The Challenge

Extreme poverty and poor health often go hand in hand, especially for mothers and young children. In countries where health systems are weak, easily preventable and treatable illnesses like malaria, diarrhea, and respiratory infections are the main killers of young children. These illnesses are further complicated by malnutrition — an underlying factor for many sick children.

For some women, pregnancy and childbirth can be a death sentence. In many of the countries where Concern works, access to quality maternal healthcare is poor. Pregnant and lactating mothers face a multitude of barriers when seeking care. This is especially true for adolescent girls aged 18 and under, leaving these mothers-to-be and their children at increased risk for poor maternal health outcomes, including disease and death.

Our Approach

Based on decades of experience, Concern has adopted an integrated approach to maternal and child health. We believe that many factors influence the health of mothers and children, such as nutrition, hygiene and sanitation, environment, knowledge, attitudes, access to healthcare, and culture. Much of our work involves designing solutions with mothers and their partners to the challenges faced every day in the world's poorest countries.

At the community level we are implementing those solutions daily, while at national and international levels we take every opportunity to advocate on behalf of women and children for better health outcomes. And we are seeing the results of that work, much of which is part of a long-term strategy to improve health outcomes for the most vulnerable.

Maternal and Child Health by the Numbers

- **810 women** die every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth
- **Over 5 million children** under 5 die every year
- **94%** of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries
- A pregnant woman or newborn child dies every 11 seconds

Read more about our work in maternal and child health: concernusa.org/mch
Our Programs

Through a variety of programs, we are affecting long-term change for maternal and child health.

In Malawi, our innovative “Heath Center by Phone” project has been integrated into the national health system, providing free access to health advice and telemedicine services in hundreds of remote communities.

“When mothers understand the risks and benefits and are well supported by their community, they are more likely to seek care. It’s up to us to give them the knowledge and mechanisms they need to make healthier decisions for themselves and their families.”

Megan Christensen, Health Advisor, Concern Worldwide

In Bangladesh, Burundi, Niger, Kenya, Rwanda, Haiti, and Sierra Leone our Child Survival Programs (funded by the U.S. Government) have impacted millions of mothers and young children over the past 20 years. Our research has contributed to life-saving advancements in community health.

In South Sudan we have established a network of mobile health clinics providing health services to pregnant women, lactating mothers, and children under the age of 5, who otherwise would go without vital checkups or treatment, directly in their own villages.

Our Impact

Concern operates maternal and child health programs in 18 countries

In Niger, we trained 18,700 mothers in good health practices in one year

Supports UN Sustainable Development Goals including Good Health and Well-Being

*Name changed for security reasons.

Nine months pregnant, Chagawa* had back and stomach pain and almost miscarried, but she went to the Concern-led mobile clinic near her village in South Sudan. “I wasn’t worried, I had medical people taking care of me,” she says. It can take Chagawa up to three hours to walk from here to the nearest health facility, which is why mobile clinics like these are so important. The team begin each session with a discussion around preventative healthcare.

Concern Worldwide is a global community of humanitarian professionals, individual donors, corporate partners, and supporters, who share a common vision of a world where no one lives in poverty, fear, or oppression. We believe everyone has the right to a decent standard of living, should have access to the opportunities and choices essential to a long, healthy, and creative life, and be treated with dignity and respect.