Partnership with MOHP, UNFPA, WHO, and GIZ to Foster Midwifery Education, Nepal

Reporting period: June 26–27, 2017
Prepared by: Ganesh Shrestha, Program Manager
Pragya Gautam, Program and M&E Coordinator

Organization: Real Medicine Foundation Nepal (www.realmedicinefoundation.org)
Project title: Partnership with Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP), UNFPA, GIZ, and WHO to Foster Midwifery Education
Project location: Nepal

June 2017
Real Medicine Foundation
11700 National Blvd., Suite 234
Los Angeles, CA 90064
+1.310.820.4502
Background
Despite many programs related to women’s health, including those promoting institutional deliveries, safe motherhood, capacity building of skilled birth attendants, etc., Nepal’s maternal mortality rate has not seen significant improvement within the last five years, going from 281 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2011 to 258 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2016 (NDHS, 2016). Although government and NGO programs have helped reduce the maternal mortality rate, the target for 2017, i.e. the Second Long-Term Health Plan (1997-2017) goal of no more than 250 deaths per 100,000 live births, was not achieved. Nepal’s infant mortality rate has also improved somewhat, going from 46 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 32 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2016. The neonatal mortality rate is still high as well: 21 deaths per 1,000 live births (NDHS, 2016).

Nepal’s government has realized that increasing the number of specialized health professionals, such as qualified midwives, is essential to reducing the country’s high maternal and neonatal mortality rates. After holding hundreds of workshops and seeking help from external development partners, the government of Nepal has successfully launched a Bachelor of Midwifery Sciences (BMS) program at two well-respected Nepali institutions: The National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) and Kathmandu University (KU).

The Bachelor of Midwifery Sciences (BMS) program was developed and continues to be supported by a consortium of partners, including the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), as well as the World Health Organization (WHO), Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), and Real Medicine Foundation (RMF). The implementing organizations are the National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) and Kathmandu University (KU). The consortium functions to ensure support of every aspect of the BMS program without duplication of efforts, working together to build strong cadres of qualified midwives to reduce mortality and morbidity rates among mothers and newborns.

To this end, RMF is currently supporting the National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS) in its implementation of the program. RMF had committed to support NAMS with a midwifery skills lab, faculty training, and education materials. RMF was asked to provide cupboards and display shelves for the skills lab, and thus far, we have provided 13 display shelves for the skills lab, 2 large display cupboards for the library, and a 12-door, steel locker for students’ use at the Paropakar Maternity and Women’s Hospital, Thapathali, Kathmandu.

NAMS Midwifery Skills Lab Handover: June 26, 2017
On June 26th, 2017, Real Medicine Foundation Nepal organized a small ceremony for the handover of support materials provided for the Bachelor of Midwifery Sciences (BMS) program at the National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS), Bir Hospital Nursing Campus. NAMS officials, professors, and students were very happy to receive the support materials.

Ceremony Preparations and Attendees
The ceremony was held on the premises of Bir Hospital Nursing Campus (BHNC), which operates a nursing program, as well as the midwifery program for NAMS. The ceremony was coordinated by RMF Program and M&E Coordinator Pragya Gautam, along with Pramila Dewan, Campus Chief of BHNC. All NAMS dignitaries were invited, and the school’s Vice Chancellor Dr. Ganesh Bahadur Gurung was the chief guest, who also chaired the ceremony. The program was attended by NAMS Dean Dr. Yan Chandra Shiwakoti, Associate Professor Dr. Piyush Dahal, and Assistant Dean Goma Niraula. Bir Hospital dignitaries in attendance included the nursing director, Associate Professor Roshani Tuitui, and nursing administrator, Associate Professor Bandana Thapa. Along with these dignitaries, the administrative staff and faculties of Bir Hospital Nursing Campus and Bir Hospital attended the ceremony. Altogether, 70 people attended the ceremony, among them RMF Nepal’s team.
NAMS and RMF dignitaries at the ceremony

Midwifery students at the ceremony

Attendees at the ceremony
**Opening the Ceremony**
Bir Hospital nursing administrator, Associate Professor Bandana Thapa, was the master of ceremonies for the event. She opened the ceremony by inviting the dignitaries on stage: NAMS Vice Chancellor Ganesh Bahadur Gurung, NAMS Dean Dr. Yan Chandra Shiwalkoti, Assistant Dean Goma Niraula, Associate Professor Dr. Piyush Dahal, Bir Hospital Campus Chief Pramila Dewan, and RMF Program Manager Ganesh Kumar Shrestha.

**Welcoming Speech**
Campus Chief Pramila Dewan welcomed all the participants and expressed her heartfelt gratefulness to Real Medicine Foundation, as she and her team have greatly benefitted from the support RMF has provided for the efficient arrangement of the midwifery skills lab. She further stated that the shelving provided by RMF will be helpful to ensure the proper arrangement and functioning of the equipment and other logistics of the lab. Similarly, she thanked RMF for supporting NAMS with display cupboards for the library, as the existing shelves were not sufficient to accommodate additional learning materials needed for the new Bachelor of Midwifery Sciences (BMS) program.

Ms. Dewan beautifully explained how even a small piece of bread would be equal to a feast when one is really hungry, and even a feast would not mean so much when one’s stomach is full. Similarly, a little help right on time can be very valuable when someone is actually in need. She explained that RMF has provided much-needed help in an urgent situation, and that help is very highly valued by NAMS. She conveyed her thankfulness and expressed hope that RMF will always extend their hand to support NAMS for the midwifery education program in years to come.
Introduction of RMF

RMF Nepal Program Manager Ganesh Shrestha was also invited to say a few words about supporting midwifery education. Mr. Shrestha provided a brief introduction about the birth of Real Medicine Foundation and explained that the organization has been working in 21 other countries around the world. He emphasized that RMF is committed to helping people through the highs and lows and empowering them to help themselves and others, thus liberating human potential. He described how RMF was established in Nepal and its current projects. He also stated that RMF’s team is privileged to be a part of the midwifery education program and is ready to help the program according to our commitment. He mentioned that Dr. Martina Fuchs, Founder and CEO of Real Medicine Foundation, would feel proud to be applauded on such a platform. He also assured attendees that Dr. Martina will always extend a helping hand to NAMS for the midwifery education program.

Student Speech

Because this is a new program in health education, we felt it was also important to hear about students’ experience. Rukmini Tripathi, a student in the BMS program, shared her overall experience. She explained that they have completed 14 weeks of clinical practice in Paropakar Maternity and Women’s Hospital, Thapathali, Kathmandu. She appreciated the endless effort of all the teachers and the institution to ensure proper learning and skills development. She also thanked RMF for providing support to students’ education and particularly for the locker at the clinical area, which helped to ensure the safety of students’ belongings during their clinical hours.

She expressed that the students felt disheartened when their learning needs were not perceived as crucial during their clinical practice, and that although they are midwifery students, they were treated the same as nursing students. Ms. Tripathi acknowledged that change rarely occurs immediately, and she
expressed hope that the concerned people would understand the critical importance of skills development in midwifery education in the course of time.

Handover of Support Materials and Announcement of Scholarship
During the ceremony, RMF announced that a full scholarship would be awarded to a deserving candidate studying in the Bachelor of Midwifery Sciences (BMS) program. The students were awed and excited to hear this news. RMF is currently in the process of selecting a candidate to receive the scholarship. RMF Program Manager Ganesh Shrestha also handed over the keys for the midwifery skills lab to the Vice Chancellor of NAMS and handed over a comprehensive model to demonstrate and practice birthing and management of postpartum hemorrhage to Pramila Dewan, Campus Chief of NAMS BHNC.

Concluding Remarks
NAMS Vice Chancellor Dr. Ganesh Bahadur Gurung offered concluding remarks to close out the ceremony. He stated that being a pioneer institution for the Bachelor of Midwifery Sciences (BMS) program had made a dream come true for the National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS). He acknowledged that there is still a lot to be accomplished for the smooth running of the program and stated that the school is always dedicated to improving the level of learning and teaching. He further reassured the students that challenges are a part of academic endeavors and being the first students of the program, they are making history in the field of health and midwifery in Nepal.

Dr. Gurung pledged that the NAMS board will help the midwifery program in every possible way and will also seek help from other professional entities to ensure better knowledge, skills, and attitude development of the students. He also stated that they will help in conducting an orientation program to educate all concerned personnel about the Bachelor of Midwifery Sciences (BMS) program and the requirements for better functioning. He stressed that quality education can produce efficient human resources and can contribute to improving the health status of the country. He also said that the country should provide an environment to retain and utilize its own people in the field of health.

Above all, he happily expressed his indebtedness to RMF, explaining that he had never dealt with an organization which so readily and immediately provided the help that NAMS requested. He extended his thankfulness and stated that he hopes to go a long way with RMF collaboratively. He also wished RMF a bright future and prosperity in all its endeavors.

Visit to the Skills Lab and Library
Upon completion of the formal ceremony, all the dignitaries were led to the midwifery skills lab of NAMS BHNC, where the students practice different skills before and during their clinical tenure. The RMF-provided shelves beautifully accommodated all the equipment and demonstration materials. Then in the library, dignitaries were shown the display cupboards for the convenient placement of books. The dignitaries commented that the support
materials were indeed helpful for the arrangement of the equipment and books, providing easy and proper access, as well as safe storage.
Visiting the RMF-supported library

Display cupboards provided by RMF for the NAMS library

Students study in the RMF-supported library
**Media Coverage**

The event was covered by one of the most popular news sources in Nepal, Nepal Republic Media, in its national, Nepali daily newspaper *Nagarik Daily*. The article was published in the June 27th, 2017 issue.

**Translated article:**

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<th>RMF SUPPORT TO BIR NURSING</th>
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<td>Kathmandu, 26th July (Nagarik) - Real Medicine Foundation has handed over support and educational materials to Bir Hospital Nursing Campus, the nursing school of National Academy of Medical Sciences (NAMS). RMF Program Manager Ganesh Shrestha handed over the support to Prof. Dr. Ganesh Bahadur Gurung, Honorable Vice Chancellor of NAMS in a special ceremony.</td>
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<td>In the ceremony, Dr. Gurung highlighted the fact that initiation of the Midwifery Education Program at NAMS was long awaited and involved a lot of effort from many people. He explained that quality education can bring about remarkable changes in the health status of the country and the country should make arrangements so that the produced human resources can be utilized within the country.</td>
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<td>RMF formally started operating in Nepal in 2015 and has been contributing to rescue relief during the disaster, as well as other health-related fields. This is the first academic year for the Bachelor of Midwifery education at NAMS, and 9 students have been enrolled in the program this year.</td>
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<td>Prof. Pramila Dewan, Campus Chief of Bir Hospital Nursing Campus appreciated the support of RMF for the smooth running of Midwifery Education Program and was convinced that RMF would collaborate with NAMS in the days to come.</td>
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**Original article:**
वीर नरसिंदलाई
आरएमएफको सहयोग

काठमाडौँ, असार १२ (नागरिक) -
रायल मेडिसिन फाउंडेशनले चिकित्सा,
विज्ञान राष्ट्रिय प्रतिष्ठान (न्याम्प)का,
अस्पताल नरसिंह क्याम्पसलाई विभिन्न शैलीक सामग्री
हस्तान्तरण गरेको छ। फाउंडेशनले
कार्यक्रम व्यवस्थापक गणेश छ्रेट्टले
'मिडवाइफरी' एडुकेशन का बागान आवश्यक
पर्ने सामग्री न्याम्पको
उपकुलपति प्रा. डा. गणेशमान
गुरुङलाई एक-कार्यक्रमकारी
हस्तान्तरण गरेँ ।

गरी अवसरमा बोल्डै उपकुलपति
गुरुङले लामो समयको परिवर्तित क्याम्पसमा
मिडवाइफरी एडुकेशन
शिक्षा सज्ज्वालन गर्न लागाईएको बताए,
गुणस्तरीय
शिक्षको माध्यमबाट
स्वास्थ्य क्षेत्रमा सुधार ल्याउन सहयोग
पुने धारणा च्याक गर्दैैं। उनले स्वास्थ्य
को पश्चात धन्यवाद पूरा भर्नेछ उन्नयन
क्षेत्र नरसिंह क्याम्पसलाई नेपाली उर्जा
गर्दैैं।

सन् २०१६ वटै सम्भाले
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स्वजन्तन भएको स्वास्थ्य नहूँ अन्तर्गत
मिडवाइफरी हुजेसन अन्तर्गत ९, जना
गाईएको अभियन्ता गर्दैैं।

सामग्री हस्तान्तरण कार्यक्रममा
क्याम्पस रसुवा प्रमिला देखि नियन्त्रण
आरएमएफको गुट एको सहयोगको
प्रतिष्ठा गर्दै आगामी दिनमा जो न्याय
श्रेमा उक संस्थाहरूको सहयोगमा गरेइ
अधि बढाउने बाटौँ।