

*Global strategic
directions for*
**NURSING AND
MIDWIFERY**

2021-2025

education

jobs

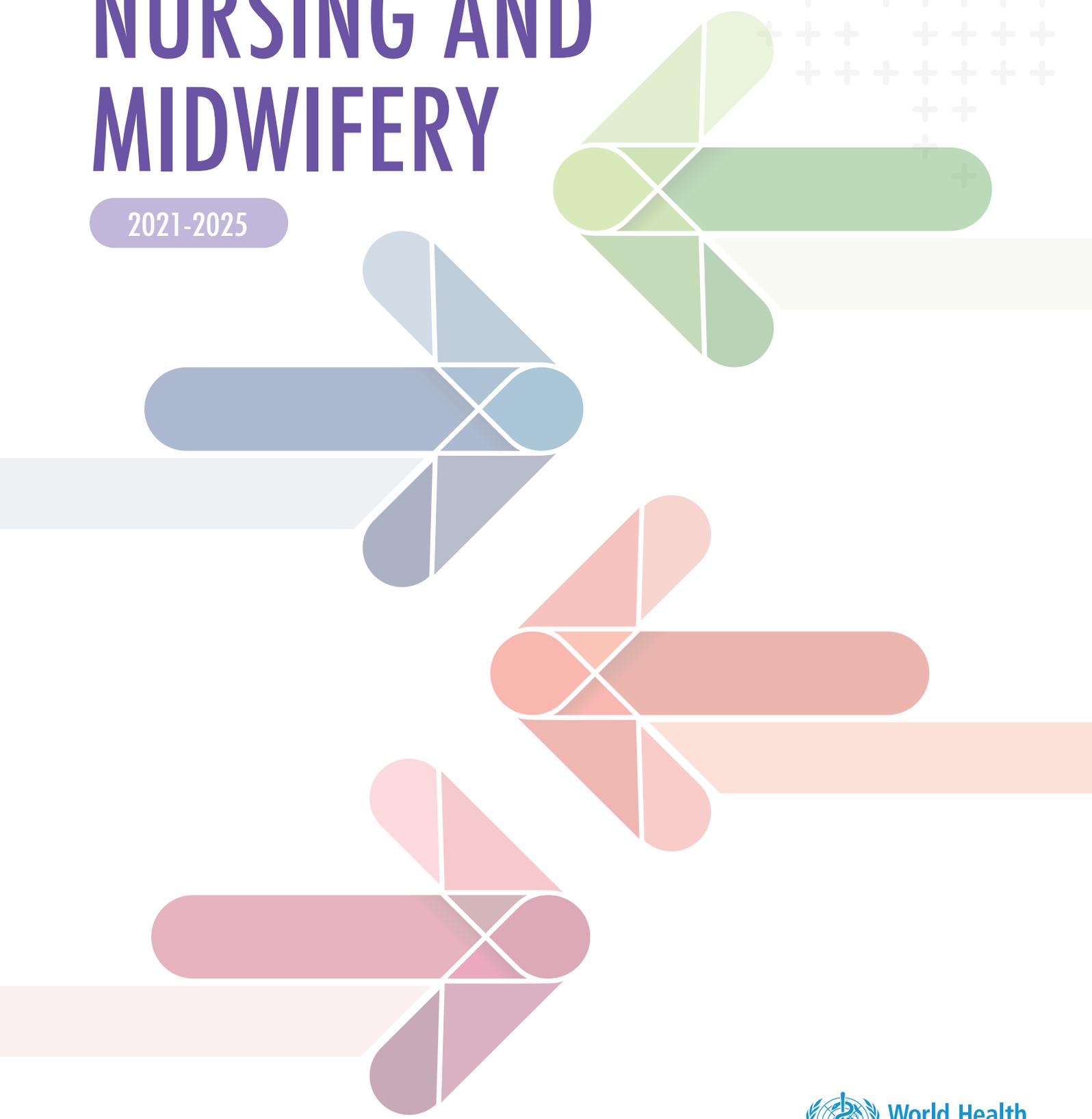
leadership

service delivery

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ISBN 978-92-4-003386-3 (electronic version)

ISBN 978-92-4-003385-6 (print version)

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Acknowledgements

The Health Workforce Department of the World Health Organization (WHO) extends its appreciation to the many individuals and organizations who participated in the web-based global and regional consultations and provided comments via email, and to Member States for their valuable input on the revised draft document.

WHO also gratefully acknowledges the WHO collaborating centres for nursing and midwifery, the *Nursing Now* global campaign, the International Council of Nurses, the International Confederation of Midwives and other professional organizations for their contributions to the draft *Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery 2021–2025*.

The conceptualization, technical development, and overall coordination of work was undertaken by Carey McCarthy, Health Workforce Department, with support from the WHO Regional Offices, the Department of Maternal, Newborn, Child & Adolescent Health & Ageing, and the Office of the WHO Chief Nursing Officer. Technical oversight and direction was provided by Giorgio Cometto, Unit Head, and by James Campbell, Director, Health Workforce Department.

The production of this document has been made possible through funding support from Germany, Norway and the Universal Health Coverage Partnership (WHO, the European Union, Belgium, Canada, France, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg, and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland).

Executive summary

The *Global strategic directions for nursing and midwifery (SDNM) 2021-2025* presents evidence-based practices and an interrelated set of policy priorities that can help countries to ensure that midwives and nurses optimally contribute to achieving universal health coverage (UHC) and other population health goals.

The SDNM comprises four policy focus areas: education, jobs, leadership, and service delivery. Each area has a “strategic direction” articulating a goal for the five-year period, and includes between two and four policy priorities. If enacted and sustained, these policy priorities can support advancement along the four strategic directions: 1) educating enough midwives and nurses with competencies to meet population health needs; 2) creating jobs, managing migration, and recruiting and retaining midwives and nurses where they are most needed; 3) strengthening nursing and midwifery leadership throughout health and academic systems; and 4) ensuring midwives and nurses are supported, respected, protected, motivated and equipped to safely and optimally contribute in their service delivery settings.

Policy priorities are expressed through a health labour market lens. This perspective allows for a comprehensive understanding of the forces that drive shortages and surpluses, geographical imbalances, and suboptimal contributions by midwives and nurses in service delivery settings. The suggested implementation approach for the SDNM is an inclusive process rooted in robust data and analysis, intersectoral policy dialogue, and evidence-based decision making on appropriate actions and investments. The monitoring and accountability framework encompasses the data-dialogue-decision making continuum and leverages established reporting mechanisms of WHO Member States.

The primary targets of the SDNM are health workforce planners and policy makers, as well as educational institutions, public and private sector employers, professional associations, labour unions, bilateral and multilateral development partners, international organizations, and civil society.

The intended impact of the SDNM is that countries fully enable the contributions of midwives and nurses towards the following common goals: primary health care for UHC and managing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic; mitigating the health effects of climate change; managing international migration; and ensuring access in rural and remote areas and small island developing states.

The SDNM uses the terms “midwife” and “nurse” to refer to the distinct occupational groups as described by the International Standard Classification of Occupations in 2008. WHO appreciates the professional distinction of the midwife and the nurse. The SDNM highlights prioritized issues and shared policy responses that have an impact on both occupations. Actions should be both context- and occupational group-specific to maximize the contributions of midwives and nurses towards greater health workforce efficiency and effectiveness and to improve access to quality health services.



*The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic reinforced the universal need to **protect and invest in all occupations engaged in a preparedness and response capacity,** in public health functions, and in the delivery of essential health services.*

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