

Eating Stones Fund UK - Programme for the Year of the Nurse and Midwife 2020

Eating Stones Fund plans to work towards the Nursing Now values and principles in 2020 by empowering nurses to be champions of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and by providing nurses with opportunities at every level, to develop their leadership and quality improvement skills. Through this we hope to provide a platform and knowledge base from which nurses can be the driving force behind change in their communities. Our work will cover UHC, Leadership and Development, Sharing Effective Practice and promotion of nurses in 2020.

Our 2020 Programme:

1. Commitment to a 5-year Nursing Scholarship Programme in Kenya.

A successful trial programme of a year saw scholarships awarded to 7 nursing students at the Matibabu Foundation College of Health Sciences' Mary Ann van Dam School of Nursing. This enabled the students, in this rurally based school, to either progress into the next year of study, or graduate and become qualified nurses. This would not have been possible without these scholarships.

Following this, Eating Stones pledges to a 5-year programme commitment, inspired by Nursing Now. This will enable those who otherwise would struggle to complete their studies, purely due to financial constraints, to become the nurses they so desperately want to be and that their communities crave in equal measure.

The Mary Ann van Dam School of Nursing may only be a few years old, but it has already established itself as one of the best independent nursing schools in the country. As a result of findings from our trial project and following consultation with Matibabu, Eating Stones will be supporting those who otherwise would not be able to start, continue or complete their nurse training. In order to have the greatest impact we will work closely with Matibabu during their award selection process to ensure they have the flexibility to apply the scholarships as they deem most appropriate.

Rural communities often don't get the same level of input as larger cities when it comes to nurse education. The Matibabu project is a vital lifeline for those needing to study nursing near to home, who are unable to move to one of the larger cities. It also enables greater diversity in terms of the backgrounds from which Kenyan nurses are coming. This is invaluable when it comes to providing holistic healthcare to more remote communities. Informed nurses, who know and understand the communities in which they are working will contribute towards an empathetic and personal approach. Understanding the lived experience of their patients helps overcome barriers to accessing health services which is vital when working towards achieving Universal Health Coverage.

2. Running the First Western Kenyan Nursing and Healthcare Education Conference.

As mentioned, rural communities often don't get the same level of input as larger cities in Kenya when it comes to opportunities for pre and post registration nursing. Following extensive consultation with Matibabu in Kenya and those at hospital sites around Western Kenya it was established that a conference offering Continued Professional Development (CPD), would be of significant benefit. The availability of education such as this to nurses, tailored for their CPD needs, was something that comes up consistently as lacking in the rural west of the country.

In partnership with Kenyan and UK nurses and academics we hope to help Matibabu Foundation arrange and host the first CPD conference for nurses in this rural community. The plan is to run this in the summer of 2020 with the date to be determined dependent on interest and commitment to participation.

This flagship event will be working to empower the nurses in attendance with up-to-date knowledge on topics related to nursing leadership, global issues facing nursing as well as subjects relevant to the environments in which they work. The final schedule will be designed collaboratively with local stakeholders. Additionally, at the conference a board of Kenyan nurses would be elected to oversee and coordinate similar and subsequent events, annually or otherwise, as deemed most required. It is understood that this will also be a huge boost to morale for the participants who often feel left behind in their more rural settings.

3. Promote Kenyan Nursing and Barriers to Universal Health Coverage to a Global Audience.

Through a UK scholarship scheme Eating Stones will provide £300 bursaries to up to 5 UK nursing departments to provide the opportunity for UK based nursing students to visit Kenya and other resource poor settings. One of these departments will be selected to receive this bursary for an additional 4 years, based on their engagement with our programme, laid out in our ESF Nursing Now Details for Universities document.

In order to raise awareness of the different barriers to delivering health services faced by their nursing colleagues around the world this needs to be seen and experienced. Greater understanding and unity between nurses around the world will help promote a more collaborative nursing voice. In order to make nurses visible everywhere the individual challenges must be shared and understood by their global counterparts.

This will raise the profile of our Kenyan nurses which will in turn enable them to advocate for their patients more broadly. This will also help these nurses feel valued and listened to beyond their immediate communities.