

## 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:

***...nurses and midwives play a crucial and cost-effective role in reducing excess mortality, morbidity and disability and in promoting healthy lifestyles...***

### Scope and functions in WHO HQ

Located in the Evidence and Information for Policy (EIP) cluster, Department of Human Resources for Health (HRH), the Office of Nursing and Midwifery directs its efforts towards:

- facilitating the integration of nursing and midwifery services in WHO programmes;

- 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.

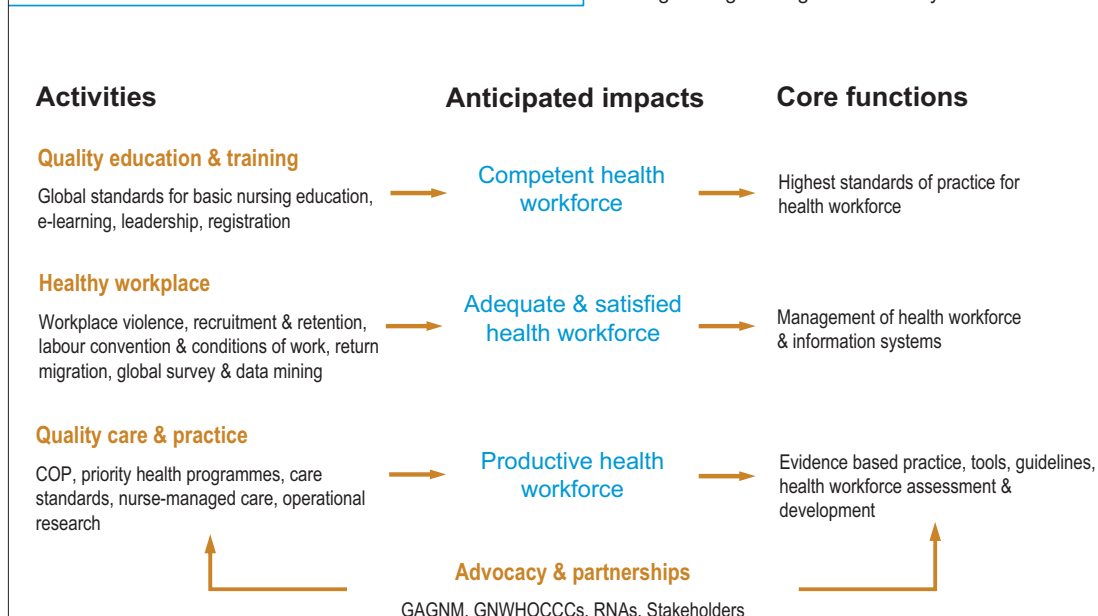
These principles will also inform future action taken by the WHO and partners. The Strategic Directions provides both a framework for WHO action to support countries in improving the quality of nursing and midwifery services, and a possible guide for action at national levels.



## 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



### 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:

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### Nursing and Midwifery website:

<http://www.who.int/nursing>