



## PRESS RELEASE ON MIDWIVES DAY 2021

Tanzania  
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Tanzanian midwives lead lifechanging research to help mothers who experience stillbirths across Africa

Tanzanian midwives have taken a leading role in helping mothers and communities deal with stillbirth in a study spanning six African nations.

The news comes ahead of International Day of the Midwife on Wednesday May 5 th 2021.

Globally, 2 million stillbirths occur every year, 64% of which happen in Sub-Saharan Africa, which has an average of 29 stillbirths per 1,000 births, compared to three per 1,000 in countries like the United Kingdom.

The governments of Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe are aiming to reduce this rate to less than 12 per 1,000 by 2025.

Midwives from the Lugina Africa Midwives Research Network (LAMRN) have been working with a team in the UK on a four-year project funded by the National Institute

for Health Research (UK) to identify women who may be at risk of stillbirth, provide better labour and birth experiences for them and ensure respectful care for those who suffer a loss.

Midwife Dr Rose Laisser, Tanzania project lead, said:

“A woman who suffers a stillbirth suffers a double loss. She not only suffers the death of a child but in the worst cases she may be seen as a failure in her own family or community. We have worked hard to change this – to try and spot who may be at risk of having a stillbirth but also providing dignity and care to those who have been bereaved.

“Midwives talk to mothers every day, so who better to conduct research which can help save the lives of both women and babies?”

The project has ensured that both midwives’ and mothers’ views are central to creating better health outcomes. Some of the studies include looking at the way stillbirth is communicated to families, the risk factors associated with stillbirth, the experiences of fathers, and the use of a bespoke board game to help train midwives around aspects of respectful care.

Rose added: “We have seen the positive impact for women and babies’ health when midwives lead research. Across the world, only 1 in 4 health leadership roles is currently held by a woman, despite 80% of the global health workforce being made up of nurses and midwives.”

New data released this week shows that increased investment in midwives could save up to 4.3 million lives every year by averting 67% of maternal deaths, 64% of neonatal deaths, and 65% of stillbirths 5 .

The figures were revealed in the State of the World’s Midwifery Report 2021, which has been launched this week to coincide with the 30th anniversary of International Day of the Midwife.

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More midwife led research would help save women’s and babies’ lives in Tanzania says Dr Rose Laisser, NIHR stillbirth project lead, on International Day of the Midwife #IDM2021 @LAMRN\_Stilbirth #SoWMy @LSTMnews @NIHRGlobalHealth &where will the African releases be held? Or link to LSTM one?>

LSTM link: <https://www.lstmed.ac.uk/news-events/news/strong-midwifery-leadership-saves-women%E2%80%99s-and-babies%E2%80%99-lives>