UNFPA GHANA PROGRAMME REPORT 2018

IMPROVING MATERNAL HEALTH OUTCOMES
Contributors

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Midwives save lives. Midwives constitute the health care workforce that can provide essential and comprehensive services, including family planning counseling and services, antenatal/delivery/postnatal care to pregnant women, essential newborn care, prevention and treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), care and education on early childhood development (ECD). According to the 2014 State of the World’s Midwifery report, Midwives, when well-educated and supported by a functional health system, can help avert over two thirds of all maternal and newborn deaths. They could also deliver 87 per cent of all essential sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health services. Yet, only 42 per cent of people with midwifery skills work in the 73 countries where more than 90 per cent of all maternal and newborn deaths and stillbirths occur. A lot of initiatives and progress have been made in midwifery in several countries around the globe. However, there remains a long way to go in improving availability, accessibility, acceptability and quality of midwifery services. UNFPA will continue supporting midwifery programmes to ensure universal access to SRHR services.

UNFPA’s collaboration with the Government of Ghana began in 1972 and has strengthened over the years with the implementation of five-year programme cycles starting from the mid-1980s. In 2008, UNFPA, in collaboration with the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) launched the “Investing in Midwifery Programme” in Africa, Asia and Latin America with the support from the Maternal Health Thematic Fund. UNFPA Ghana has since 2008, worked with the Ministries of Health and Education, regulatory bodies and the professional associations to promote quality midwifery care and services. The aim of the programme is to promote the strengthening of midwifery education, regulation, midwifery association and conduct evidence-based advocacy. UNFPA works with the government, policymakers and other development partners to help build a competent, well-trained and well-supported midwifery workforce. UNFPA focuses on four key areas: strengthening competency-based midwifery training; developing strong regulatory mechanisms to ensure quality services; raising the voices of midwives by establishing and strengthening midwifery associations; and advocating for increased investments in midwifery services. UNFPA also works to create a supportive environment for midwives by advocating for adequate workforce policies for midwives.

The purpose of the Midwifery programme is to make available a well-trained and skilled midwifery workforce to ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health services and ending preventable maternal and newborn mortality. Strengthening midwifery is UNFPA’s mandate, one that is clearly expressed in the narrative of its mission: “Delivering a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every child birth is safe and every young person’s potential is fulfilled.”
1. Strengthening Competency-based midwifery training.

UNFPA support contributes to strengthening midwifery education that ensures midwives are competent and trained in accordance with international standards i.e. ICM/WHO standards for midwifery schools, faculty, curricula, equipment, clinical practice, etc. Over the years, together with partners, UNFPA contributed in equipping skills laboratories in midwifery schools and training of faculty. In 2010 for example, UNFPA initiated and supported the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology to set up a B.Sc. degree course in midwifery. This has significantly contributed to the promotion of research in midwifery and provided opportunities for higher academic education for practicing midwives. In addition, 40 midwifery schools were supplied with learning and teaching materials and equipment (including anatomical models, medical equipment, birth simulators, computers and computer accessories). Capacity of 20 principals and 135 faculty of midwifery schools was built through trainings on management and teaching skills.
2. Developing strong regulatory mechanisms

UNFPA supports the Nursing and Midwifery Council of Ghana to strengthen midwifery regulation to guarantee midwives are accountable and autonomous in their work in accordance with ICM global standards for midwifery regulation. Ghana Nursing and Midwifery Council is the regulatory body for midwifery that regulates midwifery practice for quality care, as well as client safety and satisfaction. The accreditation and re-accreditation mechanisms of midwifery schools and their clinical training facilities are fully functional. UNFPA supported the Council to review midwifery curriculum in 2010 to comply with ICM standards. Since 2014, UNFPA has supported joint monitoring and supervision visits to Midwifery schools and practicum facilities to ensure the schools meet the global standards for midwifery training and practice. UNFPA will continue supporting the Council to ensure that midwifery regulations remain strong.

3. Strengthening Midwifery Associations

UNFPA support the midwifery association to represent midwives and help raise the profile of the midwifery profession, in accordance with the ICM Membership Association Capacity Assessment Tool (MACAT) for midwifery associations. ICM has put the voice of midwives on international stage. Through the investing in Midwifery programme, UNFPA Ghana has supported the Ghana Registered Midwives Association in many ways including development of 5-Year Strategic Plan (2013-2017), Biennial General Meetings, and conducting the International Day of the Midwife (IDM) celebrations as an advocacy platform for Midwives. In 2018, UNFPA supported midwives to celebrate their achievements in their communities during the IDM held in Kumasi under the theme: “Midwives leading the Way with Quality Care”. In this regard, 14 outstanding midwives (10 from the 10 regions of the country and 4 from the teaching hospitals) were recognized and awarded. On the other hand, the emerging of more midwifery associations in Ghana may weaken the voice of midwives.
Midwives celebrating the IDM – displaying their awards on 5th May 2018 in Kumasi.

Midwives awarded on IDM pose for a photo with the dignitaries – Kumasi, 5th May 2018.
As part of strengthening midwifery, in 2018 the ICM President, Ms. Franka Cadee visited UNFPA Ghana CO in the company of Dr. Jemima Denis-Antwi, the ICM Board Member Africa Region, the GRMA President and the President of Sierra Leone Midwives association. The coming of Sierra Leone midwives and the visit by the ICM President provided an opportunity for Ghana CO to share its experience about the midwifery programme UNFPA is supporting to improve the quality of midwifery services, with the overarching goal of bringing to zero all preventable maternal deaths.

**What UNFPA Midwifery Programme does?**

4. Advocating for increased investments in midwifery services

- UNFPA advocates for increased investments in midwifery services. In this regard, UNFPA works in collaboration with partners to support the Ministry of Health in developing policies, strategies and plans to train, recruit, deploy and retain midwives. In addition, UNFPA has over the years, supported capacity building activities for over 500 midwives through in-serving trainings on life-saving skills (including management of eclampsia and post-partum haemorrhage) to improve skilled delivery and quality of care in handling obstetric emergencies.

**UNFPA collaborations/partnerships as a way of leveraging resources**

- UNFPA, in collaboration with MCSP/USAID, worked with the Ghana Registered Midwives Association to organize an orientation meeting for midwives to advocate for the midwife’s role in early childhood development (ECD). Through the collaboration, MCSP/USAID provided orientation materials and a facilitator; UNFPA provided the financial resource and mobilized the midwives through the midwifery association.
This expanded the scope of knowledge of 150 midwives on early childhood development strengthening service integration. UNFPA Rep, Mr Niyi Ojuolape, participated in a panel discussion during the launch of the nurturing care framework for early childhood development (ECD). Her Excellency, Samira Bawumia launched Ghana’s Nurturing Care Framework for Early Child Development. The Ministry of Health, with support from USAID, UNICEF and WHO, convened the event. The Framework provides an evidence-based roadmap for action, and outlines how policies and services can support parents, families, other caregivers and communities in providing nurturing care for young children.
UNFPA, in collaboration with JHPIEGO, have set up 23 midwifery skills laboratories in midwifery schools. UNFPA bought the equipment and JHPIEGO set the skills labs and trained the tutors on how to use the manikins.

UNFPA collaborated with Maternity Foundation on the training of midwives on the use of the Safe Delivery App. The Maternity Foundation provided access to the App, technical expertise and financial resources towards the launch and training of midwives; UNFPA provided technical support to adopt and roll out the App into the Ghanaian healthcare setting, financial support for further trainings and scale up of the App. As a result, the knowledge base and skills of over 200 midwives has been enhanced through this partnership. UNFPA Ghana facilitated an exchange of this collaboration between Sierra Leone, Zambia and Maternity Foundation on the use of the Safe Delivery App. Currently, UNFPA Sierra Leone and Maternity Foundation developed a concept note, a Workplan and trained 57 midwives on the use of the App and the trainings will continue in the first half of 2019.

UNFPA established partnership with ICM to introduce the Midwifery Services Framework (MSF) in Ghana. Ghana embraced the MSF in 2017. UNFPA supported the Ministry of Health using this important framework to develop the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan and Services Framework (2019-2023). The Midwifery Strategic Plan was launched on 24th October 2018. With the Midwifery Strategy in place, Ghana is on track to reduce maternal mortality.
Dignitaries at the launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan and Services Framework (2019-2023).

Launch of the Nursing Now Campaign during the launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan and Services Framework (2019-2023).
Participants and dignitaries at the launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan and Services Framework (2019-2023).

Ms Erika Goldson, UNFPA Deputy Rep speaking during the Launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan and Services Framework (2019-2023).
Second Lady Ms. Samira Bawumia Launching the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan and Services Framework (2019-2023).

Second Lady, Mrs. Samira Bawumia speaking at the launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Strategic Plan and Services Framework (2019-2023).
UNFPA collaborated with Ghana Action on Preeclampsia (Ghapec) and Ridge Hospital on 22nd May 2018 to commemorate World Preeclampsia Day. The aim was to highlight the common occurrence and devastating impact of preeclampsia, eclampsia, and other hypertensive disorders of pregnancy (HDPs). The HDPs complicate 8-10% of pregnancies worldwide and are a leading cause of maternal and infant deaths, worldwide. In absolute terms, this means approximately 76,000 maternal and 500,000 infant deaths every year.

“What UNFPA Midwifery Programme does?

“Know the symptoms, Spread the word”...A section of the audience at the World Preeclampsia Day awareness meeting.
Ridge Hospital, 22/05/2018
The First Lady of the Republic of Ghana Her Excellence Mrs. Rebecca Akufo –Addo with the UNFPA Rep, Mr Niyi Ojuolape at Ridge Hospital during the World Preeclampsia Day awareness meeting. 22/05/2018

Niyi Ojuolape, UNFPA Rep addressing the audience on the devastating impact of preeclampsia. Ridge Hospital, 22/05/2018
**Improvements Achieved**

Generally there is improvement in maternal health as 98% of women received antenatal care from a skilled provider with 89% having had more than four ANC visits. Increased deliveries by skilled birth attendants (mostly Midwives) from 54% in 2008 to 79% in 2017. During the same period (2008-2017), the number of Midwives increased from about 3,000 to over 10,000. The number of midwifery schools also increased from about 30 to 53 (Private and Public). Overall, maternal mortality reduced to 310/100,000 in 2017 from 760/100,000 LB in 1990.

**Challenges:**

- Shortage of Midwifery workforce and inequitable distribution of midwives between urban and rural areas.
- Different factions of midwifery associations weakening the voice of the midwives.
- Pressure on existing infrastructure in Midwifery training institutions due to increased demand for midwives.
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