

Grace!



FALL 2009

INTERNATIONAL CHILD CARE AT WORK IN HAITI & THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Good Maternal Health - a Global Challenge

Each year more than 57 million women experience a pregnancy-related complication, and more than 525,000 women die either during or after childbirth as a result of poor or inadequate maternal health care – that’s one woman per minute, every day. The vast majority of these women (99 percent) are in the developing world. The suffering that these women and their families endure is totally unnecessary and unacceptable. Reducing maternal mortality is one of the UNs Millennium Development Goals, yet little has really changed in countries like Haiti to make this happen.

Many women in Haiti have no access to doctors for pre-natal care, so early determination of high-risk pregnancies cannot be made. Childbirth in Haiti can be a dangerous process. Deliveries are usually assisted by untrained Traditional Birth Attendants, in unsanitary conditions, on dirt floors and with no emergency facilities close by. Young expectant mothers are often philosophical about maternal mortality and believe that if they die it’s “God’s will.”

Geographic location is also a significant factor in maternal mortality. Women living in rural areas are often three to four hour walks from the nearest clinic or medical facility – this delay can be fatal. Time is of the essence to ensure prompt treatment where the mother is experiencing any of the many complications that can occur during childbirth.

The majority of expectant mothers in the West are fortunate to have easy access to prenatal and post natal clinics and hospitals. When a mother dies of pregnancy complications in North America, we are shocked and deeply saddened at such a tragedy – and quite rightly so! Yet in Haiti, the maternal mortality rate is 100 times higher than in North America. Six hundred and thirty women die for every 100,000 deliveries.

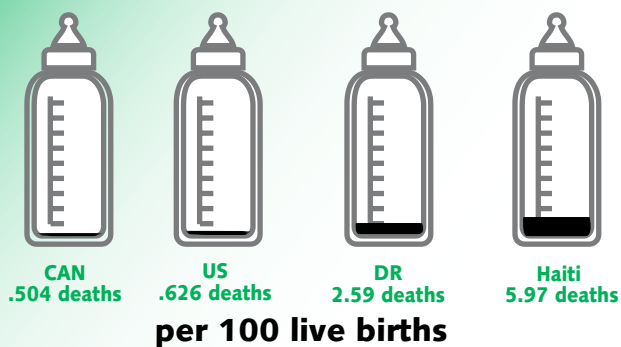
Conditions that contribute to maternal mortality include: eclampsia, hemorrhaging, obstructed labor, infection, unsafe abortions and other direct causes. Most of these can be treated and death avoided if caught in time and professional help is on hand. When a young mother dies, this is a tragedy that touches many lives – especially the remaining children. Most families are surviving from day to day, and losing a mother, can, and often does, spell disaster. But thankfully, ICC’s maternal health programs in Haiti are working to improve both maternal and child health, keeping mothers safe during pregnancy and delivery and children healthy as they grow. ●

“For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb.”

Psalm 139:13 NIV



Infant Mortality Rates:



ICC is Helping to Accomplish the UN's Millennium Development Goals



Nine years ago this September, world leaders gathered at the United Nations headquarters and established eight goals for the improvement of the developing world in the new millennium. They gave themselves 15 years to accomplish their lofty list. Progress toward these goals is tracked by the U.N., and encouraging progress has been made. International Child Care's interventions in Haiti and the Dominican Republic incorporate many of these goals.

Please visit www.internationalchildcare.org for more information about our programs.

Photo © Keith Mumma



GOAL 1: ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER

ICC treats malnutrition in Haiti by providing an innovative peanut-based product called Medika Mamba to under-nourished children at our hospital in northern Haiti; a six-week course of treatment can return a child to a healthy weight.

GOAL 2: ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION

The School Inclusion program in the Dominican Republic helps children with special needs enroll in school, and provides extra assistance to teachers, administrators and the students to make sure that the student is getting the best possible education.

GOAL 3: PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN

ICC's Micoenterprise Loan program encourages female entrepreneurship; we have helped women grow their businesses to a profitable success, which leads to a better standard of living for entire families.

GOAL 4: REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY

ICC's community health workers in Haiti and the DR monitor and chart the growth and weight of children so that ill-health can be immediately addressed. Disease caused by water-borne pathogens is a common cause of death. We treat these problems before they are life-threatening and provide clean water to families, reducing illness and death. Medical care is provided to families for free or a reduced cost.

GOAL 5: IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH

The Reproductive Health Clinic at Grace Children's Hospital provides ob/gyn care, contraception and education for women, in turn improving their chances of having healthy children! We train Traditional Birth Attendants to oversee homebirths and provide maternal and newborn care. We also run two maternity homes in Northern Haiti to provide appropriate medical care for expectant mothers in high-risk pregnancies.

GOAL 6: COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES

Grace Children's Hospital tests every inpatient for HIV/AIDS, and treats that disease as well as malaria, tuberculosis and other diseases. We provide anti-retroviral drugs as needed for those who test positive for HIV. We also have an urban health program targeting tuberculosis, and work with families to make sure that those with the disease don't spread it to others.

GOAL 7: ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

ICC is helping to fund a new water filtration project in northern Haiti, with the Haitian-produced BioSand filtration system, which is installed in villages throughout the North. We also help to fund and build latrines, which improves water quality and community health.

GOAL 8: DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT

ICC is pleased to partner with organizations around the world to improve the standard of health care in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Some of our partners include the United Methodist Advance, the Dutch TEAR fund and the Canadian government.

Source: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals>

ICC's Maternal Health Program in Northern Haiti Saves Women's Lives!

With your support, and a generous grant from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), International Child Care has implemented a Maternal Health Program to address many of the reproductive health issues plaguing women in northern Haiti.

Northern Haiti is a very rugged, mountainous area with poor roads and little access to modern health care. For most women in this region, the journey to a safe delivery center is measured in the number of hours it takes to walk – which can easily be three to four hours. This delay in reaching care often can result in the death of both the mother and child, or even lead to further health complications. Reducing the delay in reaching care is critical. In order to overcome this delay, ICC is providing an All-Terrain Vehicle, which will be used as an ambulance that will transport women to the nearest hospital when a complication arises. International Child Care is also improving communications for the Traditional Birth Attendants by providing them with cell phones to immediately contact the ambulance driver in the event of a complication during delivery.

Additionally, the training that the TBA's receive will facilitate early detection of possible complications. Cultural norms can be a barrier to expectant women seeking help with pregnancy. International Child Care is providing training to Traditional Birth Attendants about the importance of pre-natal care, early detection and appropriate management of risk factors. They in turn encourage young mothers to attend one of ICC's pre-natal clinics. International Child Care offers over 200 pre-natal clinics in northern Haiti. During visits to these clinics, mothers are tested for Sexually Transmitted Infections and HIV/AIDS. If an HIV test is positive, transmission of HIV to the unborn child can be prevented by treating with antiretroviral drugs.

To ensure that women have timely access to appropriate care, ICC is setting up several Centre D'Bergements – (Lodging Centers) four or five roomed homes which can accommodate up to ten women close to their delivery dates. They will give birth at the centers, but if a complication is detected, the homes are just minutes from the hospital in Grande Riviere du Nord or Bahun. Contracts have also been established with other major hospitals to receive patients should there be an obstetrical emergency.

Thanks to the faithful support of people like you, all of these efforts will allow expectant mothers in rural, northern Haiti to receive the care they deserve. Lives will be saved and families protected from the disaster of losing a mother. Thank you! ●

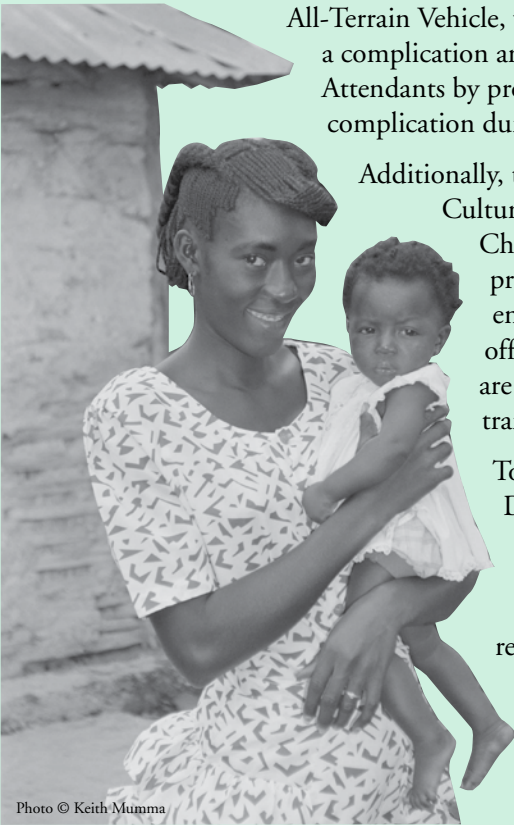


Photo © Keith Mumma

Family Planning Is Vital to Safe Motherhood and Healthy Families

International Child Care has been working to address maternal health issues for women since 1983. Family planning is considered one of the most effective ways of reducing maternal and infant mortality in developing countries. International Child Care offers reproductive health services (but not abortions) to women in both Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Each day, over 50 women line the benches of the Reproductive Health outpatient clinic at Grace Children's Hospital. They receive health education, pre-natal and gynecological examinations and contraceptives. Reproductive health appointments cost only 25 to 75 Haitian gourds (less than \$2.00 USD) depending on the nature of the visit, but this minimal fee is waived if necessary. Patients are never turned away at Grace, no matter their ability to pay.

ICC's goals for the Reproductive Health Clinic focus on empowerment and education. Women learn about the importance of birth spacing, as there are well-established associations between fertility, poverty and ill health. Having too many pregnancies or pregnancies too close together can negatively impact the health of the mother and her baby. Short intervals between births often leave women nutritionally deprived or otherwise unhealthy, and can increase the risk of death. Studies have shown children from households with large families are more likely to be poor and undernourished, and less likely to be educated. By spacing children three to five years apart and restricting the number of pregnancies through contraception, women are able to better feed, clothe, educate and provide healthcare to their existing children. Women

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Photo © Keith Mumma

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are also educated about sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, nutrition, TB and good hygiene practices.

Patients who visit ICC's Reproductive Health Clinic can also receive contraceptives. If a woman is visiting the clinic for the first time she will meet with a counselor to discuss her medical history and decide which form of birth control is best. International Child Care offers four types of contraceptives: condoms, the pill, Depro-Provera shots and Norplant. The contraceptives distributed at Grace Children's Hospital are donated by the Haitian Ministry of Health and Health Sciences Management.

Family planning is vital to safe motherhood and healthy families; it is being increasingly recognized that focusing on maternal health matters makes a difference for not just women, but entire families. The United Nations named improving maternal health as one of its Millennium Goals. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation has also dedicated enormous resources to funding maternal health programs. Through our investment in maternal health, International Child Care improves the health and quality of life for thousands of women and children in Haiti. ●

NEWSLINES



August in Wichita Falls, Texas is hot. Boiling hot, really. The hottest recorded temperature in Wichita Falls, TX is 117 degrees Fahrenheit. What better place to host the tongue-in-cheek annual HH100 biking event? The HH100 is an endurance bike ride through the Texas countryside. Riders can choose 100 mile, 100k, 50 mile, 25 mile or 10k versions of the race. The HH100 is the largest single-day bike event in the nation, and this year more than 14,000 riders participated. Since 2007, the HH100 has also been benefitting International Child Care through the Race for Grace team, which is a group of riders who raise support for ICC as they prepare for the race. This year, more than \$16,000 was raised for ICC USA and more than \$10,000 was raised for ICC Canada through the generosity of the Race for Grace team. Supporters are able to track fundraising progress at www.firstgiving.com/iccusa.

If you're interested in riding in the HH100 in 2010 as part of the Race for Grace team, please contact the ICC US office for details. ●



Grace! is published quarterly for friends of International Child Care. ICC is a Christian health agency working in Haiti and the Dominican Republic to change conditions which make people sick, hungry, unemployed and afraid.

ICC depends on individuals, churches, and donor agencies for the financial means to serve. A response card and envelope are enclosed for your contributions. Your gift will be receipted for income tax purposes.

Deeply grateful for the support of our donors, International Child Care does not sell or trade a donor's personal information to any other entity in existence without their written permission.

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ICC to open premier Maternity Ward at Grace Children's Hospital. This ward will offer institutional labor and delivery services. ICC will look for support to incorporate an operating room as well for Cesarean sections as soon as possible.



Canadian International
Development Agency

Agence canadienne de
développement international

UMCOR Advance Projects:

Grace Children's Hospital: 418520
Integrated Community Health (Haiti): 418847
Community Health Development Program (D.R.): 410215
Child to Child Health Promotion: 418242