

## Social and Behavioral Change Communications Campaign: Increasing the use of Antenatal Care in Ghana



### Summary

- In 2022, CRS Ghana ran advertising campaigns on Facebook and Instagram, targeting women of reproductive age, in Ghana encouraging them to seek antenatal care when they become pregnant to help reduce the country's maternal mortality rate. These ads were viewed a total of 15 million times by over 2 million people over 4 months.
- Thanks to [Meta's brand lift test](#) measurement tool, based on the 2 million people CRS Ghana campaign reached, the brand lift study shows it is statistically likely that 779,195 reached women in Ghana expressed the knowledge of accessing antenatal care appointments to increase the chance of a healthy pregnancy. This means statistically the target audience is aware that Antenatal Care services are available in clinics and hospitals.
- While there are many lessons still to learn, this blog post shares in detail what CRS Ghana learned about what worked and what didn't when trying to reach women in Ghana about antenatal care access.

## Maternal mortality in Ghana

To increase maternal health in Ghana, the Ghana National Safe Motherhood Protocol recommends that all pregnant women make their first antenatal care (ANC) appointment within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and attend at least eight ANC visits before delivery. Yet many pregnant women still initiate ANC after the first trimester and fail to achieve the recommended number of ANC visits. Adequate use of ANC services remains challenging, even though ANC is free under the National Health Insurance Plan in Ghana.

Based on our research, we know some of the key barriers that stop women from seeking ANC include:

- Poor knowledge of availability of maternal antenatal services
- Belief in cultural practices, rituals, attitudes, and belief systems inimical to health
- Inadequate access to skilled health service, for example many pregnant women who initiate ANC after the first trimester, fail to achieve the recommended number of ANC visits throughout their pregnancies. Resulting sometimes in undetected complications before giving birth. Household wealth is shown to significantly influence the lack of attendance to ANC services in Ghana.

## One step closer to receiving early initiation of antenatal care for pregnant women in Ghana

To help increase adoption of ANC in Ghana, CRS Ghana identified the key drivers that would encourage women to adopt the desired health behavior such as:

- The desire to have a healthy pregnancy and baby, can be improved by an increase of maternal literacy, meaning educating women of reproductive age on topics such recommended supplements and vitamins, best nutritional practices, and guidance during and after pregnancy.
- Reinforce education on negative effects of some cultural practices, such as religious rituals, and belief systems, that tend to go against medical practices. Such as a *prigibu ritual*, which is when a woman in Ghana is supposed to announce her pregnancy or make it known to the community members, this ritual often delays and denies pregnant women the opportunity of seeking early antenatal services.
- Create awareness of free access to skilled maternal services in both hospitals and clinics, as well as community midwives.
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As part of CRS' maternal and child health programming in Ghana, CRS partnered with Meta to help increase the importance of seeking ANC when pregnant and help to increase knowledge of where to access free ANC.

Based on these key drivers and CRS Ghana’s existing health programming in Ghana, the team decided to target women of reproductive age, 18-45 years old, within 7 target regions in Ghana. The goal was to reach 1 million users in Facebook and Instagram, with messages aimed to change the target group’s perception on the benefits of attending ANC visits for a healthy pregnancy and healthy baby. This campaign aimed to increase knowledge of the availability of free ANC health services, as well as available midwives within their communities.

**CRS Ghana** Sponsored

Visit the antenatal clinic as soon as you know you are pregnant to ensure a healthy pregnancy and safe delivery.

**THE BEST TIME**  
to attend ANC is as soon as you know you are pregnant.

MESSANGER  
**No two pregnancies are the same!** [Send message](#)

**CRS Ghana** Sponsored

Attend an antenatal clinic regularly to benefit from all services required by the pregnant woman.

**WHY ATTEND ANC?**  
To ensure mother and baby are healthy!

MESSANGER  
**Attend an antenatal clinic regularly** [Learn more](#)

## The Campaign

The first round of ads drove women to a chatbot where they could ask questions about ANC and get real-time responses. This led to an outstanding 51K messages from over 7K users, during a period of one month. Questions ranged from access to ANC, to pregnancy concerns, to medical questions and more. This provided the team with a lot of insight into what women needed during pregnancy related to ANC care in Ghana.

These insights led to a change for the second round of ads in these campaigns. Instead of connecting to a chatbot, we brought people together in an open Facebook Group where members could ask more personal questions about ANC and pregnancy. CRS staff who worked on the ANC project, monitored and engaged in the Group to answer questions and to ensure misinformation was not spread. To our

**CRS Ghana**

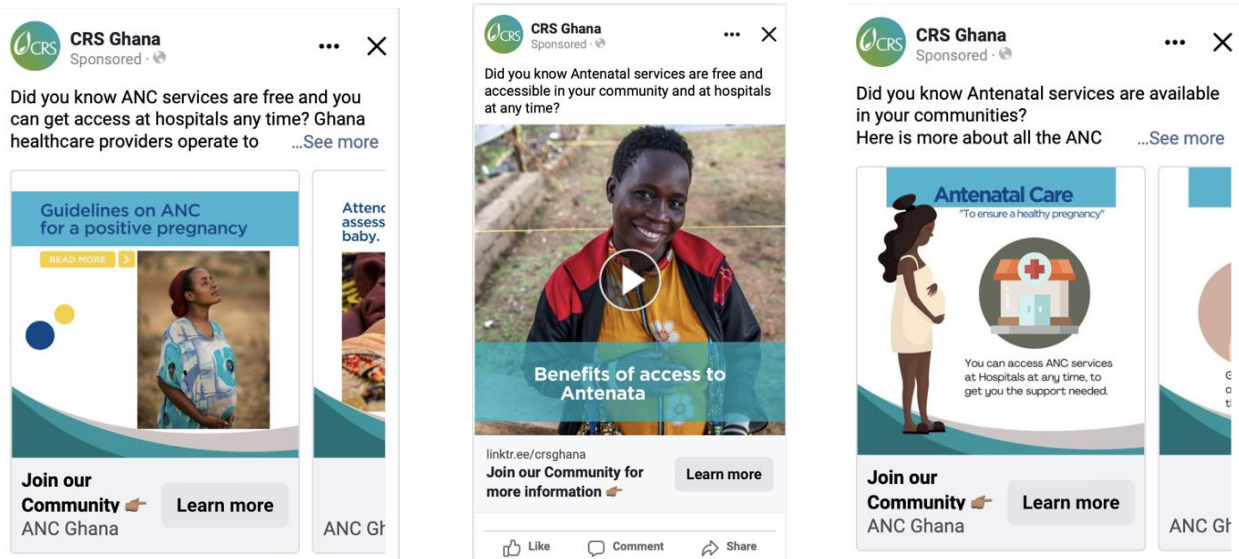
Hi Maria! Please let us know how we can help you.

When you reply, CRS Ghana will be able to see your public info and which ad you clicked.

- What is ANC?
- What is antenatal care?
- What does antenatal care costs?
- Where can I receive antenatal care?
- Why should I receive antenatal care?

type a mes...

surprise, the community grew to 1,700 members who discussed early pregnancy signs, nutritional guidance, why they should initiate early ANC services, best treatments preconception, post-natal, as well as midwife assistance, amongst many others. This Group is currently still active addressing all health concern related questions.



## Results

Thanks to Meta's ad credits, this campaign reached over 2 million users on Facebook, double the initial estimated target audience. The ads were viewed over 15 million times. We believe this could be due to ANC being a global health concerning subject that is not commonly discussed openly in social media, specifically in Ghana. In addition, we believe providing our target audience with a Chatbot where they were able to ask and immediately get a response about ANC, as well create a safe space (open Group) to discuss all their personal questions relevant to their pregnancy, was indeed very effective.

Brand Lift is a kind of lift test where you can use brand polling and other brand awareness measurements to help understand the true value of your Meta advertising and how well it performs independent of your other marketing efforts. Brand Lift works by selecting a representative sample of people eligible to see your advertising. That sample group is then randomly divided into test and holdout groups, and causal inference techniques are then used to measure the impact of your advertising.

Thanks to Meta's brand lift study tool, based on the 2 million people CRS Ghana campaign reached, the brand lift study shows based on the 2 million people CRS Ghana campaign reached, it is statistically likely 779,195 women in Ghana expressed the knowledge of accessing antenatal care appointments to increase the chance of a healthy pregnancy. Which means the target audience is aware that Antenatal Care services are available in clinics and hospitals.

## What's next

The use of real pregnant women and health workers from Ghana in the ads performed better than illustrations. And the “join the Facebook Group” call to action performed well. Community Management was key for CRS Ghana’s Chatbot and Facebook group, acknowledging everyone’s questions, sharing weekly relevant and educational content about antenatal care and pregnancy, as well as other key practices to prevent pregnancy complications.

CRS Ghana will use these learnings to effectively reach women in Ghana to ensure they have safe access to antenatal care, and ensure a healthy pregnancy and baby, and with this continue to reduce maternal and infant mortality in the country. As we continue our work, we’ll consider Facebook advertising as part of future Social and Behavior Change Communications campaigns. The Facebook Group is still active with a combination of content from informative / engaging posts, and will continue to remain open to the public, and possibly expand its organic reach in conjunction with other countries within Africa where we have ANC projects.