

## Getting Women to Hospital Faster – By Fixing Roads

In Malga, Southern Ethiopia, roads from remote villages to health facilities are often hard to use. Ambulances can get stuck, delaying them in critical emergencies.

Pregnant women have relied on stretchers and would **often lose consciousness**. Many women have to give birth at home, without a skilled attendant, putting their lives at risk.

Birkinesh, a mother from a village in Malga explains: **“When I had my first child, I didn’t have anyone to support me during my labour.**

“There was a lot of blood and my placenta didn’t come out as it should have done.

“It was a very long labour. I stayed at home, **I had no way to get to the health facility.**



**“There wasn’t any transport to get me there - it would have been over 2 hours walk.”**

Sadly, this is not unique for Ethiopian women. Her community agreed to find a solution to the issue. They came together to **lobby the government to improve the road from the village to the health centre.**

Initially, many government officials did not understand the issues that pregnant women faced, **but the group educated them.**

The community knew the local government’s obligations to them, meaning they could effectively lobby them.

They were soon successful - and the government officials agreed to rebuild the road.

**The journey time to the health centre has been reduced from 2 hours to just 15 minutes.**

Birkinesh says, “Our community together had built a road. **The project provided us with an ambulance, so I had a way to get to the health centre.**”

She concludes: “At the health facility, I was given lots of support during my labour. **My baby was vaccinated while I was there and health professionals gave me care after the birth.**”

You can support the poorest communities in improving their infrastructure and saving lives by donating. [www.womenandchildrenfirst.org.uk/donate](http://www.womenandchildrenfirst.org.uk/donate)