



Save the Children®



Saving Newborn Lives

PROGRAM OVERVIEW 2016-2017



Improving Newborn Survival

The first 28 days of a baby's life should be a time of joy, yet the first month of life – and especially the day of birth – carries the highest risk of death for both mothers and their newborns. Globally, 2.7 million newborns die each year, and 2.6 million babies are stillborn.¹ More than 80 percent of the total mortality burden result from three preventable and treatable conditions: preterm birth, infections, and complications during childbirth.¹

The Millennium Development Goal era (1990–2015) saw rapid declines in maternal and child mortality. The number of newborn deaths has decreased from 5.1 million in 1990 to 2.7 million in 2015.¹ However, newborn mortality declined at a slower pace than under-5 mortality as a whole.¹ As a result, the proportion of newborn deaths among all under-5 deaths is now 45 percent, up from 40 percent in 1990.¹

Newborn deaths and stillbirths are preventable with proven, cost-effective interventions, ranging from improved quality of antenatal care to skilled care around the time of birth to ensuring delivery of essential care for newborns.

Since 2000 joint efforts, grounded in evidence by multiple national and global stakeholders have increased attention to the importance of improving newborn health. The Every Newborn Action Plan, endorsed by the World Health Assembly in 2014, provided the first global roadmap to ending preventable newborn deaths and stillbirths through investing in quality of care around the time of birth and care of small and sick newborns. Sustainable



Development Goal 3 includes reducing newborn mortality to 12 deaths per 1,000 live births by 2030.

Save the Children's Saving Newborn Lives (SNL) program is a globally recognized leader in newborn health and a respected voice in countries. Since 2000, SNL has worked to increase awareness about the high burden of preventable newborn deaths, provide evidence on how to prevent these deaths, and support countries to reach the world's most vulnerable newborns with lifesaving interventions.

We must end preventable newborn mortality and stillbirths by 2030

- Among all children, newborns have the highest risk of death¹
- 1 million children die on the day of their birth, representing 17 percent of all under-5 deaths¹
- 2.6 million babies are stillborn ever year, half during labor and birth¹
- Over 90 percent of newborn deaths occur in Africa and Asia¹
- There is substantial evidence that two-thirds of newborn deaths could be prevented if mothers and newborns received proven, cost-effective care delivered through strengthened health systems and that improved practices at home could save many more¹

Implementation is underway, with work streams that include metrics, advocacy, country implementation, and research.

SNL seeks to support countries in achieving equitable and effective coverage of high-impact newborn services and practices at scale. By working with governments and partners to put newborn health on global and national agendas the SNL program serves as a catalyst for action.

To accomplish its goals, the program works to develop, apply, document, and sustain packages of effective, evidence-based newborn care services and practices. In addition, the program advocates for increased availability of and access to routine and emergency newborn care services and supplies, seeks to improve the quality of services, and supports generation of evidence about and demand for newborn care.



Accountability, Results & Partnerships

Improving accountability, measuring results, and encouraging partnerships are key to achieving SNL's goals. In all three areas over the last decade, SNL and its partners have helped put the foundations into place to ensure the implementation of effective newborn health interventions at scale.

- **Advocating for and fostering favorable policies, programs, and systems:** SNL helps build consensus on technical issues; translates and disseminates data and evidence; and uses epidemiological, evaluation, and cost data for national decision-making.

- **Facilitating generation of evidence around newborn health:** SNL applies country engagement strategies and technical strength to answer how-to questions about enhancing program effectiveness and coverage at scale.
- **Leveraging sustainable change in health systems:** SNL promotes implementation of evidence-based newborn care, improves technical leadership, and facilitates integration of newborn care into national health plans and budgets. SNL also supports development of provider training and curricula, social behavior change communications, guidelines for supervision, quality assurance practices, and criteria for monitoring.
- **Tracking progress and outcomes of newborn health policies and programs to promote accountability and action:** SNL develops, tests, and integrates standardized newborn metrics and methodologies to assess and monitor capacity for and effectiveness of essential newborn health service implementation.
- **Partnering with newborn health champions to build consensus around taking actions for newborns:** SNL reinforces these partnerships through identification and development of champions who can promote improved policies and practices through interaction with governments, donors, communities, and other

Global and National Impact

The increased focus on newborn health since 2000 has contributed to remarkable progress for newborns in high-burden countries and has come about in part through the following actions.

stakeholders.

Improving understanding of the causes and burden of newborn mortality and what works to save newborn lives: SNL has become a global leader in supporting research on newborn health, including annual estimates of neonatal mortality rates and causes of newborn death, and has made progress in developing and

achieving consensus on indicators to measure coverage of newborn care.

For example, SNL supported the UN estimates of stillbirth rates, published in *The Lancet* in the 2011 Stillbirth Series and expanded in the 2016 follow-up Ending Preventable Stillbirth series.³ These series provided detailed estimates of the causes and global burden of stillbirths; provided a framework to deliver solutions within the context of reproductive, maternal, and child health and nutrition programs; and included a call for collective action.

Through research it has supported, SNL has contributed evidence used to develop global guidelines and standards for specific interventions, including newborn care packages and practical ways to strengthen the continuum of care for mothers, newborns, and children. The program has also helped identify effective delivery mechanisms within existing systems that can deliver impact at scale.

Building awareness and mobilizing action for newborn health: SNL has mobilized action at both global and country levels by promoting key messages about newborn health and fostering widespread discussion about critical aspects of newborn survival.

SNL has contributed to the publication and dissemination of hundreds of peer-reviewed publications, technical and policy briefs, training manuals, guidelines, and books that build the knowledge base and promote improvements in newborn health.

SNL has worked with governments, implementers, and other partners to document the state of newborn health in several countries, building national momentum and setting the stage for informed action. In many countries, SNL-supported situational analyses have reviewed the epidemiological and social aspects of newborn health, provision of care, and the policy and donor situation.

In 2016, SNL relaunched the Healthy Newborn Network (healthynewbornnetwork.org), the first online community dedicated to improving



newborn health around the world. The network brings together newborn health stakeholders, promotes partnerships, and provides access to information about key newborn health issues. HNN facilitates access to data, key resources, and lessons learned from countries and partners working for improved newborn survival.

Building partnerships and securing leadership for newborn health: SNL has been instrumental in creating and maintaining global and country-level partnerships, through which stakeholders become important newborn health advocates who build consensus around joint actions.

At the global level, SNL plays key roles in global technical working groups that address the implementation and measurement of newborn care programs. SNL helped create the Healthy Newborn Partnership in 2000 and supported its merger into the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) in 2005. SNL was also a member of the Every Newborn Action Plan core team.

At the country level, SNL helps establish and facilitate newborn health committees and task

forces that include donors, ministry of health officials, professional organizations, and in-country partners to bring about changes in policy or strategies.

Improving accountability for and influencing newborn policies, guidelines, and large-scale programs: SNL provides capacity building and technical assistance to governments and in-country partners to track the implementation and impact of their efforts in newborn care and to inform program planning.

SNL has helped to integrate newborn health indicators into country-level health information systems and into standard household survey instruments.

SNL has convened global partnerships and built global consensus around critical interventions, such as in the WHO/UNICEF Joint Statement on Home Visits for the Newborn Child, which has been used to change policies in several countries and regions and influence delivery of programs and services.

Since its inception, SNL has gained a reputation as a trusted leader in newborn-related research, advocacy, capacity-building, and consensus-building. As a voice for neonatal and maternal health programs, SNL will continue to leverage its partnerships and expertise to improve newborn and maternal survival worldwide.

Contact Information

Saving Newborn Lives Program

Save the Children US

SNL@savechildren.org

899 N Capitol St. NE

Suite 900

Washington, DC 20002

Sources

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3. de Bernis, L et al. "Stillbirths: ending preventable deaths by 2030." *The Lancet*, January 18, 2016. Available from: [www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)00954-X/abstr](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)00954-X/abstr)



Save the Children believes every child deserves a future. In the United States and around the world, we work every day to give children a healthy start in life, the opportunity to learn and protection from harm. When crisis strikes, and children are most vulnerable, we are always among the first to respond and the last to leave. We ensure children's unique needs are met and their voices are heard. We deliver lasting results for millions of children, including those hardest to reach.

We do whatever it takes for children – every day and in times of crisis – transforming their lives and the future we share.