RESULTS

• The SWTs helped facilities instantaneously increase community awareness around key reproductive health issues.
• After SWT interventions, 85% of participating health facilities resolved numerous problems through community engagement.
• Similarly, 85% of participating facilities were able to address health challenges by garnering community contributions. For example, community members supported reconstruction and rehabilitation activities in order to address environmental and sanitation needs and improve service availability and quality.
• All 7 districts adapted the SWT model as a best practice for community engagement and have developed plans to scale up SWTs to additional health facilities not included in this program.

METHODOLOGY

• EngenderHealth facilitated SWTs in 28 project-supported facilities across 7 districts over a 1-year period (January to December 2017). Each SWT involved 40 community members—including community health actors (such as traditional birth attendants), local community leaders, and local government officials—and representatives from the health facility. The project employed a standard guideline and checklist in facilitating the SWTs and always followed the experience with an action planning session aimed at addressing challenges and opportunities identified during the SWT.
• The project employed a mixed method approach to gather key data related to facility strengths and weaknesses. Based on these findings, EngenderHealth facilitated action planning sessions and assigned health facility staff and community representatives with responsibilities for implementation and monitoring.

IMPLICATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

• This project demonstrated the value of community engagement in improving demand for health services, including specifically reproductive and sexual health, as well as increasing quality of service provision through community contributions.
• By bringing together multiple stakeholders, SWTs can promote acceptance and normalization of controversial issues, such as FP and PAC, while fostering community engagement and accountability for health service provision and health outcomes. Health facility personnel are able to sensitize community representatives to critical health issues and identify areas where they can improve service delivery to better meet community needs.