

ELIMINATE

Kiwanis eliminating maternal/neonatal tetanus



Key messages

June 24, 2010

The Kiwanis global campaign for children, The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating maternal/neonatal tetanus, aims to save the lives of a 129 million mothers and newborns. In partnership with UNICEF, Kiwanis is eliminating a disease that kills one baby every nine minutes. Kiwanis and UNICEF are targeting the poorest, most underserved women and children on Earth, and paving the way for other interventions that will boost maternal health and child survival. Hand-in-hand, Kiwanis and UNICEF are changing the world.

About child survival

- Child survival lies at the heart of everything UNICEF does. Service to children lies at the heart of everything Kiwanis does.
- Every day in the developing world, 24,000 die of preventable causes—before reaching their fifth birthday (8.8 million annually).
- Nearly 40 percent of deaths of children under age 5 occur in the first month of an infant's life.

About maternal health

- Children need healthy mothers. Children who are left motherless are 10 times more likely to die within two years of their mothers' death.
- At least 20 percent of deaths of children under the age of 5 are related to poor maternal health and nutrition, as well as quality of care at delivery and during the newborn period.
- A woman dies from complications during childbirth every minute—the vast majority of them in developing countries.

About Maternal and Neonatal Tetanus (MNT)

- One newborn dies every 9 minutes from tetanus. That is equivalent to 160 newborns each day.

- The leading causes of MNT deaths are: lack of or limited access to immunization and ante natal care services, limited or absent clean delivery services and improper post-partum cord care.
- Once the disease is contracted, the fatality rate can be as high as 100 percent in underserved areas.
- The majority of mothers and newborns dying of tetanus live in Africa, and Southern and East Asia. Generally, these are areas where women are poor, have little access to health care and have little information about safe delivery practices.
- When women are vaccinated for maternal and neonatal tetanus and learn about maternal health, they become empowered to take control of their wellbeing and that of their newborns.

About The Eliminate Project: Kiwanis eliminating MNT

- By focusing on MNT, Kiwanis and UNICEF are targeting the poorest, most underserved women and children on Earth, and paving the way for other interventions that will boost maternal health and child survival.
- The MNT elimination campaign is a proven success. UNICEF and partners have already eliminated the disease in 18 countries. Forty countries remain at risk.
- Between 1999 and 2009, 90 million women in some of the most remote places were protected with the tetanus vaccine, saving thousands of newborns from death due to tetanus every year.
- MNT is easily prevented by a series of three vaccinations to women of childbearing age, costing roughly \$1.80.
- If a woman is properly vaccinated with the tetanus vaccine she will have immunity through the majority of her child bearing years.
- Babies born to mothers who have been vaccinated will be protected through the first two months of life.
- The Eliminate Project will protect 129 million mothers and their future babies, so an estimated 387 million doses of the vaccine need to be administered.
- In order to eliminate the disease by 2015, Kiwanis has committed to closing the funding gap by raising \$110 million.

About Kiwanis' partnership with UNICEF

- Together, Kiwanis and UNICEF have a proven history of delivering results for children around the world, evidenced by the groundbreaking Kiwanis/UNICEF iodine deficiency disorders campaign.
- That historic undertaking increased the world's access to iodized salt from less than 20 percent to more than 70 percent. Iodine supplementation is the most effective means of preventing mental and developmental retardation from iodine deficiency.
- Teamed-up once again, Kiwanis and UNICEF are natural champions for The Eliminate Project.
- Kiwanis' global volunteer network and strength in reaching communities and leaders, along with UNICEF's field staff, technical expertise and unbeatable supply chain, will help wipe out this cruel, centuries-old disease and pave the way for other interventions.

Transcending tetanus: big picture

- Great strides have been made in global health over the past few decades. Inexpensive interventions like vaccines; oral rehydration therapy; anti-malarial bed nets and improved water and sanitation sources have cut child mortality by record levels.
- However UNICEF's work does not end until all of the children, even those in conflict zones or remote, hard-to-reach places—are helped. With Kiwanis' help, UNICEF will be able to reach these children.
- Though highly preventable, MNT is killing mothers and newborns unnecessarily, and Kiwanis has decided to tackle the heart of the problem: reaching those who are not served by anyone because they are too poor, too remote and invisible to the world.
- By choosing to serve those who live the most marginal existence—Kiwanis is sending a loud signal—that these women matter, they deserve to give birth to healthy babies and their babies deserve to achieve their full human potential.
- Not only will The Eliminate Project protect women and babies from tetanus, the project also will create a path for other services, such as clean water, nutrition and other vaccines, to reach the world's most vulnerable people.
- Kiwanis is an esteemed global service organization. There are countless deserving causes and issues that its membership could have selected to focus their attention and resources on. Many of these causes and issues could have brought about significant visibility and immediate relevance in the communities where Kiwanians live and work.

- Instead, Kiwanis chose to focus where the need is greatest, on the populations least served, far away from television cameras and recognition. Kiwanis chose to tackle the hardest leg of a difficult journey, at a time when MNT is on the brink of elimination, but sorely needing a champion to complete the work
- In forging ahead to close this gap and reach the unreachable, there will be dividends that transcend the elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus, and help present and future generations realize their individual and collective potential.