Afghanistan’s Midwifery profession at a glance

• **20th Century:** King Amanullah sent 12 women from his family abroad to be trained in nursing and midwifery

• **1979:** After the Soviet invasion, the health system was brought into ruins and devastated the midwifery profession

• **1996:** The Taliban took control and berried women from attending school

• **2002:** 467 midwives serving the entire country

• **2004:** Community midwifery education started

• **2014:** Two streams of higher education for midwives started

• **2014:** Around 4600 midwives are serving today
Community Midwifery Education (CME)

• Started as a pilot programme in (2002 – 2004)

• The 2 years CME program was scaled up in 2005

• The CME program is culturally accepted and made it possible for women to receive training near their own community

• Students after completion of 10th grade are selected from and by rural communities with the ownership of local communities

• Currently there are 22 midwifery schools and by 2018, they will be increased to 31
Deployment and Retention of Community midwives

• Most of midwives are deployed in their own communities after completion of studies
• Hardship allowance provided
• Strong support by the community members
• Opportunity for higher education on a bachelor degree
• In-service training
Contribution of the CME programme

- In 2002 MMR was 1,600/100,000 and in 2010, 327/100,000 (AMS, 2010)
- 28% increase in skilled deliveries
- A six-fold increase in qualified midwives since 2002
- Improving the status of women in Afghanistan
- Engagement of women in the midwifery profession has led to political and social empowerment
- Gained support, trust and collaborative approaches from government, donors and civil society
The role of the Afghan Midwives association (AMA)

- The voice of the profession and for gender equity
- Running a mentorship program for midwives
- Developed the Policy and Strategy for Nursing and Midwifery services
- Working towards Afghanistan Midwives and Nurses Council
- Promoting Higher Education for Midwives
- Advocacy Campaigns for the midwifery profession and safe motherhood
The Contribution of Partners

- Design and implementation of the CME program
- Design and implementation of the Family Health Houses Initiative
- Establishment of an accreditation system for midwifery programme
- Developed and implementing midwifery policies and strategies
- Developed and implementing midwifery on a higher education
- South-South Collaboration with Iran
- MHTF fund to support midwifery activities
Advocating for availability

- Increase the number and efficiency of professional midwives
- Improving recruitment and retention polices
- Improving career pathways
- Strengthening community engagement
Advocating for accessibility

- Providing essential services free of charge
- Improving recruitment and retention of midwives especially in rural areas
Advocating for acceptability

- Development of policy on acceptable safe practice
- Improve implementation of the Nursing and Midwifery Policy and establishment of the Midwives and Nurses Council
- Improved working environment for midwives
- The incorporation of modules on respectful care into midwifery education
Advocating for quality

The way forward

- Strengthening the midwifery education based on international standards and delivered by trained faculty members
- Improve regulation through a strong and well supported Afghanistan Midwives and Nurses Council
- Continuing support to the Afghan Midwives Association
THANK YOU

(remember.... Midwives save lives)