

"MAKING
ME
VISIBLE"



The 13th International Conference
on the Maternal & Child Health
Handbook

Toronto, Canada

August 24-25,
2022



Toronto Declaration "Making Me Visible"

**The 13th International Conference on the Maternal and Child Health Handbook,
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The 13th International Conference on the Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Handbook conference has brought together more than 700 global health leaders, policymakers, healthcare professionals, academics, and other stakeholders from 61 countries and territories, along with global organization representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), to embrace the MCH Handbook as a global standard self-care tool to provide holistic maternal and child healthcare based on Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) principles to assure the quality of services and life.

The MCH Handbook is a home-based health record and a comprehensive information tool that supports women and their families throughout the pregnancy, delivery, and postnatal period, along with the first few years of their children's lives. It was developed in Japan in 1948, and currently, the MCH handbook community accounts for more than 50 countries and areas around the globe. Some countries, such as The Netherlands, Bangladesh, and Thailand, introduced the digital MCH handbook to improve compliance and accessibility of healthcare as a pilot project. Special editions of the MCH handbook were developed tailored to specific needs and conditions (e.g., low birth weight, children with developmental disorders, etc.) to assure that the main agenda of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) "Leave No One Behind (LNOB)" is well-addressed and that everyone is "visible," and their voices are heard.

The 13th International Conference participants of the MCH Handbook hereby conclude and recommend that:

1. The MCH handbook integrates EDI principles into healthcare:
 - Equity- improved access to quality care for underserved populations
 - Diversity- culturally sensitive services tailored to the needs of the population and its subgroups by embracing a bottom-up approach
 - Inclusion- special editions for specific needs and conditions (low-birth weight newborns, children with developmental disorders)
2. The MCH Handbook assures a holistic approach to healthcare services:
 - Physical- health promotion and disease prevention, screening, and early diagnosis
 - Mental- increasing awareness about mental health and ending discrimination and stigma
 - Social well-being – advocacy, support, and inclusion
3. The digitalization of the MCH Handbook supports:
 - Establishing a population database to enhance social accountability towards healthcare education, research, and service activities and facilitate knowledge translation
 - Tackling health myths and misinformation
 - Improving adherence to health management and prevention measures (e.g., screening reminders)

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- Preparedness for public health emergencies and disasters
- 4. The sustainability of the MCH Handbook program demands multisectoral, multilevel, and diversified approaches as well as social mobilization and empowerment with country ownership and political commitment along with global partners' involvement (WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, JICA, etc.)
- 5. The MCH Handbook is a global standard self-care tool that is aligned with the five core goals to achieve Universal Health Coverage (UHC) i.e., quality care, end stigma and discrimination, affordability of health services and products, access to a holistic range of health and related services, and lastly, sustainable investment in health:
 - People-centered approach- the decision-making autonomy by empowering women and their families
 - Quality care – assure that every woman and child gets standardized healthcare services with a continuum of care to achieve the best possible outcome and enhance the quality of life

The Toronto Declaration emphasizes the innovative, equitable, and sustainable development of reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child, and adolescent health (RMNCAH) by integrating the MCH handbook as a standard self-care tool.

We are committed to the MCH Handbook concept to ensure that in the future, *"Every woman and child is visible."*

On behalf of the MCH Handbook International Committee and the 13th International Conference team, in consultation with stakeholders, experts, and participants we adopt the above mentioned declaration as our guiding principle to move forward.

Best regards,

Professor Dr. Yasuhihe Nakamura MD, PhD

Chair, International Committee on the MCH Handbook
&

Professor Dr. Shafi Bhuiyan, PhD, MBBS, MPH, MBA

Chair, International Conference on the MCH Handbook
25th August, Toronto, Canada

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