About the Children's Nursing Workforce Observatory

The ultimate purpose of the children's nursing workforce observatory project is to produce a comprehensive picture of the children's nursing workforce across the region of Sub-Saharan African countries training children's nurses, and to communicate this information to national stakeholders to inform the development of national workforce strategies and training plans.

The first Children's Nursing Training Activity Report was published in 2021. This third edition includes data for the 2022 academic year. The report, which is available to download and view here, presents information about the training programmes in operation, including active programmes, new programmes in development, and programmes that were phased out. By clicking on the relevant tabs, the report provides an option to view current data and historical data or to view data by country or institution respectively. Data visualisations present the scale of training activity and trends at country level, showing graduate numbers and educator capacity across our community.

The updated online Children's Nursing Training Directory makes it easier for funders, employers and potential students to find information about programmes.

Key messages from the 2023 Children's Nursing Workforce Observatory report

- Five programmes were added to this year's report, bringing the total number of programmes to 33.
- 176 students graduated with a Childrens' Nursing qualification in 2022. This raises the overall total of graduates to 2,193.
- 83 Educators in the listed training institutions currently have a qualification in paediatric/child nursing.
- While the number of students is increasing, the number of educators with a qualification in paediatric/child nursing is not growing in response to meet the increasing demand for specialised children's nursing training.
- The paediatric population (0-14 years) in Sub-Saharan Africa ranges between 33-47% of the general population, clearly indicating the need for a larger qualified children's nursing workforce and qualified educators to meet the training demand in the years to come.
- Efforts continue to update information in this directory. As we become aware of countries and training institutions offering specialised training in paediatric/child nursing we update the online Children's Nursing Training Directory and the Children's Nursing Training Activity Report. As more institutions participate, we hope to improve on the strength of the information presented year on year.

About the Children's Nursing Training Activity Report

A number of African nations are making progress with strategies to build and strengthen the children's nursing workforce. As the children's nursing workforce grows, there is a need for data to inform decisions about further workforce development activities, as well as deployment of the growing workforce.

The project involves a simple but robust data sharing process using the Open Science Framework to pool information about the children's nursing workforce. The process has been designed to be compatible with in-country HRHIS and National Health Workforce Accounts, ensuring that additional data burdens are minimised.

In future years we hope to include all Institutions with programmes training children's nurses and that reporting will extend to cover numbers of children's nurses in practice and patterns of deployment.

Natasha North, Research Programme Director at the Harry Crossley Children's Nursing Development Unit, which co-ordinates the project, said: "It's so encouraging to see the growth in training, which is driving such important workforce development." Beatrix Callard, who has co-ordinated this year's report, added: "This report provides evidence of training efforts across the African continent. These efforts must not only be recognized or applauded but supported by Governments, policy makers and funders alike."

How does the Children's Nursing Workforce Observatory project work?

The Children's Nursing Educator Forum exists to sustain and grow the community of practice of children's nursing educators in southern and east Africa. Since 2016 members of this community have been sharing information about training programmes in the region. In 2020 this information moved to the Open Science Framework as part of a collaborative initiative to establish the Africa Children's Nursing Workforce Observatory, making the work of children's nursing educators in Africa visible. This project is co-ordinated by The Harry Crossley Children's Nursing Development Unit at the University of Cape Town.

What is Open Science?

Open Science is an approach to research based on the principles of openness, collaborative working and sharing knowledge without barriers. Digital technologies are a powerful tool for collaboration across the whole knowledge cycle. This project is using the Open Science Framework to enable contributors to share information about children's nursing training activity, recognising that this knowledge is a product of collaboration and its ownership belongs to the community that produced it.

Call to action

If you would like to add information about a children's nursing training programme in Africa you can contact Beatrix Callard at beatrix.callard@uct.ac.za, who will assist you by adding your data to the report.

More information If you have any questions about this process, Natasha North, Associate Professor at The Harry Crossley Children's Nursing Development Unit, University of Cape Town natasha.north@uct.ac.za will be happy to talk with you.