



EveryGirl EveryWoman EveryWhere

Centre for Catalyzing Change (C3)

White Ribbon Alliance Midwifery Project

WRAI's engagement with midwifery for the improvement of
maternal and newborn health

Period: 2019-2023 Project area: India Supported by: **BILL & MELINDA GATES foundation**

The improvement of maternal health services in the country hinges crucially on the kind of infrastructure and work ethic the human resources closely involved with maternal healthcare are equipped with. Keeping this in mind, The White Ribbon Alliance India (WRAI)'s ongoing strategic initiative to improve maternal health services has focused on midwives, a section of healthcare professionals who often do not receive adequate institutional support, acceptance, agency or dignity of profession.

In this Midwifery Initiative, WRAI's role is one that facilitates and accelerates changes to promote midwife led care units (MLCUs) within public health facilities - where over 500 births happen per year - and to make them more women-oriented. WRAI will also work towards building professional and public awareness, which will facilitate the newly trained and recruited Nurse Practitioners in Midwifery (NPMs) to gain acceptance within the maternal health workforce. This will contribute to building an enabling environment for midwifery in India.

Project Objectives

Through a multi-pronged approach, the project aims to brand and position midwives as a specialized cadre providing quality respectful care for normal births. To do so, it builds on India-specific midwifery evidence to design women-centered professional opportunities and facilitates mutual learning between NPM Educators and WRAI's members (who contribute evidence and share lessons learnt with community members and with national professional and development networks).



Intended Outcomes

- Increased understanding of, and support for, the professional midwife trained to global standards and integrated into India's public health system.
- Increased understanding of and support for midwives among the public.
- Establishment of a uniform national standard of nursing education.
- Increased research and advocacy capacity among a cadre of midwives.



How does it work

WRAI's 1800 strong membership communicates and collaborates with multiple stakeholders to draw up a public policy and health systems engagement process to support midwifery practices. Key stakeholders and support groups will visit training institutes and observe midwifery led care units. They will then promote the work of this specialist NPM cadre as women-centered quality care providers to women and communities. The project also draws from global and national landscaping to support implementation efforts in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar with GOI's technical partner JHPIEGO.

Innovation / Strategy

- National-level advocacy and generation of political support by actively engaging with policy-makers, parliamentarians, nursing and medical professionals, to facilitate the acceptance of NPMs in the public health system.
- Positioning midwifery at the centre of a maternal health team, by promoting an integrated quality of care network especially for UP and Bihar.
- Using media for active engagement with women to improve people's recognition and perception of the role of the NPMs. The findings from campaigns like "What women want" (WWW) points to women asking for quality care through the support of midwives.
- Working towards consensus on the adoption of a standardized licentiate exam for nurses across stakeholders.
- Sustain the effort by supporting the research agenda where technical experts build capacity for midwifery researchers and midwife-led advocacy in India.



We are C3. Centre for Catalyzing Change. We are for EveryGirl. EveryWoman. EveryWhere.

We are a committed organization working in India to make sure no woman or girl is denied her basic rights. We design and implement interventions that work with the existing systems to deliver solutions at scale