Health Initiatives Positively Impacting Lives in Ethiopia

**Ethiopia**: The Pharo foundation’s health care initiatives in Ethiopia’s Benishangul Gumuz region go beyond generic healthcare to public health interventions. The Foundation has been intervening in health and sanitation gaps in Homosha, Menge and Undulu districts by designing tailored social and behavioural change communication tools to encourage positive practices in the community. The interventions include community conversations to create awareness of health and sanitation issues and training.

Most communities have deeply rooted practices and behaviours touching on hygiene and sanitation making it critical for the Foundation to work through the existing community structures to create a sense of ownership. One notable improvement following the Foundation’s interventions is an increase and improvement in latrine utilisation in the three districts, ensuring safe excreta disposal. To accelerate access and sustained use of latrines coupled with good hygienic practices, the Foundation is also working with sanitation enterprises (unemployed youths) to produce slabs and distribute them among the target population.

Additionally, Pharo’s health programmes involve providing capacity building to health care providers in the districts to increase their awareness of various issues. So far, Pharo has provided training on family planning to augment health care workers’ skills and in maternal and child health. The Foundation in collaboration with the regional health bureau experts are also working to improve disease spread, infection prevention, and patient safety measures at health facilities. The teams recently conducted joint supervision and post-training follow-up in the target health facilities.

In Assosa town, the Foundation also established and supported the construction of a public ablution block at the bus station area serving thousands of people. The Foundation also renovated two public health centres in Homosha and Menge districts immensely improving health care services for approximately 31,000 people.
Ethiopia: Since the construction of an intensive care unit (ICU) and a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in Assosa General Hospital in 2019 by The Pharo Foundation, the mortality rate at the Assosa General Hospital has decreased by 50%. The minister of health recognised and appreciated the Foundation for this critical project.

Girmaye Driba, a 20-year-old woman residing in Gidami district of Oromiya region was expecting her first baby and had no history of any chronic illness. She had a normal pregnancy and attended antenatal care at the local health centre where she delivered her baby. Unfortunately, the child developed complications affecting the nervous system with symptoms such as seizures and hypertonia. These signs worried the health professionals at the health centre and they referred Girmaye to the Assosa General Hospital where she and her child were admitted to the NICU. The doctors diagnosed the child with stage I perinatal asphyxia, a common condition known to cause neonatal death.

After routine lab tests, the child was placed in an incubator under oxygen therapy, and IV medication including antibiotics and anti-seizure. With both the NICU nurses and the paediatricians closely monitoring the situation, the child began to show progressive improvement. Girmaye’s child fully recovered and was discharged 10 days after admission to the NICU. In 2021, the NICU in Assosa General Hospital helped save the lives of over 1000 children bringing the survival rate of newborns to 93%.

The recently established Pharo Diagnostic Centre in Assosa town also provides services that were previously lacking in the region thereby, contributing to access of quality health care in BGRS and Ethiopia as a whole.
Health Care Initiatives in Ethiopia

Celebration of Global Hand Washing Day 2022 at Selam Ber Primary School.

Mass awareness raising campaign on menstrual hygiene during the Global Menstrual Hygiene Day 2022.

Assosa general hospital ICU.

Solid waste management inspection at the Menge health centre.