Background

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), nurses and midwives account for over half of all health care providers. A severe health worker shortage, however, is placing considerable strain on the existing workforce, hindering DRC’s ability to combat malaria, HIV, and other illnesses that contribute to the country’s high disease burden. Sufficient numbers of adequately trained nurses and midwives are needed to address essential population-based health care needs, including antiretroviral treatment for HIV.

In 2011, ICAP launched the Nursing Education Partnership Initiative (NEPI) with support from the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) through the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to improve the quantity and quality of the nursing and midwifery workforce. Through NEPI, ICAP is working in partnership with DRC’s Ministry of Health (MOH) to enhance nursing and midwifery education at four institutions:

- Kamalondo Institute of Medical Technology
- Kinshasa Superior Institute of Medical Technology
- Kintambo Technical Medical Institute
- Lubumbashi Superior Institute of Medical Technology

In DRC, NEPI is addressing the following challenges to nursing and midwifery education:
1) critical shortages of nurses and midwives; 2) limited quality assurance systems; 3) limited opportunities for advanced study or career development; and 4) under-resourced teaching and learning facilities.

Achievements

Strengthening Nursing Education Infrastructure
NEPI is improving student access to rural practicum sites; upgrading classrooms; and outfitting skills labs where nursing and midwifery students complete clinical placements. Examples of NEPI’s impact in DRC:

- Developed infrastructure and resource requirement plans for all four partner schools to guide the refurbishment of classrooms, clinical laboratories, libraries, and equipment distribution.
- Provided teaching resources to all NEPI schools including: text books, anatomical models, task trainers, clinical supplies, computers, and printers.
- Installed servers at Kinshasa Superior Institute of Medical Technology and Kamalondo Institute of Medical Technology.
- Developed equipment use, security, and maintenance protocols for each partner school.

Improving the Capacity of Nursing and Midwifery Faculty
NEPI is expanding educational and career advancement opportunities for nursing and midwifery faculty to build capacity and address worker attrition.

- Trained faculty members from the four partner schools in teaching methodologies, prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, and mentoring skills.
- Trained faculty, tutors, and mentors from the four partner schools and nursing and midwifery associations in workshops such as: research and supervision methods and PMTCT of HIV.


Key Health Challenges

Health Care Worker Density in DRC

- WHO-recommended
- DRC

Leading Causes of Death in DRC

Health Care Providers in DRC

nepinetwork.org
Trained faculty members in active teaching methods associated with the new curriculum.

Improving the Quality and Relevance of Teaching and Learning
NEPI is improving the quality of teaching and learning in nursing programs through the introduction of competency-based curricula, clinical mentorship and preceptorship, and innovative teaching techniques.

• Trained nursing and midwifery graduates in HIV/AIDS essential competencies.
• Supported the training faculty members in needs-based trainings such as active teaching methods and problem-based learning.
• Implemented new teaching techniques for the clinical classroom at each school.
• Revised advanced-level nursing curriculum for national implementation.
• Supported the development of an education module in evidence-based practice for secondary and advanced-level nursing.

Strengthening Governance, Leadership, and Administrative Capacity of Nursing Education Institutions
ICAP is providing technical and capacity-building support to strengthen leadership, education and finance management, and quality assurance at nursing education institutions.

• Trained members of the four partner institutions in grants management.
• Supported the final validation of the common research template used by PhD faculty members from Kinshasa Superior Institute of Medical Technology, MOH, Ministry of Education, and Kinshasa School of Public Health.

Enhancing Partnerships in Nursing Education Networks
ICAP supports the NEPI Technical Working Group, which provides oversight and direction for the NEPI project. It's comprised of members from:

- Ministries of Health, Education, and Finance
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- Nurses and Midwives Association
- Japanese International Cooperation Agency
- IntraHealth Medical Assistance
- United Nations Fund for Population Agency

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