



ENDING PREVENTABLE CHILD AND MATERNAL DEATHS

Restore the joys of motherhood and childhood in the world's most difficult places



Overview

One of the most dangerous things a woman in the developing world can do is get pregnant. Young children, too, are vulnerable to preventable diseases that can take their lives—provided they live past birth.

Though progress is being made, children born into poverty are almost twice as likely to die before the age of 5 than children born to wealthier families. Every year, 5.3 million children around the world die before they reach their fifth birthday! Nearly half of these are newborns who will not survive beyond their first month of life.

Most of these deaths are caused by complications during pregnancy and childbirth, malnutrition, pneumonia, diarrhea, and malaria. Though these factors are almost always preventable and treatable, in the developing world they're often a death sentence for mothers and children. Simply because of where they're born, children's odds of survival plummet.

But World Vision is determined to end these needless tragedies. We seek God's vision of fullness of life for every child, and believe all mothers and their babies deserve to have the basic information, medical support, and care needed to ensure safe deliveries and protection from preventable diseases.

By working hand in hand with the communities we serve, we're advancing healthcare for families in some of the world's most remote areas in a sustainable way. And we train thousands of local volunteers as frontline care providers to deliver solutions that help mothers and children go beyond surviving—to thrive.



MATERNAL HEALTH IS KEY

It is impossible to separate the health of a mother from the health of her child. A mother's age, the number of children she has, and the timing and spacing of her pregnancies are primary determinants of maternal and infant survival. In fact, a mother's death in childbirth lowers her baby's chance of survival in the first month to only 19%.²

World Vision's efforts focus on pregnant women, newborns, and children younger than 5 because these groups are the most vulnerable. The first 1,000 days of a child's life—from conception to age 2—are an especially critical time when the right nutrition and health interventions can have life-altering implications for a child's physical and mental development.

Why it matters

Far too many pregnant women and their babies can't get access to the basic healthcare they need. And these difficult conditions lead to tragic results.

- **About 810 women die each day from preventable, pregnancy-related causes**—and 94% of these deaths occur in low-resource settings.³
- Globally, **one in three women deliver their babies without a doctor**, nurse, or midwife.⁴
- In the developing world, **one third of health clinic delivery rooms don't have clean water**.⁵
- **For over 800,000 babies every year, their first day of life is also their last.** And another 1 million newborns die within seven days of birth.¹
- Malnutrition contributes to nearly **half of all deaths among children under 5**.¹

The facts are daunting—but the problems are solvable. World Vision's experience and expertise allow us to help mothers and children access the right services at the right time, which can mean the difference between life and death.

Our approach

World Vision uses evidence-based, cost-effective practices that address the primary causes of maternal and child death and illness. When we design projects, we build in local ownership because we believe each person's dignity, value, and giftedness matter. And because it's easier for individuals to sustain positive behaviors in supportive surroundings, our programs work at the household, community, and system levels. This multifaceted approach transforms relationships—between husbands and wives, parents and children, health workers and patients, and communities and their governments—to create change that lasts.

World Vision works to meet people where they are with information and services appropriate for each community. Our maternal and child health programs include models such as:

- **Channels of Hope (CoH)** – World Vision's signature program model for equipping faith leaders and their communities to transform children's lives. First developed over a decade ago as a faith-based response to the devastating effects of HIV and AIDS, it's been adapted to train community leaders to promote maternal and child health and respond to difficult and taboo issues like HIV stigma and gender norms.
- **Timed and targeted Counseling (ttC)** – A family-inclusive behavior change method that supports pregnant women and parents and caregivers of children up to 2 with appropriately-timed household visits. TtC trains community health workers to provide information about disease prevention and treatment, empowering families to improve their health.
- **Citizen Voice and Action (CVA)** – Our proven citizen engagement approach to building social accountability. CVA employs targeted civic education, participatory community services scorecards, and social audits of services. People are equipped to compare government standards—such as student-teacher ratios or nurses per capita—with the reality of service provision, specific to communities' contexts. Leaders make action plans in partnership with the government and key stakeholders for improved service provision and accountability.

NEHA'S STORY



Five years ago, Neha's life looked very different than it does today. She was only 18 when her father arranged her marriage to a laborer in another state in India. Her first pregnancy was filled with fear and loneliness. "I was very scared as I didn't have enough knowledge about motherhood and there was nobody to guide me," she says. "I never weighed myself, didn't take the necessary vaccinations, and would hardly talk to anyone. I didn't know anything about cleanliness. I delivered Arpit at home. My son fell sick very often. This continued for almost two years."

When World Vision India started timed and targeted counseling (ttC) in her village, Neha attended the trainings. The knowledge she gained there—along with access to better health services—made a big difference in her second pregnancy. After learning about healthy timing and spacing between pregnancies, she decided that she would wait to have her second child after her older son turned 3.

Now Neha works as a ttC volunteer, helping train other young mothers. "For my second child, I felt more prepared with not only information but also because I was training other women about the same things," she says. Today, her younger son, Harshit, is 4 months old—and much healthier than Arpit was at the same age.

Simple solutions save lives

Simple solutions are often the most effective—even when problems are complex. That's why, to help improve maternal and child health across the globe, World Vision partners with communities on efforts that go right where they're needed most by:

- **Empowering local faith and community leaders** to become agents of change and address cultural values that impact the safety of pregnancy and childbirth.
- **Training and equipping community health workers and volunteers** to recognize, treat, and help prevent diseases affecting mothers and children.
- **Educating mothers** about nutrition needs, pre- and postnatal care, and safe birth practices, so they can take control of their own well-being.
- **Protecting people from infection and disease** by ensuring babies, children, and pregnant and nursing women receive diagnosis and treatment services.
- **Promoting shared decision-making and caregiving** with a special focus on increasing men's engagement in prenatal care, delivery, and caregiving to foster stronger family relationships.
- **Providing vital resources** such as vitamin supplements, medicine, and medical supplies so local health facilities have the tools they need to combat life-threatening conditions.
- **Leveraging our industry-leading water programs** to deliver clean water, improve sanitation facilities, and train in good hygiene practices to prevent infection and disease among children and their families.

By investing strategically in proven tools and approaches that improve the health of the most vulnerable, we can save lives and restore the joys of motherhood and childhood in the world's most difficult places.



WORLD VISION FOCUSES ON
THREE ESSENTIAL OUTCOMES
FOR CHILD WELL-BEING.

- 1 Mothers and children are well-nourished.**
- 2 Mothers and children are protected from infection and disease.**
- 3 Mothers and children have access to essential health services.**

¹ UNICEF, *Child Mortality Report*, September 2019

² USAID, *Maternal and Child Health*, viewed October 2019

³ WHO, *Fact Sheet on Maternal Mortality*, September 2019

⁴ UNICEF, *Committing to Child Survival: A Promise Renewed*, September 2015

⁵ *Journal of Surgical Research*, *Water availability at hospitals in low- and middle-income countries: implications for improving access to safe surgical care*, September 2016