

Evidence shows midwifery education in Bangladesh is making real impact by improving women's access to safe childbirth

In association with the British High Commission in Bangladesh, the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) organised a dissemination seminar on Wednesday 1 June 2022, at the auditorium of DGNM in Dhaka, to share findings of two studies on midwifery in Bangladesh.

Those two independent studies focused on the lessons learnt while strengthening midwifery in Bangladesh, and pathways to women's empowerment through midwifery education. The findings indicate that the UK Government's support helped the Government of Bangladesh increase deployment and utilize the diploma holder midwives which greatly improved women's access to safe childbirth, over the last three years. In 2021, the midwives, deployed in 403 Upazila Health Complexes (UzHCs), conducted 87 per cent of the total deliveries at those UzHCs. In 2018, the percentage was only 24.

The studies also found that the existing midwifery education in Bangladesh is effective and contributing to sharpen the social and counselling skills, and improve interpersonal communications of midwives while attending any service recipients. In contrast to the traditional birth attendants, the trained midwives are able to provide more institutional support to use technology-based tools for child delivery, which makes midwifery in Bangladesh more trustworthy to service recipients.

The curriculum on midwifery education helps midwives immensely in taking vital decisions when a situation is critical. Over the last decade, the community's attitude and acceptance toward midwives have shifted remarkably. Nowadays, rural residents seek service from licensed midwives for delivery and mother care; they strive for assistance and advice from licensed midwives.

Mr. Md. Saiful Hassan Badal, the Honorable Secretary of the Medical Education and Family Welfare Division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare graced the occasion as Chief Guest. HE Mr. Robert Chatterton Dickson, the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Dr. Vibhavendra Raghuyamshi, the Chief of Health, UNFPA, Bangladesh, Dr. Daniel Novac, First Secretary, Embassy of Sweden in Bangladesh attended the seminar with over hundred representatives from different ministries, development partners, implementing agencies, midwifery institutions, and student midwives. Ms Siddika Akter, the Director General of the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), chaired the seminar.

Md. Saiful Hassan Badal, the Honorable Secretary of the Medical Education and

Family Welfare Division of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), said

“The national midwifery programme has greatly contributed to the reduction of maternal and newborn deaths, as well as caesarean section rates in Bangladesh. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has initiated development of a cadre of international standard professional midwives. It was possible due to the strong commitment and support of our honorable Prime Minister. Government has opened the door to higher education for midwives. I believe that the midwives will play significant role in enabling us to achieve the SDGs by 2030.”

In his remarks, British High Commissioner HE Robert Chatterton Dickson said

“The UK has been a close development partner to Bangladesh since independence. Our joint effort to strengthen midwifery in Bangladesh adds to the five-decade long Brit Bangla Bondhon for development.

“Today almost 3,000 midwives are working in the public health system and have helped deliver over 300,000 children over the last five years. Almost 500 midwives are serving in the Rohingya camps and others in the private sector, enabling safer childbirth for women and their babies across Bangladesh.”

During his speech, the British High Commissioner highlighted the importance of empowering young women through midwifery education, which helps women to realizing their potential and contribute to a healthy society. He reiterated the UK Government’s prioritization of women and girls in its new International Development Strategy.

“I thank the Government of Bangladesh and hope that the Government will consider those recommendations the UK supported studies have proposed to further strengthen midwifery in Bangladesh”, he added.

The Chair of the seminar, Ms Siddika Akter, the Director General of the Directorate General of Nursing and Midwifery (DGNM), the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), said

“Midwives play a critical role in saving the lives of both mothers and newborns. Bangladesh’s National Midwifery Programme has successfully enabled thousands of mothers to give birth normally. Considering the need for their services across the country, more than 20,000 midwives need to be deployed to different health facilities including district and medical college hospitals in the near future. To continue these promising developments, the Government has created 5000 new midwifery posts.”

For one decade, UNFPA Bangladesh has been a committed implementing partner of the UK who is playing a significant role in advancing the midwifery in Bangladesh. Dr. Vibhavendra Raghuyamshi, the Chief of Health, UNFPA, stated, “It has been an immense pleasure for UNFPA to take part in conducting these studies, the findings of which are highly valuable. Professional midwives do not just play a critical role in preventing maternal and newborn deaths, but also providing family planning and gender-based violence response services to

vulnerable women and girls. We look forward to continuing our partnership with the Government of Bangladesh, as well as our generous donors the United Kingdom, Sweden and Canada to ensure the life-saving services of midwives will become as widely available in Bangladesh as possible.”

- The UK is a leading bilateral donor and development partner to Bangladesh. The UK provides financial and technical assistance to the Forth Health Sector Programme of the Government of Bangladesh which aims to strengthen Bangladeshi health system to combat issues related to global health insecurity including COVID-19, ensure Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) to end preventable deaths of mothers and newborns.
- At the global level, the UK is the champion of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and an important contributor to the Global Alliance for Vaccine and Immunisation (Gavi), Global Funds for AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and the Global Financing Facility (GFF). The UK is also a major contributor to the COVAX facility that helped millions of people around the world get vaccinated against COVID-19.
- The study titled ‘Strengthening Midwifery in Bangladesh – Lessons learnt’ was conducted by ARK Foundation, funded by FCDO’s South Asia Research Hub, with the objectives to:
 1. investigate the role that the educated midwives can play in improving the maternal/ new-born health care services in the country;
 2. generate insights on the effectiveness of the midwifery services and its long-term impact on maternal health; and
 3. provide suggestions on the future direction of the midwifery programme by, inter alia, identifying possible scale-up options, opportunities and challenges, through involving/linking private/NGO sectors for training more midwives as per the needs of the country.
- The study ‘Pathways to Women Empowerment through Midwifery Education’ was prepared by Disaster Management Watch (DM WATCH) as part of the UK Government supported ‘Better Health in Bangladesh (BHB)’ programme. The study shows the impacts of midwifery education programme on the empowerment of young women in Bangladesh.

Further information

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Partners team up with Stagecoach to give Sellafield a lift

The two-year contract will provide people working on the Sellafield site's biggest infrastructure projects with transport directly to their workplace, reducing the number of vehicles on local roads and helping to meet Sellafield Ltd's target to have zero cars on site by 2025.

Stagecoach have also committed to helping Sellafield Ltd drive social impact through corporate volunteering using the Programme and Project Partners Timebank Scheme and supporting people back into work through internal opportunities.

A 75-seater double-decker bus will transport workers onto the site from Lillyhall, Workington, Kangol park and ride facilities, Cleator and Yottenfews car park at Sellafield, with plans to add more pickup locations in the future.

The framework covers 2 inflight major projects being delivered by the partnership at Sellafield – the SIXEP Continuity Plant and the Sellafield Product and Residue Store Retreatment Plant. It will also cover any increase in the numbers of services for any other projects during that time.

Rob Jones, managing director for Stagecoach Cumbria and North Lancashire, said:

We are delighted to have been awarded the contract and we look forward to working in partnership. It presents an exciting opportunity for us to grow our business and support the local economy.

The company has a strong presence in Cumbria and the north west with depots in Carlisle, Kendal, Barrow and Morecambe.

Head of Programme and Project Partners Duncan Elliott added:

The partnership is keen to support Sellafield Ltd's target to reduce vehicles on site. This solution is focussing on moving towards a programme which will share busses between projects, improving efficiency. This will provide a flexible approach to demand. It will help support our social impact and sustainability initiatives, which are key to providing a positive lasting legacy for the future.

The long-term, complete solution will ultimately provide the following benefits to the partnership and Sellafield Ltd:

- financial benefits estimated around £47.07 million by reducing the total number of vehicles required and increasing the effectiveness of running services (1)
- supporting the Sellafield Ltd Enterprise Strategy to reduce private vehicles on site and travelling to site, freeing up space for major infrastructure projects that will support Sellafield's decommissioning
- reduction in travel time to and from the Sellafield site
- reduction in congestion on the A595 and subsequent carbon emission savings, improving air quality in the local area
- standardisation of travel arrangements across the Programme and Project Partners contract, and the wider enterprise
- increased utilisation of services by mixing and matching project staff on busses if needed, as demands fluctuate
- allows Sellafield to become better 'neighbours' to the local communities

(1) cost savings for the Programme and Project Partners pipeline

About the Programme and Project Partners

The Programme and Project Partners model was mobilised in 2019 with purpose of transforming major project delivery at the Sellafield nuclear site.

The partnership brings together the best of KBR, Jacobs, Morgan Sindall Infrastructure, Doosan and Sellafield Ltd to deliver a 20-year pipeline of major infrastructure projects to support the decommissioning of Sellafield and to create a clean and safe environment for future generations.

Endangered curlews get a head start

The endangered Eurasian curlew is being given a helping hand thanks to a recovery project getting underway today in Norfolk.

The project which builds on a successful pilot project last year, rescues eggs laid by the curlew on airfields before incubating, rearing and releasing

them in habitats where they have the best opportunity to thrive.

The curlew is Europe's largest wading bird and has suffered a severe decline in population over the past 40 years.

The eggs collected by Natural England staff and partners are now starting to hatch at Pensthorpe Natural Park and WWT Slimbridge. Later this summer, the fledged curlew will be tagged and released at Wild Ken Hill and Sandringham Estate in Norfolk, while the birds raised at Slimbridge will be released on Dartmoor.

This year more GPS tags and radio transmitters are being fitted to the birds to boost efforts to track their movements and conservation.

As a ground-nesting species, curlew gravitate to airfields which mimic the natural open grasslands they prefer, while security fencing at airfields can also help deter predators such as foxes. However, curlew nesting close to runways pose a danger to air safety and, until this project began, eggs laid on airfields would be destroyed under licence to prevent the risk of collisions between aircraft and birds.

Graham Irving, Wildlife Management Lead Adviser at Natural England, said:

At Natural England we want to see nature thriving everywhere. The decline of the curlew is one of England's most pressing conservation challenges and we're proud to be leading this innovative project, which we hope will make a significant difference to the fortunes of this iconic bird in the east of England.

Chrissie Kelley, Head of Species Management at Pensthorpe Conservation Trust, said:

Working together is vital to help reverse the decline of the curlew. Pensthorpe Conservation Trust are thrilled to play a significant part in aiding the recovery of such an important species, by rearing and releasing chicks saved from the airfields. This, along with changes to the management of their habitat, we and the partners of this project hope to safeguard the future of the curlew.

Air Commodore Sam Sansome, Inspector of Safety RAF, said:

The RAF is so proud to be supporting this fantastic project again this year. It really is an amazing thing being done by the team and it is brilliant that all the organisations involved have pulled together, again, to ensure the future of this iconic bird.

Joe Hamer, Ecologist at the Defence Infrastructure Organisation, said:

DIO is proud to be a small part of the continued success of this important project. It shows that by working with partners across numerous organisations, we can make a positive change and learn important information about curlew habits at the same time.

Staff from Natural England, Pensthorpe Conservation Trust (PCT) and the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) have been working closely with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and the Royal Air Force to collect eggs from military and civil airfields.

The work which will continue into the summer follows the first year of the Defra-funded project in 2021 which saw 79 young birds reared at Pensthorpe and released in Norfolk.

Their progress has been monitored by the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), who fitted colour rings to all birds while also fitting some with satellite or radio tags giving a unique insight into their life-history; how they have dispersed, their habitat use and survival. This helps give an understanding of the success of headstarting as a conservation tool for curlew.

Up until the beginning of May 2022, 26 birds out of 79 released had been spotted, with the majority on the east shore of the Wash around the release sites. Encouragingly, most were seen together with flocks of other curlews. Away from the release area, one bird was seen near Skegness, Lincolnshire; another bird was seen in Somerset in late September; and another has been seen multiple times through the autumn and into spring on the Exe estuary in Devon.

GPS tags have also provided a fascinating window into the movements of young Curlew following release, giving a more detailed indication of whether they are acting as wild-reared curlew would. Two birds transmitted for 10-20 weeks following release, showing that grassland is especially important for young Curlew, with birds only gradually moving to using more coastal habitats – even when this habitat is very close by.

As well as saving curlew from airfields, this work should help pioneer the recovery of curlew elsewhere within their range. A key aim of this project will be to assess how nature recovery networks can help priority species bounce back from population declines, creating ideal habitat for threatened populations to recover their former ranges.

First migrants set for Rwanda to be given final notice

News story

The Home Office has begun issuing formal directions to the first group of people being relocated to Rwanda.



The government's world-leading Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda has taken its final administrative step, as the Home Office has begun issuing formal removal direction letters to those who are set to go to Rwanda where they will be able to rebuild their lives in safety.

People who have taken dangerous, unnecessary, and illegal journeys, including crossing the Channel, are among those being relocated there.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Our world-leading partnership with Rwanda is a key part of our strategy to overhaul the broken asylum system and break the evil people smugglers' business model.

Today's announcement is another critical step towards delivering that partnership and, while we know attempts will now be made to frustrate the process and delay removals, I will not be deterred and remain fully committed to delivering what the British public expect.

It comes after the Home Office issued notices of intent earlier in the month informing some individuals that they were in scope for relocation.

The removal direction confirms that they will be going to Rwanda and when. The first flight is expected to take place next month, on 14 June.

Home Office officials are speaking with all individuals to ensure the process is fully understood and people are given the appropriate support ahead of

departure.

Once in Rwanda, there is a generous support package, including up to 5 years of training, accommodation, and healthcare on arrival. Under this partnership the UK is also investing an initial £120 million into the economic development and growth of Rwanda.

The partnership forms part of the New Plan for Immigration, the government's response to overhaul the asylum system – which is currently costing the UK taxpayer £1.5 billion a year – to create a fair but firm immigration system.

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[Fatal accident at Lady Howard footpath crossing](#)

News story

Fatal accident at Lady Howard footpath crossing, Ashtead, Surrey, 21 April 2022.



Lady Howard footpath crossing viewed from the north side

At around 14:51 hrs on 21 April 2022, a pedestrian was struck and fatally injured by a train while they were crossing the railway at Lady Howard footpath crossing, between Epsom and Ashtead in Surrey. The train involved was travelling at 62 mph (100 km/h) at the time of the accident. Another train had passed over the crossing in the opposite direction immediately before the accident occurred.

Lady Howard crossing provides access to Ashtead common. The crossing is protected by gates and is provided with signage which instructs users how to cross. Pedestrian users are directed to stop, look and listen for trains

before crossing the railway.

Our investigation will determine the sequence of events that led to the accident and will include consideration of:

- the factors which may have affected the decisions and actions of the pedestrian
- any previous incidents at Lady Howard footpath crossing and how these may be relevant to this accident
- the management of risk at this crossing and Network Rail's wider strategy for assessing and mitigating risks at footpath crossings
- any relevant underlying factors.

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, the [British Transport Police](#) or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.

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