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A Summary Report

Strengthening Pre-Service Nursing Education Lessons Learnt from Nursing Education Partnership Initiative (NEPI)



1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Historically the public sector colleges, through the four-year diploma programme, have produced the majority of pipeline nursing professionals with an average of 80 per cent production rate annually in comparison with the universities producing 20 per cent. However, this sector is under threat since the diploma programme that provides pipeline nursing professionals no longer exist as a qualification type on the new framework for all national qualifications.

With the determination of the last date for the legacy nursing qualification by the Minister for Higher Education, colleges find themselves in a position that precludes them from continuing offering nursing education programmes, (both basic and specialist qualifications) with the exception of the phasing out of current programmes. Colleges are required to comply with requirements for post school education to be accredited before they can start offering programmes that lead to qualifications listed on the national qualifications framework.

Using Council on Higher Education (CHE) criteria for programme accreditation, the results of a study conducted to assess the capacity of the colleges to offer the new nursing programmes revealed that only one of the seven criteria was met, while three were partially met and three were not met. Key amongst these was that teaching staff were not sufficiently qualified to offer the proposed nursing qualifications and that basic infrastructural stipulations requisite for programme accreditation was substandard. The study concluded that it was reasonable to assume that nursing colleges in general are not ready to offer the new qualifications for reasons which will be very difficult to rectify within the foreseeable future. Yet the Nursing Strategy stipulates that the national Department of Health (NDOH) is responsible for providing support to colleges to finalise preparation for accreditation - a prerequisite for offering programmes that lead to qualifications registered in the national qualifications framework.

The enactment of a framework for all national qualifications together with the enactment of the new categories of nurses created an opportunity for reorganisation of nursing education system, taking into account obligations imposed by the legislation. It was anticipated that such reorganisation of nursing education system would again take time to be developed and implemented and will probably require a higher degree of centralisation of the nursing college sector and a streamlining of the nursing college teaching and learning model. Only then would the nursing college sector be able to produce nurses in the numbers as required by South Africa. The net result would be to ensure that nursing education operates within and is aligned to requirements for post school education system, and that qualifications obtained are commensurate with scopes of practice, thus ensuring a balance between the quantity, quality and relevance of nursing in order to improve population health outcomes.

Lessons learnt from the recently completed Nursing Education Partnership Initiative (NEPI) project provides an impetus to the NDOH to direct, guide and accelerate nationwide preparation for accreditation of public nursing colleges to ensure seamless transition from the old to the new nursing qualifications.

Stewardship by the NDOH to expand and share these gains with the nursing education community is critical to cascade and fast-track implementation of NEPI lessons throughout provinces. Thus, harmonising nursing education with population health needs.

2. THE NURSING EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE (NEPI)

Launched in 2011, the Global Nurse Capacity Building Project (GNCBP), through its sub-programme NEPI, has driven improvements in nursing education and training in six countries and 22 schools of nursing throughout Africa. The overall emphasis of NEPI is to support the transformation of nursing education by increasing the quantity, quality, and relevance of nurses in line with the World Health Organization (WHO) 2013 guidelines on *transforming and scaling up health professionals' education and training*. NEPI seeks to strengthen the capacity of pre-service nursing institutions, clinical and academic faculty to produce skilled nurses and midwives to address population health needs of the country through the introduction of competency-based curricula, innovative learning strategies, academic-service partnerships, and strengthening the teaching and learning workforce and infrastructure.

In South Africa, the NEPI initiative was customised to enable NDOH to support the reforms in nursing education outlined in the Strategic Plan for Nurse Education Training and Practice.

The objectives of NEPI's intervention in South Africa was to assess the steps that were necessary for government to implement the key recommendations of the Nursing Education and Training Strategic Plan for Nurse Education, Training, and Practice. Leading amongst these, was positioning of nursing education within the higher education landscape. The NEPI programme in South Africa has sought to demonstrate how transformation of pre-service nursing education which is able to produce appropriately skilled nurses is able to provide quality nursing care that is relevant and responsive to population health needs may be achieved.

The aim was to support on a small-scale public colleges and enable them to meet the requirements for offering nursing programmes leading to qualifications that are registered in the National Higher Education Qualifications Framework while compliant with the new legislation and regulations governing Health and Higher Education sectors and the nursing profession.

Lessons generated can be applied to the rest of the nursing education institutions in all provinces to similarly prepare them for accreditation, thus ensuring seamless transition from the old to the new nursing programmes.

3. APPROACH

- 3.1 Accreditation frameworks prescribed by the quality councils for nursing and higher education (South African Nursing Council (SANC) and CHE) were used as a guide to determine, quantify and provide requisite capabilities for programme accreditation.
- 3.2 Through a small-scale demonstration, capabilities of colleges to develop and implement pre-service education programmes were determined. In this process lessons that are generalisable for national scale-up were determined.

4. KEY STRATEGIES

NEPI provided support to the national Department of Health to:

- 4.1 develop a National Nursing Education Policy Framework - a key instrument for streamlining nursing college teaching and learning model to ensure uniformity in the provisioning of nursing education
- 4.2 develop a competency-based nursing and midwifery programmes at the selected colleges that are responsive to the national health priorities and aligned to the higher education qualifications framework
- 4.3 strengthen the capacity of teaching and clinical facilitators at the three selected colleges to design and deliver the new curricula that reflect adequate integration and coordination of national health priorities
- 4.4 strengthen infrastructure and resources by investing in innovations and operations to improve teaching and learning of each of the participating colleges.

5. ACHIEVEMENTS

- 5.1 Three prototype Nursing Education and Training Programmes, leading to the new NQF registered National Qualification were developed. These programmes are competency based on, and responsive, to national health priorities. For the first time in the country's history, public sector colleges will offer nursing programmes that are registered and published in the National Qualifications Framework. These programmes are:

- 5.1.1 Advanced Diploma in Midwifery leading to registration as a Midwife developed by Mpumalanga College of Nursing (MCON).
- 5.1.2 Bachelor of Nursing qualification leading to registration as a Professional Nurse developed by Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital (PMMH).
- 5.1.3 National Diploma in Nursing leading to registration as a General Nurse developed by Welkom Campus of the Free State School of Nursing (FSSON).

- 8.1 **Public endorsement:** There is a need to report back to the profession on the achievement of commitment made by the department to the college community through signing off of national prototype curricula by the Director-General and opening of district hospital based clinical training platforms by the Minister.
- 8.2 Although three provinces were part of the pilot project of models for district-based training platforms, Prince Mshiyeni Memorial Hospital Campus of the KwaZulu-Natal College of Nursing is conveniently identified as a site for the handover ceremony. This site also demonstrates some of the salient principles underpinning the NEPI project.

8. THE NECESSARY NEXT STEPS: OFFICIAL HAND OVER TO NATIONAL DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- a. Provinces will be able align and prioritise nursing education programmes in line with provincial priorities.
- b. The Nationally developed prototype curricula endorsed by SANC and accredited by CHE will be customised to provincial needs thus taking comparatively shorter period to develop curricula province specific curricula
- c. However, sector- wide scale up is incumbent on the willingness of provinces to embrace and use lessons generated by the project.
- Lessons learnt from the NEPI project provides an impetus to the national Department of Health to direct, guide and accelerate nationwide preparation for accreditation of public nursing colleges to ensure seamless integration of nursing education into post school education systems. Specifically:

7. NECESSARY NEXT STEPS - NATIONAL SCALE UP OF LESSONS LEARNT

- 6.1 Seventeen nurse educators formed three curriculum development teams that developed prototype curricula. The members of these teams from the NEPI implementing Nursing Education institutions engaged in the intensive process of programme design and curriculum development.
- 6.2 This participative intervention allowed the colleges to gain a sense of ownership of the whole process, which included a shift in curriculum development from a traditional content-based approach to a competency-based approach.
- 6.3 Feedback from these nurse educators revealed that their programme and curriculum design capacity was strengthened, evidenced by the limited support they needed during the final stages of programme and curriculum design.

The three colleges demonstrated that, with coordinated financial and technical support, public sector colleges are ready to offer nursing programmes.

6. KEY LESSONS LEARNT

- 5.2 All three programmes have been endorsed by the South African Nursing Council and are being reviewed by Council on Higher Education for accreditation.
- 5.3 Capacity of the nurse educators at the three colleges in terms of improving their clinical facilitation skills through the Master's degree programme as well as improving their clinical facilitation skills through the preceptorship training programme has been developed.
- 5.4 Requisite platforms for clinical teaching and learning have been strengthened in the three colleges, including:
- 5.4.1 Refurbishment and provisioning of equipment in Clinical Skills Laboratories at the three colleges
- 5.4.2 Libraries are refurbished and adequately stocked with current, relevant and sufficient learning resources
- 5.4.3 Computer Laboratories are refurbished and equipped with suitable and sufficient information Technology. (Table: 1)

Table 1: Details of refurbishment and equipment at the three colleges to be handed over to NDOH

Learning area	Mpumalanga	Prince Mshiyeni	Welkom
Computer laboratory	10 desktop computers, tables and chairs - Installation of air conditioners - Installation of blinds a - Security system installed - Temporary WIFI router with 100GB data was installed as the college applies for a permanent ADSL line to access internet	- Floor Tiling - Installations of air conditioners - Painting - Blinds and - Enhancements on security 34 desktop computers were procured and installed and the - New furniture for the whole lab - Temporary Wi-Fi router with 100GB data provided whilst the college applies for a permanent ADSL line	- Floor tiling - installation of air conditioning - installation of security - painting - Installation of blinds 10 desktop computers, tables and chairs - Temporary Wi-Fi router with 100GB data provided whilst the college applies for a permanent ADSL line
Clinical skills laboratory	The following equipment was procured: - Big Ben Round wall adult size Velcro cuff 2x emergency hospital beds 2x Hospital ward beds - M10 4.3" Color LCD Vital Sign Monitor - SP02 - NIBP - Temperature with trolley - Nursing Kelly Advanced with SimPad - Nursing Anne Advanced with SimPad - Nursing baby Advance with SimPad - Sim Mom - Megacode Kelly advanced with SimPad - Resuscitation set - Wheelchair - Rainbow" V Rem arm and footrest	- installation of cupboards for storage - Installation of security system - Two-way mirror - Installation fixtures to facilitate physical examination of the patient 2x PHC couches 3x electrical beds 2x cabinet lockers - Nursing Kelly Advanced with SimPad - Nursing Anne Advanced with SimPad - Nursing baby Advance with SimPad - Sim Mom - Megacode Kelly advanced with SimPad	- Nursing Kelly Advanced with SimPad - Nursing Anne Advanced with SimPad - Nursing baby Advance with SimPad - Sim Mom - Megacode Kelly advanced with SimPad - Floor tiling - strengthened security - painting - installation of blinds and electrical points - installation of sinks in the sluice room and
Library	- Study desks - Counter desks - Computer desks	ICAP supported the following during refurbishment: Floor tiling	- Study desks - Counter desks - Computer desks

Learning area	Mpumalanga	Prince Mshiyeni	Welkom
	- Magaz stand, 4 lift up stand shelves 900x1500x300, Newspaper stand with 12 holders - Slipping Book Trolley 800x91, 4slap. Shelves - Kick step (round steel) - Trapezoidal table 1200(w)x 740 (h) x 600(L) - Filing Cabinets - Office desks - Notice boards - General plugs - Dedicated red plugs - Security system installed in the research common and the library	- Installation of air conditioners - Installation of the physical security enhancement system for the library - Electronic system for book tagging and scanning. In addition, a - Separate area for group discussion adjacent to the main was renovated - Books have just been procured	- Magaz stand, 4 lift up stand shelves 900x1500x300, Newspaper stand with 12 holders- - Slipping Book Trolley 800x91, 4slap. Shelves - Kick step (round steel) - Trapezoidal table 1200(w)x 740 (h) x 600(L) - Filing Cabinets - Office desks - Notice boards - General plugs - Dedicated red plugs - Security system installed in the research common and the library