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Implementing an innovative family planning counselling strategy in Lebanon

Following the Syrian crisis, multiple attempts were set to satisfy the increasing need for available, accessible and culturally-acceptable reproductive health services especially Family Planning (FP) provision among Syrian refugees. Since its establishment in 2014, the Lebanese Order of Midwives (LOM) in partnership with United Nations Funds for Population Activities (UNFPA), has been working on a national FP strategic plan entitled- the “Enhanced National Capacities to Deliver High Quality Family Planning services” to improve the quality of sexual and reproductive health and rights among populations living in unfavorable conditions. Endorsed by the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health, it presents a holistic view on FP needs and aims to: i) adapt a FP manual and enhance capacities of registered midwives on reproductive health services, rights, FP methods and counselling; and, ii) apply a mentoring and coaching project to support the performance improvement of trained midwives’ providers in delivering quality FP counselling to Syrian refugees and Lebanese host community beneficiaries. This interactive plan is made of 13 steps to offer individualized FP including postpartum FP counseling to beneficiaries. Midwives providing FP counseling use special cues cards, brochures and medical eligibility criteria wheel for contraceptive use to facilitate the counseling and guide beneficiaries to choose the contraceptives that satisfy their needs. The national strategic plan was piloted last year in 14 different health facilities in the Beqaa and North Lebanon areas. Trained midwives succeeded in properly applying the plan’s steps which were reflected by the results obtained whether in hospitals or primary health care settings. More than 120 midwives’ coaches and providers were trained on the FP human rights, methods, and counseling strategy; and a large coaching program is still ongoing to conduct more than 250 visits to midwives’ providers in the different healthcare facilities. The implementation of the project is well founded and further activities are planned to upscale the FP strategy at the national level.

Biography

Nayla Doughane has completed her Master’s degree in Maternal Health Services from Saint Joseph University. She was the Director of the Midwifery School at the Saint Joseph University from 1993 to 2007. She has developed and implemented the Master’s program of Midwifery and numerous continuing education diplomas to enhance the midwives’ leadership skills in providing quality maternal and neonatal health services. For almost 20 years, she has exerted a leadership role and substantial efforts with a midwifery team, and conducted many lobbying activities for midwifery to create the Lebanese Order of Midwives. Since June 2014, she is fulfilling a leading role as a President of the Lebanese Order of Midwives and has conducted many activities all over the Lebanese regions to promote the midwifery profession and enhance the midwives’ competencies to provide safe, effective and quality neonatal and maternal health services. She is also a Senior Lecturer in the Midwifery School and has earned the title as an Honorary Director of the Midwifery School. Moreover, she has extensive experience in delivering FP services and educating health care providers in this area.

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