

# SUCCESSFUL INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION STRATEGIES: TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING OF HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL AT THE NATIONAL HEALTH SCHOOL OF ROSSO IN MAURITANIA

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the necessity, both globally and in Mauritania, for nursing professionals to possess the required knowledge and skills that enable them to ensure care across diverse healthcare settings, including hospitals and community-based services where their interventions take place. Since 2020, as part of the International Training of Trainers Program, a project has been initiated to enhance healthcare personnel training in several African countries, with particular focus on Mauritania. Strategically located just 100 km off the African coast, the Canary Islands serve as a global knowledge hub for this project, attracting mentors from prestigious national and international institutions, as well as Canary Islands experts and trained African professionals, especially from the Sub-Saharan region. This paper presents the successful experience of the program at the Rosso School of Public Health as an exemplary model of multi-actor training and cooperation, involving diverse institutions and mechanisms of aid and financing.

In Mauritania, the teaching of nursing and midwifery competencies and skills falls upon the National Health Schools, which face limitations in both material resources and teaching staff. The

shortage of specialized personnel in the country, coupled with demands for improvement in available resources for nursing and midwifery education and continuous training, has generated the need for cooperation and support. The objective is to enhance the technical and technological knowledge and skills of healthcare professionals through training both in Mauritania and in hospital and academic institutions in the Canary Islands. Subsequently, it is expected that they will apply and disseminate this knowledge, as well as implement the acquired skills in their respective countries and healthcare centers of origin.

**Keywords:** International Development Cooperation, Training of Trainers, Health Cooperation.

## Methodology

In response to this need, a multi-channel strategy has been designed for the implementation of a comprehensive care project that begins with a formative and organizational diagnosis using Witkin's (1977) Needs Assessment Model based on discrepancies, applied to educational environments by Witkin & Altschuld (1995, 2000), which allows for the identification of deficiencies and needs. The strategy continues with the provision of basic materials for the training, capacity building, and training of nursing teachers and professionals, as well as midwives. The courses have been implemented both locally and in healthcare institutions and teaching centers of the ULPGC in Gran Canaria.

## Implementation

Together with the management and teaching team of the National Health School, the scheduling of the training of trainers' courses was designed and temporally planned, conducted between June 2020 and November 2023. Update programs addressing the health issues of the region were implemented. The program benefited from the valuable experience of both Canarian and international experts, who provided their support and guidance, along with the involved university and governmental institutions in financing.

## Results

Over the past three years, this program has conducted a total of 13 activities including courses, conferences, and roundtable discussions, of which 7 have been continuous training and updating courses. These activities have trained over 200 healthcare professionals in Mauritania (Rosso, Nouakchott, and Nouadhibou). Covering fundamental areas of update such as basic nursing care, communication, healthy nutrition, medical-surgical care, maternal-fetal health, obstetrics, intensive care, and infectious diseases, with a high level of participation and participant satisfaction following evaluation. In 2023, a practical simulation laboratory was established at the ESPR with high-fidelity simulators and advanced technology. This initiative provides students with preclinical simulated practice opportunities during their training, while also facilitating ongoing training for clinical postgraduates. In 2024, we have the responsibility to establish the first specialized library in nursing and midwifery at the Rosso School. Both equipment acquisition actions have been financially supported by the Vice-Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Canary Islands (SUBCOOP Projects 2022/97 and 2023/0019) under the coordination of the ULPGC.

## Conclusions

1) Continuous training in nursing and midwifery is crucial for addressing technical needs in Mauritania. 2) Clinical simulation enhances students' skills for effective professional practice. 3) The availability of a specialized library strengthens access to educational resources in nursing and midwifery in Mauritania. 4) Local and international collaboration is essential for enhancing education and healthcare in the country.

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