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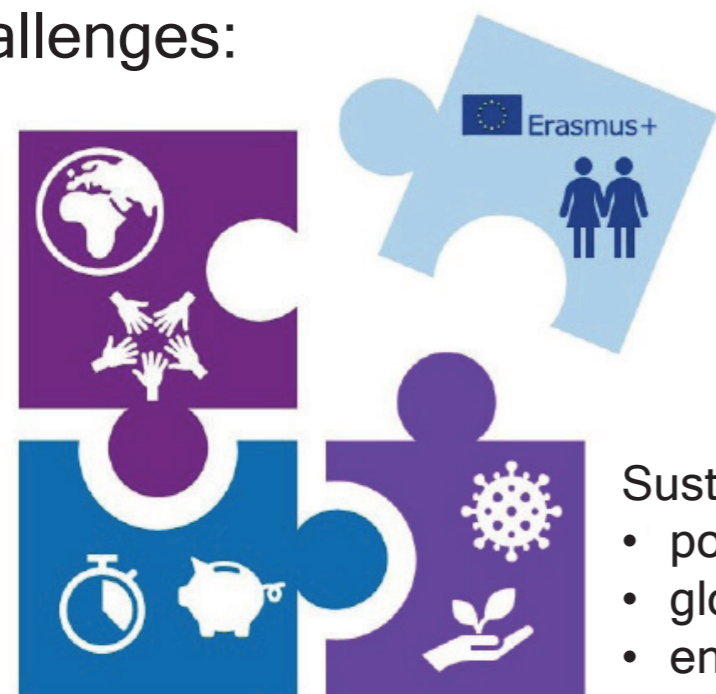
# Using digital technology to widen access to international experiences: International Student Midwives Network

Velo Higuera, M.\* , Graf Heule, P.\*\* , Miscioscia, E.\* , Ammann-Fiechter, S.\*\*  
\*Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. \*\*Zurich University of Applied Sciences

International learning experiences embedded into Midwifery curriculums can help students gain global intercultural perspectives. Attempts to internationalise undergraduate Midwifery education have been made before via clinical placements abroad or educational trips. Implementation needs to overcome few challenges:

- Globally diverse:
- education programs
  - professional competences
  - population needs

- Student capacity
- busy curriculums
  - financial barriers
  - personal barriers to travel



- Sustainability threats
- political changes (e.g. Brexit)
  - global pandemics
  - environmental impact

## Vision and Aims

We would like midwives of the future to be global leaders who work to enhance the profile of the Midwifery profession worldwide

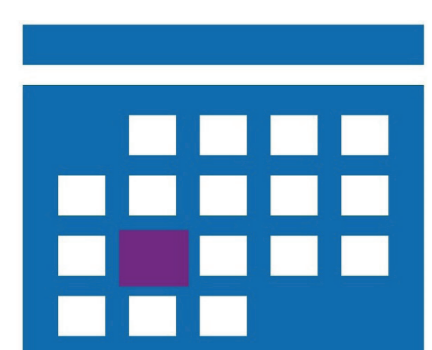
The International Student Midwife Network aims to:

- Foster peer support relationships between student midwives across Europe and globally
- Facilitate the exchange of personal experiences in the journey of becoming a midwife
- Facilitate the development of interpersonal skills to work cross culturally
- Promote intercultural learning through reflection on the similarities and differences in the social context of Midwifery
- Promote professional exchange to foster best practice in Midwifery
- Discuss and exchange ideas of contemporary and important international midwifery campaigns and debates

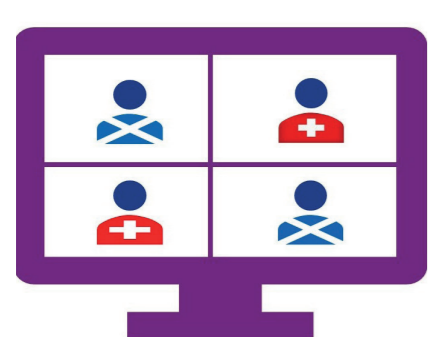
## Methods



Using digital technologies to build a virtual network, the International Student Midwives Network (ISMN) offers students the opportunity to build peer support relationships with other students in different countries



In self-regulated and self-guided groups, students meet virtually at least once a month to discuss different topics and compare their experiences in Midwifery. Students keep a reflective journal; extracts from this journal may be shared with tutors



At the end of the academic year, students expand on some of the different topics in a student-led virtual conference, where they share their learning with the non-participating students in their course



The competencies developed through the network are mapped against each local competency framework. This allows for academic recognition of their learning, in a varied format depending on institutional regulations.

## Results

Initially, planned recruitment was around 30 students, but the interest was far greater than expected. This led us to a cohort of 80 students.

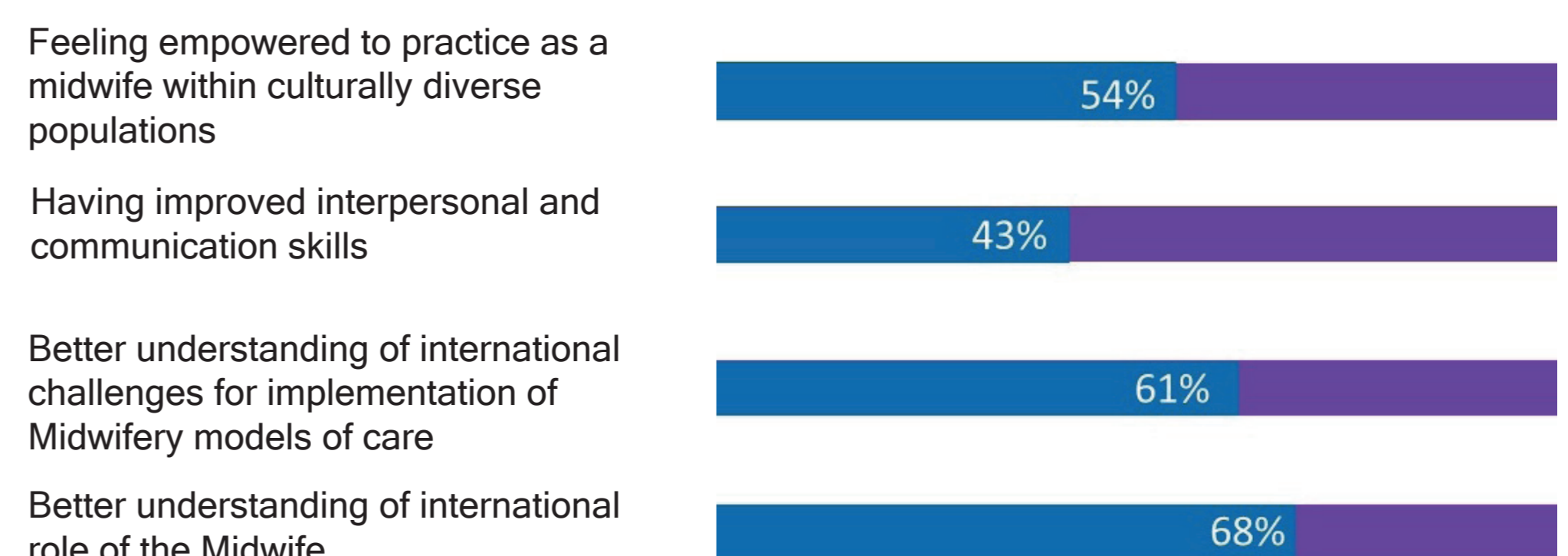
Main challenges:

- Varied digital literacy
- Low participation and drop-outs in some groups
- Organisation of meeting dates and managing competing demands
- Tutor's time for support and coordination
- Language barriers



Topics discussed in monthly meetings

As a result of their participation in the network, students reported:

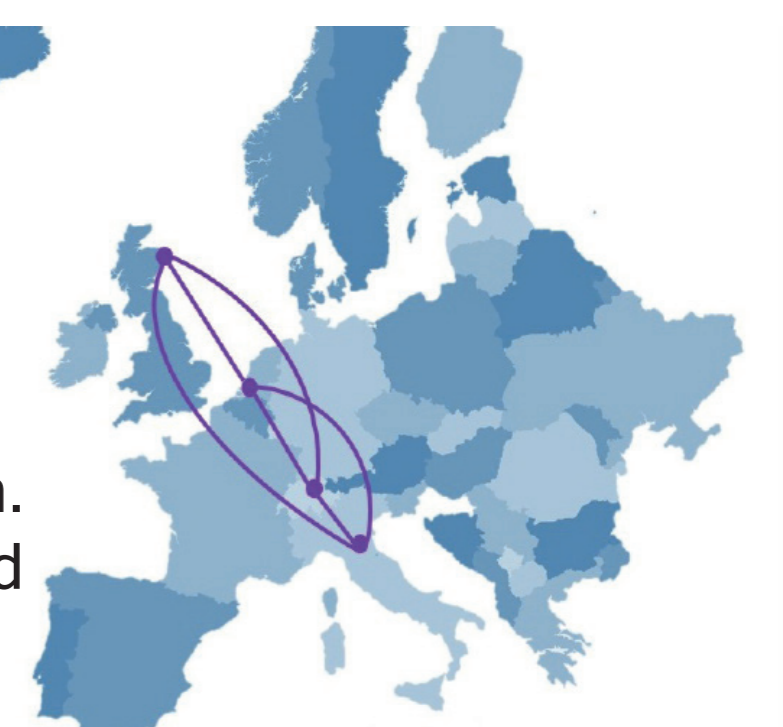


80% would recommend this experience to others

## Conclusions

This project is an ongoing development that keeps students' experience at its very core.

The success of this pilot cohort has led to the expansion of the network in 2021, with two additional partners in Rotterdam and Bologna. The network aims to continue growing beyond the borders of Europe in 2022.



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