

EB156 Item 24.3(i) Global strategies or action plans that are scheduled to expire within one year: Global Strategic Directions for Nursing and Midwifery

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In focus

The Director-General has circulated a report ([EB156/34](#)) that takes stock of progress by Member States, partners and the Secretariat in implementing the global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025 ([A74/13](#)), adopted in resolution [WHA74.15](#) (2021). The Board is invited to consider a draft decision (in para 16 of EB156/34) to extend the global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025 until 2030.

Background

[Tracker links](#) to previous discussions of nursing and midwifery.

The Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery (SDNM) 2021-2025 ([A74/13](#)) spanned four policy focus areas: education, jobs, leadership, and service delivery. Each area had a “strategic direction” and goal for the five-year period, and between two and four policy priorities:

1. educating enough midwives and nurses with competencies to meet population health needs
2. creating jobs, managing migration, and recruiting and retaining midwives and nurses where they are most needed
3. strengthening nursing and midwifery leadership throughout health and academic systems
4. ensuring midwives and nurses are supported, respected, protected, motivated and equipped to safely and optimally contribute in their service delivery setting.

The Global Strategic Directions was informed by the [State of World's Nursing 2020](#) and the [State of World's Midwifery 2021](#)

Note that the GSD21-25 was a reworking of [GSD16-20](#)

PHM Comment

Policy focus areas

Table 2 in [EB156/34](#) discusses future priorities under four headings: jobs, education, leadership and service delivery

PHM urges that the four categories be extended to include: research and evaluation, and occupational health and safety.

Research and evaluation should be core components to ensure the nursing and midwifery workforce are able to meaningfully contribute to the development of appropriate service delivery models in various settings and levels. Strengthening nursing and midwifery research will contribute to all four of the existing policy priorities.

Occupational health and safety. Mental health impacts on nurses and midwives are not restricted to COVID, and as climate change, conflict, displacement and disease outbreaks place further pressure on this workforce, occupational health and wellbeing need to be considered separately to reduce the impacts of these factors on practitioner welfare and retention and service delivery. This will help to develop workplace environments that retain and attract the workforce, reduce high levels of turnover, and protect the mental and physical health and wellbeing of nursing and midwifery workforce.

Extend the mandate

PHM urges Member States to support the extension of the global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021 – 2025 until 2030, with additional considerations, namely that research and evaluation activities of the current strategic directions should be undertaken, and additional categories to include ‘research and evaluation’ and ‘occupational health and safety’.

Future priorities

Research and Evaluation

- governments should promote and fund nursing and midwifery research and evaluation activities to drive change across all levels of research including quality of care;
- develop collaborative global nursing sites to progress research and evaluation in nursing and midwifery to build capacity in lower- and middle-income countries;
- ensure research and evaluation education is embedded in under- and post-graduate nursing and midwifery education;
- ensure career pathways for research and evaluation pathways are supported, including building publication skills;
- promote cross-professional research and evaluation opportunities.

Occupational Health and Safety

- ensure that occupational health and safety is a key consideration for nursing and midwifery workforce across all environments;
- ensure policies are developed to protect and promote nursing workforce during climate change, conflict, displacement and disease outbreaks
- ensure that nursing and midwifery workplaces are safe and supply basic needs, such as clean water supply, sanitation, electricity or gas, safe transport, housing, and digital technology;
- include a focus on women's safety, health and wellbeing within the nursing and midwifery profession
- address challenging work conditions across multiple areas, including direct care provided in emergencies eg. extreme weather events and disasters, etc.
- ensure appropriate resources are available to support direct and indirect care.

Jobs

“Accelerate growth in demand for nursing and midwifery jobs, securing sustainable domestic and external health workforce investments”

Should also include:

- work towards more equitable global distribution of nurses based on population needs and having regard to international emergencies that may affect needs across countries or lead to workforce losses;
- including a focus on supporting regions and countries with significant workforce gaps, including South-East Asia as well as the African and Eastern Mediterranean Regions.

Education

“Scale up the domestic production of nurses and midwives”

Should also include:

- equip nursing and midwifery educators with research and evaluation capabilities, skills and knowledge;
- build advocacy skills, knowledge and capabilities to promote public health and quality health care;
- integrate climate change in nursing and midwifery curricula globally to ensure workforce readiness to prevent and/or respond to climate emergencies to support population health and patient care outcomes.

Service delivery

Should also include reference to support for nursing and midwifery research directed to examining nursing and midwife practice in various health care and public health settings. Boosting such research is critical for encouraging innovation in service delivery towards efficient and quality healthcare as well as decent jobs.

Leadership

“Establish/strengthen senior government roles for nursing and midwifery planning, input into health policy and capacity-building for data reporting”

Should also include:

- improve diversity in nursing and midwifery workforce across ethnic, /cultural, gender, socio-economic status, and rural backgrounds to build trust in health systems and meet population health needs;
- invest in pipeline and pathway programs including mentorship and internship opportunities to support future career progression for all workforce categories;
- ensure opportunities for leadership development in nursing and midwifery across all levels of health service planning, implementation, delivery, research and evaluation, and funding.

Notes of discussion

Draft decision in para 16 of EB156/34 adopted but not yet posted:

The Executive Board, having considered the report of the Director-General,⁶ decided to recommend to the Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly the adoption of the following decision:

The Seventy-eighth World Health Assembly, having considered the report of the Director-General, Decided:

(1) to extend the global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025 until 2030;

(2) to request the Director-General to report to the Health Assembly on the progress made in implementing this decision, integrated with reporting on the Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030.