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ChildFund's Innovation in Decreasing Maternal, Infant Deaths

Richmond, VA – May 6, 2011 – “**Mother’s Day** is an apt time to recognize the role that mothers play in the developing world,” says [ChildFund](#)’s President and CEO **Anne Lynam Goddard**. Sponsored children of ChildFund joined together from the United States, Africa, Asia and the Americas to create a [video](#) showing their appreciation for mothers – the unofficial partners in improving the lives of children.

Consider these statistics:

- 2 million women a year give birth *alone*.
- More than a half million women in developing countries die annually during pregnancy and childbirth.
- Some 2,000 babies die every day due to complications during childbirth.

“The problem is that there are not enough health professionals out there, there won’t be for a long time, and there may never be in the places where they’re most needed,” says **David Shanklin, ChildFund’s senior health specialist**. “So we need to develop other solutions.” ChildFund’s innovative solution involves the mobilization of trained **Traditional Birth Attendants**.



On a recent trip, Goddard visited a ChildFund maternal and infant health clinic, funded by USAID in [Honduras](#), where nearly half of maternal deaths have been decreased. ChildFund works with community partners and program staff to equip mothers with the essentials to prepare for safer deliveries, resulting in healthier children.

“Because Traditional Birth Attendants are in the communities, they identify the women — they open the door,” says Shanklin. It is critical to recognize, prevent and respond to obstetrical emergencies and to decide quickly when to make a referral and transfer the woman to the closest hospital or clinic.

Despite their hardships, mothers throughout the developing world are persevering. “They provide the stable foundation on which we seek to build better tomorrows,” Goddard says.

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ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving more than 15.2 million children and their family members in 31 countries. For more than 70 years, we have helped the world’s deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change. As a member of ChildFund Alliance we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. To [sponsor a child](#) in need, visit the ChildFund website.