About Touch Foundation

Touch Foundation combines the best of private and public sector approaches and expertise to strengthen the Tanzanian health system across different levels of care. We focus our activities on two key elements of the health system: improving the quantity and quality of health workers and enhancing healthcare delivery mechanisms.

Touch’s commitment to addressing Tanzania’s healthcare crisis is coupled with a philosophy that international development should not foster dependency, but rather create sustainable change.

Touch’s Collaborative Work

In addressing Tanzania's key health system challenges, Touch recognizes that those best equipped to address them are Tanzanians themselves. Touch identifies the local organizations who are most efficiently addressing pressing issues in the Tanzanian health system. We seek to develop relationships with effective local partners that magnify their impact. In order to ensure sustainability of solutions, we transition from a collaborative co-ownership approach to local ownership.

By collaborating with organizations in communities where we work, we combine their local knowledge and expertise with our capabilities and global relationships. The impact we create is immediate, and the results endure.

We work with organizations based on their leadership, knowledge of the local community, and the strength of their capability and their demonstrated results. PRINMAT (Private Nurses and Midwives Association of Tanzania) is an organization we are privileged to partner with.

Introduction to PRINMAT

Rationale and History

In Tanzania, a country in Sub Saharan Africa with a rapidly growing population of 54 million, almost half of all births still occur at home rather than a health facility under the care of a healthcare worker (HCW). This contributes to high rates of mortality and morbidity amongst women and children. A major goal of the Tanzanian Government and other local and international partners has been to extend maternal, newborn, and child health services by increasing the number of facilities and skilled HCWs; community level education and outreach efforts; and availability of medicines, vaccines, and supplies. As emphasized in *Big Results Now!,* the Government’s strategy for propelling the country to middle income country status by 2025, ensuring efficiency and equity in health care provision and improving
the health of women and children will enable Tanzania to realize ambitious social and economic development goals.¹ Both the public and private sectors of the health system play important roles in expanding access to affordable quality health care.

Nurses and midwives in Tanzania offer frontline health services independently of doctors to underserved communities and, in particular, improve access to affordable and lifesaving maternal, child, and reproductive health services. An assessment conducted by CARE International in 1997 revealed an extreme shortage of registered private nurses and midwives with only 22 across the country operating their own practice. In order to improve the business management skills and standardize quality of nurse-run private practices, CARE International recommended that all practicing nurses be joined under one coordinating body. As a result, the Private Nurses and Midwives Association of Tanzania was founded in 1999 with support from CARE, the US Agency for International Development (USAID), and Family Health International (currently FHI360).

Sustainable Growth

PRINMAT is a non-governmental non-profit umbrella organization that supports midwife-owned and managed maternity homes (also known as clinics). PRINMAT was founded by Ms. Keziah Kapesa, a highly accomplished Registered Nurse Midwife, who is currently the Board Chairperson. Under her leadership, PRINMAT has grown to include 85 nurse-run clinics from an initial membership of only 22. The geographic coverage of these PRINMAT facilities now spans 22 of Tanzania’s 25 regions. Notably, over 75% of the clinics are owned and run by female nurses, empowering women with unique entrepreneurial opportunities in the private sector. PRINMAT provides coordination and capacity development support to its membership and represents them at national forums and to senior national-level nursing leadership.

PRINMAT’s revenue has expanded steadily through a combination of grants from international organizations, membership dues from clinics, and interest from their savings and credit scheme (SACCOS) to help PRINMAT members finance startup costs and capital improvement of clinics. Additionally, the organization launched the Kullangwa PRINMAT Nursing and Midwifery School in 2014 outside the capital city, Dar es Salaam, to train Enrolled Nurse Midwives and Community Health Workers. The School expects to receive accreditation to train Diploma Nurse Midwives (Registered Nurse Midwives) by 2017. The School generates a pipeline of well-trained nurses and midwives that pair with the existing PRINMAT clinics to complete their internships post-graduation and may even start their own clinic with the support of loans and business management capability-building from PRINMAT.

Robust Organizational Structure

The national PRINMAT Council is comprised of all nurses and midwives in private practice, which meet each year during the Annual General Meeting to discuss management, financial, and strategic issues in a transparent and open forum. PRINMAT is governed by the National Executive Committee.

(i.e. the Board) consisting of the Chairperson (Ms. Keziah Kapesa), Deputy, Secretary, Treasurer, and seven members selected to represent the geographical distribution of clinics. The Executive Secretary is the most senior officer and is based at the headquarters in Dar es Salaam where they provide overall strategic oversight and support the Program Officers in coordinating the nurse-run clinics nationwide.

A Private Sector Model for Quality Integrated Family Health Services

The role of the private sector

Tanzania’s Primary Health Services Development Program 2007-2017 estimates that private sector health facilities account for about 30% of the total facilities in the country and prioritizes strengthening and promoting their participation to achieve equitable distribution of basic health care. Additionally, about half of all training institutions are privately owned and operated. The private sector, including for-profit, nonprofit, and faith-based organizations, supplement the public health system and play a pivotal role in expanding services to the rural areas and in operating the referral hospitals. PRINMAT’s private non-profit maternity homes are situated in the underserved rural and peri-urban areas alongside

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the communities that need them most. The community, the Government, Touch, and other stakeholders recognize PRINMAT for their long-term commitment to affordability, accessibility, quality, and collaboration in all their health services and training opportunities.

**Accessibility and Affordability**

PRINMAT’s extensive geographic reach covers 22 of the country’s 25 regions. To improve access to preventive, curative, and rehabilitative care with a focus on maternal, child, and reproductive health in under-resourced communities in these regions, PRINMAT embeds their clinics within the villages they seek to serve. Clinics operate normal daily hours and reliably respond to any emergency or urgent event, providing care, referrals, and transport assistance. Each year, PRINMAT clinics provide labor and delivery services to 17,000 women and refer complicated cases requiring a caesarian section or other forms of comprehensive emergency obstetric care.

During the Annual General Meeting, the organization establishes a fee cap for common services, such as antenatal visits and labor and delivery. Each PRINMAT clinic sets its respective fees based on the payor mix of their catchment area and, in general, follows a sliding payment scale to ensure that clients can access needed services without facing extreme financial hardships.

Staffing of PRINMAT clinics varies depending on the size of the facility and its patient volume, with some employing as many as 12 HWCs and additional numbers of support staff. Nursing students at Kullangwa PRINMAT Nursing and Midwifery School conduct rotations and internships at affiliated PRINMAT clinics and receive practical hands-on training and mentorship while also supplementing the number of staff to increase service provision.

**Patient-Centered Care and Youth Friendly Services**

Unfriendly services contribute to poor health-seeking behavior amongst pregnant women and adolescents. PRINMAT’s value proposition is their commitment to respectful, confidential, gender-sensitive and quality care, which will transform the communities’ perception and utilization of these lifesaving health services. PRINMAT clinics as well as their management and staff are part of the fabric of the community and they build personal relationships with clients through compassionate patient-centered care. Their clinics are recognized for being clean and well-stocked and staff members for patience and knowledge.

PRINMAT is capable of building capacity internally and financially sustaining high impact programs beyond time bound donor funding. PRINMAT has sustained a youth-friendly services (YFS) program originally supported by Family Health International with funding from the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) to promote the prevention of HIV/AIDS in married youth (15-25 years) including provision of counselling and testing services, family planning, and PMTCT. Another program to change behaviors and sociocultural norms around male involvement in reproductive, maternal, and child health, which was originally supported by Cordaid in the Netherlands, has been integrated into the package of services. PRINMAT recognizes that their services will benefit the community the most if they are able to meet the unique needs of adolescents, women, men, and children and, in turn, clients will continuously utilize their quality care.

**Collaborative Approach**

PRINMAT is a key private sector partner of the Government of Tanzania, working with the public sector to improve health services nationally through policy reforms, quality improvement, and health promotion and advocacy efforts. A few PRINMAT maternity homes have even been made government-designated facilities in places where public infrastructure is lacking.

As described above, several US-based NGOs and international organizations partner with PRINMAT to support their efforts to scale quality integrated health care within a sustainable public private partnership approach. Most recently, USAID’s SHOPS-plus project worked with PRINMAT to develop a scope of practice for nurses and midwives to support the community-level implementation of
HIV/AIDS prevention and response activities such as PMTCT, early infant diagnosis, and antiretroviral services. In all their programs, PRINMAT collects high quality data of reporting and planning purposes.

![Figure 2.](image)

**Figure 2.** Rajabu Saluma brought his 4-month old daughter to a PRINMAT clinic midday for a routine check-up while his wife was at work. He prefers to use PRINMAT for its efficient, quick, and affordable care.

### Touch’s Partnership with PRINMAT

**Description of Relationship with Touch**

Touch Foundation recognizes PRINMAT as one of the leading private non-governmental Tanzanian healthcare organizations. Touch has partnered with PRINMAT on a program funded by Medtronic Global Health Foundation to eradicate Rheumatic Heart Disease (RHD) in the Lake Zone of Tanzania (pop. 17 million). RHD is the most commonly acquired heart disease in people under the age of 25 and often begins in childhood as strep throat. If left untreated, it can develop into rheumatic fever which damages heart valves, resulting in RHD and potentially causing heart failure, stroke, or cardiac rhythm abnormalities. Women with RHD are at particular risk of significant illness or death during pregnancy and labor.

As we strengthen RHD prevention and control efforts at the district level, Touch plans to equip PRINMAT clinics with ultrasound equipment and to provide training so that pregnant women attending their facilities can receive combined antenatal (i.e. sonogram) and left heart screening (i.e. echocardiograms). Early detection of heart conditions including RHD with echocardiograms and early treatment can save the lives of both women and their newborn children. Ultrasound trained nurses will also participate in school-based screening programs to detect more undiagnosed cardiovascular conditions in the at-risk school aged population.

**Future Plans**

Touch Foundation aims to strengthen the health system in Tanzania by working in partnership with a range of private and public partners from the local to international level. We have prioritized our partnership with PRINMAT because of their financially sustainable approach to quality primary health
care provision in underserved communities. We believe this uniquely positions them to leverage catalytic and strategic investments and radically transform the health ecosystem from within.

**Contact Information**

Dr. Steve Justus | Chief Medical Officer and SVP | Touch Foundation  
+1 917 434 7890 | steve_justus@mckinsey.com

Dr. Renae Stafford | Program Director of Academic and Clinical Services | Touch Foundation  
+255 753 363 145 | renae_stafford@mckinsey.com

Ms. Keziah M. Kapesa | Board Chairperson | PRINMAT  
o: +255 22 2761518 | m: +255 784 269057 | may.kapesa@yahoo.com

Novest Matee | Acting Executive Secretary | PRINMAT  
o: +255 22 2761518 | m: +255 784 824949 | novestmatee@gmail.com