

Maternal and neonatal health: success and lessons learnt for the Sanofi Espoir Foundation

- Nearly 4,500 midwives trained in Asia, Africa and Latin America
- More than 4.5 million women in care

Paris (France) – May 3, 2019 – On the occasion of International Midwifery Day on May 5, the Sanofi Espoir Foundation is taking a positive look at its commitment to maternal and neonatal health in developing countries. For nearly ten years through its *Midwives for Life* initiative, the Foundation has supported [35 projects in 24 countries](#). These have helped care for 4.5 million women, including nearly 1.2 million pregnant women.

Overall, the projects supported by the Sanofi Espoir Foundation have helped train nearly 9,000 health professionals, nearly half of whom are midwives. Experience both in the field and with its partners has enabled the Foundation to draw certain lessons, such as the importance of factoring in both local context and the multisectoral dimension, such as mapping all actors involved, midwives' practices, and cultural, social, economic and material determinants.

"Projects led by large organizations are often aligned with international standards, but do not always integrate with the local context. As for local or community-based projects, they take better account of local needs and context, but do not align with global standards," explains Valérie Faillat, the Foundation's Executive Director. "So it is essential to bring these two worlds together and collaborate."

The Sanofi Espoir Foundation has supported projects developed by both associations and individual midwives. These aim to reduce maternal and neonatal mortality, and fall into three categories:

- Institutional projects for the initial training of midwives, particularly in Mexico, Madagascar and Côte d'Ivoire, where the actions have made it possible to boost training paths, teachers' capacities, the equipment for practical training centers, and the accreditation of schools in accordance with international standards. In Mongolia, the project has even helped to change the entire framework of the profession, as a new decree has given midwives greater responsibility for prenatal care and childbirth.
- Projects using a community-based approach, which consist of improving pregnancy monitoring and the identification of obstetric risks and emergencies. They involve strengthening the skills of midwives through continuing education. These were carried out in Ethiopia and Tanzania with a twinning between two midwifery associations, and were documented in a publication: [Stronger together: midwifery twinning between](#)

[Tanzania and Canada](#), in *BioMedCentral/Globalization and Health* (December 2018)

- Projects to create digital tools such as remote e-learning in Senegal and pregnancy monitoring in Burma. A publication details the tools developed for midwives and expectant mothers: [Adopting digital technology in midwifery practice – Experiences and perspectives from six projects in eight countries \(2014 – 2016\)](#), in *Journal of The International Society for Telemedicine and eHealth* (January 2019)

About the Sanofi Espoir Corporate Foundation

The Sanofi Espoir Corporate Foundation was created in October 2010 to build on more than 20 years of commitment to national and international solidarity. Its mission is to contribute to reducing health inequalities among the populations that need it most in a socially responsible manner. In addition to coordinating responses to the humanitarian emergencies, the Foundation takes a long-term approach to combating childhood cancers in low and medium-resource countries, improving maternal and neonatal health, and improving access to health for the most vulnerable populations in France. For more information, visit <http://fondation-sanofi-espoir.com/>

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