

# UNPACKING WHAT MAKES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WORK FOR MATERNAL HEALTH



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## Why this research?



Community engagement approaches are often emphasized across global health interventions, **but** there is **little guidance** on **how** this community engagement **is done & what makes it work**. This study fills this gap by exploring how a community engagement intervention in Zambia, the Safe Motherhood Action Groups (SMAGs), improve maternal health care-seeking.

## What have I found?

- 1 Involving the community** in the coordination of SMAGs makes their work more relevant, acceptable and trusted.
- Using **simple language, real-life stories, humor, and audience participation** were described as useful ways to share important health information.
- Important **motivating** factors for SMAGs include **seeing value** in the work they do and a **desire to help** the community.
- While community engagement work is often voluntary, there is a **need for fiscal and physical resources** to **sustain** activities.



## Why does it matter?



These findings provide practical lessons that can be translated across settings. By outlining **what makes community engagement work**, these findings will be shared with the Zambian Ministry of Health and other stakeholders to inform recommendations and future community engagement programmes.