

Conference impressions

Intensify cooperation for healthy mothers and children



Working together with the WHO and other partners on mothers and children's health: Rotary and the WHO © RI

A worldwide zoom conference on mothers and children's health brought together Rotarians, WHO experts and other action groups and helpers. They don't want to lose sight of the focus on health for mother and child.

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Holger Knaack at his greeting

Holger Knaack started at the beginning of the joint conference on the health of mothers and children with the request to all participants to continue their



Dr. Tedros, the WHO-V seated person at the Zoom Conference

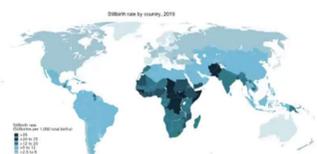
efforts even in Corona times. Every action saves lives - and the Rotarians could achieve enormous success together with the partners. He pointed out that much experience gained in Rotary actions now needs to be used even more intensively.

Anshu Banerjee of the WHO stated that the number of deaths among mothers and children up to the age of six is decreasing, but not yet enough. The total numbers would also give no all-clear: Currently, around 15 percent of all newborns die, that is about two million babies every year. The focus here is on developing countries.

The cause of the death of children up to the age of about six years is infections, diarrhea, but also meningitis, malaria and other diseases, which are actually well combated by vaccinations. That's why immunization is so important, they said. But Covid-19 had massively set back the community of helpers: neither supply nor educational actions were last possible.

WHO expert Banerjee calculated: If the corona pandemic continues for another six months, there will be around seven million additional unwanted pregnancies, as the topic of contraception cannot be advanced. In addition, there is a threat of an increase in discrimination and violence against young mothers and children.

Nearly 2 million babies are stillborn every year



Source: UN IGME Global Stillbirth Report 2020 Infant and child mortality worldwide



Educational competence is the focus of many actions.

Telemedicine therefore focused on Anne Caroline-Benski from the WHO. She called for this possibility to be integrated more and more universally and informed that in 2018 810 women died of preventable diseases every day, 94 percent of them in poorer countries. She referred to the WHO Panda pregnancy program.

Dr.

Himansu Basu, gynecologist from England and Rotarian, also reported on the CALMED - Collaborative Action in Lowering of Maternity Encountered Deaths (www.calmedrotary.org) program, which enables medical vocational training and supports further training for doctors and nurses in developing countries, as well as stimulating the provision of social workers, promotes therapists and midwives. Also his request to the participants of the meeting: Support us, work with us!



CALMED is still looking for reinforcements.



In Uganda, Rotarians support medical aid for pregnant women, young mothers and babies.

Urs Herzog, actually Rotary Polio zone coordinator, presented a project of the RMCH - Rotary Action Group for Reproductive, Maternal and Child Health (formerly RFPD). In some sub-Saharan countries, maternal mortality has been significantly reduced. But child mortality is still high, for example in Uganda. He was joined by a speaker from the region who reported on two girlfriends who died at birth or in

childbirth. His call: "Let's rewrite the story!"

Mother and child mortality is still a big problem in Mexico, especially among indigenous inhabitants, Mario Avendaño Chiapas reported. Medical help is often difficult for them to achieve, which is why traditional medical people who are on site and undergo further training are also used. Several programs enhance their work: "Dignity, respect, trust - dignity, respect, trust." - That is the basis. In Bolivia, where the situation is similar, strategic partnerships with doctors and hospitals in all provinces are also relied on.



Medical assistance is also necessary in Bolivia.



Presented current figures at the Zoom Conference: Anshu Banerjee from the WHO.

Bettina Borisch from the Geneva Institute of Global Health was able to report: The life expectancy of people as a whole is increasing - also through better health precautions and treatments for mothers and children. On average, men would be over 70 years old, women around 75 years old - although they often worked more, are partly exposed to violence and sexual exploitation, and have to struggle with numerous effects of gender

inequality. Borisch argued for a stronger commitment to education, peace and climate. This will have an effect.

John Townsend of the Action Group RMCH called for more investment in the work of the Rotary focus on maternal and child health in order to prevent numerous deaths. After all, women are the ones who saved the family from poverty. It is important to preserve skills, use partnerships and not just invest in small projects.

Moderator Pierre Hoffmeister summarized: "Rotary can help to end these problems - Rotary can solve these problems!" In the Q&A, this statement was further specified: What must good care look like? - Adapt depending on the region and currently difficult to answer. The following applies: Work in progress. Can bicycles or small cars/ears help? Depending on the region and especially on landscape conditions. Is eTraining/eLearning a good offer? - It can help to improve the possibilities of the local helpers. But for this, too, the level of education must be increased. Important: Involve local partners. Use grants? - Absolutely. Capture the potential of volunteers. Social care? - Social and mental health is also important and must be involved in projects.



Helped to answer the questions afterwards: Dr. Himansu Basu from CALMED.



Successful exchange on maternal and child health

Holger Knaack had the final word. He called the conference a great event and made it clear: "So much is possible." Even small successes could make a big difference in this area. The projects on maternal and child health definitely offer a lot of potential for cooperation. He also referred to a special Rotary club for midwives who are committed to such projects: the Goba Nurses and Midwives Rotary eClub, which also has more information available.

The participants of the conference were impressed by the abundance of projects. PDG Michael Bülhoff spoke in the comments: "It's a great opportunity for the work of RI and

WHO!"



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