ICM PRESIDENT FRANCES DAY-STIRK: THE FIVE CRITICAL C’S FOR MIDWIVES

The ICM President Frances Day-Stirk welcomed participants to the Asia Pacific Regional Conference in July. She said it was through collaborative programmes such as those being offered over the three day conference that its bold theme: Let’s Take Action could be achieved.

The President asked everyone to consider the five Critical C’s of Midwives’ practice.

Courage

Frances said it took courage sometimes to “take action” because it could mean challenging what exists already and may not be what people wanted to hear. It took courage to address issues such as gender equality and the inequity between resource rich and poor countries.

“The of the 58 countries surveyed in the SWoMY Report 2011, 11 are within the 2011 Asia-Pacific region and two account for the greatest global burden of maternal mortality,” she said.

Challenge

Frances said with three years to go until 2015 to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, reaching the targets for MDG 5 (reducing maternal mortality) had the longest way to go.

“The challenges we face in providing care that keeps mothers and children healthy and alive are very different in each community, whether it is providing access to care, improving the quality and standard of care, or coping with insufficient care resources.

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Collaborate

Frances said pooling resources and working together was essential to achieve RMNCH goals.

She said Twinning projects were excellent examples of having the courage to collaborate to build capacity. Examples she cited included:

- ICM Twins: Midwifery Associations of Australia and Papua New Guinea; Canada & Tanzania; Vietnam

“Education provides a highly qualified workforce with basic competencies to practice.

“Regulation provides practice standards, defines the scope of practice, provides quality assurance, and it protects the public.

“Association provides professional support, contributes to policy development, and maintains relationships with other healthcare professions,” said Frances Day-Stirk.

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and Japan; Mali & Switzerland, and the Netherlands and Sierra Leone;

- Other twinning projects such as American College of Nurse-Midwives (ACNM) and Zambia and the UK’s Royal College of Midwives and Cambodia, Nepal and Uganda;
- ICM/UNFPA collaboration in the Investing in Midwives programme;
- Collaboration amongst health professionals, multi-agency, Donors, and civil society.

Commitment

Frances said Governments must invest in quality midwifery services as part of the investment in the health of their populations.

She said that for example Luu Thi Hong, Deputy Director of the Health Ministry’s Maternal and Child Health Department, had noted weaknesses in the education of midwives in Vietnam, including a short training curriculum, inappropriate student/teacher ratio, and lack of a competency-based training approach.

“‘There must be commitment from other partners to improve the status and capacity of midwifery,” said Frances.

Culture

Frances said that culture influenced and underpinned all of the other C’s whether the culture of people, the environment, politics, or of birth.

“Let us be courageous, challenge, collaborate and commit to achieve a world where every childbearing woman has access to a midwife’s care for herself and her newborn in Asia-Pacific and globally,” she said.

The President concluded her welcome address by quoting the inspirational Vietnamese Monk Thich Nhat Hanh who said “We have more possibilities available in each moment than we realize.”

VAM President presents Vietnam Progress at the ICM Asia Pacific Regional Conference

The President of the Vietnamese Association of Midwives (VAM), Mrs Phan thi Hanh, welcomed nearly 500 participants from 37 countries to the Asia Pacific Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam, July 24-26. She said the conference was a turning point for VAM and midwifery in Vietnam.

“So far we have nearly 5,000 members, but we hope that the success of the conference will help to strengthen our Association and that in the next two years our membership will reach 20,000.”

Mrs Phan thi Hanh said the theme of the conference ‘For the health of Women and children - Let’s Take Action,’ urged midwives to consider how their profession will meet the many challenges and changes in the 21st century.

During the Conference scientific papers included changes in the role of midwives, how midwives are contributing to the Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6; and how midwifery and the health of women and children in low resource countries like Vietnam and others in the Asia Pacific region will be improved in the future.

Mrs Phan thi Hanh said the international community and organisations such as ICM, UNFPA, WHO, and Pathfinder International, were giving their resources and expertise. “Vietnam is proof that when people work together the MDGs can be achieved,” she said.

Key facts about the improvements in the lives of mothers and babies in Vietnam

In 1990, in Vietnam, 260 mothers died for every 100,000 live births.

By 2005, only 80 mothers died for every 100,000 babies born.

The infant mortality rate was reduced from 44.4 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 16 in 2009.

By 2015, Vietnam will have reduced these numbers even more.

The Government expects that only 58.3 mothers will die for every 100,000 live births and 19.8 babies will die for every 1,000 live births. (U5MR) – 14.8 (IM)

[Statistics supplied by VAM]

JULY UPDATE ON ICM TWINNING: TWO IS STRONGER THAN ONE

In 2011 ICM launched a Twinning Programme amongst Midwifery Associations funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Four pairs of Twins were established between eight countries.

- Umoja (Unity) Tanzania Midwifery Association (TAMA) and Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM)
• Tupela Midwives (Two)—Papua New Guinea Midwifery Society (PNGMS) and the Australian College of Midwives (ACM).
• Chosen (Challenge)—Vietnam Association of Midwives (VAM) and Japanese Midwives Association (JMA)
• Suima (Suisse Mali)—Switzerland and Mali Midwives’ Associations.

Twinning representatives first met in The Hague, Netherlands in September 2011. Each country used the ICM Member Association Capacity Assessment Tool (MACAT) to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their Midwifery Associations and from this baseline developed a strategic and action plans to inform their work. The Twins met again during the ICM Asia Pacific Regional Conference in Hanoi, Vietnam in July 2012 to share progress, challenges, and to look forward. Sadly Suima was not able to attend.

The value and power of twinning is reflected in the achievements of the Twins to date. Activities have been implemented both as individual associations and collaboratively. Here are two updates on collaboration:

• CAM became a member of CANADIAN-PMNCH, a national Canadian partnership of NGOs government and health professionals working for global Maternal Newborn and Child Health (MNCH). It achieved its first grant from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). It engaged the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and other government agencies in ongoing discussions regarding involvement in global MNCH.
• TAMA has developed the “Scope of Midwifery Practice” document and adopted the ICM essential competencies for basic midwifery practice (2011). TAMA in collaboration with key stakeholders, has begun the process of separating midwifery regulation from nursing regulation, in order to promote the autonomy of midwifery practice. Furthermore, TAMA is developing a website. Discussions are underway for the individual Twinning of 25 midwife and 14 student midwife twins from the two associations. Joint benefits include improved communication and sharing of information.

TUPELA: Year one initiatives focused on increasing membership and participation in professional activities in order to improve the quality of midwifery care; improving the visibility and viability of the Midwifery Associations; creating a partnership between ACM and PNGMS and the exchange of cultural and professional knowledge, skills, information and experiences to promote shared understanding.

The PNGMS has quadrupled its membership from 50 to 200 members. PNGMS does not have a dedicated office but is now looking for a space. Tupela successfully secured a sponsorship grant enabling PNGMS to begin purchasing office equipment. Two new regional sub-branches have been established for wider country inclusiveness. PNGMS celebrated The International Day of the Midwife for the first time in Port Moresby and is planning its first Annual General Meeting.

ACM reported increased awareness of the needs of women and midwives in PNG, improved communication and linkages between the two associations.

A recently secured donation of a free international teleconference service will enhance future communication between the two associations, where physical communications have proven difficult especially with poor access to internet in Papua New Guinea.

SEPTEMBER PUBLICATION OF ICM’S UPDATED MODEL CURRICULUM OUTLINES FOR PROFESSIONAL MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

ICM has developed a set of Model Curriculum Outlines for Professional Midwifery Education available on the ICM website in English and Spanish and French. This set of four resource packets is based on the updated competencies and global education standards, and is provided to the global community to enhance understanding and use of the documents.

The four resource packets with appendices that comprise the ICM Model Curriculum Outlines for Professional Midwifery Education (2012) include:

Packet #1: Background and the Curriculum Development Process
Packet #2: Model Midwifery Curriculum Outlines
Packet #3: Key Resources Available for Midwifery Education
Packet #4: Teaching and Learning in a Competency-based Curriculum

The Model Curriculum Report can be found on the ICM website.
Abigail Kyei said there have been major achievements especially in midwifery education and association development. However she said there were still gaps in strengthening regulatory mechanisms despite tremendous political advocacy.

She said awareness of the importance of midwifery services to help improve maternal and neonatal health was steadily growing in many countries, and this raised a high need for standardised regulatory mechanisms to support the deployment of the midwives and encouragement for them to save the lives of women and children.

"For these reasons we wanted the Workshop to focus on strengthening regulatory measures that will further help promote midwifery as a profession, with a clear scope of practice and code of ethics. This in turn will help promote better recruitment and retention of midwives to save lives," she said.

**SEPTMBER WORKSHOP IN ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA, TO SUPPORT INVESTING IN MIDWIVES AND MIDWIFERY SKILLS**

More than 60 midwives gathered in Addis Ababa September to attend the Midwifery Programme mid-year Review and Technical Capacity Building Workshop. In welcoming participants and distinguished guests, ICM President Frances Day-Stirk said the Programme, now in its fourth year, was a partnership between ICM and UNFPA, and funded by key donors, the Dutch and Swedish governments.

"The goal of the ICM/UNFPA partnership is to scale up midwives and midwifery to improve the progress on MDGs. The focus of the Workshop is the important topic of regulation, both of midwifery education and practice, which has at its heart quality midwifery services and protection of the public."

"The sorts of achievements in health needs we want to realise require effective partnerships, and commitment with good working relationships between ICM/UNFPA; UNFPA Headquarters and country offices; and the technical expertise of the Ghana team, the Country Midwifery Associations and the Programme as a whole, as well as Government commitment," said Frances Day-Stirk.

Among the workshop participants were Country Midwife Advisers, Programme Officers, ICM Midwife Advisors and UNFPA representatives. Participants came from 22 countries: Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan, South Sudan, Timor Leste, Uganda and Zambia.

Specific aims of the meeting were outlined by ICM International Midwife Adviser Abigail Kyei and included:

- Updating Programme successes for stakeholder review
- Enhancing Country Midwife Advisors’ (CMAs) knowledge on the importance of well-functioning Midwifery Regulatory Systems
- Improving the skills of CMAs in the use of anatomical models in midwifery
- Documenting progress on activities
- Challenges and issues in improving relationships with stakeholders
- Consensus on key activities for future implementation in the programme
- Updating knowledge on technical issues and sharing experiences on the role of midwifery to address maternal and child mortality.

Abigail Kyei said there have been major achievements especially in midwifery education and association development. However she said there were still gaps in strengthening regulatory mechanisms despite tremendous political advocacy.

She said awareness of the importance of midwifery services to help improve maternal and neonatal health was steadily growing in many countries, and this raised a high need for standardised regulatory mechanisms to support the deployment of the midwives and encouragement for them to save the lives of women and children.

"For these reasons we wanted the Workshop to focus on strengthening regulatory measures that will further help promote midwifery as a profession, with a clear scope of practice and code of ethics. This in turn will help promote better recruitment and retention of midwives to save lives," she said.

**STRENGTHENING THE SIERRA LEONE MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION (SLMA) AS THE FOCAL POINT FOR MIDWIFERY IN WEST AFRICA**

Two meetings in Sierra Leone in September were part of the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) programme to support the Sierra Leone Midwives Association (SLMA) and enable midwives to contribute to the reduction of maternal and new-born mortality.

The two meetings in the Eastern and Western Regions of Sierra Leone followed on from April’s meeting in The Freetown area. Participants included representatives of SLMA national and district executive committees, midwifery education institutions, the Ministry of Health and midwives from the two regions.

The aim of the meetings were to strengthen SLMA and the role midwives in Sierra Leone in order improve maternal and newborn health and through the dissemination of the Global Standards for Midwifery Education (2010), Global Standards for Midwifery Regulation (2010), Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice (2010), and the Member Association Capacity Assessment Tool (2011), and advocating for their implementation nationally.

These ICM global documents reflect the three pillars of Midwifery: Education, Regulation, and Association and were developed to guide Midwifery Associations and their governments to review and improve on the education and regulation of midwives and
midwifery and enable countries to review their midwifery curricula for the production and retention of a quality midwifery workforce.

SLMA provides a focal point for information exchange between Midwifery Associations in English-speaking West Africa. The process to begin a Platform of Exchange in the region began in April this year with SLMA hosting a meeting attended by representatives from Liberia, Nigeria, and Gambia.

There has been significant success in strengthening SLMA, with a headquarters established in Freetown and District branches. Of the 13 Districts, five have District Executive Committees representing midwives and midwifery in those districts and working as advocates for improved health outcomes for women and new-born across the country.

As well as this programme ICM has used a “Twinning” approach to strengthen SLMA with a relationship between Sierra Leone and the Dutch Midwives Organisation (KNOV).

The essential reference documents released by ICM are: the Global Standards for Midwifery Education (2010), the Global Standards for Midwifery Regulation (2011), the Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice (second edition 2010) and the Member Association Capacity Assessment Tool (second edition 2011), Model Curriculum Guidelines for Professional Midwifery Education (2012).

THE ICM 30TH TRIENNIAL CONGRESS IN PRAGUE 2014

There is already massive interest and great anticipation about the Prague Congress following ICM’s hugely successful 2011 event in Durban, South Africa, where more than 3,000 midwives attended from a record 115 countries.

Thousands of midwives from Member Associations in 100 countries will attend this unique forum to share excellence in practice and knowledge, learn about the challenges facing midwifery across the continents, and enjoy mutual support amongst colleagues.

In November there will be a full registration details on the Congress web site www.midwives2014.org with a link from ICM’s website www.internationalmidwives.org and social media sites. A Bonus Discount rate will be available for early bookers. Full details will appear on the Congress website in November, when Registration Brochures will also be sent to ICM Member Associations.

The Congress theme “Midwives: Improving Women’s Health Globally,” is highly pertinent to the 2015 Millennium Development Goals, so midwives and all participants can be assured of a “cutting edge” quality to the scientific programme.

JUNE RIO+20 CONFERENCE

At the Rio+20 Conference in June, world leaders along with thousands of participants from governments, the private sector, NGOs and other groups came together to discuss issues of the environment, sustainability, poverty and equity. The relationship of health to sustainable development was recognized in the final Rio+20 outcome document: “The Future We Want” reaffirming governments’ commitment to accelerate the MDGs.

ICM President Frances Day-Stirk said there had been enormous progress since the “zero draft” of the Rio declaration late last year which had practically no mention of health, to this one, which included a specific section and numerous references to a wider range of health issues and health determinants.

ICM supported a seminar at the conference hosted by FEFAF (Federation European des Femmes au Foyer); 9 Months to Save the World: Mother Key to Sustainable Development.

The President said that midwives have always recognized the importance of the pre-natal period to the health and well being of mothers and their newborn infants.

“A pregnant mother’s thoughts, her feelings, her environment and the way she gives birth, directly affects the long-term development of her child.”

“Midwives know the chilling statistics on maternal and infant mortality, almost all of which is preventable with proper midwifery care, but have we made the association with sustainable development?

“ICM is passionately committed to supporting midwives, so intimately connected with mothers and childbearing. We are passionate advocates of providing the best conditions for development for every child. This must include supporting sustainable development as essential to achieving improved outcomes for childbearing women worldwide,” said Frances Day-Stirk.

LANCET TO LAUNCH NEW SERIES ON MIDWIFERY FOR 2013

A new global project was launched in June to enhance the evidence base on midwifery services and raise the
visibility of midwifery to assist national level decision-making.

This collaborative endeavor, supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, brings together an international team of 35 researchers comprised of health systems analysts, health economists, statisticians and specialists in midwifery.

The research will focus on the impact of midwifery and health systems interventions on improving maternal, newborn and child health outcomes while placing particular emphasis on low and middle-income countries. The aim of this extensive project will be to inform and provide guidance to decision-makers at the national level on key areas (budget allocations, health system development) which will increase access to midwifery services. Additionally, it will provide impetus to improving the competency and coverage of midwifery services.

The research will contribute to global actions in achieving Millennium Development Goals 4, 5 and 6, especially MDG 5. The papers will be featured in The Lancet in a special series on midwifery in Spring 2013.

The project is being steered by an executive group that includes the University of York, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the White Ribbon Alliance, ICS Integre, the University of Southampton, Yale University, and the University of Technology, Sydney.

Susan Warren
September
International Confederation of Midwives
www.internationalmidwives.org