



TV

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U.N. IN ACTION

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ECUADOR PROVIDES BIRTH CHOICES TO SAVE LIVES

VIDEO

AMAZON JUNGLE/LAKE
INDIGENOUS WOMAN CLEARING
THE FOREST

SMOKE/BANANA HOUSE
OLD WOMAN IN HAMMOCK

WOMAN GIVING INSTRUCTION
TO ANOTHER WOMAN GIVING
BIRTH VERTICALLY

STREET SCENE
OUTDOOR MARKET

AUDIO

NARRATION

Ecuador's Amazon jungle...

According to a myth of the Hoarani people, pregnant women died giving birth because the only way for their babies to be born was for their husbands to cut open their bellies... (12.5")

But one day – the myth goes – a mouse appeared and told a pregnant woman to throw a rope over a beam in the ceiling, get down on her knees, tap her body with a palm stick, and push the baby out. This is called vertical birth. (15")

Today indigenous women continue to follow this traditional practice at home. But home birth can be life threatening. (7")

Ecuador has 13 million people, and nearly one million are indigenous. Many live in remote areas where women face high risks of dying from complications in childbirth simply because they receive medical help too late. (16")

ALBA W/ OTHER WOMEN ON
BOARD A BOAT

Alba Peralta and a group of community health promoters are on a campaign to encourage rural women to switch from home birth to hospital delivery. (8.4")

ALBA PERALTA ON CAMERA

ALBA: (Spanish) F
"Life experiences have taught me that it's my obligation to tell women they should go to a health centre because not only are their lives in danger, but their baby's as well." (10.75")

WOMEN ON BOARD BOAT ON
NAPO RIVER

NARRATION
Today they are travelling 60 miles up the Napo River to Palma Roja, one of the 500 tiny hamlets accessible only by boat. (8.62")

CLOSE UP OF FEET GETTING
OFF THE BOAT

In 1998, the government passed a law providing free maternal health care to every woman, but few in rural communities know about it. (8.75")

ALBA & HER GROUP WALKING IN
HAMLET

In 2004, a network of health promoters known as the Users Committee was created. Supported by the UN Population Fund, or UNFPA, they are to inform and encourage women to claim their rights and benefits. (13.75")

ALBA ENTERING MARIELA'S
HOUSE

Alba and her team are visiting 18-year-old Mariela Grefa to persuade her to go to the hospital. (5.85")

MARIELA WITH MOTHER
DEMONSTRATING VERTICAL
POSITION

Pregnant with her first baby, Mariela is learning from her mother the traditional way of childbirth. (5.7")

ALBA WITH MARIELA

But despite the offer of free services, she still prefers giving birth at home. (4.4")

MARIELA ON CAMERA, TALKING TO ALBA

MARIELA : (Spanish) **F**

"I am scared to go to hospitals, because I know that sometimes when women cannot give birth the normal way, doctors open you up." (8.10")

MIDWIFE PERFORMING RITUAL OVER PREGNANT WOMAN

NARRATION

For indigenous peoples, giving birth is a private and intimate family ritual. Midwives and family members are always there to give support and comfort. Modern medicine is not only unfamiliar but also frightening. (14.6")

LILY RODRIGUEZ ON CAMERA

LILY: (Spanish) **F**

"When women arrive in hospitals, they have to go through a practice that is completely different from their culture..." (5.5")

RODRIGUEZ IN HOSPITAL

NARRATION

Lily Rodriguez is the Deputy Representative of UNFPA in Ecuador. (4.35")

RODRIGUEZ ON CAMERA

LILY: (Spanish) **F**

"They are in an unfamiliar environment, and in a language they do not understand, and that's why they resist going to the hospital." (6.8")

DR. AMORES ON CAMERA

DR. ALFREDO AMORES: (Spanish) **M**

"I asked a young mother, 'why don't you go to the hospital?' And she said, 'because we are violated.'" (8")

DR. AMORES TALKING TO
WOMEN W/ BABIES

NARRATION

Dr. Alfredo Amores, Director of the Orellana Provincial Health Department, says women are wary of western medical doctors. (7.7")

DR. AMORES ON CAMERA
WOMEN W/ BABIES

DR. ALFREDO AMORES: (Spanish) **M**

"If they open your legs and put their hands inside you without asking, what do you make of that? For an indigenous woman, this is tremendously offensive." (8.9")

ALBA IN WORKSHOP

NARRATION

Years of campaigning by the Users Committees for more culturally sensitive services have led to a new initiative. (6.4")

OTAVALO/PEOPLE IN TOWN
SQUARE
HOSPITAL/VERTICAL BIRTH
ROOM

Otavalo City, high in the Andes, where half of its ten thousand residents are indigenous, recently opened a vertical delivery room in its hospital. It's the first public health institution in the country to provide vertical birth delivery. This Otavalo model is now being replicated in other state health facilities. (19")

RODRIGUEZ ON CAMERA

LILY: (Spanish) **F**

"What's being done is the recognition of the Declaration on the Rights of the Indigenous Peoples which says that they have the right to be taken care of according to their culture, and world view." (10")

NARRATION

ALBA & OTHER WOMEN ON BOAT

To inform women of their rights and birth choices is a critical role played by Alba and the Users Committees. (6")

MAN W/ CHILDREN ON BOARD
RAFT

Since they began their work, the number of pregnancy-related deaths has started to decline in Ecuador. (5.6")

UN LOGO

This report was prepared by Patricia Chan for the United Nations. (4)