

THEORY of CHANGE



if:

There is national political will to support life-saving products and services

Products are registered where women and girls need them most

A strong evidence base supports innovative delivery strategies

Policies and practices are adopted to ensure correct use

There is commitment to implement solutions that ensure availability and use

then:

Ministries and other stakeholders will expand access to essential products and services for women and girls

Venture Strategies Innovations (VSI) is a nonprofit organization committed to improving the health of women and girls in developing countries by creating access to affordable medicines and services. VSI believes women and girls deserve equitable access to life-saving medicines regardless of where they live. To make this a reality, VSI builds political will and capacity at national and community levels to register quality products and integrate them into the policies and practices of countries where they are needed most.

VSI employs three strategies – registration, introduction, and availability – to achieve its mission to connect women and girls with products and services. VSI engages governments and partners to achieve regulatory approval of quality, essential medicines and supplies. It partners with these stakeholders to evaluate innovative distribution and service delivery strategies to reach remote populations and incorporate the product's use into health systems. Finally, VSI applies practical solutions to overcome barriers and ensure everyday availability to communities in need.

VSI's Theory of Change holds that if *the following outcomes are realized...*

- There is [national political will](#) to support life-saving products and services;
- Quality affordable [products are registered](#) and made available where women and girls need them;
- A [strong evidence base](#) supports innovative delivery strategies;
- [Policies and practices](#) are adopted to ensure correct use;
- There is commitment to implement solutions that ensure [availability and use](#)

...then over the long term, ministries of health, donors, public and private service delivery organizations and interested parties will [expand access to essential products and services for women and girls](#).

VSI MILESTONES

In following its mission to improve the health of women and girls, VSI has achieved several key milestones:

- Registered the life-saving medicine, misoprostol, in 20 countries to prevent and treat women suffering from excessive bleeding in childbirth, unsafe abortion, miscarriage and other obstetric emergencies.
- Added misoprostol to essential medicines lists for obstetric indications in 13 countries, allowing for the medicine to be publicly procured and made more widely available to those most in need.
- Supported the revision of national policies and protocols in Nigeria to create the first model of community distribution of life-saving commodities for maternal health. VSI further demonstrated this delivery model in Bangladesh, Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Mozambique, Ghana, and Ethiopia.
- Shaped policies and practices to allow for tasks to shift from specialized health workers to primary, traditional, and/or community health workers – creating greater access to services in rural and remote areas in countries such as Ethiopia, Angola, and Rwanda.

VSI IMPACT AND VALUE

VSI has laid a strong foundation for the scale-up of high-impact health interventions in low-resource settings. VSI has also contributed to broader changes in the maternal and reproductive health landscape that extend beyond specific countries and projects:

- Pioneered the introduction and use of misoprostol for obstetric indications and helped de-stigmatize its use for obstetrics globally.
- Created policy change at the international level, including spearheading misoprostol’s inclusion on the World Health Organization’s Model List of Essential Medicines and the United Nations list of 13 “effective but overlooked” life-saving commodities. This policy also included task-shifting, where the WHO now endorses the practice for misoprostol distribution for preventing postpartum hemorrhage.
- Expanded international recognition of product distribution and service delivery distribution strategies for women who deliver at home, where many donors now endorse and train on community-based distribution for national scale-up programs.
- Facilitated development of strategies for misoprostol introduction regionally by promoting inter-country exchanges of local evidence through VSI-sponsored regional summits and international conferences.
- Secured commitments from the governments of Ethiopia, Angola, Zimbabwe, and Rwanda to expand access to postabortion care in rural and underserved areas through task-shifting strategies that include the use of the primary health care workers to deliver services.

VSI has improved access to essential medicines and services in over 26 countries through its strategies and model for change. In building national consensus, demonstrating product use, and shaping policies, VSI has helped expand the capacity of health systems to meet the needs of hard-to-reach populations. In these ways, VSI has catalyzed change at national and local levels to ensure that woman and girls can access life-saving medicines and services and lead healthier lives.