



## **ARC LEARNING SESSION**

**KIGALI 21-23 March 2017**

### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

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It is quite a challenge to summarise our experiences over the last three days.

The purpose of the learning session, as outlined in the meeting objectives, was to strengthen the ability of nursing and midwifery leaders to successfully implement, monitor, and evaluate national quality improvement projects. The focus for this learning session has been on monitoring and evaluation. We were privileged to have with us, Kethi Mullei, who explained monitoring and evaluation concepts and requirements, and shared with us monitoring and evaluation tools. We spent time refining project monitoring and evaluation plans and while differentiating between inputs, outputs, outcomes, indicators, numerators, and denominators is frequently a bit of a struggle, there is no doubt that we are learning, as painful as that learning might be at times, and that this learning is contributing to improved nursing and midwifery care in our countries.

It was really exciting to share the progress being made with your country projects; to hear the constructive comment and affirmation of the work being done. ARC faculty are very aware of the demands on your time and resources when you go back home and truly appreciate your dedication and commitment to the successful completion of your projects. It is important to remember however that the end of your project is not the end. The end of the project is just the end of the first step. The next step is to take that learning and apply it on a broader scale and scale up what has been achieved to other sites within your countries.

Our learning included presentations from Agnes Waudu about the development of the Task Sharing Policy in Kenya; from Dr Byiringiro Rusisiro on the Rwanda Mentorship Program; and really relevant presentations to our projects from Philomene Cyurinyana and Mary Mwangi on the impacts of HIV on young women and adolescent girls. Such important information and reminders about the unique needs of this special group.

It is always rewarding for the four pillars of nursing and midwifery: administration, education, professional, and regulatory, to spend time together to discuss issues specific to their area of responsibility, and the results of these discussions will be collated and sent to you within the next few weeks.

One of the highlights of the learning session for me was the input from QUAD members in leading ARC learning sessions and I want to particularly commend Andre Gitembagara from Rwanda; Bheki

Mamba from Swaziland; Cynthia Chasokela from Zimbabwe; and Makholu Lebaka from Lesotho for taking on this responsibility at this learning session.

Another highlight of this learning session was the site visits to the University of Rwanda Nursing and Midwifery School; the Rwanda Nursing and Midwifery Council; and the Rwanda Nurses and Midwives Union. On behalf of the participants and the ARC faculty I want to thank the Rwanda QUAD for all their effort in organising these really interesting and useful visits.

It is hard to find words to describe the impact of our visit to the Rwanda Genocide Memorial and I want to thank the Rwanda QUAD for making the necessary arrangements and providing that opportunity. It was a truly thought provoking, distressing, yet inspiring experience. I appreciated the courage and honesty of Rwanda as a people, to publicly acknowledge the terrible wrongs of the past of a people divided against each other, and to use that history to build a future based on forgiveness and unity. The memorial site is quite beautiful and peaceful, despite the horrors depicted, and caused me to reflect on all the current conflicts in our world and the important role that nurses and midwives can play in being advocates and role models for tolerance, respect, and peace.

I want to acknowledge the ARC faculty and all the work they do preparing for the ARC meetings and supporting you in between meetings with your projects: particularly Ken for his quiet and wise leadership; Muadi for her unfailing energy and enthusiasm; and Agnes, Nancy and Nixon for their excellent organisation and communication to ensure the meeting is successful.

I also want to acknowledge each country team for your input over the past three days; for your patience and your perseverance; for your good humour; for your respect and understanding; and for your very precious friendship. The peer sharing and support has been incredibly valuable. And finally, I would like to again thank the Rwanda QUAD for hosting the ARC learning session. Kigali is a beautiful city and it has been such a pleasure to be here.

There is still a lot of work to be done over the next six months: bringing your projects to a successful conclusion and conducting the end of project facility assessments. It is nice to know we will meet again soon 6-8 July in Lusaka. Until then, take care. Remember that to be able to look after others you need to look after yourselves also. Safe journeys home, all the very best as you move toward the finishing line for your projects, and looking forward to seeing you again in July.