



12 May 2014 - Imagine two Boeing 747's\* full of pregnant women crashing every day. That's how many women die in childbirth, every day. According to WHO estimates approximately 800 women die from preventable causes linked to childbirth, the majority in [developing countries](#) . It's a silent statistic that should make headlines, but doesn't.

Childbirth, in the best of conditions, is a difficult process. In developing countries, it's a downright dangerous process. Beyond unsanitary conditions, the absence of access to proper equipment and lacking medical attention, young age exponentially increases the risks for both mother and baby.

In developed countries, most 15-year-old girls find themselves busy with friends and their smartphones and are still considered to be children. However, in developing countries, 15-year-old girls are often considered as grown women, and many are already married by that age and expected to bear children. Their young age, however, places them at risk for complications. In developing countries it is estimated that 1 young woman in 160 will die of causes related to childbirth – while the equivalent for developed countries is only 1 in 3,700.

In 2000, the UN established the [Millennium Development Goals](#) , which amongst other goals seek to improve maternal health. The

[MDG for maternal health](#)

has two primary objectives. First, it seeks to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio by three quarters of its 1990 level. Second, it seeks to achieve a universal access to reproductive health

including access to contraceptives, family planning and healthcare. The underlying desire behind the MDG is to bridge the divide that exists between developed and developing countries and ensure basic human rights for all mothers, and all people, around the world.

Progress has been made, and maternal mortality has actually decreased by 47 percent from 1990. However, nearly [50 million babies worldwide](#) are still delivered without skilled care, and midwives often make the difference between life and death. As the world [celebrated midwives on May 5](#)

, midwives around the world gathered together to network and share knowledge as well as to share their experience with the world. As a part of the MDGs for 2015, the midwives' campaign this year focused on the theme "The World Needs Midwives Today More Than Ever" as part of an ongoing campaign to highlight the need for skilled maternal caregivers.

According to a new report by [Save the Children's 2014](#), we are still very far from reaching the targets set by the MDGs. Mothers and newborns remain especially vulnerable during conflict or crisis situations. The report notes that worldwide women and children are fourteen times more likely to perish in a disaster situation. Rates of maternal deaths are down, according to [new figures](#) released by the UN, but pre-existing medical conditions heighten the risk of death for pregnant women and require continued investment in quality care during pregnancy and childbirth.

\*In a classic 3 class setup the 747 is estimated to transport 417 people.