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**A remarkable
birth in Haiti**

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**HANDS UP FOR
HEALTH WORKERS!**





Twenty-two-year-old Habiba safely gave birth to her second daughter, Sumah, by Caesarean section. "I was in labour for two days at home because a female elder in my village told me to not bother to go to the hospital," Habiba says. "But I knew after having a Caesarean to deliver my first child that I should go to the hospital for my new one. I am very happy."



Photo: WHO/Chris Black

Dr. Abdul Bashir leads a Merlin mobile medical team into Khaspak village in Badakshan following a two-hour walk from the nearest road. Many villagers, particularly pregnant women, young children and the elderly find it extremely difficult to reach the nearest health centre, a three-hour walk from Khaspak.



Khaspak's villagers are immunised against tetanus by Sahabeddin, a vaccinator from the mobile medical team. On this day, Sahabeddin worked at the village mosque where more than 40 people came to be vaccinated against measles, diphtheria, whooping cough and Hepatitis B.



Photo: WHO/Chris Black

Big differences over big distances From the field...

Like many other remote towns in Afghanistan's northeastern Badakshan province, the people of Khaspak live far from clinics and hospitals. Instead, they rely mainly on Merlin mobile medical teams to come and treat them. Thanks to your support our teams can reach these isolated people to provide essential health care.



Photo: WHO/Chris Black



Photo: WHO/Chris Black

As well as mobile clinics, remote villages like Khaspak benefit from women who receive health training in Badakshan's capital, Faizabad. Newly trained health workers return to provide health care – including midwifery – in their communities. Merlin is also training midwives in Takhar and Kunduz provinces.



Many parts of Badakshan are accessible only by foot. It can take up to two weeks to reach the nearest city, where specialised health care is available.



Midwife Huma Awar Sumadi checks a patient's blood pressure during the health team's visit to Khaspak. "I became a midwife because I knew too many women who were dying during pregnancy," Huma says. "It is important for people living in such remote communities to be seen by qualified health workers to improve their health."



Photo: WHO/Chris Black



Photo: WHO/Chris Black

Key health messages, including how and when to refer people suffering serious health problems to specialised care, are delivered to village leaders by World Health Organisation and Merlin representatives. Our team has developed close relations with the tribes people in this remote area.



Profile of a health worker

At 61 years-old, Anne Omoy should be looking forward to retirement. Instead, she walks nine kilometres through the dense Congolese jungle everyday to and from Lokando Health Centre, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), where she is matron.

Anne Omoy, Democratic Republic of Congo

Lokando is an old colonial town that is now home to a small Congolese military base. The town's health centre is able to cope with minor surgery and complications in pregnancy. More complex cases have to be referred to the hospital in Kindu, a 60km trip upstream by boat – and usually without an engine.

Anne has been helping mothers to deliver their babies safely since 1967. At Lokando, Anne sees about 30 pregnant women every week. "I only did two years of a three year training programme because I got pregnant. Since then the only training I have received is from Merlin. No one else," she tells us. Having witnessed DRC's turbulent history unfold, Anne has seen many changes over the years.



Photo: Frederic Colbert



Photo: Frederic Colbert

Top: Anne weighs a baby to check for signs of malnutrition.

Bottom: Anne has been a midwife for 43 years.

her community. She told us: "Since Merlin started working here things definitely improved. During the war the health centre was always looted. Merlin came and built latrines, did some rehabilitation to one of the buildings and supplied us with some equipment and drugs. Merlin's work motivates staff."

Anne's unwavering commitment in the face of such hardship is both humbling and inspiring. Thanks to your support we can train even more health workers like Anne so that needless deaths can be prevented and more lives can be saved.

Giving so much for so little

One thing that hasn't changed is Anne's commitment to her work, even though she has never received a salary from the government. "The prime (incentive) that Merlin pays me (about \$14 a month) is the only money I have ever been formally paid," Anne explains. Her job is so demanding that Anne has no time to tend to crops, and the prime is barely enough to send her five children to school.

Incredibly, in all her years as a midwife, Anne has never experienced a maternal death. This is despite having five miscarriages herself, "now I give advice to pregnant women to try and help them in difficult situations", she says.

Anne is glad to be working alongside Merlin and helping to provide essential maternal health for

> News in brief: Liberia



Photo: Germa Gordon

Merlin Student wins midwife award

Congratulations to Merlin student midwife Victoria Gaye, who won third place in the International Student Midwife of the Year category at the British Journal of Midwifery Practice Awards 2010, held in June. Victoria is a student at Merlin's midwife training school in Zwedru, Liberia, which was set up in 2008.

Merlin Chief Executive Carolyn Miller received the award on Victoria's behalf in London. Victoria was officially presented the award at the midwife school in Zwedru in July by the Liberian Ministry of Health.

You may remember we appealed for urgent

funding back in 2009 to keep the school open. Thanks to your generous support we have been able to continue training midwives to the very highest standard in a country where their expertise is desperately needed.

Years of civil war has left Liberia with a shortage of health workers and one of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world. Merlin's midwife school is equipping students with the skills and knowledge needed to save the lives of mothers in this remote corner of the world. We couldn't continue our work in Liberia without your support, so thank you!



> News in brief: Pakistan

Pakistan Jalozai storm

In June a devastating storm tore through Jalozai camp in Pakistan where Merlin is providing much needed health care. Jalozai is home to over 100,000 displaced people fleeing from the violence in Pakistan's North West Frontier province. The storm destroyed or damaged over 80 per cent of the camp.

Thanks to all those who donated to our emergency appeal, Merlin's team were able to respond immediately, working around the clock to rebuild clinics and pharmacies that were destroyed in the storm. Pakistan

Country Director Patrick Parsons says: "In addition to rebuilding our clinics, the storm caused an estimated \$50,000 worth of losses to Merlin's programme in Pakistan through the destruction of drugs, equipment and patient records. It is a devastating loss, but we are determined to continue delivering health care for the people of Jalozai."

Our team in Pakistan would like to say a huge thanks to all everyone who supported the appeal.





Photo: Amy Beaumont/Merlin

Cezanne checks up on her new goddaughter.

A special birth, a special name

Cezanne is a nurse and team leader for one of Merlin's mobile clinics. Here, she talks about a life changing experience she had in a remote part of Haiti.

"Every week, our mobile clinic visits a small village about 45 minutes into the hills from Petit Goâve, west of Port-au-Prince. There is no proper road to the village; instead our 4x4s take us up a stony riverbed – which will be totally impassable once the rainy season starts. Nearing the end of our clinic one week, a man ran in saying that his wife's water had broken hours ago and she was having heavy contractions in the river bed below. She had been trying to hike the three hours to the nearest hospital, but was not going to make it.

Only stopping to make sure that we had the equipment we needed, the team and I trekked down to where she was labouring, perched on a tiny river rock. Her only company was the local birth attendant, an old man who was sitting in silence as she contracted away. He had no

medical supplies or equipment with him.

Dr. Mario and I immediately strapped on gloves, lifted up her gown and felt the head crowning. At that moment the lady stood upright and screamed as she pushed her baby out. Unbelievable! Blood and fluids absolutely everywhere, baby breathing ok and mama trembling. With the infant safely placed on her mother's stomach, I tied off the umbilical cord and cut it with my scalpel – et voila! Happy birthday, baby! Her parents were so moved that they decided on the spot to name the baby after us – Maria Cezanne Merline."

More midwives = more healthy mothers and babies

Luckily for this new family everything was OK, but in a country with a dramatic shortage of



Photo: Amy Beaumont/Merlin

Above: Both mother and baby are doing fine thanks to you!
Below: Baby Merline just minutes after her amazing birth.

With the infant safely placed on her mother's stomach, I tied off the umbilical cord and cut it with my scalpel – et voila! Happy birthday, baby!



trained midwives, stories like this are all too common. They don't always end so well. In Haiti, 630 women will die for every 100,000 births – the highest maternal death rate in the Americas. In the UK the figure is just a fraction of this, with less than 10 maternal deaths per 100,000 births.

But thanks to you we are changing this heartbreaking situation. Your support means our mobile clinics are reaching these isolated areas and ensuring people here have access to essential health care.

More qualified midwives means less mothers dying needlessly and from entirely preventable causes. It's that simple. With your help we can train more midwives all over the world so there will be more healthy babies just like Merline.

Cezanne adds, "The proud mother brought her baby daughter back to our clinic for her first antenatal clinic last week. Both mother and baby are doing great, and I now have a beautiful new Haitian goddaughter."



Photo: Amy Beaumont/Merlin



Photos: Kate Holt

Forging a better future Giving the gift of a lifetime

Every year Merlin helps people caught up in disaster zones and emergencies. Our teams respond immediately in the face of great danger to save lives during times of crisis. As you know we are also committed to staying for as long as it takes, and we never leave until our work is done.

Your support makes all this possible, but we also rely on the generous contributions people make to Merlin in their wills. By leaving a gift to Merlin you are leaving a lasting legacy of improved health to millions of people. It couldn't be simpler, whether you are making a new will or changing an existing one, our guide will help you along every step of the way.

A gift to Merlin could help us be ready whenever and wherever the next humanitarian

By leaving a gift to Merlin you are leaving a lasting legacy of improved health to millions of people

emergency strikes. It could help us to train local people in Haiti to become health workers and serve their communities for generations to come. It could even help to rebuild a health centre in a remote village in DR Congo.

Please do think about including Merlin in your will and make the difference of a lifetime. If you would like some more information or a copy of our guide then just complete the form and send it to us in the freepost envelope provided. Thank you.

Please send me a copy of the Merlin Legacy guide

Name

Address

Postcode

Tel

Email



Please complete this form and return in the freepost envelope provided or send to: Merlin, FREEPOST RLZE-EGYR-JAGH, 12th Floor, 207 Old Street, London, EC1V 9NR. (No stamp required).

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