

Gambia

More than 60 percent of the Gambian population lives in poverty. Predominantly urban and young, the population has low usage of contraceptive methods and is growing fast. Maternal mortality has steadily decreased since 1990, although the ratio remains high. The national health policy includes the provision of free maternal and newborn health services and a strategy to expand emergency obstetric care. The government has introduced a performance management package for the health sector and works with health professional associations to improve working conditions. There is a midwifery workforce shortage and low capacity for pre-service training. Despite insufficient faculty and the fragile educational infrastructure, efforts are in place to accelerate education in midwifery competencies. A retention scheme is in place offering incentives to midwives (and other cadres) posted to remote areas. Investments and capacity building at all levels of the nation's health system will contribute to scaling up midwifery services.

► COUNTRY INDICATORS*

Total population (000); % urban	1,751; 58
Adolescent population (15-19 yrs) (000); % of total	183; 10
Number of women of reproductive age (age 15-49) (000); % of total	419; 24
Total fertility rate (children per woman)	5.1
Crude birth rate (per 1,000 population)	37
Births per year (000)	61
% of all births registered	55
Number of maternal deaths	250
Neonatal mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	32
Stillbirth rate (per 1,000 births)	26
Number of pregnant women tested for HIV	31,071
Midwives are authorized to administer a core set of life-saving interventions	Partial
Density of midwives, nurses and doctors per 1,000 population	0.6
Estimated workforce shortage to attain 95% skilled birth attendance by 2015	54
Gross secondary school enrolment (male; female) %	52; 49
Literacy rate (age 15 and over) (male; female) %	57; 34

► MDG INDICATORS

Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	400
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	57
Contraceptive prevalence rate (modern methods) (%)	18
Adolescent birth rate (births per 1,000 women age 15-19)	104
Antenatal care coverage (at least one visit; at least four visits) (%)	98; –
Unmet need for family planning (%)	–
Under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	106

► MIDWIFERY WORKFORCE¹

Midwives (including nurse-midwives) ²	274
Other health professionals with some midwifery competencies ³	–
General practitioners with some midwifery competencies	–
Obstetricians	–
Community health workers with some midwifery training	1,092
A live registry of licensed midwives exists	Yes

► MIDWIFERY EDUCATION

Midwifery education programmes (direct entry; combined; sequential)	Yes; Yes; Yes
Number of midwifery education institutions (total); number of private	9; 0
Duration of midwifery education programmes (in months)	18
Number of student admissions (first year)	–
Student admissions per total available student places (%)	100
Number of students enrolled in all years (2009)	–
Number of graduates (2009)	–
Midwifery education programmes are accredited	Yes

► REGULATION

Legislation exists recognizing midwifery as an autonomous profession	–
Midwives hold a protected title	–
A recognized definition of a professional midwife exists	Yes
A government body regulates midwifery practice	Yes
A licence is required to practise midwifery	Yes
Midwives are authorized to prescribe life-saving medications	Yes



MIDWIFERY BAROMETER

Midwives per 1,000 live births	5	●
Birth complications per day; rural	28; 13	●
Lifetime risk of maternal death	1 in 49	●
Intrapartum stillbirth rate (per 1,000 births)	12	●
Neonatal mortality as % of under-5 mortality	31	●

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

A midwives association exists	Yes
Number of midwifery professionals represented by an association	300
Association(s) affiliated with ICM; ICN	Yes; Yes

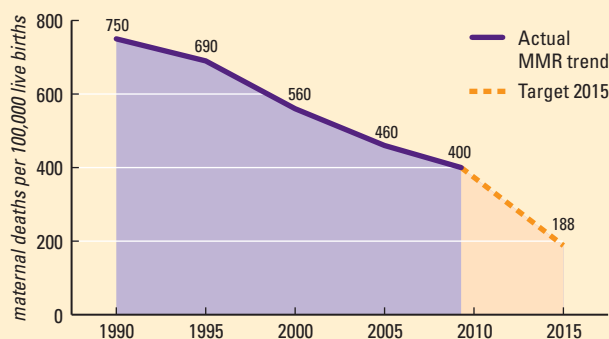
POLICIES

A national maternal and newborn health plan exists that includes the midwifery workforce	Yes
The plan is costed	Yes
The national health workforce plan specifically addresses midwifery	Yes
Compulsory notification of maternal deaths	No
Systematic maternal death audits and reviews	No
Confidential enquiry for maternal deaths	No
Compulsory registration of all births	Yes
All maternal and newborn health services are free (public sector)	Yes

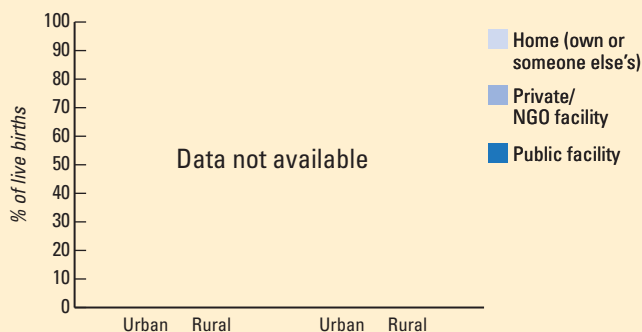
SERVICES

Number of facilities providing essential childbirth care	53
Number of Basic Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care (EmONC) facilities	41
Number of Comprehensive EmONC facilities	7
Facilities per 1,000 births	1

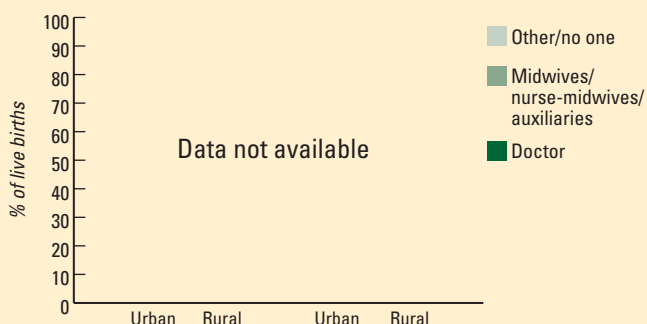
Trends in maternal mortality: 1990–2015



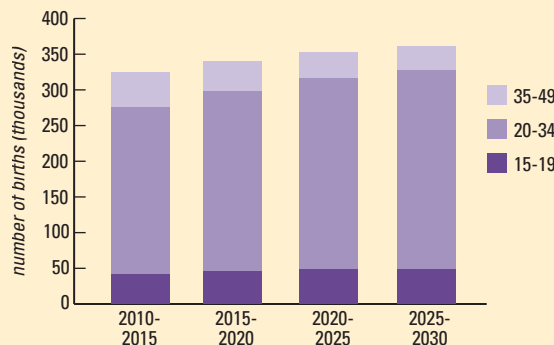
Where women give birth: urban vs. rural



Who attends births: urban vs. rural



Projected number of births, by age of mother



Explanatory notes: *Annex 2 provides a complete list of source data. All data sources are from 2008 unless otherwise stated. Where country respondents stated that data were not available, the term 'Unavailable' is used. In all other instances, '-' is used to denote a nil response or data that requires further verification. 1. 2008 estimates based on country data returns and the WHO Global Atlas of the Health Workforce. 2. Includes midwives, nurse-midwives and nurses with midwifery competencies. These figures do not necessarily reflect the number of practising midwives or the ICM definition of a midwife. 3. Auxiliary midwives and auxiliary nurse-midwives.