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*Innovation and reciprocity:  
strengthening professional  
associations through cross cultural  
partnerships*



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# Innovation and reciprocity in twinning: strengthening professional associations through cross-cultural partnership

Friday 6<sup>th</sup> March 2020

*Momtaz Begum, Bangladesh Midwifery Society*

*Sharmin Shobnum Joya, Bangladesh Midwifery Society*

*Joy Kemp, The Royal College of Midwives UK*



**5th Commonwealth Nurses  
and Midwives Conference**

Friday 6 and Saturday 7 March 2020, London UK

Celebrate ...

nurses and midwives, breaking down barriers, leaving no-one behind

# Background

- Royal College of Midwives and Bangladesh Midwifery Society have been twinned since July 2017
- ICM promotes twinning between professional midwives' associations for mutual strengthening and learning
- Twinning has potential to increase midwives' power and transform communities (Cadée, 2018)



# Royal College of Midwives

- RCM founded in 1881
- Midwifery regulation in UK since 1902
- RCM has had recent international partnerships in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Nepal, Nigeria and Uganda
- Recent ambition to strengthen international operations and influence



# Historical Background



BMS formed in 2010

Midwifery is a new profession  
in Bangladesh

Prime Minister's commitment

Midwifery education started  
2013, graduated 2016,  
deployed 2018

Midwives young, enthusiastic  
and digitally competent but  
inexperienced

# Twining Project

Funded by UNFPA.

Donor Objective:

- To build the capacity of BMS to be a strong voice for midwives all over Bangladesh and create demand for midwifery services



Workstreams:

1. Project Management
  2. Building organisational capacity
  3. Midwifery Leadership development
  4. Advocacy
  5. Networks and linkages
  6. Monitoring and Evaluation
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# Promoting Innovation

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- Cross-cultural teams and exchange can foster creativity and innovation (Bounken et al, 2015; Battacharya, 2010)
- UK health services have been slow to adopt innovations (Nuffield Trust, 2017)
- South Asia has been recognised as a hub for innovation and technology



# Cultural Exchange

- 14 RCM staff visits (4 people)
- 5 international consultants
- 4 local consultants
- 5 RCM midwife volunteer 'twins' with matched skill-sets
- WHA Geneva 2018
- Dubai conference 2018
- Cambodia exchange visit April 2019
- UK visit March 2020



# Cambodia Exchange April 2019



# Innovations in BMS – using technology

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- Developed an almost virtual professional association
- Executive team and staff function online through social media
- Virtual sub-committees
- Online database and e-voting system
- Online education portal
- Reducing carbon footprint



# Innovative approaches

- Workshop facilitation – using trash art
- Story writing competition
- Bursaries for YMLs
- Individual twinning relationships
- Responding innovatively to context e.g. emergencies



# Reciprocity: Innovation in UK inspired by twinning with BMS

- Development of e-voting and e-toolkit for RCM local branches
- Exploring twinning between local RCM branches and university midwifery societies
- Twinning student midwives across continents
- Development of resources to support global engagement
- Challenging our engagement with RCM members and staff of Bangladeshi heritage and driving improvements in care for British Bangladeshi community



# Evaluation of Phase 1 Nov 2018

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- Utilised Cadee's (2018) 25 Critical Success Factors for Midwifery Twinning Partnerships, grouped around equity, shared values, shared commitment, programme management and communication
- Results showed twinning had led to achievements, improvements in capacity and changes in mindsets and values
- Challenges in equity and balance of power

# Soft evaluation Dec 2019

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- Significant improvements in BMS organisational capacity
- Young Midwife Leaders developed and embracing their roles
- Twinning relationships have helped to challenge cultural norms
- Challenges with sustainability as international travel and funding reduces

# Moving forward

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- Collate evidence for success and change
- Publish and disseminate
- New cohort of young leaders
- Harness technology and innovation further in the face of current global challenges (funding, travel restrictions etc)
- Explore regional and local twinning options

# Thank You for listening!



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"The greatest joy is to  
become a mother;  
the second greatest  
is to be a midwife."  
- Norwegian Proverb

