



CAM ACSF

Midwives for everyone, everywhere
Des sages-femmes pour tous, partout

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Dear Members,

As we reflect on the events of 2023, I am filled with gratitude for each and every one of you who contributed to our collective success. It is an honour to represent you at an organization that continually demonstrates unwavering dedication to the advancement of midwifery in Canada.

One of the most significant milestones for the CAM Board of Directors of the past year was the progress made on governance reform. This transformative endeavor stemmed from a deep reflection on our intended impact and a commitment to ensuring that the structure of our Board aligns with our values and reflects the diversity of lived experiences, identities, and skills of CAM members. Much work has been done over the past few years – in particular by Past President Alix Bacon – with the goal of decolonizing the organization's structure and engaging a broader spectrum of CAM members in our work.

In October of 2023, we had the exciting opportunity to gather for our first in-person conference since the onset of the pandemic. The conference in Ottawa was not only a momentous occasion to connect with fellow members and learn together (and dance!), but also a testament to the resilience and camaraderie that define our community. It was a privilege to be able to meet many of you.

The digital transformation of the Canadian Journal of Midwifery Research and Practice (CJMRP) marks a significant milestone in 2023, made possible by the tireless efforts of the long-time Editor in Chief, Patricia McNiven. We extend our thanks to Patty for her many years of service and hard work in publishing and promoting the CJMRP. This transition to a digital platform ensures broader accessibility to invaluable research and insights, strengthening our collective knowledge base.

On the international stage, Canadian midwifery shone brightly at the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) Triennial Congress held in Bali, Indonesia in June of 2023. Our contributions along with the National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) were met with



admiration and respect, underscoring the profound impact of Canadian midwifery and Indigenous midwifery on a global scale. Our partnership with NCIM remains central to our mission; we have the privilege of witnessing the transformative work of their staff and leadership to advance Indigenous midwifery and strengthen access to excellent outcomes for Indigenous, Inuit, and Metis communities across the country.

Expanding our programming for both Global and National initiatives has been instrumental in enhancing our visibility and credibility with the federal government. The staff team worked hard on a number of important projects in 2023 to strengthen midwifery here in Canada and globally.

As we look ahead, let us carry forward the spirit of collaboration, innovation, and advocacy that defines the Canadian Association of Midwives. Together, we will continue to champion excellence in midwifery, empower our members, and advance the health and well-being of communities across this country and beyond. Health systems need midwives.

With heartfelt appreciation and optimism for the future,

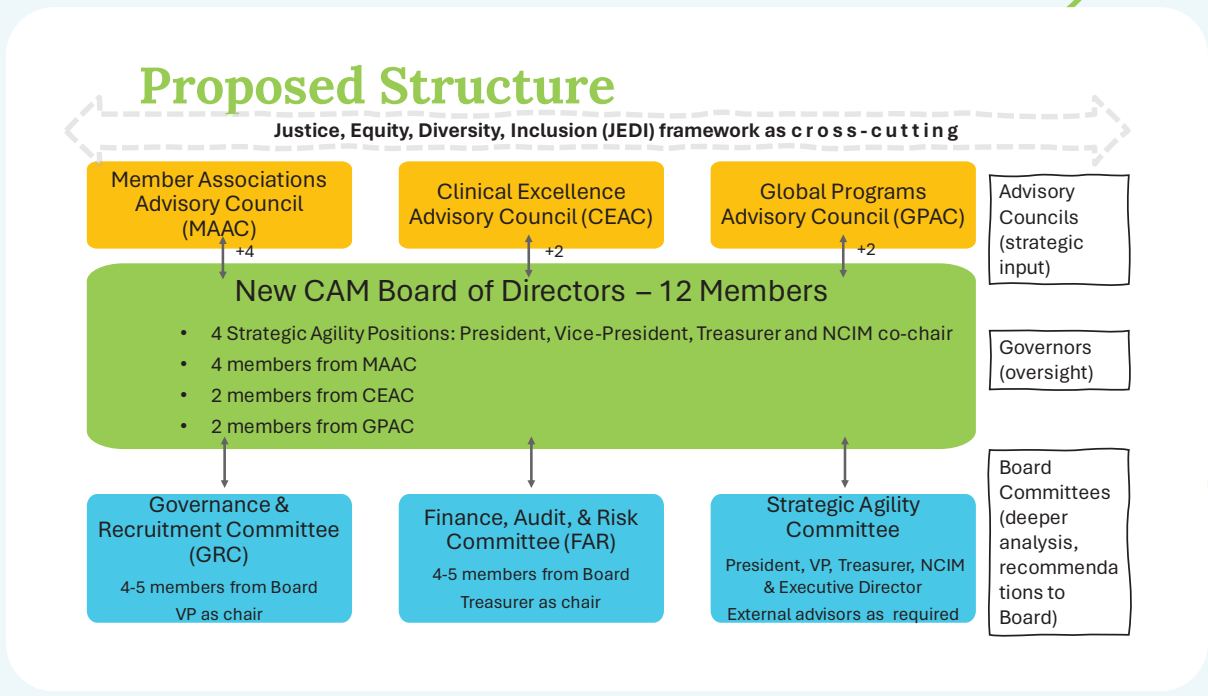
CJ Blennerhassett, RM, MHA, CHE
President, Canadian Association of Midwives

GOVERNANCE REFORM

In 2022, the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) engaged in a governance reform process to consider alternatives to the original governance structure still in place since CAM's incorporation in 2001. The objective is to ensure our national midwifery association is equipped to realize our intended impact and that our governance structure is aligned with our values. More specifically, we want to ensure equitable and appropriate representation of all CAM members on the Board of Directors.

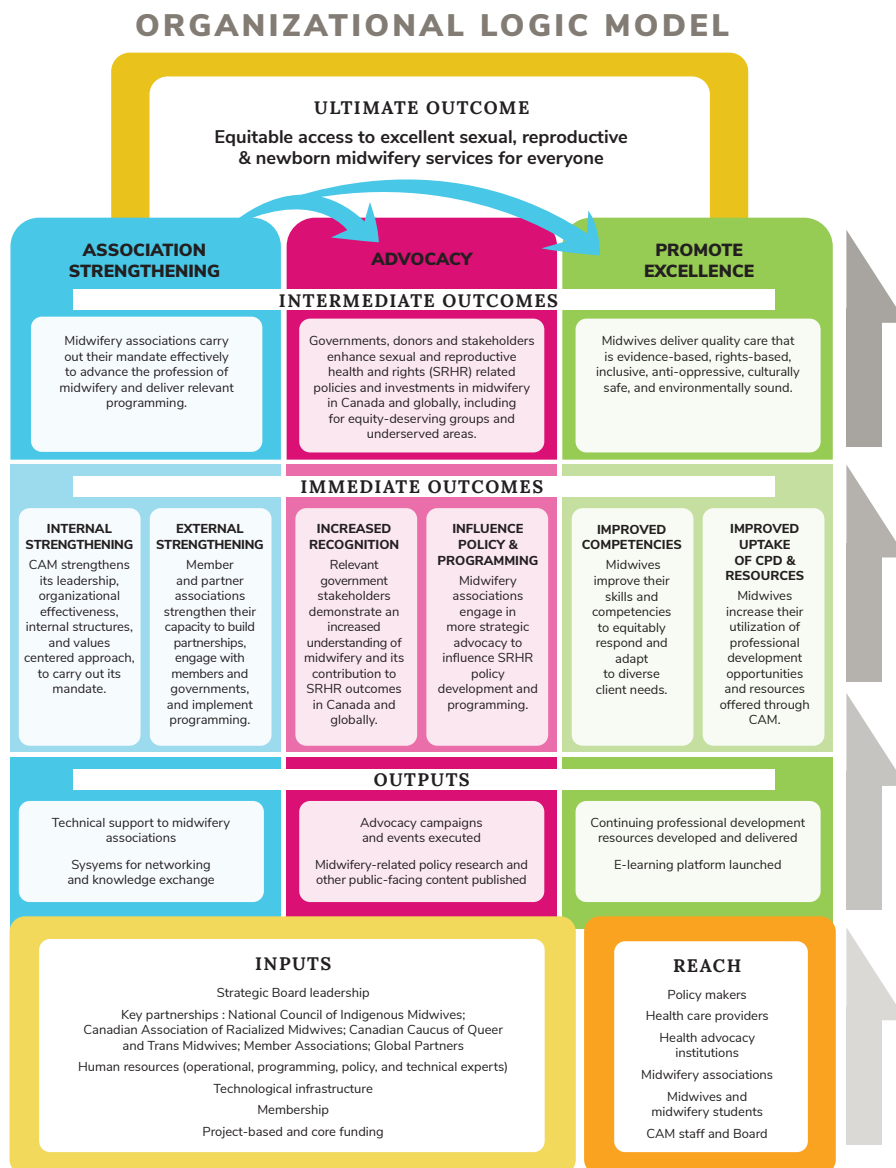
In 2023, after a thorough analysis of 20+ focus groups hosted by past President Alix Bacon, the Board of Directors approved a new structure that was shared with members at the 2023 Annual General Meeting and during the CAM Conference.

The Board hired an external consultant to support the Governance Committee to develop new bylaws and terms of reference which will be completed in 2024. CAM will call a Special Meeting of Members in the Fall of 2024 to review the new proposed bylaws and articles of continuance of CAM.



THEORY OF CHANGE AND CAM'S NEW LOGIC MODEL

CAM's 2021-2025 Theory of Change aims for equitable access to excellent sexual, reproductive, and newborn midwifery services. It focuses on three pillars of work, Advocacy, Association Strengthening, and Promoting Excellence. To track progress, CAM developed a Logic Model outlining inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and long-term impacts, providing a visual roadmap for enhancing sexual and reproductive health and rights of pregnant people from diverse backgrounds.



WHAT ARE CAM'S PILLARS OF WORK?

CAM'S PILLARS OF WORK

Association Strengthening : CAM aspires to strengthen its ability to have a positive influence on advancements in the midwifery sector, by developing infrastructure, building internal capacity on equity, decolonization, and respectful maternity care, and through governance reform. CAM also seeks to strengthen external midwifery associations and partners, such as provincial and territorial Member Associations, the National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM), Canadian Caucus for Queer and Trans Midwives (QTM), and the Canadian Alliance of Racialized Midwives (CARM) to boost their strategic leadership and promote equitable midwifery care.

Advocacy : CAM and partners work to influence regulatory and policy changes and increase investments to integrate midwifery into health systems at various levels. These efforts focus on improving access to midwifery care, especially in underserved and Indigenous communities, by shifting perceptions of key stakeholders on midwifery's role in Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) outcomes.

Promoting Excellence : With partner support, CAM aims to enhance the quality of care for all midwifery clients. Providing quality, continuing professional development (CPD) trainings and resources helps midwives strengthen their technical skills and competencies, leading to improved midwifery practice.

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ASSOCIATION STRENGTHENING

CAM undertook several activities to strengthen midwifery associations throughout the year.

CAM collaborated with Capital Hill Group to support the Midwives Association of New Brunswick (MANB) in advocating for the Fredericton Midwifery Program. They met with the Health Minister to discuss education, training, and updates to the midwifery act. As a result, the 2024-25 New Brunswick budget allocated an additional \$562,000 for midwifery services in Fredericton.

<https://www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/fin/pdf/Budget/2024-2025/speech-2024-2025.pdf>

Photo : Hon. Bruce Fitch Minister of Health New Brunswick, and Staff, CJ Blennerhassett, CAM President, Brittany Stairs, President MANB & Ursula Rinne, MANB

CAM, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada, provided mentorship and funding to the Manitoba Association of Midwives (MAM) and the Prince Edward Island Midwives Association (PEIMA) to address vaccine hesitancy. MAM identified vaccination barriers through consultations, launched a communications campaign, updated their website with vaccination resources, and advocated for midwives as vaccinators. PEIMA also updated their website and created tools to help midwives facilitate informed vaccination discussions with clients.



MIDWIFERY SERVICES ARE NOW AVAILABLE IN PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND!

As of January 30, 2024, two midwives started working at Charlottetown's Queen Elizabeth Hospital offering care from preconception through to 8 weeks postpartum.

CAM congratulates all the midwives and members of the public who have worked so hard over decades to make this dream a reality. A particular note of thanks and congratulations must be extended to long-standing CAM Board member Joyce England of the Prince Edward Island Midwives Association whose dedication to this work has been an inspiration and gift to us all!



<https://canadianmidwives.org/p-e-i-finally-has-its-first-official-midwives-cbc/>

REVITALIZATION OF THE CANADIAN CAUCUS OF QUEER AND TRANS MIDWIVES (QTM):

CAM hired consultants to enhance support for 2SLGTBQIA+ members, identifying their needs and developing tools for midwives to provide affirming care. Recommendations from key informant interviews with QTM members will inform the creation of resources, available on CAM's website in 2024, to support the caucus and foster community for 2SLGTBQIA+ midwives. To find out more or to become a caucus member, contact Annie Hibbert : ahibbert@canadianmidwives.org





THE CANADIAN ALLIANCE OF RACIALIZED MIDWIVES (CARM):

In the past year, CARM strengthened its governance and leadership, establishing a Core Leadership Circle of 13 members with three Co-Chairs. They held their first hybrid meeting to refine draft Terms of Reference and guide CAM's Project Forward staff on supporting better health systems through IBPOC Midwife Leadership. At the CAM conference, CARM had an exhibit table and hosted its first large social gathering. A logo was created with input from a workgroup. The Core Leadership plans to present the finalized Terms of Reference during CARM's inaugural AGM in fall 2024. To find out more or to become a member, contact: Annie Hibbert : ahibbert@canadianmidwives.org



EMERGENCY SKILLS

To support small midwifery associations with limited access to training opportunities, CAM organized an Emergency Skills Instructor Training prior to the CAM Conference opening with the support of the Association of Ontario Midwives. Midwives from New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island and two midwives who practice in Nunavut participated in the training.



ATLANTIC MIDWIVES TRAINING

The National Emergency Skills Committee continues to lay the groundwork to build a national standard for emergency skills programming which will help guide smaller provinces and territories with their programs. These programs will also benefit through CAM's new E-Learning Initiative that will provide the needed infrastructure for provincial and territorial emergency skills programs and the development of their future Continuing Professional Development (CPD) needs.

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ADVOCACY

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

May 5, 2023 – International Day of the Midwife

Member of Parliament for London West, Arielle Kayabaga gave a Statement in the House of Commons on May 4, 2023 in support of International Day of the Midwife.



In addition to ongoing meetings with Members of Parliament and political staff to advance policy changes and investments in midwifery programming, CAM hosted a Reception for Members of Parliament and other stakeholders during the CAM Annual Conference in Ottawa in 2023. Several MPs representing all three political parties attended the event.



The Honorable Mark Holland, Minister of Health attended the closing ceremony of CAM's annual conference and shared remarks.

Throughout the year, CAM engaged with key government stakeholders and politicians to advance policy initiatives. This included fostering relationships with the reinstated Chief Nursing Officer at Health Canada, currently held by Dr. Leigh Chapman.

CAM also met with Erin Hetherington, Director of the Student Loan Forgiveness Program, and other policy staff to advocate for the inclusion of midwives in Canada's incentive program for doctors and nurses working in rural and remote communities.

Additionally, CAM Executive Director Tonia Occhionero, alongside National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) Executive Director Ellen Blais and Policy Advisor Megan Davies, attended meetings to amplify NCIM's advocacy efforts. They sought commitments from federal departments such as Health, Finance, and Women and Gender Equality to secure increased funding from Indigenous Services Canada to support the growth and sustainability of Indigenous Midwifery.



Photo : CAM Executive Director Tonia Occhionero, Honorable Mark Holland, Minister of Health and NCIM Co-chair Alisha Julien Reid

MIDWIVES INCLUDED IN CANADA'S STUDENT LOAN FORGIVENESS PROGRAM!

Midwives are recognized as an essential part of Canada's public health care system in the recent federal budget. After years of advocacy work, CAM applauds the inclusion of midwives in the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program established in 2013 to incentivize doctors and nurses to work in rural and remote communities.

In the recent federal budget, the government proposes to amend the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act and the Canada Student Loans Act to permanently expand the reach of the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program to midwives and other professionals who choose to work in rural and remote communities.

More to come on the roll out of this important policy change for midwives in Canada.

INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF MIDWIVES (ICM)



COUNCIL MEETINGS 2023

CAM President CJ Blennerhassett and NCIM Core Leader Heather Heinrichs were appointed to represent CAM and NCIM at the International Confederation of Midwives (ICM) Council Meetings and Triennial Congress in June 2023.

CAM and NCIM contributed to the high-level discussions related to midwifery globally, supported the amendment or adoption of new positions statements and NCIM representative Heather Heinrichs spoke poignantly about the state of Indigenous Midwifery to Council.

Sandra Torres, midwife from Chile and past Vice President of ICM was elected ICM President.

TRIENNIAL CONGRESS 2023

Canada had an important presence during the Congress as many midwives, Indigenous midwives, Tonia Occhionero, CAM Executive Director and Juana Berenstein, AOM Director of Policy presented at the event.

CAM also hosted a meet and greet of midwives from Canada in Bali to foster networking.

CAM's Global program and NCIM's work were highlighted in many ways at the ICM Congress. Many midwives, including CAM's Executive Director, Tonia Occhionero showcased the work of midwives in Canada and our approach to partnerships globally.



SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ABORTION...IN CANADA

September 28 marks annual International Safe Abortion Day. In the 8 days leading up to September 28, 2023, CAM posted one video per day educating the public and midwives about the realities of abortion in Canada. The videos focused on increasing access to abortion, combatting misinformation, and highlighting midwives' role as abortion providers.

The primary placement for the campaign was Instagram Reels and the campaign videos also became our inaugural posts launching [CAM's TikTok account](#). By leveraging video, we were able to reach a larger audience of people who do not already follow CAM, translating to increased public engagement. The campaign videos have been viewed over 18,000 times, with an average engagement rate 4 times the industry average.

8 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ABORTION
...in Canada 🇨🇦



Midwives have a key role to play in providing comprehensive abortion care, in Canada and globally.





INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE MIDWIFE (IDM)

For International Day of the Midwife 2023, CAM celebrated for a whole month. Our “Celebrate a Midwife” campaign ran through social media and the CAM newsletter from May 5th to June 5th, 2023. We invited CAM members and the general public to share a photo and a short story celebrating a special midwife in their life (whether it be their midwife, a midwife colleague, friend or family member). Each week we reshared a selection of submissions.


Below are some highlights.



From Annie Hibbert, CAM’s Association Strengthening Lead. “Nathalie Bisson and Claire Bartier, thank you for giving us a voice, taking the time, providing us with space and freedom of movement. Thank you for your emergency skills and the actions you took quickly to help our son take his first breath.”



From a client of Midwives of York Region. “My midwives were so skilled and helped deliver my placenta at the last minute. I was so grateful to the closeness and the bond you form with your midwife during those moments.”

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**PROMOTING
EXCELLENCE**

2023 CAM CONFERENCE

The CAM Conference was held in Ottawa, October 4th - 6th.



The conference featured an inspirational lineup of keynote speakers, who delivered thought-provoking talks on the future of midwifery in Canada and around the globe.

With a diverse range of topics and panelists, attendees enjoyed sessions addressing crucial issues such as the role of midwives in abortion care, strategies for recognizing and responding to family violence, and opportunities for enhancing networking within the midwifery community.



Notably, a special panel explored the intersection of sexual and reproductive health with climate change.



Two standout workshops included a workshop on expanding the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council Midwifery Competency Appendix to better serve underserved groups, and an intensive Emergency Skills Certification Pre-Conference Workshop.

Additionally, the sold-out exhibit hall featured latest innovations and products and of course there was an epic dance party!



“The chance to meet and network with other midwives was amazing. The closing ceremony was wonderful, the networking opportunities were fantastic. The theme was great.”

While it was wonderful to gather in-person once again, we recognize that the landscape for in-person learning has shifted significantly due to the pandemic, economy, and other factors. This presents a unique opportunity for us to rethink the future of our in-person events and professional development activities. We are excited to innovate and adapt, ensuring that our members continue to receive the best experiences and learning opportunities possible.



CANADIAN JOURNAL OF MIDWIFERY RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

The Canadian Journal of Midwifery Research and Practice (CJMRP) **goes 100 % online**. Since 2003, CAM members received the CJMRP in print three times a year. In 2023, the journal transitioned to a digital format to enhance the profession's visibility and credibility. [CJMRP.com](https://www.cjmrp.com) continues to offer research articles, literature reviews, abstracts, case reports, and articles for midwives and reproductive health care providers. Special thanks to Patricia McNiven, who has championed the publication as Editor in Chief for over 20 years!



Now 100% Online



NEW E-LEARNING INITIATIVE

CAM is excited to announce the launch of our new E-Learning Initiative! Our online learning platform will be launched in 2024 and will offer many opportunities for midwives and other health care providers to enhance their skills. We look forward to sharing our suite of courses in the Fall of 2024.

DISMANTLING ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH CARE

The Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM), in partnership with, the National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM), has been prioritizing combatting anti-Indigenous racism in healthcare. Key initiatives include the development of the “Cultural Safety and Humility Training for Acute Care Settings” course and a pilot survey on “Advancing Cultural Safety in Midwifery Education” at two educational sites.

Additionally, CAM and NCIM collaborated with the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC) to develop the Midwifery Competencies Appendix. The project also supports Indigenous midwifery students and providers through knowledge-sharing and virtual support sessions. These efforts aim to embed cultural safety and anti-racism practices within midwifery education and practice.

**SAFE AND
EMPOWERING —
WHAT YOU'LL
EXPERIENCE FROM
MIDWIFERY
CARE.**

FIND A CARERPOVIDER
AT HAVINGABABY.CO

HAVING A
baby



IBPOC MIDWIVES LEADING FOR BETTER HEALTH SYSTEMS

In 2023, CAM advanced anti-racism initiatives, supported IBPOC midwives and students, and increased awareness of midwifery care among newcomers.

CAM collaborated with the Canadian Alliance of Racialized Midwives (CARM) and the National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) to develop training content focused on anti-racism and discrimination in the healthcare system.

A Research Showcase highlighted groundbreaking research by racialized midwives and students on health inequities and racism.

Significant advocacy campaigns were launched to promote Indigenous Sexual and Reproductive Health, including the #BirthBack campaign to end forced birth evacuations.

Additionally, public awareness campaigns were created to promote midwifery services to underserved populations, along with resources for newcomers <https://havingababy.co/respectful-and-inclusive-care>.

Leadership training and research capacity building for IBPOC midwives were also supported.

INDIGENOUSMIDWIFERY.CA



**SAFETY.
CEREMONY.
COMMUNITY.
SELF-DETERMINATION.
RECLAMATION.**

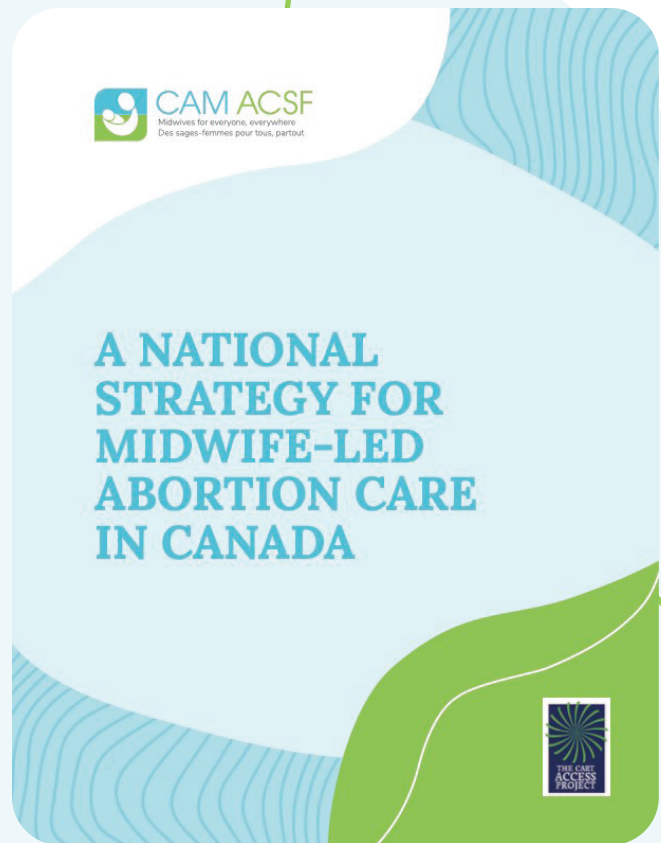
#BirthBack

ADVANCING ACCESS TO ABORTION FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

Funded by Health Canada, the Contraception Abortion Research Team (CART) Access Project aimed to improve abortion access for underserved populations. CAM's participation focused on enhancing midwife-led abortion services. Resources were developed, including a National Strategy, online materials, policy resources, and social media campaigns, in collaboration with organizations, including, the Canadian Caucus of Queer and Trans Midwives and le Regroupement les sages-femmes du Québec.

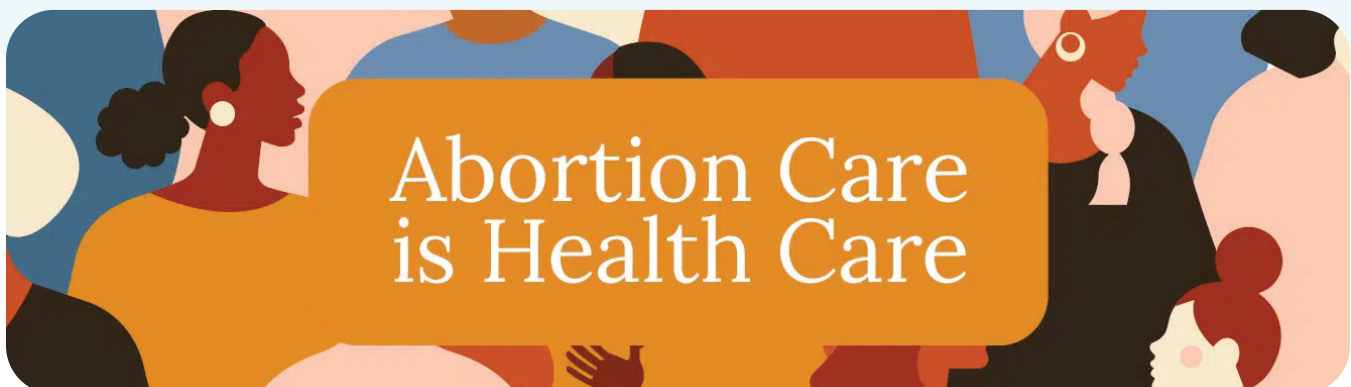
A key achievement was the National Strategy for midwife-led abortion care, outlining midwives' unique contributions to sexual and reproductive healthcare. The strategy was developed by a Steering Committee with representatives from various stakeholders, including the National Council of Indigenous Midwives, the Canadian Alliance of Racialized Midwives, and the National Abortion Federation (Canada).

The project also produced a Midwifery-Led Abortion Toolkit with a Policy Briefing Note, an Advocacy Road Map, and a Stakeholder Mapping Tool to support policy implementation and advocacy. Additionally, CAM created an online micro-learning course to introduce these resources, available on the new e-learning platform in Fall 2024.



Access resources here :

<https://canadianmidwives.org/midwife-led-abortion-care/>



WE CAN TALK ABOUT IT : MIDWIVES ADDRESSING VACCINE HESITANCY

CAM held three community practice sessions on vaccination and immunization for midwives, addressing vaccine hesitancy and providing evidence-based information. Topics included pediatric RSV prevention, tools to address vaccine hesitancy, and motivational interviewing techniques. These sessions were recorded and are available on CAM's website. <https://canadianmidwives.org/vaccines/>

Additionally, CAM updated its client-facing vaccination booklet, a resource for midwives to educate clients on vaccines, their function, importance, immunizations during pregnancy, vaccine safety, and related diseases in simple language.

You can download the booklet [here](#) .



MICRO-CONTRIBUTION PROGRAM

To boost community-based vaccine education and outreach, CAM supported nine midwifery clinics through its micro contribution program. This led to the strengthening or establishment of eight new vaccination clinics in Ontario, which now provide immunizations for Tdap, Influenza, and Hepatitis B. One clinic also added routine childhood vaccinations, including MMR for 2–4-month-old infants.

These clinics primarily serve clients without access to primary care providers or the Ontario Health Insurance Plan. They used low-barrier approaches such as wrap-around services, transportation vouchers, and home visits to build trust and facilitate access. Additionally, vaccination information was adapted and translated into languages like Arabic, Tigrinya, Somali, Turkish, Farsi, Spanish, Portuguese, and Pashto to support linguistic minority communities.



GLOBAL

CAM's Global program is a unique initiative, no other national midwifery association participates in strengthening the midwifery profession globally on the same scale.

In 2023, CAM Global implemented programs in Haiti, South Sudan, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and launched a new project in Venezuela. These efforts were in collaboration with partners such as l'Association des Sages-Femmes d'Haiti (ASFH), the Puntland Association of Midwives (PAM), la Société Congolaise de la Pratique Sage-Femme (SCOSAF), the Somaliland Nurses and Midwives Association (SLNMA), the Somalia Midwives Association (SOMA), the South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association (SSNAMA), and the Tanzania Midwives Association (TAMA). Additionally, a new partnership was formed with the Association of Malawian Midwives (AMAMI) for a project in Malawi.



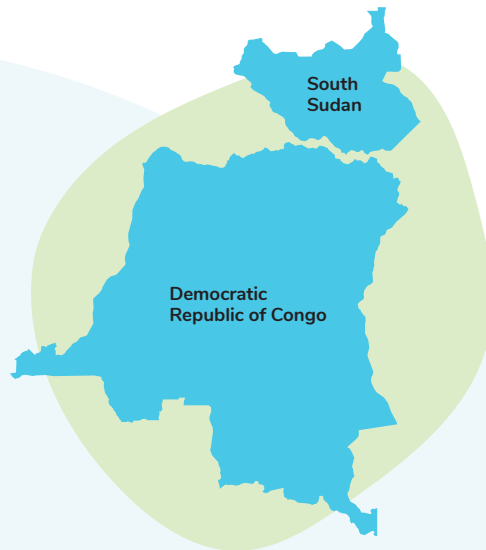
At CAM's annual conference in Ottawa, CAM Global co-hosted a reception with members of Canada's international development community, policymakers, and funders. International partners, including ASFH members from Haiti and a UNFPA Somalia representative, attended to discuss collaborative efforts.

Supported by CAM's membership and Global Affairs Canada, CAM's Global program has enhanced global health outcomes and contributed to the growth of CAM and the midwifery profession in Canada.



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO AND SOUTH SUDAN

The SMART-RMC project, led by CAM and supported by Global Affairs Canada, aims to reduce maternal deaths in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan through gender-responsive, quality healthcare provided by a well-trained midwifery workforce. The project collaborates closely with midwifery partners, the Société Congolaise de la pratique Sage-Femme (SCOSAF) and the South Sudan Nurses and Midwives Association (SSNAMA).



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS :

- › **DRC** : SCOSAF distributed 687 family planning products and provided reproductive and maternal health services to 577 women through mobile clinics, addressing barriers to care for vulnerable women. The initiative also included performances by a midwife-led theatre troupe to raise awareness on Respectful Maternity Care (RMC), focusing on confidentiality, non-discrimination, privacy, and quality care.
- › **South Sudan** : 83 healthcare providers from 11 remote facilities received training in gender-responsive RMC and clinical competencies. These were supplemented by virtual mentorship sessions with a Canadian midwife volunteer, enhancing skills retention and fostering Canada-South Sudan midwife exchanges.
- › **Outreach** : Across both countries, SSNAMA and SCOSAF reached 21,400 community members through radio and televised messages on RMC.



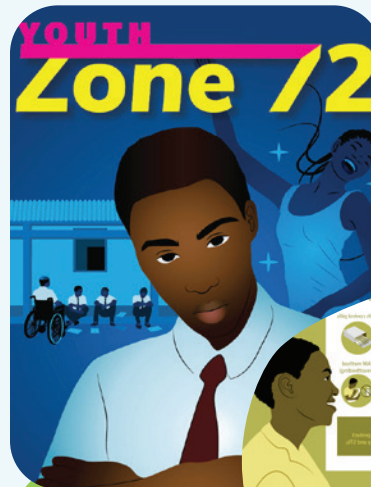
SOUTH SUDAN



Global Affairs Canada-funded and UNFPA-led project, Human Resources for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Sexual and Gender-based Violence in South Sudan, aims to support the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) of women and girls in South Sudan, particularly those in vulnerable situations such as IDP camps, women with disabilities, and those living with HIV. The project focuses on increasing the availability of skilled healthcare providers, improving attitudes toward SRHR, and preventing gender-based violence (GBV).

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS :

- › **Youth-Led Advocacy** : The weekly radio program YouthZone72 reached 2,396,600 listeners and 230,736 social media users. In 2023, a Facebook Live version was introduced, featuring live interpretation for deaf audiences.
- › **GBV Prevention and Response** : Two comics on GBV were created, reaching over 150,000 people with print materials that encourage discussions on gender-based violence and consent.
- › **Training Health Workers** : Gender-sensitive and context-adapted job aids were developed to support rights-based family planning, covering topics such as accountability, empowerment, informed choice, equity, and privacy. Over 25 health facilities are participating in the training.



HAITI



The Supporting Equal Sexual and Reproductive Health (SESRH) project aims to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for 55,346 citizens, including 40,755 adolescents and women and 14,591 adolescents and men, in Croix-des-Bouquets, Haiti. Launched in April 2021, SESRH is funded by Global Affairs Canada (GAC) and implemented by the Fondation Paul Gérin-Lajoie, CAM, and the Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC).

Despite facing intense security challenges in the capital, Port au Prince the PASSREL project has continued with significant contributions from Haitian partners, including ASFH. Their resilience is an inspiration.

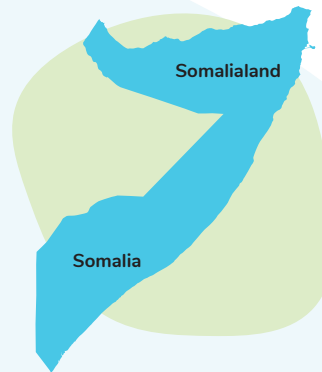
PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS :

- › **Training** : 80 health workers trained on women’s health rights and respectful maternity care.
- › **Research** : A study on adolescent health is being conducted by a team of 3 Haitian and 3 Canadian midwives, expected to conclude in July 2024.
- › **Organizational Strengthening** : Activities to enhance project management, financial administration, and communication for the midwifery association.



SOMALIA AND SOMALILAND

The Strengthening Midwifery Education and Practice in Somalia and Somaliland (SMEPS) project aims to reduce maternal mortality by addressing the critical shortage of skilled midwives in Somalia, Somaliland, and Puntland through enhanced education, practice, regulation, and association strengthening. Led by UNFPA, the project is a collaboration between CAM, the Somali Midwifery Association (SOMA), the Somaliland Nurses and Midwifery Association (SLNMA), and the Puntland Association of Midwives (PAM), supported by Global Affairs Canada.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS :

- › **Peer-to-Peer Event** : A successful event hosted by SLNMA in Hargeisa brought together representatives from SOMA and PAM, fostering relationships, knowledge exchange, and discussions on relevant topics.
- › **Curriculum Update** : An 18-month nursing midwifery curriculum was updated, validated, and endorsed to meet international standards.
- › **Diploma Implementation** : In 2022, a revised three-year diploma curriculum was validated and endorsed. A three-week workshop in August 2023 trained 52 clinical instructors across three cities on the revised curriculum.



VENEZUELA

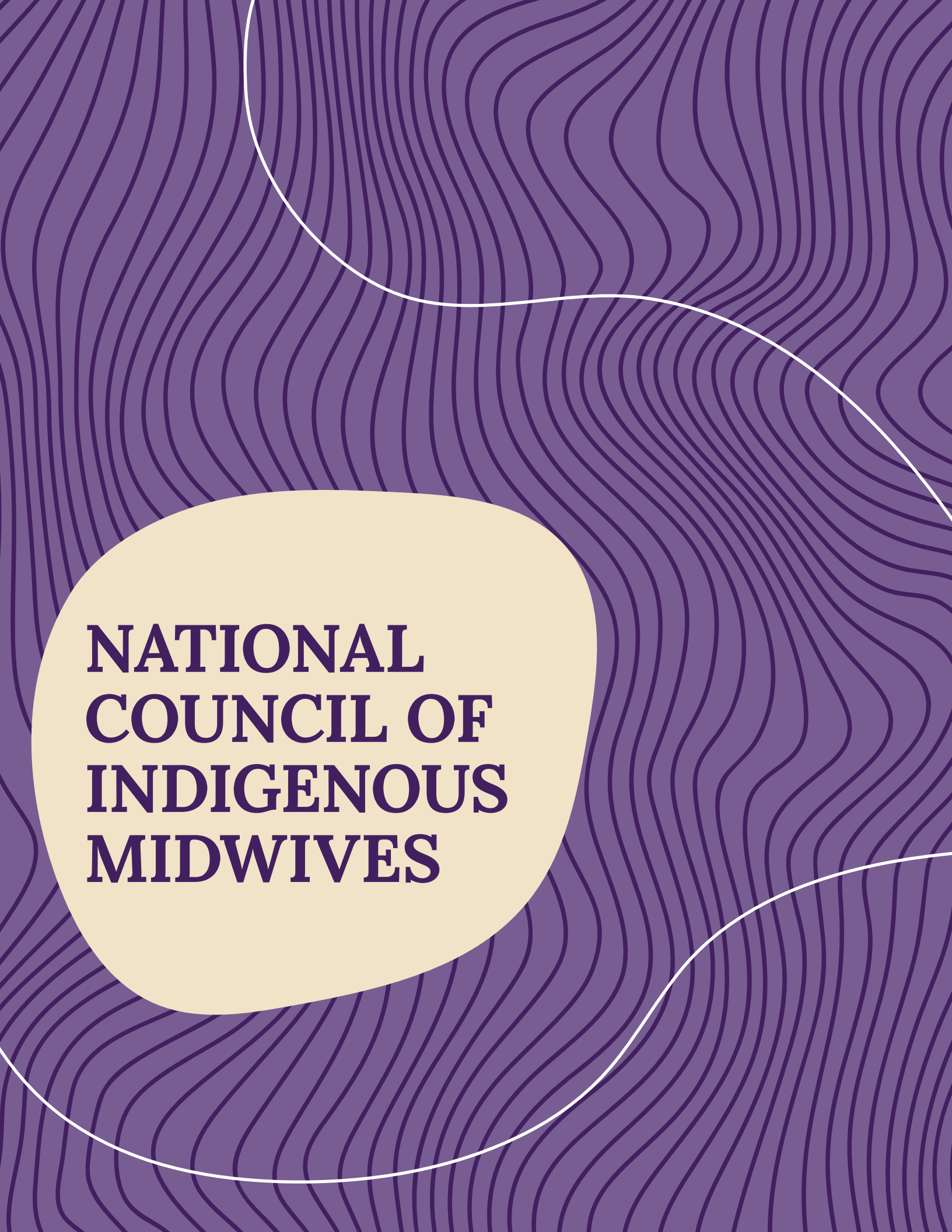
Funded by Global Affairs Canada, this three-year UNFPA-led project, in collaboration with the Canadian Association of Midwives and the National Council of Indigenous Midwives, focuses on improving maternal, newborn, and reproductive health outcomes for marginalized women, girls, and newborns in the state of Zulia, Venezuela. It targets the Wayuu and Yukpa indigenous communities of Sierra Machiques de Perijá and Maracaibo, as well as other vulnerable populations in Maracaibo's periphery.



PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS :

- › **Training of Trainers Workshop :** Development of participant and facilitator materials to support a workshop on Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) for healthcare personnel from seven health institutions in Zulia.
- › **Midwife Collaboration :** Preparation for a meeting between Canadian and Venezuelan midwives in collaboration with the National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) of Canada.
- › **Intervention Plan :** Development of a three-year intervention plan with UNFPA-Venezuela and UNFPA-Panama, establishing guidelines for collaboration with other UNFPA offices in Colombia and Latin America.



The background is a deep purple color with a pattern of thin, white, wavy lines that create a sense of movement and depth. A large, irregular yellow shape, resembling a speech bubble or a drop, is positioned in the lower-left quadrant. Inside this yellow shape, the text "NATIONAL COUNCIL OF INDIGENOUS MIDWIVES" is written in a bold, dark purple, serif font. The text is arranged in four lines, centered within the yellow shape. There are also two thin white curved lines that sweep across the page, one starting from the top left and curving towards the right, and another starting from the bottom left and curving towards the right.

**NATIONAL
COUNCIL OF
INDIGENOUS
MIDWIVES**

ADVOCACY, POLICY, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

The National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) continues to advocate for policy changes at the federal and provincial/territorial level to increase investments in Indigenous Midwifery and to expand pathways to Indigenous midwifery education and services.

In 2023 NCIM held several meetings with Ministerial Offices to advance these investments.



(NCIM Executive Director, Ellen Blais and CAM Executive Director, Tonia Occhionero with Minister of Indigenous Services Canada, Patty Hajdu).



In September 2023, NCIM launched a campaign to end forced birth evacuations (in partnership with Les Femmes Michif Otipemisiwak and Pauktuutit Inuit Women of Canada). Campaign materials were viewed over 117,000 times on social media.

<https://indigenousmidwifery.ca/end-forced-birth-evacuations/>

NCIM and partners on the Indigenous Women's Wellness Advisory Council helped to develop a policy options paper "Expanding Indigenous Midwifery and Doula Services". The paper identified the financial and regulatory barriers to the growth of Indigenous midwifery and presented concrete budgets and policy solutions for the federal government.

Funded by :



Indigenous Services
Canada

Services aux
Autochtones Canada

INDIGENOUS MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

NCIM's Indigenous Midwifery Education (IME) program aims to grow community-based Indigenous midwifery by reducing barriers in access to education.

In 2023, the Introduction to Indigenous Midwifery course was created and delivered with positive feedback from learners. We held a land-based learning event, which brought together all our IME program participants, as well as some other apprentice midwives, to learn hands-on skills, connect with others working to become midwives and receive teachings from experts in Indigenous Midwifery.

NCIM has also partnered with the Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM) to invest in an online learning initiative that will host all the Indigenous Midwifery Curriculum on an accessible platform.

Diverse participants from allied health positions engaged in the program, demonstrating a high motivation to become Midwives.

In 2023, one additional community joined the IME program, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, making a total of six communities who are now participating in this pilot program.

Our Mentorship and Resilience Lead (MRL) travelled to 3 communities : Kehewin, Opaskwayak Cree Nation, and Sturgeon Lake First Nations to strengthen NCIM's relationship with community leadership and navigate solutions to IME related challenges that have been identified in each community.

We continued to strengthen relationships with diverse stakeholders, including midwifery education programs, regulators, local communities, and government organizations.



In 2023, NCIM met with the Canadian Midwifery Regulators Council (CMRC) to continue discussions around registration for our learners.

An external evaluation was completed and showed this program is working as intended and has great potential for expansion.

Communities currently participating in the program and our land-based learning events include :

- › **Nunavilk Hudson's Bay Coast :**
Innujuak, Saluit, Kujuak,
- › **Ontario :** Wagamaou and Sandy Lake First Nation, Nipissing, Tasmiskamingsix Nations of the Grand River, Walpool Island and Kettle Point First Nations.
- › **Labrador :** Natuashish and Sheshatshiu
- › **Manitoba :** Opaskwayak, Winnipeg Metis terretory
- › **Saskatchewan :** Big River First Nation and LeRonge First Nation, Sturgeon Lake First Nation
- › **Alberta :** Keheewin First Nation
- › **British Columbia :** Cowichan Tribes



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

NCIM continues to bring together diverse stakeholders, thought leaders, and strong community visionaries to advance the goal of restoring midwifery and birth as close to home as possible. NCIM learns from and listens to Indigenous communities and we develop and share resources and tools to grow and sustain Indigenous midwifery.

2023 ANNUAL GATHERING

Indigenous midwifery students and practicing Indigenous midwives had the opportunity to participate in traditional knowledge sharing and workshops during NCIM’s annual gathering in Ottawa in October, 2023. The gathering was centered around land-based learning and sharing, drawing on the knowledge of Elders, Knowledge Keepers and Indigenous Midwives from across Turtle Island.

UPROOT SYMPOSIUM

In February 2023, NCIM facilitated the Uproot Symposium – a half-day virtual event to understand and remove the colonial barriers to restoring Indigenous Midwifery and birth. Topics included colonial health policy, midwifery regulation, hospital privileges, decolonial approaches, and resources to advance the restoring of birth. There were over 400 attendees and we received positive feedback.



LANGUAGE PROJECT : LANGUAGE REVITALIZATION

A call for interest was drafted to recruit six (6) Indigenous community groups to participate in language revitalization in birth. The communities have been selected and are currently completing their resources on birth, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights(SRHR), and Indigenous midwifery in their Indigenous languages.



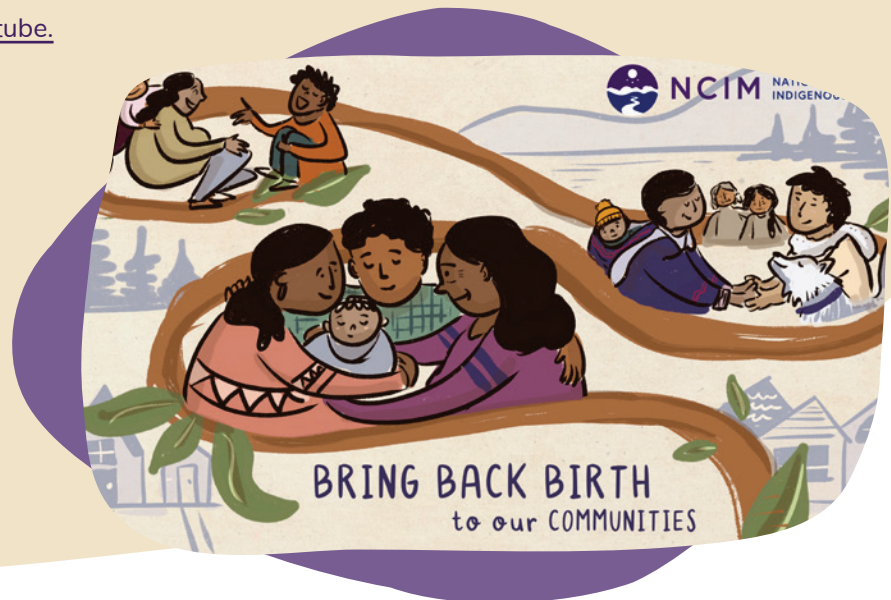
NATIONAL MIDWIFERY INUIT FORUM

In 2023 NCIM had the opportunity to partner with Pauktuutit to co-plan and host the National Inuit Midwifery Forum. This was another well attended national event aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge around birth in the north and the impact on Inuit wellbeing. NCIM is continuing to work alongside Pauktuutit on our many shared goals. Both organizations have priorities in restoring birth, reducing evacuation for birth, and creating a locally educated Indigenous midwifery workforce.

INDIGENOUS MIDWIFERY VIDEOS

In 2023, NCIM also produced two videos to build knowledge about Indigenous Midwifery :

- › Indigenous Midwifery (About us) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K5oQnYED6HA&t=1s>
- › Birth Evacuations <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CHn3QFuLaR4>



ADDRESSING ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM

NCIM collaborates with the Department of Indigenous Services Canada and Health Canada to combat anti-Indigenous racism (AIR) through cultural safety initiatives. As part of the Anti-Indigenous Racism Advisory Circle, NCIM contributes to a national distinctions-based response for Indigenous women, girls, and gender-diverse people, guided by Joyce's Principle.

In 2023, NCIM developed an evaluation framework to assess progress in addressing AIR within university-based midwifery education programs, piloted with two programs. The framework, created by external consultants and NCIM's anti-Indigenous racism working group, aims for bi-annual participation from all Canadian midwifery programs.

NCIM continues to support Indigenous students and the Indigenous Midwifery Education pilot, and has developed resources for dealing with AIR in workplace, education, and healthcare settings, to be published soon on their website.

REDUCING THE HARMS OF RACISM FOR INDIGENOUS LIFEGIVERS

Everyone deserves respectful health care, free from racism and discrimination. You can improve your experience with health care providers in your childbearing year.



Remember, In Health Care You Have A Right To:

1. Speak about racism.
2. Ask questions and express your concerns.
3. Understand your diagnosis.
4. Get results of any test or procedure.
5. Ask for more information.
6. Understand the risks, benefits and alternatives of a proposed treatment.
7. Ask for more time to think about your options.
8. Choose what is right for your body.
9. Be respected in your decisions.
10. Ask for a different provider.

Preparing for a health visit:

- **Keep Notes:** on paper or your device about your questions, concerns, and symptoms.
- **Invite** a trusted person to join you and tell them how they can support you.
- **Consider** more supports:
 - Indigenous Doulas.
 - Patient Navigators or Advocates.
 - Community Health Workers.

Share Your Birth Preferences:

Learn, talk, and write about your preferences for birth. Share them with your health care provider and support team.

Examples:


- Pain relief options and goals.
- Cultural considerations or practices.
- If you want birth control after the birth.
- Baby feeding preferences.





REDUCING THE HARMS OF ANTI-INDIGENOUS RACISM: CARING FOR THE CARE GIVER

Tips for Indigenous Midwives and Midwifery Students



How to Cope with Racial Trauma Awareness:

- Coping with trauma is different for everyone.
- Understand your warning signs or triggers.
- Acknowledge the range of your emotions.

Support:


- Reach out to avoid internalizing negativity.
- Talk with your support system.
- Seek help from mental health professionals.


Grounding:


- Seek guidance from trusted mentors.
- Centre yourself and remember your skills and capacities.
- Address racism in ways that are safe/able for you.

Care:

- Recognize and attend to the negative impacts to your emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing.
- Set boundaries when you need to take a break.
- Remind yourself that you are worthy of better treatment.







ABOUT NCIM



The National Council of Indigenous Midwives (NCIM) exists to promote excellence in reproductive health care for Inuit, First Nations, and Métis women.

We advocate for the restoration of midwifery education, the provision of midwifery services, and choice of birthplace for all Indigenous communities consistent with the U.N. Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. As active members of the Canadian Association of Midwives, we represent the professional development and practice needs of Indigenous midwives to the responsible health authorities in Canada and the global community.

Indigenous Midwives enable access to culturally-safe sexual and reproductive health care for Indigenous families, the return of birth to Indigenous communities, and a reduction in the number of medical evacuations for births in remote areas.

<https://indigenousmidwifery.ca/>
admin@indigenousmidwifery.ca



ABOUT CAM

The **Canadian Association of Midwives (CAM)** is the national organization representing approximately 2200 midwives and the profession of midwifery in Canada. CAM's mission is to provide leadership and advocacy for midwifery as a regulated, publicly funded, and vital part of the primary maternity care system in all Canadian jurisdictions.

CAM promotes the **vital role of midwives in sexual, reproductive, and newborn health**. Our work is grounded in equity, respectful care, informed choice, self-determination, and reproductive justice. We advocate for community-responsive midwifery and contribute to progressive health policy in Canada, and internationally.

canadianmidwives.org
admin@canadianmidwives.org





CAM ACSF

Midwives for everyone, everywhere
Des sages-femmes pour tous, partout