

'IT'S VERY REWARDING TO HAVE THE BABY BREASTFEED AFTER SAFE DELIVERY'



Midwife of Rashaant soum of Khuvsgul province S.Byambasuren

During the Obstetric emergency skills training on "Reproductive Health, Maternal and Neonatal Emergency Care", organized in Khuvsgul Province earlier this year with support from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Policy and UNFPA, we interviewed the midwife of Rashaant soum of Khuvsgul province S.Byambasuren about working as a midwife in rural Mongolia.

S.Byambasuren graduated from Ulaanbaatar Medical college in 1990 as a midwife and has since been working in Rashaant soum for 32 years.

How many childbirths have you assisted in so far?

Since I began working as a midwife, I have assisted in the delivery of more than a thousand babies. I myself have five children and two grandchildren. Three of my children are medical professionals. One is studying to become a dentist.

What is it like to work as a midwife in a soum?

My profession is a very rewarding profession. It is a great joy to see a safe delivery. Most of all, I do worry about the third phase where the placenta is delivered. It's very rewarding to have the baby breastfeed after a safe delivery. There is no greater happiness than that. I get a lot of energy after seeing a healthy baby after birth.

Rural women are very nice, they breathe clean air, eat and drink healthy, and they show great respect and trust towards doctors and midwives. We don't have too many problems because the people follow the advice given by medical professionals well. The main thing is to understand the needs of each woman and communicate accordingly.

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'IT'S VERY REWARDING TO HAVE THE BABY BREASTFEED AFTER SAFE DELIVERY'



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During your 32 years as a midwife, you must have faced many difficulties. What are some of the biggest lessons you learned?

Of course, problems do occur. Only after 2010 did soums begin to employ three or four doctors. In general, there is a senior doctor, who is the head of the soum health center, a statistician, and a soum feldsher. In general, soum midwives work at the level of senior doctors. There are many complications and there will be times when you will assist in childbirth alone. Soum feldsher and midwives are working at the level of senior doctors, performing all types of duties. Starting from evaluation to service, we perform the duties of internists and pediatricians. Sometimes even minor surgery is done.

When ectopic pregnancy occurs, it's common to go into hemorrhagic shock, which can be very difficult. In such cases, the midwife and the doctor are the only ones there to perform surgeries.

Of course, we also work as a team with nurses. Due to our remote location, it is very difficult to wait for the surgical team after making an emergency call to the province. Regardless, we provide care to the best of our capacity. There have been no maternal deaths in the 30 or so years I worked in the soum.

That is a great achievement. What is the secret of this success?

The most important thing is antenatal care. Mothers should be healthy before pregnancy. It follows the principle that a healthy mother gives birth to a healthy child. Preventive check-ups are important and should be done thoroughly. Antenatal care should be effective. This, for me, is the most important thing.

There is discussion about supporting midwives to improve access to health care and support the services that midwives provide. What would you do if you were offered to work as a consultant midwife or as a teacher, rather than being retired? You have invaluable experience that can be transferred to the next generation of medical professionals.

I would agree to work. I have 30 years of work experience in communicating with patients, and I am ready to work further to transfer my knowledge and skills to young midwives.

For instance, I found the two-day training organized by UNFPA for health workers in Khuvsgul Province very effective. We have gained so much information and noticed many things that we could reflect into our work plans. Now the midwife job description is being updated. Some of us are working at the same level as a doctor, and some of us have assisting roles. In this regard, I think it is very important to update the job description according to each level of health care. Of course, there is also the issue of wages. Doctors and midwives working in soums are not paid enough. That is why young doctors are more interested in working elsewhere or in private hospitals.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been no classroom training for the past two years, with online training as the new norm. How effective do you think online training is?

It is effective. We get the information we need and apply it to our work. However, when classroom training is held, it gives us the chance to sit together, and discuss and exchange ideas on issues. We talk about the problems in our local settings and how we are managing them. We learn from each other's experiences. I think a face-to-face discussion is more effective than online learning.

What is the current COVID-19 vaccination status for pregnant mothers in your soum?

Vaccination is generally completed. All pregnant women were administered the second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. During the third dose administration, people's attitudes toward vaccination changed. But vaccination is being done. Now we have 29 pregnant women in antenatal care, 100% of them have gotten the second dose of the vaccine. Coverage of the third dose is at 20% to 30%.

Do you face any challenges when recommending vaccination to pregnant women?

It's relatively not bad. The attitude of rural people is positive and tolerant. A doctor's advice is well received.

However, people get a lot of information from the internet and Facebook. Many people are misinformed. There are people who say that they got this and that after being vaccinated. In such instances, we try to communicate with empathy and provide correct information and advice that address each person's concerns.

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

ENSURING THE DIGNITY OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

The hand-over of dignity kits for the women and girls staying at one-stop service centres (OSSC) and shelters and necessary equipment for the establishment of etuslamj.mn, a gender-based violence service database, was organized on 21 June 2022, under the "Combating GBV in Mongolia" project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and jointly implemented by the Government of Mongolia and UNFPA.

A total of 655 dignity kits were handed over to 31 OSSCs and shelters nationwide, while equipment worth over 100 million MNT was handed over for etuslamj.mn database.

Ms. A.Ariunzaya, Minister for Labour and Social Protection, Dr. Khalid Sharifi, UNFPA Mongolia Head of Office, and Dr. Stefanie Burri, Director of SDC, and representatives from the Family, Children, Youth Development Agency and Ulaanbaatar-based OSSCs and shelters attended the event.



STRENGTHENING COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL POLICE AGENCY



Dr. Khalid Sharifi, UNFPA Mongolia Head of Office, and UNFPA Gender programme staff held a courtesy meeting with Police Lieutenant Ts.Nyam-Ochir, First Deputy Chief, and Police Major E.Bayarbayasgalan, Head of Division to Combat Domestic Violence and Crime Against Children, and other officials of the National Police Agency.

The parties discussed the implementation and results of the "Combating GBV in Mongolia" project supported by UNFPA and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Mongolia. They highlighted the importance of improving gender-based violence data collection, analysis and dissemination.

PREVENTING OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, MANAGING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING EMERGENCIES

The UNFPA Gender programme team organized a session on the key concepts of gender and gender-based violence, sexual harassment in the workplace, and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse to the staff of Erdenes Oyu Tolgoi LLC on 4 May 2022.

During the Humanitarian Country Team meeting held on 12 May 2022, the UNFPA Gender programme team organized a session on the key concepts of gender, gender equality and gender-based violence and related data, and managing gender-based violence in emergencies, such as armed conflict, natural disasters and pandemic.

On 30 June 2022, the UNFPA gender programme held a session on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, its relevance, and the bystander-to-action approach to prevent and respond to violence to employees of all youth development centres in the country.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS MEET TO BOOST EFFORTS TO ELIMINATE GBV



The National Committee on Gender Equality, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia (MOFA) and UNFPA organized the quarterly Development Partners' Meeting on "Enhancing technical cooperation and cross-sectoral coordination towards eliminating gender-based violence (GBV)" on 27 June 2022 in Ulaanbaatar.

During the meeting, representatives from the government, UN agencies in Mongolia, diplomatic missions, and international and local NGOs exchange views on the challenges and opportunities in the implementation of the Law on Combating Domestic Violence to enhance technical cooperation and cross-sectoral coordination toward eliminating GBV.

Mr. N.Ankhbayar, State Secretary of MOFA, and Mr. Tapan Mishra, UN Resident Coordinator, delivered opening remarks emphasizing past achievements in preventing and responding to GBV in Mongolia. Dr. Khalid Sharifi, UNFPA Mongolia Head of Office, provided an update on the implementation of the Law on Combating Domestic Violence and contributions of UNFPA's next Country Programme for 2023-2027.

REPORT PRESENTED ON CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN



The Government of Mongolia participated virtually in the 82nd session of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and presented the 10th periodic report of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection coordinated and facilitated the organization of the working group discussions and consultations since 3 June, and the presentation of the report was held on 23 and 24 June 2022. The event was supported by the project "Combating GBV in Mongolia", funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and jointly implemented by the Government of Mongolia and UNFPA.

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

SAFEGUARDING MATERNAL, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Emergency Obstetrics Care training for 40 obstetricians and midwives of Darkhan-Uul and Selenge provinces, including doctors and midwives from soums, was conducted in the city of Darkhan on 27-28 June 2022.

This hands-on clinical simulation-based training was conducted by emergency obstetric care trainers from the National Center for Maternal and Child Health, Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences, and Urgoo Maternity Hospital. Opening remarks were given by Senior Specialist of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Social Policy J.Chimgee and Head of the Darkhan-Uul province Health Department B.Battsengel.

During the training, UNFPA presented on the maternal deaths review and the importance of COVID-19 vaccines in preventing complications among pregnant and breastfeeding women.



**ЖИРЭМСЭН, ХӨХҮҮЛ
ЭХЧҮҮДИЙН КОВИД-19-ИЙН
ЭСРЭГ ДАРХЛААЖУУЛАЛТ**

ЭМЧ НАРТ ЗОРИУЛСАН ЗӨВЛӨМЖ

COUNSELLING GUIDELINES DEVELOPED ON VACCINATION AGAINST COVID-19 FOR HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDERS

The counselling guidelines for health care providers, and messages for pregnant and breastfeeding women on vaccination against COVID-19 have been adapted and endorsed by the Advisory Board on Obstetrics and Gynecology under the Ministry of Health.

The guidelines were disseminated nationwide among doctors providing counselling services at provincial and soum levels.

ASSESSING THE AVAILABILITY OF MODERN CONTRACEPTIVES AND MICRONUTRIENT

In partnership with UNICEF, UNFPA has supported the Contraceptive and Micronutrient Availability Study at service delivery points. The survey was conducted by the National Center for Maternal and Child Health. The data collection is complete and the researcher are conducting statistical analysis.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF MIDWIVES CELEBRATED UNDER THE THEME “100 YEARS OF MIDWIFERY PROGRESS”

With UNFPA support, the high-level meeting for International Day of Midwife was held under the slogan “100 years of midwifery progress”.

The meeting saw the participation of members of Parliament, the Minister of Health, and representatives from JICA.

Mr. Bjorn Anderson, Director of UNFPA's Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and Ms. Franka Cadee, President of the International Confederation of Midwives, participated from distance and made opening remarks.



The main purpose of this high-level meeting was to advocate to high-level officials the importance of midwifery service, and the need to allow Mongolian midwives to practice more independently in accordance with the international scope of practice of midwifery. The statement was handed to representatives of Parliament, Government and UN in attendance.

The meeting resulted in the development of a national midwifery statement “What do midwives want?” for policymakers, contributing to the empowerment of midwives.

During the meeting, Dr. Khalid Sharifi, UNFPA Mongolia Head of Office, introduced the UNFPA Global Midwifery Strategy with key interventions in support of midwives.

HEALTH SECTOR RESPONSE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE



With technical support of UNFPA, the training on “Clinical Management of Rape and Intimate Partner Violence” for health care providers of six provinces (Sukhbaatar, Dundgobi, Selenge, Arkhangai, Uvs and Khovd) and Ulaanbaatar was conducted in the second quarter of 2022, in collaboration with the Mongolian Federation of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

A total of 105 health service providers specialized in trauma, adolescent health, mental health, and obstetrics and gynecology participated in the training.

ADOLESCENTS & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



On 8 April 2022, UNFPA Mongolia launched the "Pre-departure" programme in Uvurkhangai province, expanding the delivery of quality health education, including comprehensive sexuality education for young people.

UNFPA designed and developed the Pre-departure Programme for graduating secondary school students in rural areas departing to the provincial centre and Ulaanbaatar for higher education.

The launch event of the Pre-departure Programme was attended by representatives from the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Uvurkhangai Province Governor's Office, Family, Children, Youth Development Department of Uvurkhangai Province, UNFPA Mongolia Country Office, and youth participants of the programme.

During the launch, Uvurkhangai local officials expressed their commitment to ensuring the sustainability of UNFPA's initiatives to reach marginalized adolescents and young people and expand the initiatives at the soum level. In addition, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection plans to broaden the Pre-departure programme nationwide.

UNFPA and Unitel LLC launched the E-Hub digital library on 9 June 2022 at the Youth Development Centre in Darkhan-Uul Province, which operates under the Family, Children and Youth Development Department of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Under the initiative, Unitel LLC will establish an E-Hub in youth development centres in all 21 provinces. The hubs will provide access to free e-books, e-contents and other means of learning to empower adolescents and youth through knowledge and education.

The opening ceremony of the E-Hub in Darkhan-Uul province was attended by the Head of the Family, Children and Youth Development Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection G. Batdorj, Deputy Governor of Darkhan-Uul province B.Javkhlan, Head of Darkhan-Uul province's Family, Children and Youth Development Department A. Amgalan, Head of Office of UNFPA Mongolia Dr. Khalid Sharifi, Executive Director of Unitel LLC D.Enkhbat, and children and youth of Darkhan-Uul province.

UNFPA and Unitel LLC will launch E-Hubs in the remaining 20 provinces in phases through 2023.

UNFPA AND UNITEL PARTNERSHIP SUPPORTS RURAL YOUTH'S ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE



VIRTUAL CAPACITY-BUILDING TRAINING PROVIDED TO YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTRE STAFF



UNFPA Mongolia, as the lead agency of the UN Youth Working Group for 2022, developed the annual plan for capacity-building training for Youth Development Centre (YDC) staff.

In addition, UN agencies such as ILO, IOM and UNICEF are delivering virtual training to YDC staff in 2022. The main objective of the training is to enrich YDC staff with up-to-date information and practical tools for quality service delivery to youth at YDCs.

To kick off the training series, UNFPA Mongolia delivered a training on gender-related topics in June in partnership with the National Committee on Gender Equality, National Statistics Office, and National Center Against Violence. In addition, national institutes and UNFPA Mongolia specialists delivered a five-hour virtual training on gender-related topics to 60 YDC staff. Through this training, YDC staff were introduced to concepts related to gender equality, gender-based violence, domestic violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and the work of relevant national institutions in these areas.

The series of capacity-building training will continue to be offered to YDC staff throughout 2022. The training will cover various topics on family planning, prevention of STIs/HIVs, youth rights at work, volunteerism, counter-trafficking, and more.

UNFPA CO-LEADS DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS' YOUTH ENGAGEMENT THEMATIC WORKING GROUP IN 2022

UNFPA is co-leading the development partners' youth engagement thematic working group in 2022 with Peace Corps. The first in-person meeting of the working group took place on 13 June 2022 at the UN House. Representatives from Peace Corps, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Caritas, Lorinet Foundation, UNDP, IOM, ILO, FAO and UNFPA attended the meeting.

Head of the Youth Development Department of the Family, Child, Youth Development Agency of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection Mr. O.Selenge participated in the meeting as the government representative and presented an overview of youth issues in Mongolia and the related national priorities related to youth development. The partners in attendance introduced their work in youth development and briefly discussed how best to synergize their works for better impacts. As the group was newly founded in 2022, the members will continue discussion of synergizing the work in youth development through 2022 at upcoming meetings.

UNFPA IN THE FIELD

UNFPA organized field monitoring visits to Arkhangai, Zavkhan, Khovd, Bayan-Ulgii, Sukhbaatar and Dornod provinces from April to June 2022.

In April, the joint field monitoring visit to Arkhangai and Zavkhan provinces was organized with the Coordination Council for Crime Prevention (CCCP) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Ms. Ch.Amarbayasgalan, Senior Officer of CCCP, Ms. Susanne Amsler, SDC desk officer in charge of Mongolia, and Mr. Benoit Meyer-Bisch, Deputy Director of SDC, joined the mission.

In May, high-level visits to Khovd and Bayan-Ulgii provinces were organized with Mr. S.Zulpkhar, Vice-Minister for Labour and Social Protection, Police Major Ms. E.Bayarbayasgalan, Head of Division to Combat Domestic Violence at the National Police Agency, Dr. Khalid Sharifi, UNFPA Mongolia Head of Office, and Dr. Stefanie Burri, Director of SDC joined the mission. Furthermore, Vice-Minister Mr. S.Zulpkhar and UNFPA Mongolia Head of Office Dr. Khalid Sharifi jointly visited Sukhbaatar and Dornod provinces in June 2022.

One of the goals of the visits was to monitor the implementation of the “Combating Gender-based Violence in Mongolia” project, funded by SDC and jointly implemented by the Government of Mongolia and UNFPA.

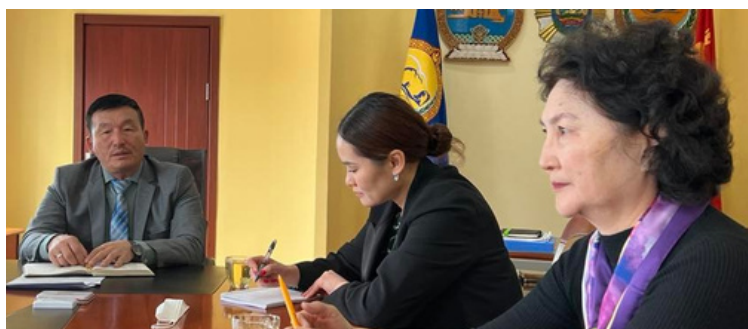
The mission teams met with provincial authorities, relevant officials and service providers at the one-stop service centres (OSSC) and shelters for survivors of gender-based violence.

During the mission, it was noted that significant progress was made in strengthening the survivor protection and multi-sectoral coordination mechanisms established at the local levels. In particular, OSSCs and shelters in Arkhangai, Zavkhan, Khovd and Bayan-Ulgii provinces are carrying out women’s economic empowerment initiatives and enabling survivors of violence staying at the facilities to live independently and to break the cycle of violence.

The shelter in Sukhbaatar province was opened in May 2022, and 90 million MNT was allocated from the local budget to support survivor protection mechanism, while the OSSC in Dornod is making progress in strengthening multi-sectoral coordination mechanism through capacity building of the local multi-disciplinary teams at the primary level.



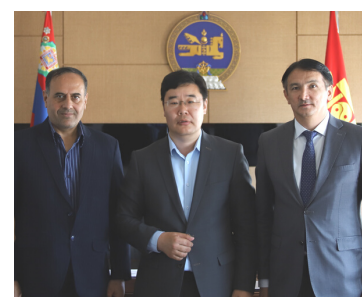
Governor of Zavkhan province D.Tuvshinjargal meets UNFPA mission team



Chairman of Local Representatives Khural of Arkhangai province B.Batjargal meets UNFPA mission team



Deputy Governor of Dornod province Sh. Yol Meets Vice Minister of Labour and Social Protection S. Zulpkhar and UNFPA mission team



Governor of Sukhbaatar province M. Iderbat and Vice Minister of Labour and Social Protection S. Zulpkhar with UNFPA Mongolia Head of Office Dr. Khalid Sharifi



Governor of Khovd province B.Dugerjav with UNFPA mission team



Governor of Bayan-Ulgii province D.Bayirjan meets with UNFPA Mission team

UN JOINT PROGRAMME ON “EXTENDING SOCIAL PROTECTION TO HERDERS WITH ENHANCED SHOCK RESPONSIVENESS” WRAPS UP



The UN Joint Programme on "Extending Social Protection to Herders with Enhanced Shock Responsiveness" (2020–2022) has been completed. The closing steering committee meeting was held on 26 June 2022 to review the end valuation presentation by an independent research body.

In the second quarter of 2022, the Herders' Forum was organized in Zavkhan province, where 14 startups in five soums of Zavkhan, who were supported by UNFPA under the UN Joint Programme, exhibited their products and achievements. Stakeholder consultative meetings looking into the lessons learned and sustainability of the programme interventions were held in Zavkhan and Ulaanbaatar. The programme contributed to the expansion of social and health insurance coverage among herders of 14 herder cooperatives in five provinces of Zavkhan province, and resulted in the formation of social protection financing strategy, which was presented to the government.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We thank our donors, implementing partners, and colleagues for their continued support in our efforts to deliver a world where every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe and every young person's potential is fulfilled.



The State Great Hural (Parliament) of Mongolia



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MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION AND
SCIENCE



MINISTRY OF LABOUR
AND SOCIAL
PROTECTION



NATIONAL COMMITTEE
ON GENDER EQUALITY



NATIONAL
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OF MONGOLIA



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