

State of the World's Midwifery (SoWMy) 2021

Dear colleague,

The 72nd World Health Assembly designated 2020 as the International Year of the Nurse and the Midwife, in recognition of the essential role of midwives and nurses in progressing towards universal health coverage. To mark the conclusion of this important year and the 10th anniversary of the first State of the World's Midwifery (SoWMy) report in 2011, the third global SoWMy report will be published in 2021. The report will provide an updated evidence base and detailed analysis of the midwifery workforce across the globe. Previous SoWMy reports have included only low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), whereas SoWMy2021 will cover all countries which submit the necessary validated data.

The main objectives of SoWMy2021 are to:

- a) Show progress made since SoWMy2011 and SoWMy2014 in relation to the midwifery workforce;
- b) Further improve the evidence base to enable stronger policy dialogue to strengthen midwifery services;
- c) Accelerate progress on the sustainable development goals (SDGs) through a focus on access by women to skilled and competent midwives operating in an enabling environment;
- d) Contribute to the monitoring of progress towards equity and 'leaving no-one behind'; and
- e) Collate and share evidence on the impact of midwives and the return on investment in midwifery.

The report will be designed to stimulate policy dialogue and thus inform policy change. It will describe the state of the present-day midwifery workforce, and provide an update on progress since SoWMy 2011 and 2014, including, where possible, identification of qualified midwives working across the ICM Scope of Practice of a Midwife. There will be a strong focus on equity, both in terms of workforce coverage and equity of opportunity for midwives themselves. An online annex to the report will provide a country profile for each participating country, collating key indicators to inform policy and planning for equitable access and effective coverage of midwifery services.

Previous reports in the SoWMy series required participating countries to complete a detailed questionnaire. This time, the data will come from two sources: (1) ICM's Midwife Map survey of its 140+ member associations, and (2) the World Health Organization's National Health Workforce Accounts (NHWA) platform (<https://www.who.int/hrh/statistics/nhwa/en/>).

For the Global Midwives Associations Map survey, ICM will invite you to submit validated data via an online questionnaire. An instructional document with details of the process and links to the survey will be shared in October 2019, with a deadline of 31 December 2019 for submission of a completed questionnaire.

We invite you to work together with the relevant national and sub-national stakeholders (e.g. ministries of health, ob/gyn professional associations, leaders of educational institutions, health worker regulators) to ensure that the most recent and accurate midwifery workforce data are collated, validated and submitted. UNFPA country offices and ICM HQ are ready to support you in this work. We suggest that you arrange an initial meeting with the UNFPA country office, to plan how you will work together on the survey. If we can help with initial contact, please let us know.

Once a plan is agreed, please forward this letter and the accompanying concept note to all other relevant stakeholders in your country and invite them to work with you to collate and upload the requested information.

We strongly encourage **all** our member associations to participate, to make SoWMy2021 a truly global report. There are no eligibility criteria other than the provision of validated data.

If you have any questions about the ICM member association survey, please contact Charlotte Renard of ICM (c.renard@internationalmidwives.org). Questions about SoWMy2021 should be directed to Anna von Hörsten of UNFPA (vonhorsten@unfpa.org).

With our very best wishes



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