



The White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood (WRA) is an international coalition of individuals and organizations formed to address the need to make pregnancy and childbirth safe for all women and newborns. With individual and organizational members in 148 countries and affiliated National Alliances in 15 – Burkina Faso, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Malawi, Nepal, Pakistan, Rwanda, South Africa, Sweden, Tanzania, Uganda, Yemen and Zambia – WRA is a global grassroots movement uniting people from all walks of life to advocate for changes to ensure every woman's and newborn's access to quality health care before, during and after childbirth.

WRA works from the grassroots up through all levels of government to build coalitions, strengthen capacity, influence policies, harness resources and inspire action to reduce maternal and newborn mortality and morbidity. WRA priorities are to increase investment in health system strengthening and the provision of family planning services, skilled birth attendance, and emergency obstetric and post-partum care. Furthermore, once commitments are made, WRA continues to mobilize communities to hold governments to account for the quality of services and removal of barriers to care.

WRA is at the forefront of a global campaign to raise public awareness and create political will to achieve the United Nations Millennium Development Goal to improve maternal health. Although there is much to be done, the White Ribbon Alliance draws inspiration, lessons and strength from the success of its advocacy, for example:

- In **Burkina Faso**, WRA convinced political leaders to increase the national budget for maternal health.
- In **India**, WRA secured changes in national policy and led the implementation of programs to enable nurse-midwives to perform life-saving procedures.
- In **Indonesia**, WRA pioneered and established Alert Villages nationwide to help communities recognize danger signs in pregnancy and act quickly to utilize improved systems of transport and communications.
- In **Nepal**, WRA mobilized the political will and provided the expertise for the country's first Safe Motherhood Master Plan with resources allocated throughout the national budget.
- In **Tanzania**, WRA conducted community clinic audits documenting gaps in the availability of skilled health workers and is working with the government to increase the numbers of midwives, nurses and doctors needed in rural health districts.

The white ribbon is dedicated to the memory of all women who have died in pregnancy and childbirth. In some cultures, white symbolizes mourning and in others it symbolizes hope and life. The white ribbon represents this dual meaning globally. The WRA not only works to sustain life and hope for all women, but also mourns and honors those women who did not survive pregnancy or childbirth.

THE WHITE RIBBON ALLIANCE • ONE THOMAS CIRCLE NW, SUITE 200 • WASHINGTON, D.C. 20005 USA

telephone: 202-777-0933 • fax: 202-775-9694 • website: www.whiteribbonalliance.org