthy pregnancy. During MAMI's field work, the team offered pregnant women courses aimed at improving their mental, physical and emotional health.



MESSAGE ADAPTATION, LOCALIZATION AND TRANSLATION

MAMI began by undertaking the principal translation of the MAMA messages from English to Spanish. Throughout the translation process, the MAMI team took care to ensure that the content in each message remained intact and clear. The MAMI team overcame challenges related to evaluating the context, using language that was formal enough but not too technical, and getting messages across in less than 160 characters.

An important part of the message adaptation process occurred with the assistance of a medical team. This collaborative work provided the MAMI team with a firm understanding of the medical terminology at the core of the messages. In addition, the medical team helped motivate women to participate in the project, and to adapt the messages to the local context.

Some of MAMA's messages were determined to be contextually irrelevant in Colombia. For example, the vast majority of births in urban Colombia (98%) are attended by skilled medical personnel.³ Therefore, in Manizales, MAMA's messages about delivery at home (such as those about cord cutting) were deemed irrelevant. Additionally, in Colombia 93% of the population uses improved drinking water sources.⁴ As such, MAMA messages on clean water are not as necessary or relevant in many cases in the country. In other settings in Colombia, such as in more rural and isolated communities, the MAMI team plans to reevaluate the use of this content.

In addition, the MAMI team determined through interviews and surveys of women in the pilot program that the language in the messages was at times too direct and explicit for the Colombia context. The MAMI team is therefore working to create messages that are more subtle (while still straight-forward) to prevent the women from feeling uncomfortable. This work will prove very valuable as more MAMA Community Members in Latin America and the Caribbean adapt the messages for their own cultural contexts, as many of these countries share conservative Catholic cultures.

FUTURE PLANS

The next step for MAMI is a second phase with 80 new mothers and their supporting partners in Manizales. It will also involve signing up 1,035 mothers and their supporting partners from different municipalities in Caldas and other zones. These new subscribers will allow MAMI to substantially expand their work and impact the region. In addition, the MAMI team is working to develop a sustainable business model to achieve greater impact and scale at the national level.

3. World Bank "Saber: Country Report 2013, Colombia — Early Childhood Development" 2013

4. World Health Organization Data Repository "MDG 7: Water and Sanitation"



Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action

The MAMA Community Spotlight series shines a light on some of the great work being done by organizations using MAMA's adaptable mobile messages. Each month we feature a new organization that has downloaded our messages and is using mobile technology to improve maternal, newborn and child health.

Inspired by these innovative programs? Download the MAMA messages for yourself by visiting www.mobilemamaalliance.org and completing our short questionnaire.

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