

# Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Project (MNCH)

## Background

Tajikistan's health sector currently undergoes reforms to conform with the National Health Strategy 2010-2020. Multisectoral and multidonor working groups on health management and health governance, finances, resources and service delivery are supporting this process. For the Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP) strengthening and improving Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health (MNCH) services is a key priority of the National Health Strategy. The MNCH project contributes directly to the goal setting of the Tajik health strategy and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal 3 "Ensure healthy lives and promote wellbeing for all at all ages"- by supporting measures to reduce infant and maternal mortality in the project region.

## Project Structure

The MNCH project in Tajikistan is currently in its first phase, with a follow up project in the planning process. The project's objective is to improve the medical and advisory services to pregnant women, mothers and newborns in the Khatlon Oblast, comprising ten districts in the Kulob region. The political partner is the MoHSPP of Tajikistan. The project coordinates strongly its activities with those of the KfW (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau) – in supported health institutions in the same province.

The project is well embedded in the structures of the MoHSPP and is working closely with the department of maternal and child health care. A steering committee composed of the Deputy Minister, the Head of the Mother-Child Department at the MoHSPP and the heads of the Medical Accreditation Center, the Republican Center for Medical Equipment and Maintenance, the Post-Graduate Institute and advisors of the MoHSPP oversee the project implementation.

The MNCH project coordinates activities with other important development partners, such as KfW, UNICEF, WHO, local and international consulting companies working in the MNCH field.

The project also supports the maintenance of medical equipment with the assignment of an international maintenance specialist (Integrated Expert) as well as a Development Worker. Both link-up regularly with regional maintenance experts, for example with experts in Uzbekistan, to exchange lessons learned.

Project name	Maternal, Neonatal and Child Health Project (MNCH)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	Kulob region of Khatlon Oblast
Lead executing agency	Ministry of Health and Social Protection of the Population (MoHSPP) of Tajikistan
Duration	October 2016 to November 2019 Project extension until 2022 is in the planning phase

## Our Approach

To improve the maternal and neonatal health services, the project intervenes in five multilevel areas:

### Area I: Human Resources Planning and Development:

- Revision of the Re-Certification process for doctors and nurses;
- Curricula revision for obstetricians/gynaecologists, neonatologists and midwives;



Left: Field visit of midwives at Khatlon region.

Right: Midwifery workshop in Dushanbe

- International/regional exchange programme with professionals and relevant partners from the same field of work, to exchange experiences on how to integrate the revised or newly created standards into the daily work.

#### Area II: Quality Improvement of Health Services:

- Implementation of the national accreditation plan;
- Technical assistance to the development and implementation of a Quality Improvement (QI) approach;
- Assist the Medical Accreditation Center to develop and implement a business plan;
- Supporting the development of clinical protocols and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and related trainings;
- Small-scale investments to improve infrastructure in Primary Health Care (PHC) facilities.

#### Area III: Strengthening the Efficiency and Transparency of the Health Care System:

- Revision of the referral guideline for pregnant women, women giving birth and newborns;
- Technical assistance to the implementation and monitoring of the referral system;
- Introduction of a Mother and Child Pass (Rohnamo);
- Introduction of an information booklet (Tafsianoma), for young couples (which creates a link between the MNCH project a second GIZ Project on Nutrition);
- Revision of curricula for obstetricians/gynaecologists, neonatologists, and midwives;
- Technical assistance to implement of revised curricula;
- Small scale investment to improve quality of teaching;
- Procurement of medical equipment;
- Strengthening the National Midwifery Association.

#### Area IV: Strengthening the Republican Centre of Maintenance of Medical Equipment:

- Advising the Technical Working Group, appointed by the Ministry of Health, in developing a National Maintenance Concept;
- Inventory management of medical equipment;
- Training of local engineers and clinical personnel;

- Establish SOP's and an "Out-of-Control Action Plan (OCAP)" to assist clinical staff to perform simple maintenance tasks or to resolve problems themselves;
- Implementation of a maintenance concept at the Tajik National Research Institute (TNRI);
- Exchange programs with Uzbekistan.

#### Area V: Family Planning:

- Dissemination of information on family planning issues and available contraception methods in target communities in line with the recommendation of MoHSP;
- Trainings for PHC staff to strengthen provision of information on family planning;
- Trainings for women's groups on family planning issues to organize awareness raising campaigns and exchange visits between the communities;
- Broadcasting of key messages on family planning on local radio and conduction of radio dialogues with relevant stakeholders.

## The Benefits

The period around childbirth is critical for saving the maximum number of maternal and newborn lives and preventing stillbirths. Standards of care that explicitly define what is required together with measures of quality were prioritized as a key to ensure the quality of maternal and neonatal care services. Therefore, with increasing numbers of births in health facilities, attention has shifted to the quality of care since it contributes to morbidity and mortality.

The benefit of this project is that it covers all necessary aspects in the field of maternal and neonatal health to achieve the best possible outcome and to improve conditions in delivered services, which are aimed directly at the population, especially at pregnant women, mothers and their children.

By improving services, we help reduce maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality and make a significant contribution to the right to health and received quality -health services.

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