Since 1990, 90 million children have been saved due to global efforts to reduce child mortality.

The U.S. Role

In 1985, USAID and UNICEF launched an initiative to combat preventable childhood diseases. In the decades since, as a leading innovator and one of the largest donors to global maternal and child health (MCH) efforts, the U.S. – led by USAID – has played a vital role in the development and delivery of low-cost, high-impact interventions to improve the health of the most vulnerable children and mothers.

Achievements

» In USAID’s 24 MCH priority countries, between 1990 and 2011:
  ◊ Annual deaths of children under 5 were cut from 7.7 million to 4.8 million.
  ◊ Newborn mortality rates declined 33 percent.
  ◊ Women’s death rates from childbirth or pregnancy sank 5 percent per year on average – faster than the global average.

» Globally, around 17,000 fewer children died every day in 2012 than in 1990.
Why it Matters

» In 2012, 6.6 million children died before their fifth birthday – around 18,000 per day.8

» Of the number above, nearly 3 million – almost 8,000 per day – were babies who died in their first 28 days of life.9

» In 2013, nearly 800 women died every day from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.10

» Good health pays dividends throughout life. One academic study projects a nine-fold payback in social and economic benefits in less-developed countries from modest increases in health spending.11

The U.S. Role (continued)

USAID has prioritized easy-to-use interventions with the highest impact on the leading causes of under-5 child death – pneumonia, diarrhea, malnutrition, prematurity, asphyxia, malaria and newborn sepsis – and has addressed mothers’ needs with programs that improve access to voluntary family planning and target complications related to pregnancy and birth. USAID also engages in partnerships with corporations and multilateral organizations in pursuit of shared MCH goals.12

Achievements (continued)

» A public-private alliance composed of USAID, the American Academy of Pediatrics, corporations and NGOs – called Helping Babies Breathe – has trained and equipped over 100,000 birth attendants in less-developed countries in the resuscitation of newborns.14

Endnotes
12 One example is the Mobile Alliance for Maternal Action (MAMA) which uses mobile phones to improve maternal health in developing countries. MAMA includes USAID, Johnson and Johnson, the United Nations Foundation, mHealth Alliance, and BabyCenter.