

AT A GLANCE

The Maternal and Newborn Health Fund

The Maternal and Newborn Health Fund is UNFPA's flagship initiative to ensure equitable access to quality reproductive, maternal and newborn healthcare.

The fund drives impact in **four key areas**:

- Supporting policy, norms and financing for universal access to maternal and newborn health services, as part of a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Improving the availability and quality of maternal and newborn healthcare in the context of comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights.
- Empowering communities by enabling women, families and communities to take charge of their own health and hold governments accountable for quality healthcare.
- Strengthening data systems to drive impact, equity, and accountability.

Established in 2008, the Fund currently supports 44 countries, including 25 "with high maternal mortality rates and total number of maternal deaths." The aim is to drive innovation, policy and advocacy, integrating high-impact practices into national strategies and systems for long-term, sustainable results.

Ruth Domi, a new mother, at the maternity ward of Ntchisi District Hospital, Malawi. The hospital is supported by UNFPA. © UNFPA/Luis Tato



The challenge

Every day, 712 women die from pregnancy and childbirth complications, more than 6,000 newborns lose their lives, and over 5,000 more are stillborn, most from causes that could have been averted with skilled healthcare. The vast majority of these deaths are preventable, yet maternal and newborn survival is still determined by factors such as where a woman lives, her access to quality care, and the strength of the health system around her. A woman in sub-Saharan Africa is 135 times as likely to die in childbirth than one in Europe or North America, with even higher risks in conflict zones, where half of all maternal deaths occur. Maternal health complications — such as postpartum haemorrhage, infections, hypertensive disorders, prolonged obstructed labour and unsafe abortions — are largely preventable. Both lack of access to and poor quality care contributes significantly to poor maternal and newborn health outcomes.

The solution

We know the causes and we know the solutions. With proven, high-impact interventions, such as educating, deploying and retaining midwives and expanding access to quality maternal health medicines and devices, underpinned by sustainable investment, we can eliminate preventable maternal and newborn deaths — and save millions of lives.



WHY INVEST?

Ending preventable maternal deaths by 2030 requires US\$116 billion, yet only \$12 billion is projected — leaving a \$104 billion shortfall that endangers millions of lives. While 61 per cent of countries for which we have data have costed maternal and newborn health plans, only 12 per cent of these plans are fully funded. Investing in maternal and newborn health is not only a moral imperative but also an economic opportunity—every US\$1 invested yields over US\$8 in returns through improved productivity and reduced healthcare costs.

For more information please contact:

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Results

Through the Maternal and Newborn Health Fund, UNFPA has already transformed millions of lives:



427,300 midwives supported
with education and training



712 midwifery schools
accredited to national standards
aligned with WHO/International
Confederation of Midwives (ICM)



80% of supported countries
use a national tool to monitor
maternal and perinatal deaths



57% of the population in assessed
countries can access emergency
obstetric care within two hours
(increased from 47% in 2019)



85% of supported countries have
a national strategy to end fistula



54,000 women with fistula have been
treated, restoring health and dignity

- 14,000 fistula survivors received
reintegration and rehabilitation
support after surgery

Together with partners, UNFPA is also scaling up midwifery care by co-leading a Global Midwifery Acceleration Roadmap by “the Midwifery Accelerator” and leading the global Campaign to End Fistula.



www.unfpa.org/maternal-and-newborn-health-thematic-fund-catalyst-change