

Implementation of National Curriculum for the Diploma of General Nursing (DGN) and Certificate for Community Health Worker (CHW) Program

Brief 19: Meeting with representatives from the National Department of Health (NDoH) and University of PNG (UPNG) School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS) – Nursing Division, 5th March, 2024 – Holiday Inn, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea

Background

The Strengthening Health Workforce Education (SHWE) program in Papua New Guinea (PNG) focuses on supporting nurses and community health workers (CHWs) as the country's largest health workforce cadre to address both present and future health challenges. The program is implemented by the WHO Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CC UTS), in partnership with the PNG National Department of Health (NDoH), University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and the PNG Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST) with funding provided by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT).

This Meeting

Key stakeholders from the University of Papua New Guinea School of Medical and Health Sciences (UPNG SMHS) Nursing Division (ND), NDOH, PNG Medical Board, PNG Medical Standards and PNG Nursing Council met with the WHO CC UTS team on 5 March, 2024 to review the potential and commitment of the ND, UPNG and NDOH in developing and implementing a program or educators of health professionals in PNG.

The SHWE Program conducted jointly by the NDOH and WHOCCUTS identified a need to further upgrade the educational preparation of teachers in the schools of nursing and the education for beginning CHWs and Nurses. The 'Fast Track' program undertaken by the educators across the country identified a need and interest for a program to be developed locally that would enable all educators across the country to have the opportunity to be educated to at least bachelor

level for CHW teachers and to master level for teachers of nurses.



Ms Shirlyn Belden and Ms Marie Kavv from the SHWE Program Secretariat based at NDoH

Discussion and activities were as follows:

1. Who would be the target of programs? Discussion centred around the aim and purpose of the program. It was agreed that the program should be designed at a number of levels to enable the maximum number of educators to gain relevant education to improve the quality of education of beginning nurses and CHWs.
2. What would the level of the program be? Initially it was agreed that the program be developed at PG Dip level, however, there are many educators in CHW schools who need their qualifications upgraded urgently, so that there is a need for both a Bachelor of Health Professional Education as well as a Graduate Diploma Health Professional Education.
3. The purpose of the programs: it was agreed that once these programs were developed they would provide the national standard for educators of health professionals in PNG. The group also reviewed the WHO competency standards for

educators and agreed that they broadly represented the possible outcome standards that would be expected.

4. Market analysis. It was agreed that there was a need for a market analysis to ensure that the program would be sustainable over the longer term.



Meeting participants: Dr Nancy Buasi with her staff from the UPNG SMHS ND.

Action Plan arising from the meeting:

- a) NDOH, UPNG to set up a working group to oversee the market survey.
- b) Identification of key stakeholders and the need to involve and inform them in the process of course development.
- c) A further workshop be conducted later this year to identify a working group and begin to develop UNPG course documentation to enable the program to be developed and accredited by UPNG.

It is hoped that the proposed Stage Two of the SHWE Program will enable this valuable work with UPNG to continue in the future

Proposed Timeline

2024 - market assessment, identification of course documentation and course approval processes and plan of action.

2025 - fully develop programs for UPNG accreditation.

2026 - program implementation.



Stakeholders from UPNG SMHS ND, NDoH, PNG Medical Board, PNG Medical Standards, PNG Nursing Council and WHO CC UTS at the meeting held at the Holiday Inn on 5 March 2024

