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# **Gamjul MotherCare: A Digital Lifeline for Safe Pregnancies in The Gambia**

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Gamjul, The Gambia, West Africa

GAMJUL

**Title of the Innovation/Practice**

Gamjul MotherCare: A Digital Lifeline for Safe Pregnancies in The Gambia

**Lead Organization(s) and Country/Region**

Gamjul, The Gambia, West Africa

**Problem Statement**

In The Gambia, pregnant women, particularly in rural and underserved areas, face systemic barriers to quality antenatal care, timely interventions, and reliable health information. Manual recordkeeping, under-resourced clinics, and weak follow-up systems contribute to high maternal and neonatal mortality. Health providers lack digital tools to track individual risk factors, detect danger signs early, or ensure continuity of care. These gaps are exacerbated by limited health literacy and infrastructural constraints. In response, Gamjul, a women-led organization focused on equitable maternal health, is developing MotherCare, an inclusive, mobile-based platform to improve maternal outcomes. This culturally adapted, low-tech innovation strengthens communication between providers and expectant mothers, promotes informed health-seeking behavior, and enhances care coordination through a locally rooted, scalable approach.

**Innovation or Practice Description**

MotherCare is a community-driven digital platform strengthening antenatal care through accessible mobile technology. Co-created with over 200 women, midwives, and health officials, it empowers pregnant women and equips frontline providers.

For pregnant women, MotherCare provides:

- Local-language SMS and voice reminders for antenatal visits
- Weekly gestation-specific health tips via SMS/audio
- A maternal health hotline connecting to certified midwives and community health volunteers

**For providers, it offers:**

- A tablet-based digital logbook for patient tracking, referrals, and follow-ups
- Offline-first capabilities with periodic cloud syncing
- A user-friendly interface tailored for low-tech environments

The MVP will launch in Brikama and Basse, piloting with 100–150 women across two clinics over 3–4 months. Community health workers will receive training to support adoption and digital literacy. The platform emphasizes accessibility for low-literacy users and smooth integration with current workflows.

This low-cost, open-source tool enhances service delivery and maternal self-efficacy in low-resource settings. Its design centers equity, usability, and long-term sustainability.

**Results and Evidence of Impact (Anticipated)**

While implementation is upcoming, early outcomes include:

- 200+ women and 15 providers engaged in co-design
- 85% of participants showed strong interest in mHealth tools
- Providers anticipate reduced missed appointments and better follow-ups
- Ministry of Health partners expressed willingness to scale post-pilot

Pilot evaluation will use pre/post surveys and interviews to assess maternal knowledge, clinic attendance, and system usability.

### **What resources or policies support it?**

The "Gamjul MotherCare" initiative aligns closely with The Gambia's national health strategies and policies on maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH). Several key policies and programs support such digital health innovations:

#### **1. Reproductive, Maternal, Neonatal, and Adolescents Health (RMNCAH) Policy 2017–2026**

This policy underscores the government's commitment to improving reproductive and child health services. It emphasizes ensuring access to skilled birth attendance, antenatal care, and emergency obstetric services, aiming to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality rates.

#### **2. National Health Sector Strategic Plan 2014–2020**

The plan focuses on strengthening antenatal care services at all levels, including training healthcare providers, community engagement, and providing necessary equipment and supplies. It also advocates for the introduction of incentive packages to promote early antenatal booking.

#### **3. Smart Paper Technology (SPT) Initiative**

Implemented at Bundung Maternal and Child Health Hospital, SPT is an innovative paper-to-digital system that links maternal and newborn health information with immunization records. This initiative enhances reporting and data availability, facilitating better maternal vaccine safety surveillance.

#### **4. Country Cooperation Strategy 2024–2028**

This strategy outlines the Ministry of Health's role in setting health policies, conducting research, and mobilizing resources. It supports the integration of digital health solutions to improve health service delivery and outcomes.

These policies and initiatives create a supportive environment for digital health solutions like "Gamjul MotherCare," aiming to enhance maternal health outcomes through improved access to care and information.

### **Scalability & Sustainability**

MotherCare is built for replication. It leverages open-source software, supports multilingual customization, and aligns national health policies. Local health workers will act as digital ambassadors, ensuring community ownership. Partnerships with the Ministry of Health and international donors are advancing, with plans to integrate postnatal care and immunization tracking. Offline capabilities and interoperability make it fit for broader deployment across West Africa.

### **Lessons Learned or Key Insights**

- Participatory design ensures cultural and contextual fit
- Offline functionality is critical in low-connectivity zones
- Engaging health authorities from the outset promotes integration
- MVP piloting allows adaptive learning and resource efficiency

### **Partner Quotes or Community Voice**

"I used to forget my check-ups. Now I feel more confident and prepared." –Awa, expectant mother

"It will help us know who missed their visit and follow up better." – Nurse Mariama, Brikama Health Center

## **Sources and Acknowledgements**

- Gamjul community consultations (2024–2025)
- Brikama and Basse district health teams
- Ministry of Health – Gambia (digital integration discussions)
- Technical guidance: Digital Health Africa, UNFPA Gambia