

Midwifery in Bangladesh:

A brief introduction

Over the years, there has been gradual reduction of maternal deaths nationwide. However, with maternal mortality rate reducing by 12.5% between 2010 and 2016 (BMMS, 2016), the country still loses 14 mothers a day due to delivery complications; complications in the post-partum period; delivery by unskilled home birth

Significant Achievements in Midwifery

attendants; and, lack of appropriate care by a skilled provider, for obstetric complications.

Bangladesh has made a commitment to end preventable child and maternal deaths by 2030 to achieve the goals of Sustainable Development. For reaching the goal the healthcare planners have prioritized antenatal and postnatal care, normal vaginal delivery, emergency obstetric care and newborn care which directly links to quality maternal health services. Given the large number of maternity cases in Bangladesh, the country demands a huge supply of midwives to ensure healthy pregnancy for women and newborn. An estimated 22000 midwives will be required to meet the national need.

- 41 Govt. Midwifery Institutes are offering Diploma in - Midwifery
- 48 Private Midwifery Institutes are offering Diploma in – Midwifery
- Around 4396 Midwives received license from Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC). Among them 600 are from BRAC University.
- About 1149 Diploma Midwives have been deployed already at sub district level health complexes.

The Prime Minister of Bangladesh committed at the UN General Assembly Special Session in September 2010 to train 3000 midwives at the first go. To fulfill the commitment of the Honorable Prime Minister and with the purpose of developing a cadre of competent and compassionate midwives, in January 2012, a three-year Diploma in Midwifery Programme was introduced by the Government of Bangladesh (GoB).

The plan for professional development of midwives is also the result of years of collaboration and relationship building among stakeholders such as the government, non-government organizations, donors, academia, professional associations, United Nations Agencies and donors.

Midwifery education in Bangladesh

Forty-one Government Midwifery Institutes are offering a three-year Diploma in Midwifery Programme since 2012. Every year huge number of students are being enrolled in the course and more in the waiting list. Simultaneously, midwifery education has also been expanded by the 48 private institutes. The most significant private sector initiative has been from BRAC University which introduced the Diploma in Midwifery side by side with government. This innovative educational initiative, which is co-funded by the UK government and BRAC, is the first of its kind in the private sector of Bangladesh.

Developing Midwives Project (DMP) of BRAC University

To develop competent and compassionate midwives, increase their usage particularly in underserved rural

Highlights Of BRAC University in Midwifery Education Programme

1. Pioneer among the private Midwifery Education institutes.
2. Curriculum approved by Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC) and International Confederation of Midwives (ICM).
3. Seven academic sites accredited by the government.
4. 7th Batch of students have been enrolled.
5. 260 seat capacity in each batch.

Already there are

- A. 1253 Students enrolled
- B. 833 Midwives graduated from 5 batches
- C. 600 BNMC Licensed midwives from 4 batches
- D. 161 BRACU Midwifery Graduates have been deployed by the GoB

And of course-

230 BRAC University Midwife Graduates are serving in Rohingya Refugee Camps.

areas and also, to contribute in reducing maternal and neonatal deaths in Bangladesh, BRAC University initiated Developing Midwives Project (DMP) in 2012 with funding from the UK Government. This was approved by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoH&FW) and accredited by the Bangladesh Nursing and Midwifery Council (BNMC). Since its beginning DMP has focused on strengthening health care system through midwifery services to different communities of Bangladesh. The 'Diploma in Midwifery' course from the beginning of its initiation is giving emphasis to ensure that mothers could avail a respectful maternity care.

The course:

Developing Midwives Project offers a 3-year diploma course with a midwifery curriculum which follows the standards set by the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM). The Project is being

implemented through seven academic sites in six divisions across the country.

Admission Criteria

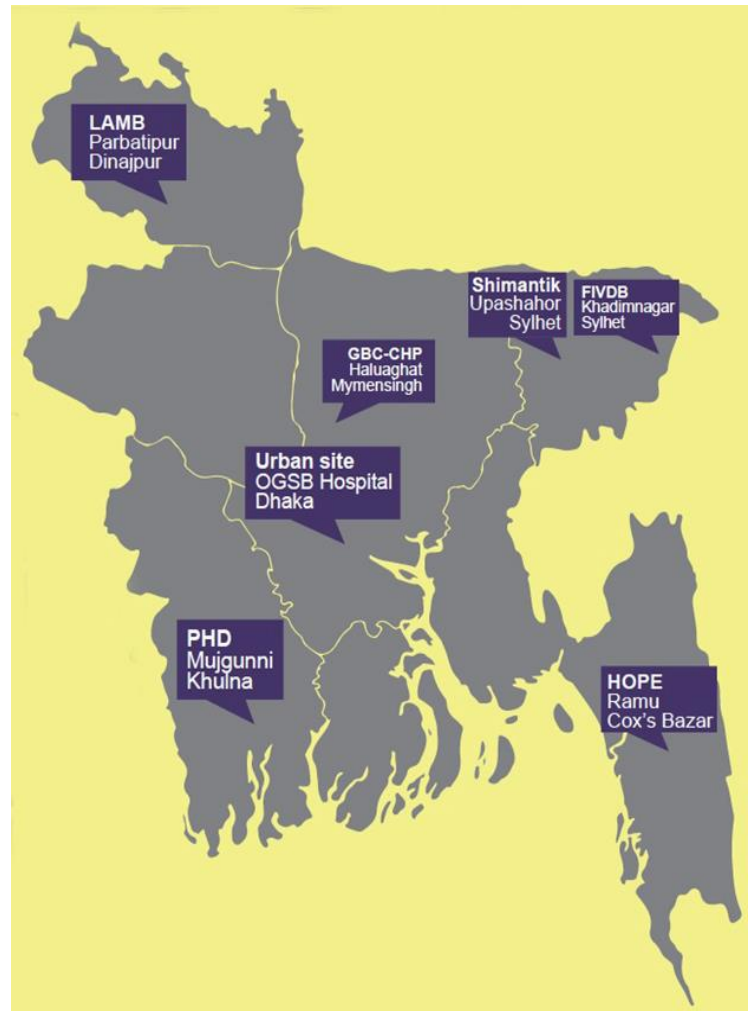
Aligned with the GoB admission standards, BRACU allows young women who have completed 12 years of education are eligible for the written admission test. When successful, they appear for viva. Commitment to complete the three-year course and work as a professionally practicing midwife afterwards are also admission requirements. DMP keeps 30 percent seats reserved for minority group and ethnic population.

Graduation Requirements:

- 40 Normal Vaginal Delivery (NVD)
- 40 Newborn Care
- 100 Antenatal
- 100 Postnatal Care
- 25 Family Planning method distribution

Curriculum

The curriculum is of 155 credits, which consists 40 percent theoretical and 60 percent practical hours. Over the period of 3 years a total of 34 modules are run including six on English language which are trained, managed and monitored by BRAC Institute of Language (BIL). The Midwifery Education Team (MET) of this project is responsible for preparing, revising and timely dissemination of academic calendars, modules and clinical equipment. All the academic sites are designed with adequate classrooms, clinical labs, computer labs, libraries and dormitory facilities.



E-Learning and more

DMP has introduced E-Learning methodology to the midwifery students and faculty where they gather updated knowledge on midwifery and collect relevant information. They are often encouraged to access the E-Learning platforms such as 'Global Health E-Learning,' and 'Bangladesh midwifery society online courses' which offers different learning opportunities to internalize midwifery curriculum and modules. For example, modules related to antenatal care, emergency obstetric and newborn care, community health, patient safety, complication during pregnancy etc. have direct recommendation to use online based knowledge resources as an integral part of study. Faculty update their knowledge and acquire certificates from the Global Health Networks which is monitored by the team leader of MET.

Midwife-Led Care Centre

Midwife-Led Care Centre (MLC) is another significant initiative of DMP. In an effort to provide quality maternity services to the community, 24/7 maternity centre led and operated by midwives have been situated in Mirpur, Dhaka with the help of BRAC Maternity Centre and in collaboration with Charikata Family Welfare Centre (FWC) of Jaintiapur, Sylhet. MLCs are promoting the alternative birth positions, pain relief exercises for easier normal vaginal delivery. Innovative endeavors such as these have created interests among the pregnant mothers and resulted into increasing patient flow. Moreover, this model centres enabled the midwifery students to learn how to provide professional midwifery services and at the same time promote midwifery professions to the people of different community.

Why we are different?

- Community engagement during studentship including health fairs in the community and school premises
- Proficiency in English
- Supervised round the clock clinical practices
- Availability of counsellor who grooms the students
- Student Welfare Committee (SWC) in every academic site
- 30 % students receive free studentship