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Global Network of Midwives (GNM): A solution for disparate access to health and rights for women

Narjes Shiraghaei Kootenaei

Mazandaran Midwifery Association, Iran

The rise of the Internet and online platforms paved the path for knowledge and information to be reached to the remotest places around the world and saved so many lives by connecting people together and to each other's knowledge and expertise. But unfortunately, that connectivity in the field of midwifery hasn't reached its full potential. Midwives are not connected in the same way as the other professions are and this is harmful. For example, in developing countries such as Iran, Afghanistan, and Turkey in which the government has its own agenda regarding women's rights, midwives' lack of access to new knowledge and connectivity, results in spreading ideas which are in line with government's agenda and not the women's best of interest. And this is not only happening in the public sector but the private sector as well. In these societies, associations and private organizations have to follow the same policies and usually, the knowledge and information are distributed from top to the grassroots. I believe midwives are the first line of defense for women's rights in a lot of societies. And having educated, knowledgeable, up-to-date midwives would help not only to improve women's health but also society's wellbeing. Under this light I propose a new network; a network of midwives who are connected from all around the world with a simple click on social media platforms; a network of people who are keen to learn and teach and exchange ideas beyond the borders and policy frameworks. Let's use this fascinating tool that we have in our hands and make sure we make the best of it. The best for our societies and our future.

Biography

Narjes Shiraghaei Kootenaei is a freelance speaker and trainer and Head of Mazandaran Midwifery Association, Iran since 2015. Her research work is based on "Evidence Based Midwifery" and her book "Is It Safe in Pregnancy?" is the first in the field in Persian language, has been praised both by midwives and moms. For her, sex education and family planning are two pillars of a healthy society and although in Iran both topics are sensitive and in most cases forbidden, she managed to start and successfully continue her informative and frontier workshops on these topics for the last five years. It's never been easy, neither the government nor the society in general is keen to openly talk about these issues. She didn't stop on teaching the midwives and colleagues on these topics. She managed to convince school's deans and parents of teenagers to agree to sex education and in the last five years she regularly has sexual health workshops at five schools. Also she has a strong presence on online platforms especially on Telegram (the leading social media platform in Iran) for sex education.

narges8989@gmail.com

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