

## Health: Maternal Health in Ghana Action Guide



*Selina Fletcher after giving birth to her daughter Savina at Korle Bu Hospital in Accra, Ghana. Credit: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam*

### Introduction

Since 2008 pregnant women in Ghana have been entitled to free health care. This is a huge step forward, but around 75 women per week are still dying because they lack access to qualified care. **Urgent investment in Ghana's health service is needed to help save lives and reduce inequality.**

### What is the impact of health inequality?

Ghana has a shortage of qualified health workers. For example the UK has ten times more nurses and midwives for every 10,000 people than Ghana.

Health facilities are often far from women's homes. Less than half the population live within an hour's travel of a hospital or clinic and many people in the countryside live even further away. Many pregnant women don't know that they can get free health care so they don't go to hospital to give birth. Finally poorer communities rely on traditional, often unqualified, care. If complications arise during birth, traditional birth attendants often don't have the skills to save lives.

### What needs to change?

Inequality in access to healthcare must be reduced. It will help ending pregnancy difficulties and mortality. The government of Ghana should invest more in its health service and overseas countries should keep their promise to give 0.7% of their income as overseas aid. This aid will help Ghana and other poor countries to invest more in services like maternal health care. In addition, the causes of inequality in Ghana and elsewhere need to be addressed.

### What can you do?

1. **Inform:** Teach others about the issue of health inequality, using the PowerPoint on Health.
2. **Broadcast:** Plan creative actions to help raise awareness across your school and community.
3. **Influence:** Think about how to convince important decisions makers do something to help.



*Adumporka Abotiyure, from a remote part of the Upper East Region of Ghana, gave birth to her son at the local health centre. Credit: Abbie Trayler-Smith/Oxfam*

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### 1. Inform

Teach your peers about the issue of health inequality using the example of Ghana, and inspire your peers to do something too!

- Make sure you understand the issue.
- Use the PowerPoint on Health to help other students learn about it.
- Be creative: invent games based on the photos e.g. ask them to decide which are from the capital city of Accra and which are from the rural north.
- Discuss the issues with them and ask them to teach other young people about it.



*Credit: John McLaverty/Oxfam*



*Photo: John McLaverty/Oxfam*

### 2. Broadcast

Get together with friends and communicate about inequality to raise awareness in your community.

- You could plan an exhibition of the photos in your **school using the 'Health—Photos for Workshop'**.
- Find a place and a time for your event, and ask your teachers to support your project.
- Use Facebook, Twitter, invite the press. Spread the word! Invite friends, family, other schools.
- **Be original, and persuasive to catch people's attention.** Could you put the photos in interesting places or make films of you talking to people about them?

### 3. Influence

Try to influence people who make important decisions about inequality e.g. politicians or business leaders. Some ideas:

- Invite your political representative to your photo exhibition, or send them photos of your event, or messages you collected during the event to show that local people care about inequality and want something to be done.
- If they attend your event, get prepared. Plan what you want to say to them and how you want them to act. Ask them to make a pledge, whether it is to talk to other politicians about the issue or to offer more overseas aid to tackle issues such as maternal health.

Example campaigns that are trying to reduce inequality:

- **Oxfam's Even It Up campaign:** [www.oxfam.org.uk/evenitup](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/evenitup)
- The Action 2015 campaign: <http://www.action2015.org/>