



Strengthening Midwifery Globally

International Day of the Midwife 2012

A call to action

The **International Day of the Midwife** is an important day in the international calendar for raising awareness of midwives and midwifery locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

It provides a special opportunity to

- inform** everyone with an interest in health that midwives are crucial to reducing maternal and neonatal mortality
- celebrate** the achievements of midwives and progress made in improving maternal and neonatal care and midwifery services
- motivate** policymakers to implement change by lobbying for adequate midwifery resources and recognition of the unique professional role of midwives

Last year we came together on the 'Road to Durban', beginning a walk in different places across the world that ultimately ended at the 29th ICM Triennial Congress in Durban, South Africa.

This year the message that 'the world needs midwives more than ever' is still relevant, strengthened by evidence in *The State of the World's Midwifery 2011* report and the PMNCH report *Essential interventions, commodities and guidelines for reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health* that midwifery is the key to reducing maternal and infant deaths, and the only effective way to achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 & 5. The message that 'Midwives Save Lives' is increasingly relevant as the 2015 deadline for realising the MDGs draws ever closer.

I am writing to urge you to join colleagues and supporters all over the world in organising and supporting local activities for the International Day of the Midwife 2012. This resource pack has been developed to help you plan and organise an event.

You will find in this pack ideas to help you:

- create a memorable event
- obtain publicity and increase awareness
- write a news release for local distribution
- connect with others through social media

There is also a checklist of key messages that will be useful for your own leaflets or briefings, and a fact sheet that explains why the International Day of the Midwife is so important, with academic references to support the facts. On the ICM website you will find other resources to download, including posters that can be copied and printed locally. Further resources will be added as we get nearer to May 5.

ICM is also developing an advocacy and campaigning pack, which will be available separately. This will help you target the message that the world needs midwives now more than ever at policy makers and other key stakeholders.

Thank you for joining in this important day for midwives, mothers and babies everywhere. Standing and working together we strengthen midwifery globally, and make the world a better and safer place.

Yours sincerely

Agneta S Bridges
ICM Secretary General





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Creating a memorable event

Each year local midwives, Midwifery Associations and supporters of midwifery globally develop their own keynote activities for the **International Day of the Midwife** to suit their own particular circumstances and resources. For example, in 2011 many organisations held a walk leading up to the Walk to Durban at the start of the ICM Triennial Congress in June.

It doesn't matter what you do, as long as you do something to meet one (or all) of the key objectives:

inform everyone with an interest in health and justice that midwives are crucial to reducing maternal and neonatal mortality;

celebrate the achievements of midwives and progress made in improving maternal and neonatal care and midwifery services; and to

motivate policymakers to implement change by lobbying for adequate midwifery resources and recognition of the unique professional role of midwives

You will know best what will work for you.

Examples of ways in which midwives have made the day special include:

- a walk or street parade and rally in a public place
- setting up stalls in a market-place or other popular area to publicise midwifery services and to offer information and advice
- a meeting, workshop or conference to hear about new developments in midwifery and exchange news with other midwives in the region
- inviting a government minister, NGO representative or a celebrity to speak or open an event
- a multi-faith service to celebrate midwifery and safe childbirth
- presenting an award to a midwife or group of midwives
- setting up a competition to design a promotional poster (ideal for schools)
- making or commissioning a badge, pin, pen, bag with the IDM message
- raising money to help midwives in countries where extra resources are greatly needed, eg:
 - bicycles for midwives' transport in remote areas
 - sponsoring a midwife to attend an important conference
- 'Let's celebrate midwifery' with eating, drinking, singing, dancing
- a balloon race
- meeting with politicians to highlight the case for more midwifery

The International Day of the Midwife is an opportunity for every midwife to think about others in the profession, to make new contacts within and outside midwifery and widen the knowledge of what midwives do for the world.





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Publicity and raising awareness

Put a face to the story

Media like to put a face to a story. This can be a local midwife or mother with a good story to tell. A 'celebrity' will always guarantee media interest. The main thing is to give the story a human face, and a human voice. Some suggestions:

- the local Mayor or leader of the local authority/neighbourhood council
- a broadcaster from local radio or television news
- a Member of Parliament / Senator or other significant politician
- the editor of a local/area/regional newspaper
- an actor or singer who lives in the area
- a business leader
- a church leader or group of multi-faith leaders
- a senior health manager or health professional

Tell the media

The media can't report what they don't know about. Make sure you tell them so they can plan to attend your event and perhaps send a photographer / reporter. A lot will depend on what else is happening on the day but good human interest stories are always important. Mothers, babies, birth, families are all on the news agenda.



- send a media release two weeks before the event
- make sure all the details are included, especially contact details
- telephone a reporter/ broadcaster 7 days beforehand

Involve the community

Gaining support from the community will help considerably, and you may ask your local council or health authority to help with the supply of water, a few sweets/chocolates and some marshals on the route. Any publicity you send out should include groups of sponsors or helpers.

Gather supporters

Seek support from the local chamber of commerce, specific businesses, the Lions, the Round Table, volunteering organisations, any local UN organisation or any other charitable grouping that might help out with planning, participation or sponsorship.

Send out invitations

Send out invitations to participate to as many local groups as possible, particularly women's groups, family organisations and health associations. Ask shops, community centres, hospitals and churches if you can place a poster on their notice boards.

Make it memorable

If a reporter or photographer turns up, look after them. Allocate someone to be their helper, to answer their questions, to tell them who's who.

If a photographer doesn't come, take your own photographs, preferably with a digital camera. Ask a keen amateur photographer to help. Send the photographs to the newspaper. *See the photography guidelines on the website.*



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You may want to issue stickers to participants and supporters with specific messages or have some T-Shirts printed. *Logos are available to download from the website*

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Sending a Press Release

Every event is of interest to local media. But they can't report it if you don't tell them about it. This is an example of how to inform them BEFORE the event. Just provide the facts, let the journalists write the story, it is, after all their business. Media need to know Who, What, Why, When, Where.

And they need a couple of good quotations to make the story human. This can be from a local midwife, or mother. If you can get a celebrity to be quoted, or a significant civic leader, all the better. The media will want to talk to someone for further information so make sure you give a contact number for follow-up.

Four top tips for your Press Release

Target your media

Decide whether you're going for newspaper, local radio or TV. Find out what kind of stories they like. Phone them and ask which journalist will cover this issue, their deadlines, and contact details. Give them a brief outline of your planned event.

Short and sweet

Your Press Release should be short and to the point. No more than one page long.

Keep it in the email

If you're sending an email, put the Press Release in the body of the email, following the outline below. Attachments often get rejected by computers.

Follow up

Phone the newsdesk or the journalist you sent the email/PR to. Ask if they received it and if they need any more information. Don't call just before a deadline as the journalists will be very busy. Mid-morning is a good time to ring.

Press release email format

Press release for immediate release

Date

International Day of the Midwife May 5

What you are doing

Where it is taking place

When (date and time)

Short quotation from someone relevant to the story

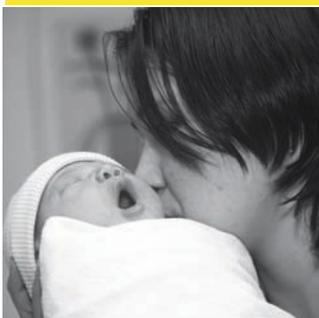
Contact details (name and phone number)

Note for Editors:

The International Day of the Midwife is celebrated on 5th May each year to highlight the important role midwives play in the health of mothers and children.

Over 340,000 women and over 3 million infants around the world die each year as a result of preventable pregnancy and childbirth complications. Most of these deaths would be prevented if there were enough qualified and adequately resourced midwives.

The World Health Organization, UN agencies and other international agencies have identified that midwives are the key to achieving reductions in maternal and newborn deaths and disabilities globally. There is substantial evidence to support the fact that Midwives Save Lives.





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Key messages

International day of the Midwife

The International Day of the Midwife is celebrated on 5th May each year as a day to highlight the important role midwives play in the health of mothers and children.

Every woman every child

The International Day of the Midwife is a day for emphasising the ICM vision of a world where every childbearing woman has access to a midwife's care for herself and her newborn

The world needs midwives now more than ever.

Over 340,000 women and over 3 million infants around the world die each year as a result of preventable pregnancy and childbirth complications. Most of these deaths would be prevented if there were enough qualified and adequately resourced midwives.

Midwives save lives

The World Health Organization, UN agencies and other global partners have identified that midwives are the key to achieving reductions in maternal and newborn deaths and disabilities globally. There is substantial evidence to support the fact that Midwives Save Lives.

Shared commitment to tackle inequality

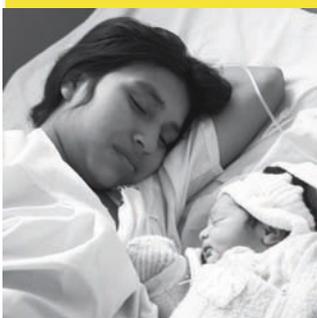
On the International day of the Midwife we demonstrate our shared commitment to tackling the issue of maternal and newborn mortality with midwives and mothers around the world. The locations and levels of maternal mortality indicate serious inequalities throughout the developing world.

Better quality care

Even in the developed world, midwifery services are frequently threatened with cut-backs as health authorities and governments seek to cut costs. On the International Day of the Midwife affirm the basic right to better quality care for mothers and their newborn and greater access to skilled midwifery support.

Midwives supporting midwives

The International Day of the Midwife is about 'midwives supporting midwives' to publicise the urgent need for better maternal and newborn health across the developing world. The International Confederation of Midwives unites the power of midwifery associations across the world to develop and strengthen midwifery globally.



International Confederation of Midwives

Vision

a world where every childbearing woman has access to a midwife's care for herself and her newborn

Mission

To strengthen member associations and to advance the profession of midwifery globally by promoting autonomous midwives as the most appropriate caregivers for childbearing women and in keeping birth normal, in order to enhance the reproductive health of women, and the health of their newborn and their families



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Maternal and neonatal mortality

Maternal mortality

Every year approx 350,000 maternal deaths happen worldwide ¹

75% of these deaths occur during childbirth and the post-partum period ²

80% of maternal deaths are due to 5 direct causes: hemorrhage, sepsis, unsafe abortion, obstructed labor and hypertensive disease of pregnancy ³

7 million women suffer injury, infection or disability from maternal causes ⁴

More than 60% of all maternal deaths occur in 6 countries — India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Ethiopia and DRC ⁵

Only 23 countries are on track to achieve a 75% decrease in maternal mortality rates by 2015 ⁶

Inequality

99% of all maternal deaths occur in developing countries

The chances of dying due to pregnancy or childbirth in Somalia is 1 in 14, in Sub Saharan Africa 1 in 31, and in Europe 1 in 4,200 ⁷

Pregnancy and childbirth are among the leading causes of death and disability for girls and women in developing countries ⁸

13 million adolescent girls give birth each year in developing countries, often missing out years of education, which reduces their chances for adequate income and opportunity to escape poverty⁹

Neonatal mortality

There were 3.1 million neonatal deaths, 2.3 million post neonatal deaths and 2.3 million childhood deaths (aged 1-4) in 2010 ¹⁰

Worldwide mortality in children younger than 5 years has dropped from 11.9 million deaths in 1990 to 7.7 million deaths in 2010 ¹¹

3 Million stillbirths, and 3.7 million newborn deaths occur each year ¹²

Less than 1% of these deaths occur in high income countries ¹³

Effects of maternal mortality

Infants of mothers who die in childbirth are more likely to die within two years¹⁴

Children under 10 whose mothers die are 3 to 10 times more likely to die within 2 years than children whose mothers live ¹⁵

School enrollment and drop-out numbers are higher for children whose mother has died¹⁶

Immunisation rates, nutritional status and growth are lower for children whose mother has died¹⁷

Each year approx US\$15.5 billion in potential productivity is lost when mothers and newborns die¹⁸

Access to essential midwifery services

Only 63% of births in the developing world are attended by skilled health workers. In Southern Asia this is 45% and Sub-Saharan Africa 46%¹⁹

Women in urban areas have 50% more births attended by skilled personnel than women in rural areas ²⁰

84% of Women who have completed secondary or higher education have skilled attended births ²¹

In developed countries 99% of births is assisted by a skilled attendant²²

Effects of skilled attendance in pregnancy and birth

Up to 90% of maternal deaths could be prevented by universal access to adequate reproductive health services, equipment, supplies and skilled healthcare workers ²³

A 10% increase in skilled health workers leads to a 5% reduction in maternal deaths ²⁴ Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand managed to half their Maternal Mortality Rate within 10 years by increasing the number of midwives ²⁵

It was estimated 350,000 extra midwives are needed to ensure universal coverage for maternity care ²⁶ but this number is now under review





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