Title: Developing Leadership Capacity for Nursing Practice in Liberia

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Abstract Text:

Purpose: The country of Liberia is just rebuilding the healthcare infrastructure after 20 years of civil war. Although many countries have invested a great deal of funding and personnel into rebuilding various sectors, healthcare leadership development, especially related to building nursing capacity has lagged. Many of the ward managers are young and there are only a handful of masters prepared nurses in the country.

Methods: This past year nursing leadership at the John F. Kennedy Medical Center, Indiana University School of Nursing and the University of Massachusetts developed a week long intensive leadership workshop in which 9 of the ward nurse managers and 2 of the faculty from the diploma program at Tubman National Institute for Medical Arts participated. The Kouzes and Posner Leadership Model served as an underlying framework for the workshop. The workshop objectives focused on 3 primary areas: recognizing individual leadership strengths, leadership team building, conflict management and strategic thinking. Each day the participants created the agenda for the next day’s session to keep the program relevant to their needs.

Results: The participants engaged in creating cases reflecting real world problems they were dealing with as teams and proposed solutions and ‘ways forward’ using consultation from the faculty. Two specific, on-going projects were developed: 1) Integrating students into clinical areas to enhance learning and 2) Patient care equipment management. One of the faculty is engaging with the participants in person every quarter until the next workshop this year to provide on-going support for their activities.

Conclusions: Workshop evaluations reflected the participants’ perceptions about their own growth and their identification as a leader. Future workshops will continue to build on participant based needs assessment and use student centered pedagogies to maximize learning and continue to support leadership team development.