

Collaborative Partnership to Build the Nursing and Midwifery Profession in Rwanda: University of Rwanda College of Nursing and Midwifery and University of Illinois, Chicago College of Nursing

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Background

The Rwanda Human Resources for Health (HRH) is a seven-year program to build collaboration and partnership in health education between the Rwandan Ministry of Health (MoH) and many of the leading US educational institutions. The MoH has a commitment to meet the health needs of Rwandan citizens by 2020. The goals of HRH are accomplished through interventions to address the country's most challenging obstacles in high-quality healthcare: a critical shortage of skilled health workers; challenges in health worker education; and inadequate infrastructure and equipment in health facilities. The School of Nursing and Midwifery at the University of Rwanda was selected in 2011 to participate in the HRH program. In addition, the MOH has partnered with a consortium of 23 top US institutions of medicine, nursing, health management, and oral health in the Rwanda HRH program. The University of Illinois at Chicago's (UIC) College of Nursing is a member of the consortium of nursing colleges working with the HRH program in Rwanda.

Description

The HRH program is designed so that at the end of the 7 years, there will be sufficient Rwandan educators, infrastructure, and domestic funding to sustain the upgraded health care and health sciences education system after international funding is phased out. The Rwanda HRH Program is heavily focused on raising the skill level of the nursing and midwifery workforce. Since 2012, UIC's College of Nursing has recruited 9 midwives and 17 nurses to work in locations throughout Rwanda.

Lessons Learned

Contributing to global health, particularly for nurses and midwives, is a key goal of the UIC College of Nursing. During the first 3 years of the program, supporting Rwandan faculty by pairing with full-time UIC nursing and midwifery partners has resulted in numerous innovations in educational approaches and clinical practice. In addition we have learned that context is critical to the reciprocal learning that has occurred.

Conclusion

Our poster described the highlights of the collaborative work between the members of the UIC faculty and their Rwandan counterparts. We also delineated the role of the UIC College of Nursing in facilitating the collaboration and ongoing support for the HRH- Rwandan team since the inception of the program.

Key words: global health, collaboration, nursing and midwifery, human resources for health