Addressing Two Problems at Par: Human Resources for Health Crisis and Inability to Pay School Fees for Nursing Candidates in Tanzania

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Problem

Tanzania is currently experiencing a critical shortage of Human Resources for Health of about 49% [1]. On Average, there are only 14.5 health professionals per 10,000 population, which is far below the agreed WHO standard of 23 per 10,000 population. Of great interest, and out of this, the density of Nurse Midwives (NMs) to population is at 3 per 10,000 population (same to 0.35NM per 1000 population) of which it is far below the WHO recommended standards of 3 Nurse Midwives (NM) per 1000 population. Numerically, the current shortage of Nurse Midwives (NM) stands at least 12,525 [2].

There is equilibrium mismatch between the supply of Nurse Midwives and Demand for in the health facility as well as in the community health systems. Facilities in urban areas are in better chance to receive a good number of NMs compared to those in rural areas- factors like remoteness, poor living environment and working environments, and drop out and retiring exacerbate the shortage.

Description

In 2012, Amref Health Africa, launched a campaign called Stand Up for African Mothers- whose goal was to support the implementation of Millennium Development Goals (MDG) 5 and 4 on reduction of Maternal and Infant mortality in Tanzania. The Campaign since then has received significant support and gained popularity. The aim of the campaign is to raise funds from the Corporate Sector to support training of 3800 Nurse Midwives -NMs in 26 schools in Tanzania through eLearning approach. Likewise, More than 326 students have received full scholarship to pursue certificate course in Nursing and Midwifery from Tanga, Mtwara, Coastal, Geita, Simiyu, Kigoma, Tabora, Mara, Shinyanga. Also, more than 154 Nurse Midwives -NMs have graduated, 10 have already been recruited and 144 are awaiting recruitment.

Lessons Learnt

To date, Amref has supported more than 847 Nurse Midwives -NMs to pursue diploma in Nursing and Midwifery in 26 schools in Tanzania through eLearning approach. Likewise, More than 326 students have received full scholarship to pursue certificate course in Nursing and Midwifery from Tanga, Mtwara, Coastal, Geita, Simiyu, Kigoma, Tabora, Mara, Shinyanga. Also, more than 154 Nurse Midwives -NMs have graduated, 10 have already been recruited and 144 are awaiting recruitment.

Recommendations

In order for the government to bridge the shortage of Nurse Midwives -NMs in the country, innovative approaches such Public - Private Partnership that leverage private sector resources should be considered. There is no maternal health without a midwife.

References

2. Ibid.