



The Role of Local Communities in Enhancing Maternal Health Initiatives in West Africa: A Perspective from Morocco

Karim El Mansouri¹, Youssef Chraïbi^{2,3}, Amira Benali⁴, Fatima Zahra Alaoui^{5,6}

¹ Department of Clinical Research, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez

² Department of Public Health, Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II

³ University Ibn Tofail, Kenitra

⁴ Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez

⁵ Department of Clinical Research, Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II

⁶ Mohammed 1st University of Oujda

Published: 14 December 2009 | **Received:** 30 August 2009 | **Accepted:** 23 November 2009

Correspondence: kmansouri@yahoo.com

DOI: [10.5281/zenodo.18530478](https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.18530478)

Author notes

Karim El Mansouri is affiliated with Department of Clinical Research, Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Youssef Chraïbi is affiliated with Department of Public Health, Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Amira Benali is affiliated with Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fez and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Fatima Zahra Alaoui is affiliated with Department of Clinical Research, Institut Agronomique et Vétérinaire Hassan II and focuses on Medicine research in Africa.

Abstract

Maternal health outcomes in West Africa require sustained improvement. While broader health programmes are vital, the specific role of integrated local community structures is less documented. This short report examines this integration from a Moroccan perspective, considering its potential relevance for West Africa. The purpose was to describe and analyse the perceived role of local community agents in supporting maternal health initiatives in Morocco. The objective was to identify transferable practices for similar settings in West Africa. A qualitative, descriptive approach was employed. Data were collected via semi-structured interviews with a purposive sample of healthcare professionals, community health workers, and local administrative officials involved in maternal health programmes. Analysis identified a central theme of ‘trusted intermediation’. Local community health workers, particularly women, were perceived as critical bridges between formal health systems and pregnant women. Initiatives using these workers reported a perceived increase in antenatal clinic attendance, including earlier first-trimester registrations in one regional programme. Local community structures, when formally recognised and integrated, can enhance the reach and acceptability of maternal health initiatives. The Moroccan experience indicates that community-embedded agents are important for addressing socio-cultural barriers to care. Maternal health strategies in West Africa should prioritise formal partnerships with existing local community structures. Investment in training and supporting community health workers, especially female workers, is recommended to leverage their position of trust. Maternal health, community health workers, West Africa, Morocco, community engagement, qualitative research This short report contributes a practical perspective on

integrating local community assets into maternal health programmes, highlighting a specific model from North Africa with potential relevance for West African regions.

Keywords: *Maternal health, Community participation, Sub-Saharan Africa, Primary healthcare, Health systems strengthening, Participatory action research*



ABSTRACT-ONLY PUBLICATION

This is an abstract-only publication. The complete research paper with full methodology, results, discussion, and references is available upon request.



REQUEST FULL PAPER

 **Email:** info@parj.africa

Request your copy of the full paper today!



SUBMIT YOUR RESEARCH

Are you a researcher in Africa? We welcome your submissions!

Join our community of African scholars and share your groundbreaking work.



Submit at: app.parj.africa



Scan to visit app.parj.africa

Open Access Scholarship from PARJ

Empowering African Research | Advancing Global Knowledge