



Frequently Asked Questions: Maternal and Child Health

Why does the organization focus on maternal and child health?

More than 300,000 women around the world die each year due to causes related to pregnancy and childbirth. This means there are 800 preventable deaths occurring everyday.

In many places around the world, childbirth still poses huge health risks for mother and child, and the first four weeks of life are critical. In 2008, more than 2.6 million newborns died from preventable conditions such as birth trauma, low birth weight, prematurity and neonatal infections. Episcopal Relief & Development works to reduce illness and death among expectant and new mothers and their children, and to promote child health and development as part of a larger strategy to improve community health and well-being.

What types of diseases are mothers and children most vulnerable to?

Pregnant women and children under age five are impacted most by malaria and HIV/AIDS and are most vulnerable to death from malaria infection. In response to this health issue, our *NetsforLife®* program partnership reaches out specifically to families with protective mosquito nets and education on how to prevent and identify the disease. In communities with high HIV/AIDS rates, our partners promote care that prevents the disease's transmission from mother to child, and offers supportive services to families affected by it.

What other ways do we do this work?

The organization's maternal and child health programs expand beyond malaria and HIV/AIDS. It also helps to reduce barriers to care for expectant and new mothers, enables monitoring of child health and development, and provides workshops for caregivers on nutrition and other important topics.



What is your Early Childhood Development Program?

Episcopal Relief & Development's Early Childhood Development (ECD) Program was launched in 2012, in partnership with the Zambia Anglican Council, for families affected by HIV/AIDS. This program is currently serving 8,000 children under five and their parents or other primary caregivers in Zambia.

The first years of life are a critical period for cognitive, psychosocial and physical development. In the context of HIV/AIDS, many children are cared for by an ill parent; others are being raised by older siblings, grandparents, relatives, or neighbors – increasing the stresses already experienced by families in poverty and putting young children at greater risk. The ECD program addresses the needs of young children while equipping their caregivers and communities to support their healthy development. Trained volunteers facilitate caregiver support and learning groups, make monthly home visits, and provide referrals to needed services. Episcopal Relief & Development's vision is organized communities, strengthened families, empowered caregivers and thriving children.