

Virtual Interactions for Nursing and Midwifery Leaders
Small Island Developing States Human Resources for Health

Brief: Virtual/Hybrid Conference - University of Technology Sydney

18th April, 2024 (SYD)/17th April, 2024 (UK)

Background

This brief provides an overview of the virtual conference on Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Human Resources for Health, held during the University of Technology Sydney's (UTS) Pacific Leadership Program 2024 (PLP). The conference was held in a hybrid manner, with PLP fellows participating on-site at UTS and Caribbean participants attending virtually. It was co-hosted by the World Health Organization Collaborating Centre for Nursing, Midwifery and Health Development at the University of Technology Sydney (WHO CC UTS), the South Pacific Chief Nursing and Midwifery Officers Alliance (SPCNMOA), and JHPIEGO.

The health workforce of SIDS have unique and context-specific needs due to various factors inherent to Pacific and Caribbean regions. The conference focused on nursing and midwifery issues

of human resource and migration in these two regions with the common aim to support regional nursing leaders to strengthen quality and safety of the health workforce. It saw fruitful learning opportunities and discussions from participants and experts, including WHO Chief Nursing Officer Dr Amelia Latu Afuhaamango Tuipulotu.

Conference Objectives

The specific objectives of the conference were to:

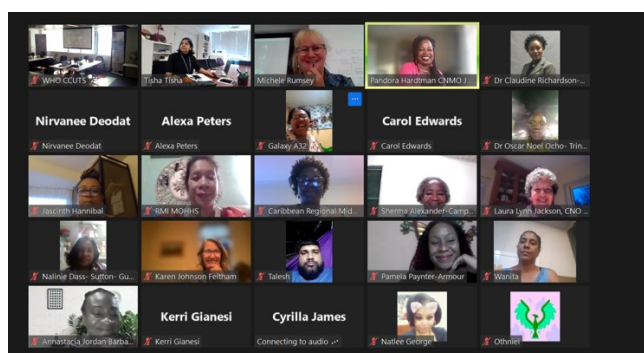
1. To provide a platform for nursing leaders to discuss and analyse the impact of disasters on the health workforce.
2. To identify common challenges and barriers faced by nursing leaders in managing the health workforce during and after disasters.
3. To share best practices and lessons learned from past disaster responses.



PLP Fellows and WHO CC UTS Team with Dr Amelia

4. To generate recommendations for addressing the identified challenges and barriers.
5. To foster collaboration and networking among nursing leaders involved in disaster response and workforce management.
6. To contribute to the development of strategies for strengthening the resilience and effectiveness of the health workforce in the face of future disasters.

Additionally, the conference aligned with the PLP objectives, specifically to 'strengthen leaders to increase regional regulation and accreditation standards in order to strengthen quality and safety of the Pacific health workforce'.



Online conference participants from the Caribbean and the Pacific

Presentations

The conference commenced with an Acknowledgement of Country from Prof Michele Rumsey (WHO CC UTS) and welcome from Pandora Hardtman (CNMO, JHPEIGO) who co-facilitated virtually. Then, four presentations were given on various topics.

Prof Jim Buchan (UTS) gave a presentation on Migration and Health Workforce Challenges in SIDS. He highlighted common issues faced by SIDS, such as flat career structures; limitations of resources, training capacity, and management; and active international recruitment of workforce. Jim highlighted that the 2020 State of the World's Nursing (SOWN) reported that, prior to the pandemic, the global nursing workforce was estimated to be 27.9 million nurses with 90% reported female. The global shortage of nurses at that time was 5.9 million nurses. Nearly all of these shortages were concentrated in low-and-lower-middle-income countries, and one in every eight nurses practised in a country other than the one where they were born or trained, highlighting significant, and unique issues for the nursing and

midwifery workforce in SIDS. He also presented possible solutions that emphasized collaboration and coordination.

Dr John Connell (University of Sydney) then provided Perspectives from the Field, specifically from experiences in Fiji. Prof Di Brown (UTS) and Mele Sii Inukihaangana Filise (CNMO Tonga) then presented on Issues in Scope of Practice, drawing on their experiences in the Pacific. Lastly, Dr Amelia Latu Afuhaamango Tuipulotu (WHO CNO) gave a talk on the 25x25 emergency care initiative aimed at training nurses and midwives in 25 WHO partner countries on emergency care by 2025.



Dr Amelia giving a presentation on-site

The talks provided valuable information and insight on current issues, perspectives, and strategies for nursing and midwifery practice globally. Fellows reported that they found the talk by Dr Amelia particularly inspirational.

Discussion Groups and Interactive Sessions

Three separate discussion groups were formed with in-person and online participants and facilitators.



Group Discussion

The first discussion group identified and prioritized the key challenges and barriers faced by nursing leaders in managing the health workforce push-pulls of migration. For instance, focusing on limited resources, high disease burden, and migration and brain drain. The second group identified and prioritized the key challenges and barriers faced by nursing leaders in managing the health workforce and scope issues, focusing on geographical isolation and climate vulnerability. Group three highlighted best practices and lessons learned from past disaster responses, focusing on effective strategies for supporting and managing the health workforce, focusing on limited resources and cultural sensitivity.

Each group was also tasked with suggesting recommendations to address the identified challenges and barriers. Representatives from each group then presented a summary of their discussion for further facilitated discussion, feedback, and refinement of recommendations.



Discussion Group

Following the discussion and feedback session, Dr Carey McCarthy (Technical Officer, Health Workforce Department, WHO HQ) gave a virtual talk on the State of Worlds Nursing Report (SOWN) 2025, which included a discussion on the inclusion of SIDS in WHO global reports and the importance of data accuracy.

Pandora Hardtman (Jhpiego) then facilitated an interactive session where participants got to share their experiences, concerns, and ideas. One participant suggested “There should be more opportunities to hear from countries and their experiences to guide and underpin the development of SOWN”. Some other common points brought up by participants from both regions included networking and collaboration; sharing resources, experiences, and ideas on tackling common issues and challenges; training and strengthening of the workforce; commitment through authority

endorsement, policy, and global support; and improvements to data collection and reporting.



Dr Amelia with on-site participants (PLP fellows)

The conference was officially closed by Dr Amelia Late Afuhaamango Tuipulotu, who summarized key points of discussion and shared words of wisdom and inspiration.

In-person PLP attendees and facilitators, and invited UTS faculty staff, then got the opportunity to learn from and discuss important issues with Dr Amelia as they enjoyed lunch.

Conclusions

Addressing the nuanced needs of nurses and midwives in SIDS requires empowering and connecting them to meet the evolving health needs of their communities. This includes initiatives to promote the well-being and professional development of nurses working in these challenging environments, often resulting in isolation.

As such, this conference was designed to connect nursing and midwifery leaders, provide support, solutions and enhance well-being, especially now, as the State of the Worlds Nursing report 2025 is collecting data. The conference saw participation and involvement of attendees in sharing their experiences with challenges and solutions on human resources for health specific to their regions and countries. This included presentations and discussions on limited resources, high disease burden, geographical isolation, climate vulnerability, cultural sensitivity, and migration and brain drain.

Recommendations

- Further promote cross-regional collaboration among nursing and midwifery leaders in SIDS. Collaborative networks facilitate the sharing of resources, experiences, and best practices, which is crucial for managing the unique challenges faced by SIDS.
- Encourage the inclusion of SIDS in SOWN 2025 to highlight their specific needs. Reliable data is critical for informed decision-making and strategic planning to address SIDS challenges effectively.
- Strengthen health workforce policies and regulatory frameworks to support the recruitment, retention, and professional growth of the nursing and midwifery workforce in SIDS.
- Change the name to "Dynamic Small Island Developing States (DSIDS)" to reinforce a positive identity that highlights the resilience, strengths, and capabilities of these states.

Countries involved

Pacific Island Countries	Caribbean Countries
Cook Islands	Caribbean Regional Midwives Association
Fiji	Barbados
Kiribati	Guyana
Marshall Islands	St Kitts
Nauru	St Lucia
Palau	St Vincent
Papua New Guinea	The Bahamas
Samoa	Trinidad & Tobago
Tonga	
Tuvalu	
Solomon Islands	
Federated States of Micronesia	
Vanuatu	