



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



MCSP Madagascar Technical Brief

Pre-Service Midwifery Education

February 2019

www.mcsprogram.org

Project Overview

The United States Agency For International Development (USAID)-Supported Maternal And Child Survival Program (MCSP) Supported The Ministry Of Public Health (MOPH) In Madagascar To Accelerate The Reduction Of Maternal And Newborn Mortality Over The Course Of Its 5-Year Implementation Period (2014–2019).

MCSP's Interventions Aligned With The Roadmap To Accelerate The Reduction Of Maternal And Neonatal Mortality, Especially Strategy 3: "Providing Essential Integrated And Quality Services Around Pregnancy And Childbirth Focusing On Teenagers And Youth Health."

The Program Intervened In The 16 USAID Priority Regions To:

- Provide The MOPH With Technical Support At The National Level In Maternal And Newborn Health (MNH) And Immunization.
- Provide Technical Assistance To Improve The Quality Of MNH And Immunization Services In The USAID Priority Areas.
- Strengthen Providers' Capacity To Offer Long-Term Family Planning Methods.
- Improve Prevention And Management Of Malaria In Pregnancy.
- Strengthen Pre-Service Training Institutions' Capacity To Educate Midwives According To International Standards And Competencies.
- Initiate A Process To Increase The Number Of Nonspecialist Doctors Capable Of Providing Essential Surgery Services.



Photo by Karen Kasmauski, Jhpiego.

Introduction

Although the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends one midwife for every 5,000 people, Madagascar has only one midwife per 16,000 people. In addition, the quality of midwifery graduates from public and private training institutes remains an issue due to unsatisfactory quality of instruction by teachers, supervisors, and instructors.

Several recent reforms aimed at improving the quality of midwifery have been implemented with a focus on pre-service midwifery education, including raising the minimum recruitment level of students from the secondary school diploma level to a bachelor's degree, including midwifery in the license master doctorate system, and requiring that students pass a national test to enter public service.

A baseline assessment conducted by MCSP in 2014 revealed gaps in the availability and functional capacity of midwifery pre-service education (PSE) institutions. An International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) assessment conducted in 2016 on midwifery education showed some shortcomings related to the four essential midwifery functions related to pre-pregnancy and antenatal care, labor and birth, and ongoing care for women and newborns.

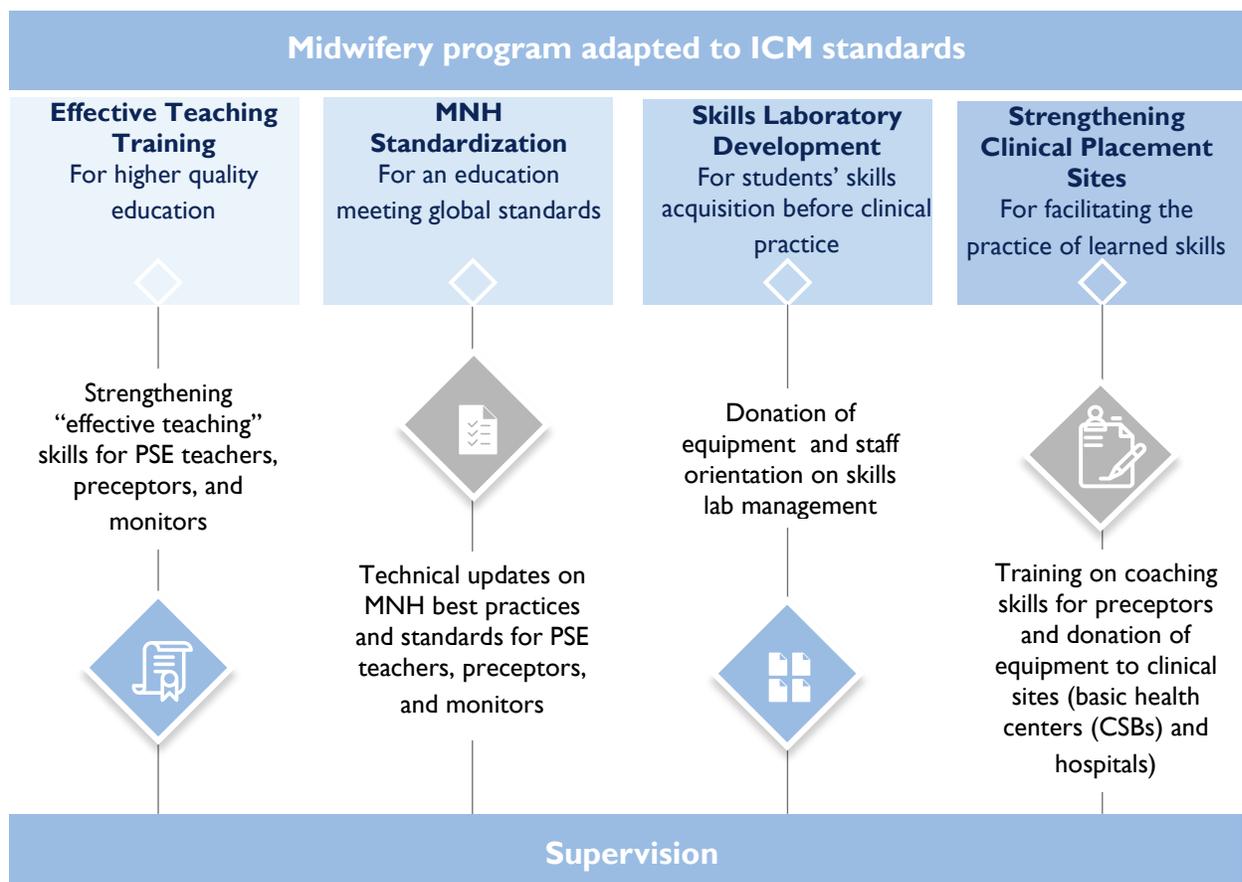
Strengthening the capacity of midwives is an important activity in Madagascar’s Roadmap for the Campaign to Accelerate the Reduction of Maternal and Neonatal Mortality in Africa. To help the country train midwives who can immediately provide quality services upon graduation, MCSP supported revisions to the PSE curricula and improvements in teaching quality in public and private PSE institutions.

Interventions and Approaches

For midwifery PSE to meet the standards of ICM, MCSP supported:

1. The revision of the midwifery program according to WHO and ICM standards, together with the faculties of medicine, which oversees the public midwifery institutions
2. The capacity-building of teachers, preceptors, and monitors at midwifery institutions, which received technical updates on evidence-based MNH standards and a training on effective teaching: Following the trainings, supervision visits were conducted to monitor implementation of new acquired skills.
3. The establishment of a skills laboratory in public pre-service institutions to enable students to develop and master essential skills on anatomic models before their clinical placements: To this end, MCSP donated equipment (including anatomic models), materials and supplies (e.g., kits, trays, garbage cans, syringes, and gloves), and trained staff to manage the skills labs. MCSP also supported the National Council of Midwives of Madagascar in the establishment of a skills lab by providing models and furniture to strengthen the skills of graduating midwives and teachers at accredited private schools.

Figure I. MCSP Interventions to Strengthen Pre-Service Education (PSE) at Public and Private Institutions in Madagascar



Results

Updated National Midwifery Curriculum

The national training curriculum for midwifery education was updated to reflect the latest recommendations from WHO and the ICM, including the emphasis on an even balance between theory and practice. This approach was further emphasized during MCSP's supervision of the faculties of medicines, which oversee Madagascar's midwifery schools and private midwifery institutions.

Strengthened Midwifery PSE Institutions

MCSP strengthened Madagascar's six faculties of medicine and 27 private institutions, resulting in:

- Seventy-nine teachers, 51 training preceptors, and 17 monitors received training in effective teaching methods to strengthen the quality of teaching and coaching provided to students.
- Fifty-two public teachers, 51 public training preceptors at the clinical level, 17 public monitors, and 27 teachers from private institutes received updates on best practices for MNH service provision. Each faculty of medicine now has a pool of skilled trainers.
- Four skills laboratories were developed at the pre-service training institutions in Toamasina, Fianarantsoa, Antsiranana, and Mahajanga), and were supported by the donation of training for 52 staff on skills lab management.
- Eight clinical midwifery training sites—Analakininina University Hospital, Itaosy District Reference Hospital, Tanambao Antsiranana University Hospital, and five district health clinics in Antsiranana I and Toliara I—were equipped with basic materials and supplies, including instrument trays, trash bins, decontamination boxes, and newborn resuscitation kits.
- MCSP supported midwifery training institutes to conduct regular supervision of their instructors and students using a monitoring and supervision method developed in collaboration with the faculties of medicine to improve teaching quality.

Effective Training in Practice

Hand in hand, two managers remain committed to ensuring the quality of students' midwifery training at Antsiranana's pre-service training institution.



Photo credit: MCSP/Julie Rajaonson

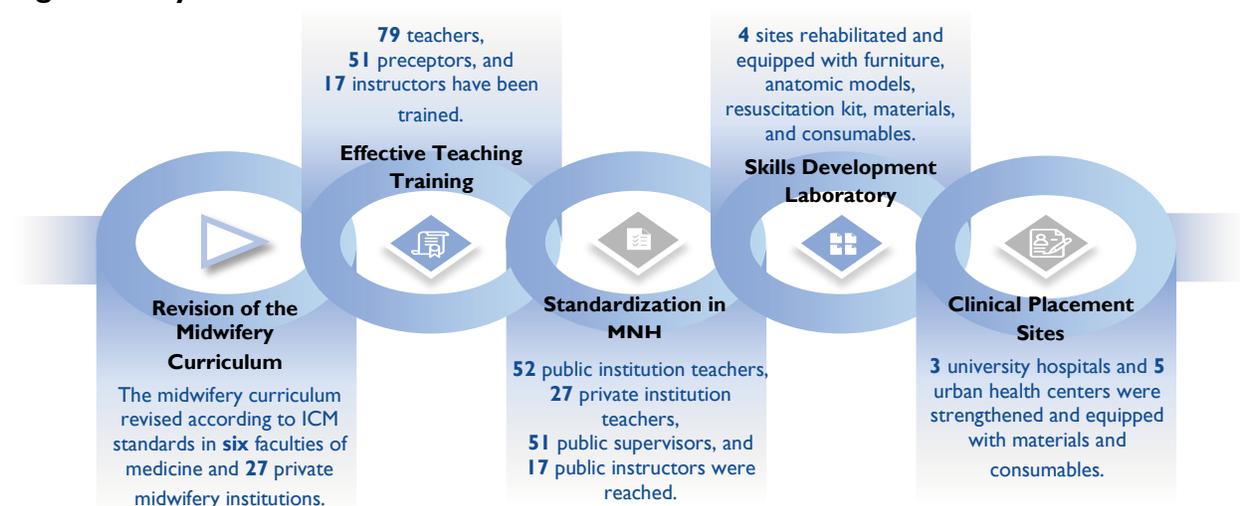
"I took the initiative to train the mentors of nursing students in effective teaching because I am convinced that it is very important. That's why I lent my documents. They are also motivated. I promised to help them in their self-learning. It's an effective approach."

- Mrs. Micheline, head of pre-service training institution department

"If we apply the approach in effective teaching, teaching becomes easy."

- Mrs. Charlotte, educational consultant, midwifery section

Figure 2. Key Achievements as Part of MCSP's Pre-Service Education Interventions



Improved Quality of Education

In supported institutions, improvement in education quality was noted after instructors were trained in effective teaching skills and in setting up skills laboratories. For example, students' skills were assessed in Fianarantsoa and Toamasina public institutions. During the first supervision in 2017, only focused antenatal care was mastered by all evaluated students, whereas in 2018, some percentage of students mastered all key competencies. However, simulated practice in the skills lab must still be improved (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Percentage of Students who Mastered Key Competencies in Fianarantsoa and Toamasina Midwifery Public Institutions, 2017–2018 (n = 31 students)

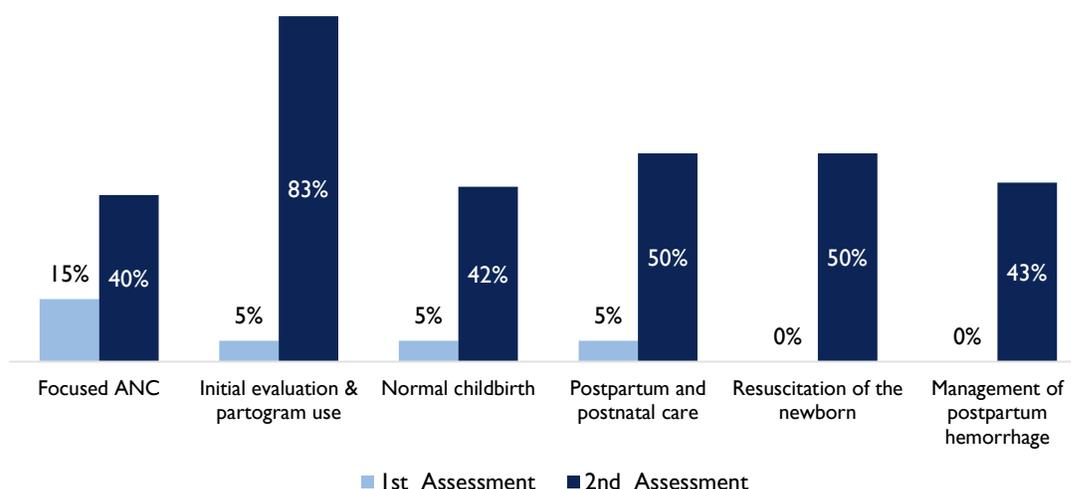
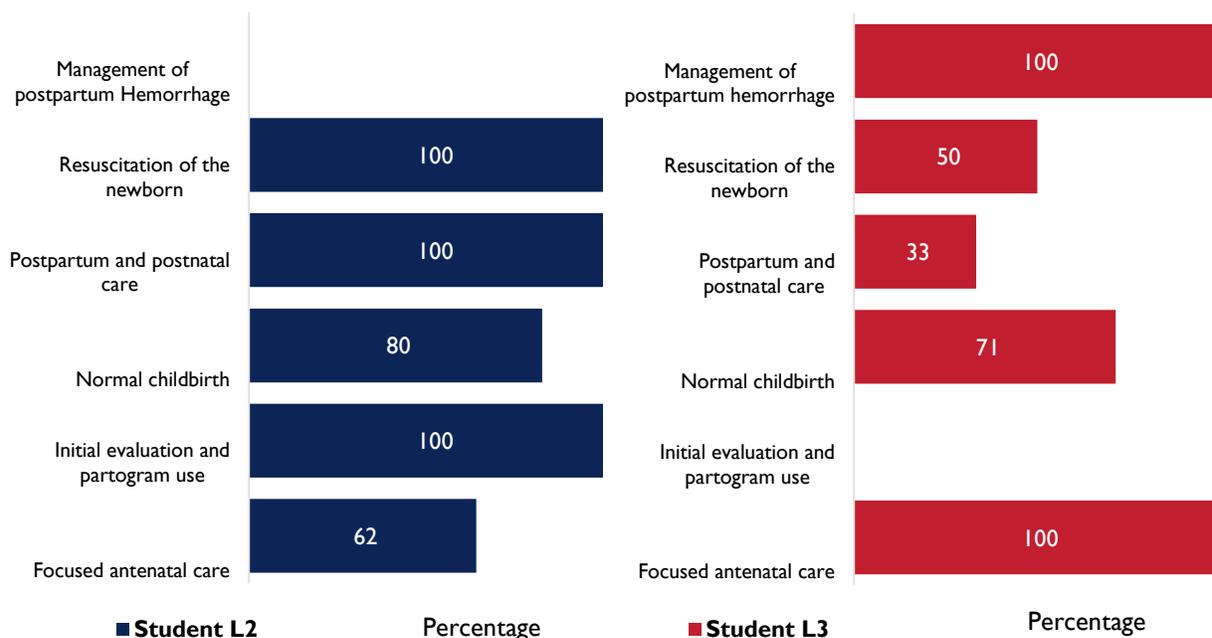


Figure 4. Percentage of Students who Achieved a Score >90% Per Competency at 10 Private Midwifery Institutions, Disaggregated into L2 (Second-Year) and L3 (Third-Year) Classes (n = 71 students)



Lessons Learned

- Institutions that have systematically adopted the use of a checklist—a key tool introduced via MCSP’s effective teaching training—for both classroom teaching and skill lab simulation have seen a significant improvement in students’ knowledge retention and skills acquisition.
- With the shift to the license master doctorate system, a functional skills lab is critical for any pre-service institution to improve quality of education. It is essential to not only have the equipment but also trained staff who have the competency to properly manage the skills lab.
- MCSP support was directed mainly to public PSE institutions, but support to private institutions should be considered given that more and more graduates from those institutions are enrolled by the MOPH into public service.
- To improve and maintain the quality of education provided, PSE institutions should conduct regular supervision activities, including assessment of program implementation, teachers, and students. This will also facilitate their accreditation.
- Through MCSP, improvements in the midwifery PSE systems were introduced but should be sustained through additional support, as current investments in PSE will yield long-term results.

This brief is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of the Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-A-14-00028. The contents are the responsibility of the Maternal and Child Survival Program and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.