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Accreditation of private midwifery and nursing schools in Mali: a local sustainable solution to increasing the supply of qualified health workers

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Background: WHO's Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health (HRH) emphasizes the importance of effective health worker regulation for achieving the health-related Sustainable Development Goals, with establishment of education standards and quality assurance being critical. West African governments have struggled to address problems within their higher education systems for health professionals. It is now acknowledged that private institutions can play a crucial role in revitalizing the region's outdated universities. However, rapid expansion of private schools raises concerns about quality of education and adequacy of regulatory mechanisms. The USAID-funded Mali HRH Strengthening Activity, led by IntraHealth International, assisted Mali's Ministry of Health and Social Development to deliver targeted HRH interventions to improve education quality in private universities, better manage health workers, and initiate a decentralized HRH recruitment and motivation strategy.

Case presentation: In 2018, the HRH activity leveraged the West African Health Organization (WAHO)'s accreditation system to support 10 private nursing schools to introduce WAHO's regionally accepted, competency-based curriculum in reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health. The project undertook a 10-step process with the schools to assess their status against WAHO regional standards, implement action plans to address gaps, and support accreditation. Eight schools in Mali are now accredited compared to three at project inception.

Biography

Dr. Touré Cheick Oumar is IntraHealth Mali's Country Director and Regional Director for West Africa. He is a global health leader with more than 20 years of experience managing health systems strengthening and service delivery projects funded by multilateral or bilateral donors. He is a known expert in both developing and rolling out clinical, medical, and managerial standards in low-resource settings. Recently he contributed to the effort to customize the WHO's surge planning tools—including the Adapt Surge Planning Support Tool and the Health Workforce Estimator—for African contexts to project COVID-19 cases and work with ministries of health in Mali and Kenya to apply a tailored version of WHO's WISN method.