



A  
promising  
future

Strategic directions  
2014-2017



International  
Confederation  
of Midwives

Strengthening Midwifery Globally

**The Strategic Directions for the triennium 2014-2017** sets the stage for the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) and its Member Associations (MAs) to address the unfinished business of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the post-2015 agenda related to Sexual, reproductive, maternal and newborn health (SRMNH). In creating the strategy we have reflected and built on current policies, previous strategies, contemporary concepts, and input from ICM's Council to ensure it is relevant and practical.

During the past three years the ICM global standards and competencies developed in the previous triennium have been shared and disseminated worldwide and increased substantially ICM's presence and involvement in the global, regional and national arenas. Subsequently, the number of MAs, partners and collaborators has grown; and ICM is called upon increasingly in technical, strategic and political fora as the voice of the profession globally.

Many converging global initiatives and reports recognise midwives as central to the SRMNH workforce, quality of care and the prevention of maternal-newborn mortality. The State of the World's Midwifery Report 2014, which outlines evidence and outcomes to strengthen midwives and midwifery services, Every Newborn Action Plan; Ending Preventable Maternal Deaths; and the Lancet Series on Midwifery are just a few examples.

At the national and regional levels, ICM Member Associations have received support; technical assistance and guidance; training; mentoring; and linkages with other stakeholders for professional growth and visibility. None of these successes would have been possible without the support of our committed partners, colleagues, donors and volunteers. The diligence and sound leadership of the Council, Board and Secretariat have resulted in a successful triennium, positioning the ICM to move forward to 2015 and beyond.

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The Board is mandated to act on behalf of the Council, to implement its decisions and to uphold the governance of the ICM. The Secretariat, based in The Hague and headed by the Chief Executive, is responsible for the operationalisation of the strategic plan.

In order to facilitate input and information at the 2014 Council meeting in Prague, an interactive strategy session was conducted. Strategy sub-groups of delegates were formed to review the existing strategic directions, identify ICM accomplishments during the last triennium and discuss the issues and potential priorities for the next. Each subgroup presented a summary of their outputs to the Council. Subsequently, these outputs were collected, summarised, analysed and reviewed by the Board and Secretariat. The Board then designed a process to compile the data and outline the strategic directions.

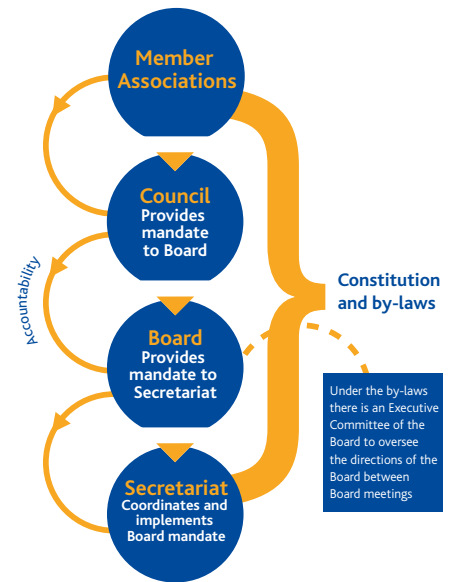
As the global organisation of midwives associations with members in more than 100 countries, ICM represents over 400,000 midwives globally. It is governed by an international Council made up of delegates from each of its 116 Member Associations. The Council is responsible for setting the strategic directions for the forthcoming triennium. Each triennium, in connection with Congress, the Council elects a Board for a three-year term with representation from Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Americas and Europe.

The vision and mission form the foundation of ICM's work, underpin the strategy and are consistent with the objectives of the Confederation:

- work to improve women's health globally;
- promote and strengthen the midwifery profession; and
- promote the aims of the Confederation internationally.

We are guided by the aim of the Confederation to advance worldwide the goals and aspirations of midwives in the attainment of improved outcomes for women, their newborns and families during the childbearing cycle, using the ICM midwifery philosophy and model of care.

## ICM governing process



This document follows on from the 2011-2014 Strategic Directions, which set an ambitious agenda of change and progress. The management structure and processes of the Secretariat have been improved to make our Confederation stronger and more efficient.

- ICM standards widely disseminated and incorporated and used as reference in national midwifery education and regulation;
- Midwifery research more visible and higher on the global agenda (e.g., Lancet Midwifery Series);
- Strengthened capacity of MAs.

ICM's Strategic Directions 2014-2017 builds on those achievements and aims to move us to new levels of engagement and effectiveness in collaboration with and in support of our Member Associations.

# Who we are

Midwives  
must engage and  
commit to play  
a part in the future  
sustainable  
development goals.



Midwifery is a  
vital solution to the  
challenges of providing  
high-quality maternal  
and newborn care for  
all women and newborn  
infants, in all  
countries.



In 2013,  
289,000 women died  
from childbirth  
complications. Nearly three  
million newborns die in the  
first month of life and  
2.6 million newborns are  
stillborn each year.

Improvement of maternal and newborn health through midwifery  
Ten Hoop-Bender P., De Bernis L., Campbell J., Downe S., Fauveau V.,  
Fogstad H., Homer C.S.E., (...), Van Lerberghe W.  
(2014) The Lancet, 384 (9949), pp. 1226-1235.

International Confederation of Midwives, WHO and  
UNFPA. State of the World's Midwifery report for 2014:  
'A universal pathway. A woman's right to health'.

# Global trends impacting midwives and midwifery

In the last decade midwives have gained increased visibility and recognition as the key providers of SRMNH care. We believe there remains work to be done with several issues, challenges and opportunities for midwives and midwifery in the future.

The MDGs 2015 deadline approaches, progress has been made, yet success in achieving the targeted reduction in maternal and newborn mortality remains a challenge. Sustainable development to ensure healthy lives and well-being is one of the most important issues post 2015. So too is the focus on quality, availability, accessibility, acceptability and affordability of services in relation to universal health coverage (UHC) in SRMNH.

Girls make up the majority of the world's out-of-school-children and are less likely than boys to enter primary school. This, along with the inadequate secondary education of girls and boys, contributes to insufficient numbers entering midwifery education and resulting in midwifery workforce deficits.

Climate change, conflict, gender-based discrimination, unmet contraceptive needs, population growth, illiteracy and poverty all impact the lives and health of women and girls. Child marriage, gender-based violence, discriminatory laws against women and girls affect their health and socio-economic status. Global economic crises have also impacted the donor landscape limiting available development funding.

Legislation, regulation and licensing of midwives are essential to providing high-quality care and public protection. Advances in technology have the potential to increase access to care and support midwives working in isolation.

According to The World Bank<sup>1</sup>, creating employment opportunities in underserved communities through UHC is dependent on a high performing workforce, quality education and adequate remuneration. Professional midwives can provide 87% of the 46 essential interventions needed for women and newborns creating a “best buy” in returns on investment in midwifery education.

Recruitment, retention and remuneration of midwives is challenging as midwives salaries are amongst the lowest in low and middle income countries. Supportive working and living environments enables retention whilst internal and external migration, including unethical recruitment, often results in inequitable access to health care, within and between countries.

<sup>1</sup>Presentation by A. Maeda, Lead Health Specialist, Health, Nutrition and Population Network. The World Bank at The Global Health Systems Research Symposium, Cape Town, South Africa, 30 September to 3 October 2014.

# Our Vision

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





# Our Mission

To strengthen Midwives 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.



## WORKING WITH PARTNERS

Working with partners has historically been integral to the success of ICM. By definition, midwives work in partnership with women and ICM in turn, actively commits to strategic partnerships that are essential to the achievement of mutual goals. ICM's strategic partnership model fosters engagement with civil society, governments, UN agencies, other health care professional organisations and the private sector in promoting the health of women, their newborns and families.

Successful partnerships at national, regional and international levels have resulted in increased influence, wider reach, combined credibility, sharing of knowledge, skills and the effective use of resources. We especially recognise long term partners whose continuing support means ICM can confidently plan into the future for innovation and sustained success. Ultimately these partnerships serve to strengthen the voice of midwives and the impact of ICM in advocating for women and midwifery services.



# MIDWIVES SAVE LIVES

Approximately **290,000 WOMEN AND OVER 3 MILLION NEWBORNS DIE** each year of complications resulting from pregnancy and childbirth.

**EDUCATED MIDWIVES** can make the difference between life and death for women and newborns.

Midwives ensure healthy outcomes for women and babies.



ADOLESCENTS AND WOMEN

PREGNANCY

BIRTH

POST-NATAL (NEWBORN)

MOTHERHOOD

CHILDHOOD

MIDWIVES PROVIDE A CONTINUUM OF CARE

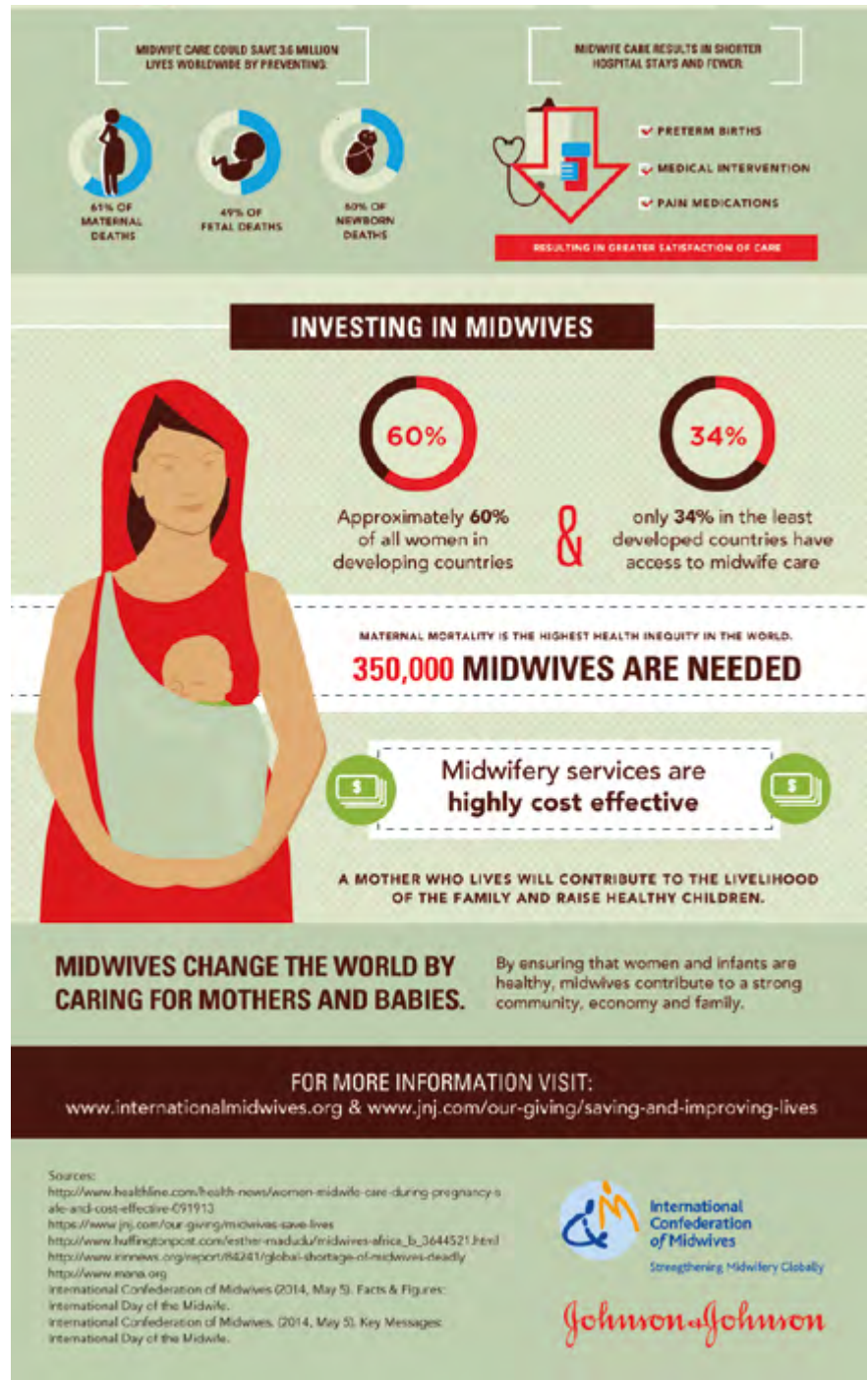
THEY PRACTICE IN A VARIETY OF SETTINGS:



## REGIONAL VISIBILITY AND PRESENCE

The spirit of ICM is represented by midwives all over the world and is visible through the impact of our work in countries, towns, villages and communities. Individual midwives form our MAs which work to improve outcomes for women, their newborn and families, and promote and strengthen midwifery in their countries.

MAs are organised into four regions which come together globally to form the ICM. The purpose of this is to promote collaboration and cooperation between MAs and their strategic partners. ICM recognises that each region has particular aspirations and challenges. Strengthening ICM's regional presence enables a timely, focused response to regional-specific issues. This way of operating enhances the relevance of ICM's work, collective efforts, extends our reach, represents an evolution in how we work and consolidates our position as a viable global entity.



# STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS AND OUTCOMES

## Strengthening midwifery globally

Each triennium the ICM develops strategic directions that guides and maintains our focus as we work with our members, governments, partners, civil society, and other stakeholders in achieving our mission. These five strategic directions and outcomes set the scene for 2014-2017.

**STRENGTHEN**  
midwifery education,  
continuing education  
programmes and the  
role of the midwife as  
an educator



Women, girls and newborns deserve access to and receive quality care from competent midwives.

High quality education for midwives must, at a minimum, meet the ICM global standards for midwifery education.

We believe that midwife educators who maintain competence in midwifery practice and teaching are best placed to educate students to become competent midwives.

### ENABLING ACTIONS

- ICM will support competency-based midwifery education programmes
- ICM will support the acquisition of competency based teaching skills by midwifery educators through Training of Trainers (TOT) for faculty and preceptors
- ICM will establish a system of endorsement for midwifery curriculum that meet the ICM standards
- Integrate and align the activities of the Education Standing Committee with the Secretariat

### WHAT WILL HAVE CHANGED

- Midwives are prepared in competency-based education programmes
- Competent midwives prepared and available to provide quality SRMNH care within the framework of basic human rights and respectful care
- Adequate number of competent midwife educators within each faculty according to ICM standards
- Midwifery education programmes apply for ICM endorsement

**ENHANCE**  
midwives' professional autonomy and ensure midwifery regulation, education and practice is designed and governed by midwives



An ICM established model of regulation standards that promotes regulatory mechanisms, which protect the public.

These high level standards set an ideal regulatory direction to enable safe, competent and autonomous midwifery practice.

ICM advocates for national legislation, development plans and relevant management strategies.

### ENABLING ACTIONS

- ICM will support Member Associations to work with regulatory bodies to implement the global standards, tools and competencies
- Integrate and align the activities of the Regulation Standing Committee with the Secretariat
- Update the Terms of Reference of the Regulation Standing Committee to ensure support and compliance

### WHAT WILL HAVE CHANGED

- Midwives are able to operate to the full scope of their professional practice through enabling regulation
- Increased number of midwife-specific statutory instruments and regulatory bodies
- Midwifery-specific professional standards and practice frameworks are applied by regulatory bodies for the safety of the public

**PROMOTE**  
midwifery research that enhances and documents evidence-based midwifery practice



As the ICM Code of Ethics states, we believe that: "Midwives use up- to-date, evidence based professional knowledge to ensure safe midwifery practices in all environments and cultures".<sup>2</sup>

ICM will inspire and promote best practices.

### ENABLING ACTIONS

- Improved use of expertise within the Research Standing Committee

### WHAT WILL HAVE CHANGED

- Evidence-based midwifery is a professional norm
- An ICM research repository of evidence-based practices established and accessible

<sup>2</sup>International Confederation of Midwives, Core Document: International Code of Ethics for Midwives, 2014 (Prague)

**ADVOCATE**  
for midwifery and  
extend the influence  
of midwives in policy  
development that drives  
service direction.



ICM believes that each MA shares a commitment to adding value to our Confederation through effective partnerships with women.

At local, national, regional and global levels our collective voice is used to highlight the role and value of midwives.

ICM will promote capacity building and best practice on advocacy, and transformational change and sustainable programmes among members.

### ENABLING ACTIONS

- Champion normal birth
- ICM will work in partnership with other organisations which share similar objectives in SRMNH
- Develop an advocacy toolkit

### WHAT WILL HAVE CHANGED

- ICM effectively influences policy direction
- ICM's campaigns are executed with partners to extend our reach
- Women receive respectful care and their human rights are upheld
- MAs will have greater capacity for effective advocacy

**PURSUE**  
strategic collaborations  
with relevant organisations  
and networks that share a  
common interest



ICM believes that the effective promotion of health and prevention of disease within maternity and newborn care cannot be accomplished by a single professional, community or policy – making group.

ICM will work together with NGOs and partners to develop solutions to address areas of common interest.

### ENABLING ACTIONS

- Experts database established and functional in collaboration with Standing Committees
- Identification and assessment of strategic partners

### WHAT WILL HAVE CHANGED

- Midwives and other relevant experts apply for inclusion in the database
- ICM is actively engaged in long-term strategic alliances and relationships
- ICM influence, reputation, exposure is enhanced and integrity maintained
- ICM has built sustainable partnerships with civil society and the public and private sectors

## ENABLING AIMS

Our enabling aims underpin ICM's mission and vision and are common to all our strategic objectives and facilitate their achievement.

**TO SUPPORT**  
the development of  
strong MAs

Strengthening the midwifery profession is ICM's mission because we believe that well educated and autonomous midwives can make the difference between life and death for women and children. The formation of strong associations is foundational to the achievement of our mission.

**TO DEMONSTRATE**  
accountability, develop  
and maintain sound  
leadership and governance  
at all levels that facilitates  
the exploitation of new  
and rewarding  
opportunities

ICM exercises its responsibilities as a member organisation in a transparent and accountable manner. ICM actively employs mechanisms through planning, monitoring, reporting and evaluating that demonstrate accountability in all of its activities and programmes. The concepts of leadership and governance at ICM encompasses the establishment and monitoring of its strategic directions, plans and policies, effective oversight, motivation and partnerships that integrate our systems to achieve results.

ICM acknowledges and assumes responsibility for actions, products, decisions and policies. It is accountable for implementing sound business processes as well as reflecting the aims and objectives of ICM in all of its work.

**TO PROTECT**  
and promote the  
intangible and tangible  
concepts, words and  
images that create the  
brand of ICM

The ICM brand exists to create visibility of our work on enhancing the health of women, girls, newborns and families through the promotion of the art and science of midwifery. The ICM brand exists as the point of interaction for ICM and its stakeholders and donors. Through our brand, we direct the content of those interactions to create consistency and develop a feeling of ownership by midwives and MAs.

**TO EMBED**  
the principles and  
practices of risk  
management, continuous  
improvement and sound  
resource management

At ICM, we recognise the need to identify, assess and prioritise risks. Through planning, we engage in the coordinated and economical application of resources to minimise, monitor and control the impact of unforeseen events. Through the use of a continuous improvement process we strive to improve our products, systems and services in an efficient and effective way.

**TO BUILD**  
organisational capacity  
in resource mobilization  
so that the Confederation  
is financially stable and  
sustainable

ICM aims to diversify its income sources so that it is less dependent on a few donors thereby providing more space to determine and finance its own priorities and related activities. ICM has the capacity within the Secretariat, Board and partners to mobilise resources in a variety of ways.

**TO ENSURE**  
a well-functioning  
Secretariat

A transformed, strong Secretariat will effectively facilitate, coordinate and support the ICM in successful strategic actions, monitoring of progress and impact in the reporting of activity outcomes to members and other stakeholders.

The activities of ICM are also guided through effective coordination, advocacy, communication and the development of strong, competent member organisations. It supports and connects MAs through its membership services and maintains institutional memory of the ICM.

Informed by local and regional needs, differences, beliefs and the ERA pillars of ICM ... A Promising Future is designed to advantage MAs and all who work with ICM in the common interest of improving SRMNH health worldwide. It encompasses the key ingredients of a solid, substantive strategy to guide ICM and its MAs in the coming triennium. We believe we are stronger when working together to achieve greater impact in advancing the global mission of our Confederation.





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If you want to  
go fast, go alone,  
if you want to go  
far, go together

African  
proverb

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