

Strengthening Health Worker Education in Papua New Guinea

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

Holiday Inn, Port Moresby - 3 June 2024

**Brief 21: PNG SHWE Project Principals Meeting and official launch of the updated National
Curriculum for the Diploma of General Nursing and Certificate for Community Health Workers**

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 and involves a comprehensive review, development, and implementation of updated National Curriculum for the Diploma of General Nursing (DGN) and the Certificate for Community Health Worker (CHW) Program. 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).

Principals' Meeting

In line with the conclusion of Phase One of the PNG SHWE Program, all principals from the participating nursing schools and CHW institutes were invited to a final meeting held on Monday 3 June, 2024 at the Holiday Inn, Port Moresby.

Principals or senior representatives from 12 schools of nursing, and 14 CHW institutes across PNG were in attendance. The Project Secretariat based at the NDoH (Mrs Mary Roroi, Ms Shirlyn Belden and Ms Marie Kavuu) coordinated the workshop logistics on the ground, as well as travel and accommodation arrangements. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the WHO CC UTS project team

based in Sydney (Prof Di Brown, Ms Amanda Neill, Ms Kerri Giansesi).

Following an opening prayer by Ms Mary Kililo (Technical Adviser – pre-Service and Health), Ms Kililo and Prof. Di Brown welcomed the principals to the meeting. Once introductions by all attendees were delivered, Ms Kililo ran through the goal, aims and objectives of the SHWE Program, followed by general discussion of the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for a nurse or CHW in PNG.



Principals' group work at the Principal's Meeting, 3 June 2024

Ms Kililo's presentation gave an overview of project achievements over Phase One, including the WHO CC UTS Gap Analysis and Desktop Review, the NDoH Baseline Survey Study. Prof Di then briefly explained the results of the Gap Analysis and the program process that had followed – including the review of the curriculums and subject development, and the development and implementation of the Fast Track Program (FTP) to support capacity building of nursing and CHW educators.



Prof Di Brown (WHO CC UTS) with Principals involved with the SHWE Program at the meeting

Prof. Di described how data has been collected throughout the SHWE Program, her hope is to visit individual schools and institutes in the future to gain better knowledge and evidence of their operation on the ground, particularly their implementation of the new curriculums. In relation to the FTP, it was generally agreed that the program belongs to PNG and ideally will be delivered locally in the future, with links to a Masters level qualification through UPNG, and in alignment with the NDoH National Health Plan.

Following the initial presentation, a session was held for principals to provide feedback on the Program to date. The main points will be included in monitoring and evaluation data for final project reporting, however the overall feedback about the Program was very positive. It was found that although some educators found weaknesses in their teaching skills, after attending the FTP workshops they were more excited about teaching, learning and applying their learning with student-centred practice.

Prof Di thanked the principals for sharing their views. The WHO CC UTS team were also thanked for their support, work on the curriculums and FTP, and for the new resources and teaching and learning strategies imparted. Prof Di then ran through some preliminary findings from research with FTP participants and congratulated all principals for embracing the significant changes that have occurred.

During lunch, a representative from Elsevier outlined the range of resources available to enhance and support learning of relevance to health educators.

This was followed by a group feedback session where principals discussed in groups what they felt is needed for them to implement the new curriculums at their respective institutions. The top 5 priorities were:

1. More up-to-date learning resources – including e-library resource materials, mannequins, text books.
2. Increased human resources – increased teaching staff numbers.
3. Information Technology - reliable internet access and computer availability, IT support.
4. Continuing Professional Development – training for all educators on curriculum and FTP, preceptor training.
5. Available curriculum resources – resources for future semesters developed including teaching and learning materials, full semester resources available for planning and time management.

Launch of the revised DGN and CHW Curriculums:

The timing of this meeting coincided with the formal launching of the revised DGN and CHW curriculums by NDoH, hosted by the PNG Nurses Association at the Crown Hotel.



Miriam Carter (DFAT PNG) launching the newly revised DGN and CHW curriculums



PNG NDoH and DFAT colleagues with WHOCCUTS Colleagues at the national launch of the new curriculums.

Following an opening prayer, the President of the PNG Nurses Association, Mr Frederick Kebai, welcomed attendees, with Ms Lina Wam (Manager, Human Resources, NDoH) and Sr Merylyn Nicholas (Deputy Director of Nursing Clinical Services at Port Moresby General Hospital) providing some background and formally launching the new curriculums. This achievement comes at the end of the 3-year SHWE collaboration, implemented by WHO CC UTS, in partnership with the PNG NDoH, University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG) and the PNG Department of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology (DHERST).

WHO CC UTS supported the principals to attend the launch and the 21st South Pacific Nurses Forum (SPNF) which occurred in Port Moresby from June 4th to 7th 2024, through the funding of their associated travel expenses.



PNG Health Secretary Dr Osborne Liko opening SPNF, congratulates nurses and CHWs on newly launched curriculums

The Forum provided an excellent opportunity to support nursing colleagues across the Pacific to network and plan for actions over the next two years and promote leadership capacity building within the region. The SPNF convenes biennially at various locations, with the next forum planned to be held in Fiji in 2026.

Implementation of Approved Curricula:

The approved CHW Curriculum has been disseminated to the CHW schools who will continue to implement this over the next two years.

The revised Diploma of General Nursing (DGN) has been endorsed by the PNG Nursing Council in June 2023 and an approval letter was sent to DHERST in August 2023. We are now waiting for final approval by DHERST Board on academic curriculum content. This will be a milestone achievement for the project and for nursing education in PNG.

Next Steps:

With the successful completion of FTP training, the focus is shifting to remaining project work. It is hoped that under the proposed Stage Two of the program, work will continue on the development of a Bachelor of Health Professional Education (BHPE) with UPNG in the future, and FTP participants will be given some advanced standing for this course.