

Maternal and Newborn Newsletter



Save the Children



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Maternal and Newborn Health for Ethnic Minorities

The Maternal and Newborn health for ethnic minorities is a three-year project generously supported by Takeda through Save the Children Japan. It aims to improve maternal health and reduce newborn mortality by strengthening the quality of Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (RMNCH) services at district, health center and community level in three districts of Luang Prabang Province. It is fully integrated within the Save the Children Primary Health Care (PHC) program, working in partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Luang Prabang. Leveraging the PHC health systems strengthening approach, it aims to improve the quality of inclusive MNH services and develop community MNH service provision. In this issue, we highlight how in-facility mentoring is benefiting the health center midwives through supported internship in the district facilities.



In-facility mentorship for health center midwives

MENTORSHIP

WHAT? Mentorship is learning by doing together in practice in the mentee's workplace
WHO? Mentors are experienced mother & newborn health care providers trained in the Mentorship approach. Mentees are midwives, nurses, doctors involved in MNH care
WHEN? Mentoring is part of everyday practice
WHERE? In 3 district hospitals in LP, All HC in each district and the community
HOW? Trained mentors mentor their peers in practice with a buddy system of support
WHY? Mentoring builds skills & capabilities to improve quality care at the time of birth



Why an internship for health center midwives?

Health center midwives are often the least experienced MNH providers. Young, newly graduated, their rapid training seldom equips them with the skills, confidence or experience to provide quality care. Furthermore, they are working in remote and rural health centers without adequate support or supervision. The number of women birthing in health centers remains low, and so to maximize opportunities for practice internships occur in the district facility where health center midwives come for two-week to one month internships and are able to facilitate real deliveries with mentor supportive supervision.

How does the internship work?

The health center midwife is paired on daily work shifts with one of the four district mentor. An initial meeting at the start of the internship between the HC midwife and the mentor establishes jointly agreed objectives for the internship. These are reviewed again at the end of the internship, feedback provided and progress documented. In addition, the HC midwife keeps her own daily record of activities, learning and a delivery log of births that she has facilitated independently. One to one mentoring in the district facility provides supported opportunities for practice and also importantly strengthens the linkages between HC and district by developing relationships and mutual understanding.

So what is the benefit?

Health center midwives report that they feel more confident having had one to one intense support and practice. Skills of facilitating a birth, infection control, preparation before birth, supporting mothers with breastfeeding were reported to have improved. All health center midwives said they would share their learning and experience with the other staff in the health center. The internship is an effective way to build skills and confidence and to support health center midwives in their professional development.



Photo Captions: (consent was given for photographs)

Photo 1 Top: HC midwife from Nambak with her personal learning log

Photo 2: New mother and baby in Nambak

Photo 3: HC midwife facilitating a delivery

Photo 4: HC midwife supporting mother with breastfeeding after birth

Photos by Mentors & SCI team