

Infectious Disease (ID)

Globally, 25,000 children die every day from six preventable causes—pneumonia, diarrhoea, malaria, measles, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and neonatal causes. Children under age five are most affected by these five causes, with children under age two forming a large component of affected children. The primary cause of death is not always the only factor contributing to the child's increased risk of mortality. Mild to moderate malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies are major underlying causes for child mortality in most of the cases.



Causes of maternal and child deaths vary substantially from one country to another, and there are even differences within countries. Through an intensive focus on disease prevention and community-based case management, World Vision (WV) seeks to contribute significantly to 5 million fewer children dying globally each year. It will ensure survival and growth of girls and boys through improved health outcomes.

“Disease prevention” is an increasingly complex term encompassing a broad range of activities intended to: **promote health** before the development of a disease, establish **early disease detection and diagnosis** leading to timely disease management, and prevention of death by **delaying or reversing** disease progression. Almost two-thirds of deaths can be averted with simple, proven interventions at the community level. So far, many more resources have been invested in treatment in tertiary facilities, building and renovating health facilities at the expense of community-based health care. The programme-level focus on preventive community-based health management offered by health workers at the household level is essential in correcting this imbalance.

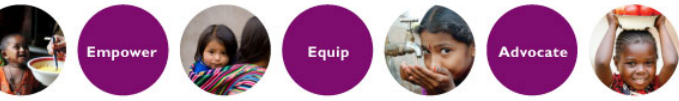
The Facts

- Pneumonia kills more children (approximately 2 million) each year than any other disease—more than AIDS, malaria and measles combined. It accounts for nearly one in five child deaths globally (UNICEF).
- Diarrhoea is the second biggest killer of children under age five, but 90 per cent of children would be saved if treated properly (WHO).
- About one-third of the world's population has worm infestations like water-borne schistosomiasis or soil-transmitted infections that include hookworm, roundworm and whipworm (WHO).
- Malaria is endemic in 107 countries, with sub-Saharan Africa hardest hit (UNICEF).
- Each year, an estimated 1 million deaths are caused by malaria, with 80 per cent among African children under age five (UNICEF).
- Measles kills as many as 500 children per day, with 95 per cent of these deaths in low-income countries with weak health infrastructures (WHO).
- Tuberculosis (TB) accounts for nine per cent of deaths among women between the ages of 15 and 44, and it is the single biggest infectious disease killer of women in the world (WHO).

World Vision's response

World Vision is committed to improving the health and nutrition of women and children in the areas in which WV works, contributing to the global reduction of under-five and maternal mortality. WV is focused on three essential outcomes to achieve this goal:

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



World Vision utilises evidence-based and cost-effective strategies, with specific emphasis is on pregnant women, newborns and children under the age of two. WV's "7-11" strategy deals with mother and child health-related issues utilising seven key interventions for pregnant women and 11 for children 0-24 months. This strategy promotes adequate nutrition, protects mothers and their children from infectious disease, and ensures access to essential health services. Evidence indicates that a strong focus on prevention generates positive outcomes at the community level; therefore, the 7-11 strategy includes significant preventive actions along with promoting access to health services.



Key Projects

As part of its core strategy to support maternal and child health and nutrition, and reduce child deaths, World Vision is incorporating community-based responses to encourage prevention and care-seeking for malaria for pregnant mothers and children under age two. One World Vision project called "Operation Safety Net" launched in October 2009 to provide three million nets to protect 6 million people from malaria in **Zambia, Mozambique, Kenya and Mali**. In early 2010, World Vision completed its distribution of 300,000 nets in Zambia, and Mozambique is the next country to receive nets.

World Vision is a lead partner in the CORE Group Polio Project, a community-based project that seeks to eradicate polio in four target countries—**Angola, Ethiopia, India and Nepal**—by mobilising communities to participate in routine immunisation campaigns and vaccination services. World Vision works with partners to educate about immunisation and promote behaviour change. A significant reduction in wild polio virus is already being documented in three of the four target countries.

For the past three years, World Vision **Zambia** has contributed to the Zambian Ministry of Health Child Health Promotion (CHP) weeks which promote de-worming of children under five and pregnant women, management of childhood diseases, immunization, nutrition, Vitamin A supplementation, growth monitoring and health education, and other services at the community level nationwide. In addition World Vision Zambia supports the School Health and Nutrition (SHN) Programme. A pilot project through the SHN programme found that more than 50 per cent of school children screened were infected with helminths and schistosomiasis. World Vision supports mass de-worming, iron supplementation, school feeding and health education programmes through yearly school treatment campaigns by providing logistical support and significant resources through Gifts-in-Kind in partnership with Imres and MedPharm Ltd.

For general information about World Vision's health, nutrition, and HIV and AIDS work, please contact:

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World Vision is a Christian relief, development and advocacy organisation dedicated to working with children, families and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice. World Vision serves all people, regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, or gender.