



Strengthening Midwifery Globally

BASIC AND ONGOING EDUCATION FOR MIDWIVES

BACKGROUND

Midwifery is a profession in its own right, with a unique body of knowledge as well as shared knowledge with other health disciplines. Much of this knowledge is based on evidence that is the result of research carried out by midwives and others, and as such it is extended or amended from time to time by the findings from new studies. Many countries currently lack opportunities for midwives to undertake further study/training beyond pre service education.

STATEMENT OF BELIEF

The ICM believes that midwives should be in charge of defining midwifery education and practice in keeping with the needs of the country or region. ICM further believes that midwifery competence can be achieved through multiple educational pathways, provided that stated competencies are clear and there is evidence that such competency has been achieved; that all teachers must be competent in both theory and clinical practice; and that learning is ongoing and does not stop at the completion of a formal educational programme. Therefore, ICM believes that it is the ethical duty of each midwife to remain safe and current in practice at all times. Continuing education should be compulsory for all practising midwives.

POSITION

In keeping with the above mentioned beliefs, the ICM:

- recognises and requires that competencies for the practice of midwifery, based upon the *ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice*, are defined locally, in keeping with the needs of individuals/families and the area of the world where the midwife is practising
- supports and requires that these essential competencies for midwifery practice be included in the design and implementation of midwifery curricula
- mandates that curricula provide the opportunity for all learners to acquire the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to enable the midwife to practise to the full extent of her role as identified within the *ICM Definition of the Midwife* (2005)
- recognises and supports multiple routes of entry into midwifery that result in a variety of educational programmes
- recognises and requires that midwifery teachers be safe and current in their theory and clinical practice
- recognises the vital role that continuing education plays in the safety and currency of an individual's midwifery practice and urges member associations

to require continuing education updates in keeping with the ethical mandate for advancement of midwifery knowledge and practice as stated in the *International Code of Ethics for Midwives* (1999).

- recognises that, to strengthen and advance the role of the midwife, a system of continuing professional development should be in place.

GUIDANCE TO MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Member associations in countries where midwives do not have control of midwifery education are encouraged to negotiate with their governments with the aim of achieving this, after the necessary efforts to define competencies and curricula have been accomplished.

RELATED ICM DOCUMENTS

- ICM Definition of the Midwife. ICM, 2005.
- ICM International Code of Ethics for Midwives. ICM, 1999.
- ICM Essential Competencies for Basic Midwifery Practice. ICM, 2002.
- WHO, ICM, FIGO. The Critical Role of the Skilled Attendant. WHO, 2004.
- WHO, ICM, ICN. Islamabad Declaration on Strengthening Nursing and Midwifery. WHO, 2007.

Adopted at Glasgow Council meeting, 2008

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