

Maternal Health Education Sierra Leone



The CNMF was funded by The Burdett Trust for Nursing to provide three maternal health education programs in Sierra Leone: one urban and two rural. The first urban program was conducted in July 2017 in Freetown. The second and third rural programs were conducted in June 2018 in Makeni and July 2018 in Bo. The funding built on previous grants where five programs were provided in Sierra Leone 2012-2013 (one urban and four rural); two programs were provided in Lesotho (2015); two programs in Tanzania (2016); and one in Malawi (2016).

The most recent United Nations maternal mortality data (2015) for the Sub-Saharan Africa region indicates Sierra Leone now has a revised maternal mortality rate of 1,360 per 100,000 live births (the 2011 figure was 830 per 100,000 live births). The latest figures released by the United Nations Population Fund in May 2017 as part of the Maternal Death Surveillance and Response Annual Report put the figure at 1,165 per 100,000 live births.

Sierra Leone is still struggling to rebuild its health services following the devastating impact of Ebola in 2014-2015. Two hundred and ninety six health care workers in Sierra Leone became infected with Ebola and 221 died; a much higher proportion than in the general community. One hundred and fifty two were nurses (including 3 midwives; 33 maternal child health aides; and 9 traditional birth attendants).

The maternal health education programs for midwives in Sierra Leone were conducted in partnership with the Sierra Leone Ministry of Health and Sanitation and the Sierra Leone Nurses Association.

The programs are offered over five days of intensive training and cover global maternal health policies and statistics, including the Sustainable Development Goals; antenatal care; intrapartum care; obstetric complications; postnatal care; care of the neonate; women with special needs; communication, respecting diversity, and working in teams.



Makeni



Bo

Multiple teaching modes are used to maintain interest and role model effective education: pre and post-tests; didactic lectures; videos; group work; group exercises; individual self-reflection; and practical 'hands-on' training.

Local educators co-facilitate the training and all training resources are left in-country to enable further programs to be conducted. All participants receive a USB drive containing all training materials, links to videos, and additional resources.

One hundred and fifteen midwives participated in the education programs in Sierra Leone: 34 in Freetown (July 2017); 40 in Makeni (June 2018); and 41 in Bo (July 2018). In addition, five local educators participated and four support persons from the Sierra Leone Nurses Association.

The education program is evaluated by participants on a daily basis and at the conclusion of the program: 92.5% of participants said they had learned something new as a result of the education program and 99.6% said what they learned will help them to improve their practice. These results demonstrate the importance of the education and training to midwives in Sierra Leone. The CNMF acknowledges the valuable and ongoing support of The Burdett Trust for Nursing in the delivery of the education programs.