

Development of the Mother and Child Health Record Book in Myanmar

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I. MCH in Myanmar

In Myanmar, approximately 1.3 million women give birth each year. Childbirth remains a great health risk for a number of mothers and newborns. In addition to this, access to maternal and child health services, particularly in rural communities, remain a challenge. This is not only attributed to the lack of skilled healthcare providers and healthcare facilities, but also to the mothers' lack of knowledge and support to the existing MCH programs provided by the Ministry of Health. These concerns and several others related to improving the MCH status of mothers and children in Myanmar lead to the development of the mother and child health (MCH) record book.

II. Development of the MCH Record Book in Myanmar

The MCH record book was developed as mandated by one of the country's national social objective: to promote the health status of the entire nation. Similar to other MCH handbooks worldwide, the MCH record book can be used not only as a health record but also as a health educational tool. It consists of important health records for mothers', newborn babies' and children's health. It also serves as a manual of good practices to be followed during the antenatal period, postnatal period, taking care of newborn babies and under-five year old children. Thus, allowing mothers to be knowledgeable and vigilant in accessing their MCH needs and services in their respective communities.

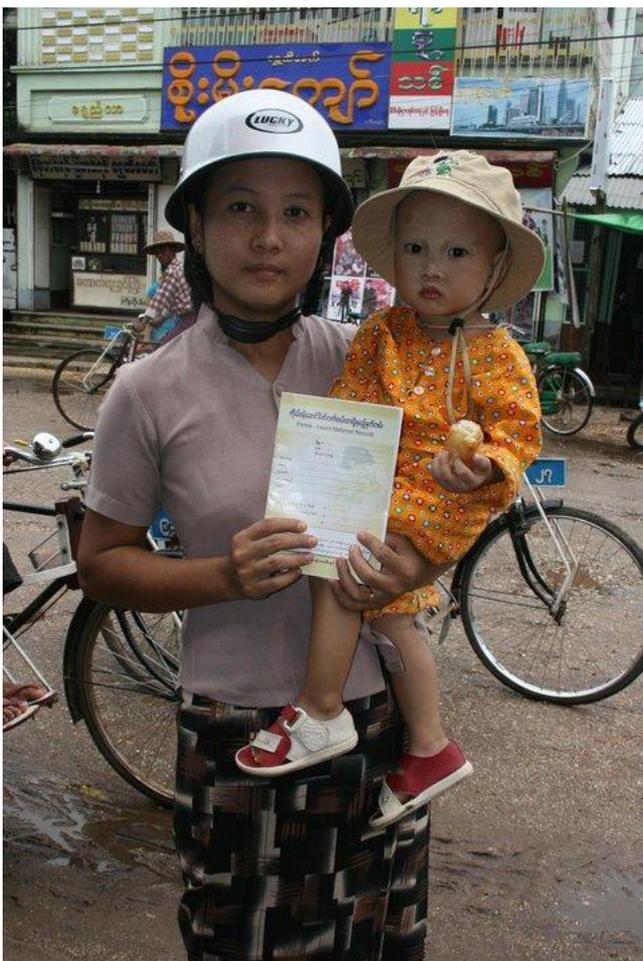
Prior to the MCH record book in Myanmar, the Home-Based Maternal Record (HBMR) book was previously developed and utilized through the initiative of the MCH section of the Public Health, Department of Health. It is currently provided for free to mothers in the community. Three thousand copies are distributed to each township every year.

Due to the success of the HBMR book, the MCH record book development came into fruition. The MCH section, with the cooperation of the Women and Child Health Development Section, which in turn developed the contents on child healthcare, created the current version

of the MCH record book. The record book consists of 28 pages of basic health information and records for mothers and healthcare providers to complete. The MCH record book was made possible through the assistance of the Department of Health, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, JICA and JOICFP.

III. Future Perspectives

The MCH Handbook is planned to be introduced in a pilot community near Yangon in 2011. The Department of Health plans to provide a copy of the record book to all mothers and under-five children free of charge. It is hoped that during the initial stages of introduction in the future, donors will assist in reprinting and distributing the record book to respective areas for the aim of improving the health status of mothers and children in the country. The handbook can be of great contribution in strengthening maternal and child health in the long run and have a positive impact on sustainable health care development in Myanmar.



The precursor of the MCH record book, the Home-Based Maternal Record (HBMR) being held by a mother during her visit in the local health center.

