



Press Release

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Partnership places nursing and midwifery on global stage

A project to equip nurses and midwives to tackle global healthcare challenges has been launched at the University of Edinburgh.

The first pioneering projects of the Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative will improve care for people who use health services in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of Liberia and Uganda.

The Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative will connect and empower nurses worldwide to share research, innovations and knowledge to improve people's health outcomes.

The project will have a focus on innovating nursing and midwifery in areas where health systems are affected by challenges such as disease outbreaks, poverty and conflict.

The initiative, which is a collaboration between the University's Nursing Studies and its Global Health Academy, builds on Edinburgh's leadership in nursing and midwifery research and teaching.

Professor Aisha Holloway, Head of Nursing Studies at the University of Edinburgh, said: "The Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative will elevate and strengthen nurse and midwifery education, practice, research and influence through partnership and collaboration. It will help propel nurses and midwives as drivers of change and to help them actively contribute and lead in making a better world for all. We are proud to be part of the global push to promote the role and sphere of frontline healthcare workers."

The work of the Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative is made possible through partnerships with a range of organisations and groups that are working on global health solutions.

The inaugural project is funded by The Burdett Trust for Nursing, which was established in 2002 to make charitable grants to support nursing.

Three projects led by nurses and midwives in Africa will be provided through the Burdett Trust Innovative Global Nursing and Midwifery Partnership (IGNITE).

Each of the partners for the three projects have longstanding links with the University of Edinburgh.

Projects include developing nurse-led emergency care in two front line hospitals in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to improve support for women who have experienced complex sexual trauma in war.

IGNITE will work with the William VS Tubman University in the Republic of Liberia, healthcare organisations, midwives and nurses to advance hospital-based maternal and neonatal care.

Elsewhere, a project that will improve nursing clinical skills in palliative care to reduce suffering at the end of life in Uganda is being developed in partnership with the country's Mbarara University, its Ministry of Health and other local healthcare organisations.



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Shirley Baines, Chief Executive of the Burdett Trust, said: “The IGNITE programme provides an opportunity to strengthen approaches to support pioneering nursing and midwifery clinical practice, directly impacting on patient and population outcomes, and accelerating progress towards the World Health Organisation’s Sustainable Development Goals.”

The root of the Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative, experts say, is to develop projects that are useful, usable and able to address the needs of patients and people who use care services.

Researchers in areas such as nurse leadership and global health will develop teaching and research to enable nurses and midwives to lead and create projects in their workplace.

Professor Liz Grant, Director of the Global Health Academy at the University of Edinburgh, said: “We are delighted to launch the initiative with three projects linked to priority areas of nursing and midwifery activity. We look forward to developing the Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative as a leader in teaching, research, consultancy and collaboration to help advance global solutions for healthcare.”

The development comes in the Year of the Nurse and Midwife, which was declared by the World Health Organisation (WHO) to raise the status and profile of nurses and midwives and which the University of Edinburgh proudly supports.

The Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative has been welcomed by Nursing Now, which works in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Council of Nurses, to empower nurses to take their place at the heart of tackling 21st Century health challenges.

Lord Nigel Crisp, Co-chair of Nursing Now, said: “We welcome the development of the Edinburgh Global Nursing Initiative. Universal health coverage will not be achieved without developing nursing globally. Nurses are the largest part of the professional health workforce. Developing nursing will have the triple impact of contributing to three of the Sustainable Development Goals – improving health, promoting gender equality, and strengthening economies.”

For more than six decades, the University has helped raise the status and professionalism of nursing, beginning with the introduction of the first Nurse Teaching Unit at a British university in 1956.

The University is also home to the UK's first nursing degree, the UK's first nursing research unit, and Europe's first Professor of Nursing Studies.

The Global Health Academy, launched in 2009, brings together experts from across the University to share resources and knowledge on global health issues such as obesity, pandemic flu and tropical diseases such as malaria and sleeping sickness.

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