The Nursing & Midwifery programme at WHO

What Nursing and Midwifery services mean to health

Nurses and midwives play a central role in health service delivery – promotion, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation – in areas of great health need, where they may be the only frontline providers of health, especially in remote areas. Health challenges such as HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, maternal and child health and mental health, alongside emerging diseases such as SARS and avian influenza, put the strengthening of the health workforce high on national agendas. Since in most countries nurses and midwives form the bulk of the clinical health workforce, developing and strengthening human resources for health means recognizing that nursing and midwifery services play a vital role in improving health service delivery.

Nursing and Midwifery in WHO

Several World Health Assembly resolutions (WHA42.27, 45.5, 47.9, 48.8, 49.1 and 54.12) on nursing and midwifery demonstrate the importance WHO Member States attach to nursing and midwifery services as a means of achieving better health for all communities. The most recent resolution, WHA 54.12, states that:

- providing evidence-based information;
- supporting technical efforts for capacity building;
- forging networks for effective networks and partnerships.

Thinking strategically, acting globally!

Strategic directions

The Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery Services (2002–2008), developed by WHO and its partners, provide a framework for collaborative action to support countries in enhancing the nursing and midwifery services that contribute to achieving both national health goals and the health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of the United Nations system. The main strategic areas are:

- health planning, advocacy and political commitment
- management of health personnel for nursing and midwifery services
- practice and health systems improvement
- education of health personnel for nursing and midwifery services
- stewardship and governance.

Our principles

Partnership: working together on common objectives, acting collaboratively and supporting each others’ efforts.

Relevance: developing health services and systems guided by health needs, evidence and strategic priorities.

Ownership: adopting a flexible approach that can guide action at global and national levels and be implemented with local involvement.

Ethical action: planning and providing health care services based on equity and fairness and respect for gender and human rights.

These principles will also inform future action taken by the WHO and partners. The Strategic Directions provides both a framework for WHO action to support countries in improving the quality of nursing and midwifery services, and a possible guide for action at national levels.
How do we operate?

The Nursing and Midwifery Office is supported by the Regional Nursing Advisers in the six WHO regional offices, as well as the Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery (GAGNM) and the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Nursing and Midwifery Development (GNWHOCC).

Key contributions within WHO and to its partners

The office strives to contribute to evidence for global health policy and develop guidelines for planning and management of human resources. It also works to:

• build and maintain workforce databases;
• identify and provide support to priority programmes (such as HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, TB, malaria and mental health);
• provide direction to and chart global trends in nursing education and practice;
• pursue and foster research (such as migration, shortages and retention);
• establish linkages;
• build capacity;
• develop care standards and generate best practices in care.

We can make things happen!

How do we operate?

The Nursing and Midwifery Office is supported by the Regional Nursing Advisers in the six WHO regional offices, as well as the Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery (GAGNM) and the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Nursing and Midwifery Development (GNWHOCC).

Our partners

• Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres in Nursing and Midwifery Development;
• International Catholic Committee of Nurses and Medico-social Assistants;
• International Confederation of Midwives (ICM);
• International Council of Nurses (ICN);
• International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies;
• International Labour Organization;
• International Society of Nurses in Cancer Care;
• Sigma Theta Tau International Honour Society of Nursing;
• United Nations Children’s Fund;
• United Nations Population Fund.

... and many more!

What are the benefits to our partners?

• greater insight on global issues and programmes related to nursing and midwifery;
• access to current information on health policies, research and service delivery;
• increased opportunities for networking at global, regional and national levels;
• faster linkage to packages on essential care standards for nursing and midwifery;
• increased visibility of expertise of collaborating centres and the WHO priority programmes;
• enhanced opportunities for resource mobilization, both human and financial.

To learn more, please contact:

Dr Jean Yan, Chief Scientist for Nursing and Midwifery
Electronic mail: yanj@who.int

Nursing and Midwifery website:

http://www.who.int/nursing

### Office of Nursing & Midwifery Programme & activities 2006–2007

**Mission**

To provide equitable access to an adequately educated, skilled, and supported health workforce to meet health needs

**Mandate**

Resolution WHA54.12

Strengthening nursing and midwifery

### Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality education &amp; training</th>
<th>Anticipated impacts</th>
<th>Core functions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global standards for basic nursing education, e-learning, leadership, registration</td>
<td>Competent health workforce</td>
<td>Highest standards of practice for health workforce</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Healthy workplace**

Workplace violence, recruitment & retention, labour convention & conditions of work, return migration, global survey & data mining

Adequate & satisfied health workforce

Management of health workforce & information systems

**Quality care & practice**

COP, priority health programmes, care standards, nurse-managed care, operational research

Productive health workforce

Evidence based practice, tools, guidelines, health workforce assessment & development

### Advocacy & partnerships

GAGNM, GNWHOCCs, RNAs, Stakeholders

### Activities Anticipated impacts Core functions

**Quality education & training**

Global standards for basic nursing education, e-learning, leadership, registration

Competent health workforce

Highest standards of practice for health workforce

**Healthy workplace**

Workplace violence, recruitment & retention, labour convention & conditions of work, return migration, global survey & data mining

Adequate & satisfied health workforce

Management of health workforce & information systems

**Quality care & practice**

COP, priority health programmes, care standards, nurse-managed care, operational research

Productive health workforce

Evidence based practice, tools, guidelines, health workforce assessment & development

### Key contributions within WHO and to its partners

The office strives to contribute to evidence for global health policy and develop guidelines for planning and management of human resources. It also works to:

• build and maintain workforce databases;
• identify and provide support to priority programmes (such as HIV/AIDS, maternal and child health, TB, malaria and mental health);
• provide direction to and chart global trends in nursing education and practice;
• pursue and foster research (such as migration, shortages and retention);
• establish linkages;
• build capacity;
• develop care standards and generate best practices in care.

We can make things happen!

**How do we operate?**

The Nursing and Midwifery Office is supported by the Regional Nursing Advisers in the six WHO regional offices, as well as the Global Advisory Group on Nursing and Midwifery (GAGNM) and the Global Network of WHO Collaborating Centres for Nursing and Midwifery Development (GNWHOCC).