

unicef 

联合国儿童基金会

携手为儿童

China's South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund

**Training for China-Africa**

**Collaboration to Improve**

**Maternal, Newborn**

**and Child Health**

**in Eight African Countries**







# CONTENTS

Background 01

Overview of the training programme 03

Objectives

Design

Evaluation and certification

Training outcomes

Best practices and lessons learned 09

What went well

What could be improved

The way forward

---

**In December 2019, UNICEF and the Government of China signed an agreement on the implementation of maternal newborn and child health (MNCH) projects in eight countries in Africa: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zimbabwe.**

**The projects were launched with support from China's South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund (SSCAF). The objective was to improve equitable access to high-impact health services for pregnant women, newborns and children.**

---



# ► Background

Under the framework of the eight MNCH projects, the International Health Exchange and Cooperation Center (IHECC) of the National Health Commission (NHC) was a project partner to facilitate expert exchanges and technical assistance between China and the eight countries.

The framework was designed to share policies, best practices and experiences from MNCH programmes in China, to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for women and children. Emphasis was placed on learning between China and the eight countries, and equipping health professionals in China to better engage in global cooperation.

In 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic unfolded, the in-person training was adapted to self-paced learning, blended with live interactive sessions.



# ► Overview of the training programme

## Objectives

- **The ultimate objective of the projects was to reduce the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) and the newborn mortality rate (NMR) in the partner countries.**

The target audiences were government officials, project managers, technical experts and UNICEF staff. The project aimed to improve the capacity of the participants to use evidence to inform policies, guidelines and tools, to reduce maternal, newborn and under-five mortality rates.

- **Another aim was to facilitate learning between China and the eight partner countries, and to explore opportunities for further cooperation under the South-South Cooperation framework.**

The project was designed to exchange replicable experiences and lessons in: political commitment, strategies, financing, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, management information systems, implementing strategy and management approaches.

- **A final objective was to identify technical needs in implementing the SSCAF projects in the eight countries that China can support.**

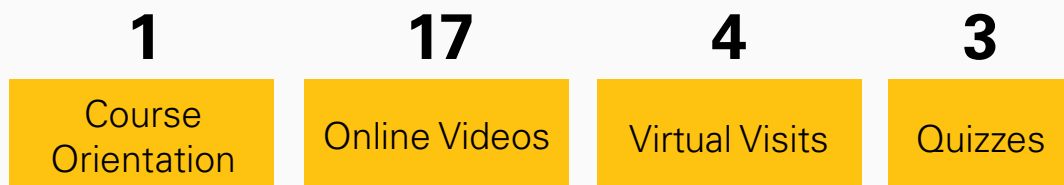
## Design

The training was designed to be demand-oriented, module-based, able to share knowledge and learning, and have an inbuilt monitoring and evaluation mechanism. To make the training meaningful and engaging the course included needs surveys, online video lectures, live interactive sessions, and online Q&As and quizzes.

UNICEF and IHECC first used an online survey to assess the needs of the participants. The results were compared with a list of MNCH best practices to identify topics where supply matches demand.

The first round of the course was designed with three self-paced modules, with a course orientation, 17 online videos across 12 topics, and virtual visits to four examples of facilities with best practices in MNCH in action.

On completing each module, participants were asked to take a quiz and share their comments on an online discussion platform.



- ▶ **Module one** gave an overview of MNCH progress in China, with a focus on the efforts and achievements in the health system in improving MNCH in recent decades.

- ▶ **Module two** introduced China's system for MNCH and introduced the National Basic Public Health Programme at community and primary healthcare levels, and childbirth and emergency MNCH care in hospitals.
- ▶ **Module three** focused on enablers of a functioning health system. This explained China's MNCH-relevant policies and technologies. It also covered the country's political commitment, strategies, financing, human resources, monitoring and evaluation, and management information systems.

Throughout the training participants were encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback, through an online message board, emails, or in interactive sessions.

IHECC, with UNICEF's support, developed an online learning platform (brhth.com) to facilitate the training. The platform provided a way to share information, conduct surveys, deliver courses, and provide certification. It also included discussion boards and a knowledge exchange portal. In early 2020, when it was clear that the training needed to be conducted online due to COVID-19, the online platform was still in the early stages of development. IHECC accelerated the development of the platform so that its essential functions would be available. UNICEF and international experts reviewed the platform to ensure it is easy to use and fulfills the objectives of the project.



©UNICEF/Sierra Leone/2020



©UNICEF/UN0536254/Wenga





**The course, over six weeks, included:**

- 8 hours of video lectures
- 10 hours of reading
- 3 hours for quizzes and discussions
- 3 hours of interactive sessions



The course was delivered in French and English.



For participants with poor internet access, files containing video lectures and reference documents were compressed. Files were also packaged and emailed to all participants as a backup.



Participants were invited to develop a post-course action plan, as part of the evaluation process. Through the action plans, participants articulated how best practices in MNCH could be adapted for SSCAF projects, potentially with technical support from China.

**Quality assurance in the project was a priority. This included:**

- ▶ Experienced, well-trained facilitators, to keep participants intrigued and motivated.
- ▶ Rehearsals and refining of presentations for video shoots.
- ▶ Each video went through rounds of technical review for content and language, followed by enhancement by a professional graphic designer.
- ▶ A Chinese-English glossary of terminology was prepared so that terms were standardized throughout the training.
- ▶ All Q&As were documented, and feedback was provided to facilitators and participants.

# Evaluation and certification

The training emphasized participant engagement and quality of learning. Detailed assessment indicators and scaled scores were set prior to the training. A certificate of completion was awarded to participants with a score of 70 or more, which was provided through the online training platform (brhth.com).

## South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund Training for Maternal, Newborn and Child...

Project has ended End: 2021-01-19

The project is supported by the South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund established by the Chinese government. On 10th December 2019, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and China International Center for Economic and Technology Exchange (CICETE) signed a South-South Cooperation Assistance Fund Implementation Agreement, formally initiating the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH) Projects in eight African countries (Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zimbabwe). Apart from improving access to health fa... [more](#)



Join

Joined 154 People

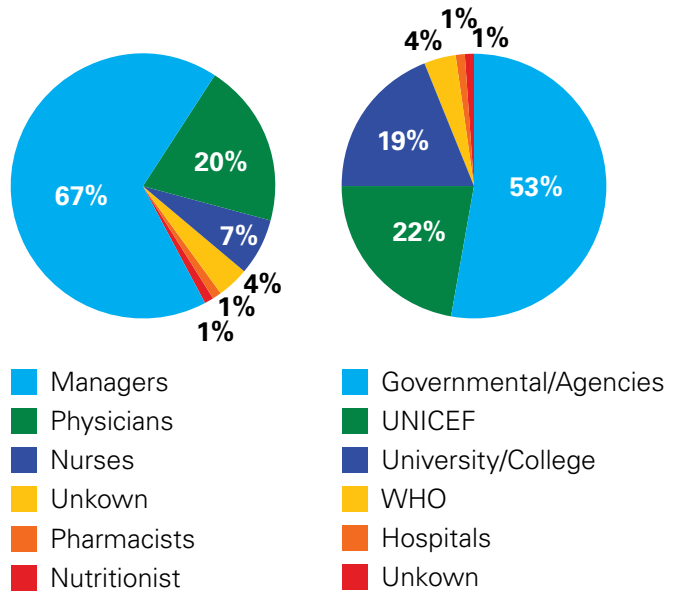


Awarding of certificates to training participants

Photo: Courtesy of IHECC

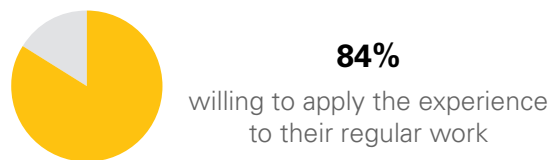
# Training outcomes

A total of **138** participants registered for the training, including 93 decision-makers or managers, 28 doctors, 9 nurses, and 8 participants who did not indicate their background.



In feedback, participants reported the training was practical, interesting, and relevant to their countries. In post-course action plans participants demonstrated willingness to apply knowledge acquired in the training.

In a follow-up survey, 94 per cent of respondents reported that their knowledge had improved, and 84 per cent reported that they were willing to apply the experience to their regular work.



Another marker of success was demand for further training. Three additional technical areas were identified for a second round of training.

Topics included community mobilization for maternal and child health, strategies for maternal and newborn safety, and neonatal care.

Developed by 32 facilitators, this second round of training went live in June 2021, with 50 participants.



# ▶ Best practices and lessons learned

## What went well

- ▶ **The course was designed and delivered in a systematic approach.**  
At the heart of this approach was an effort to understand the needs of countries both at the collective and individual level, and tailor the training to the needs of participating countries. In-depth consultation with UNICEF country offices, health officials from participating countries and Chinese medical teams in these countries contributed towards this assessment. A participant needs survey, feedback and analysis during the process also helped.
- ▶ **All the agencies involved learned from the training.**  
The eight project countries learned about China's experiences, but the capacity of Chinese experts was also expanded, and the Centres of Excellence in South-South Cooperation in maternal and child health also gained valuable experience.
- ▶ **The organizers demonstrated innovation and flexibility in moving the training online.**  
The training platform was tweaked and improved during the implementation, and this platform will serve as a model for future cooperation projects.
- ▶ **Each partner brought a unique strength to the project.**  
UNICEF's programmatic network in the project countries laid a solid foundation for inviting the right participants. IHECC provided valuable technical support as an in-country partner.

# What could be improved

## Technical Elements

Despite efforts to anticipate and fix problems, technical issues inevitably arose. This included intermittent internet access for participants, a need for more training in remote training and video shooting, and a need for low-resolution and high-resolution videos.

## Relevance to local contexts

The backgrounds of the participants, as well as the context of participating countries, should be further incorporated into the course. In this vein, interactive sessions could be further broken down to understand implementation scenarios in project countries.

## Engagement

The platform's distance-training functions need to be further refined, with a focus on making the experience more user-friendly for participants.



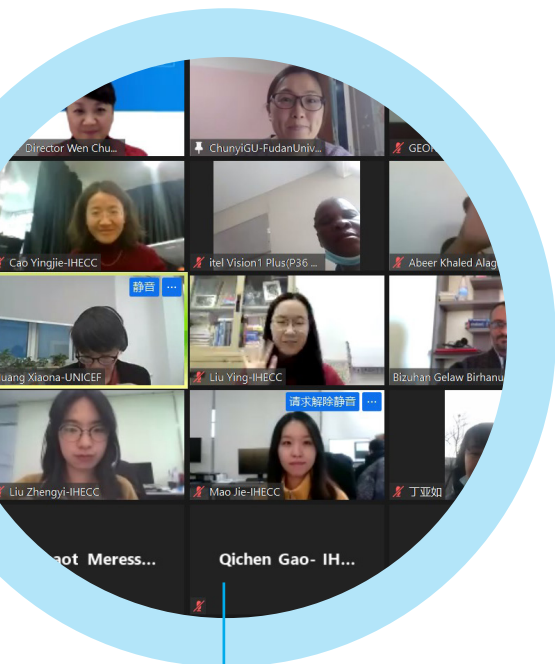
Shooting a field visit video at Beijing Maternal and Child Health Care Hospital  
Photo: Courtesy of IHECC

## The way forward

Building on the experiences of the SSCAF training – what worked and, equally importantly, what did not work – new technical areas will be identified and expanded for knowledge-sharing.

These areas include, for example, the use in China of Ying Yang Bao (a complementary food supplement) to prevent childhood stunting and anaemia, as well as China’s experience in elimination of mother-to-child transmission on HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B. In both areas China has demonstrated success and has valuable experiences to share with other developing countries.

All stakeholders will continue work together to boost cooperation and bring the best knowledge and technologies to improve maternal, newborn and child health.



**Interaction and Q&A sessions**  
*Photo: Courtesy of IHECC*



**English-French simultaneous interpretation of an interaction session**  
*Photo: Courtesy of IHECC*



**Chinese experts presenting during a training session**  
*Photo: Courtesy of IHECC*





## LEARN MORE

**Weibo:**

[www.weibo.com/unicefchina](http://www.weibo.com/unicefchina)

**WeChat, Douyin and  
Kuaishou:**

unicefchina

**Website:**

[www.unicef.cn](http://www.unicef.cn)



联合国儿童基金会

携手为儿童