

## Regional Training Centre of Excellence

-Mauritius, Madagascar and other African Countries



*This case describes the activities of the Mauritius Institute of Health as provider of training in various sexual and reproductive health and gender topics. The African institute, acting as a centre of excellence, raised capacity of health personnel across the region.*

### Issue

The establishment of a regional family health training centre in Mauritius for sub-Saharan African health workers has been supported by UNFPA since 1982. The initiative was strategic given the high birth rate in Africa, as well as the success of the family planning programme in Mauritius and its proximity to other African countries.

The Mauritius Institute of Health (MIH) served as a regional training centre providing continuing education to local health staff and undertaking relevant training and research in reproductive health. After 1994, in line with the

International Conference on Population and Development agenda, the training programme was redesigned and came to be known as the Training of Trainers in Reproductive Health Course, with a focus on family planning.

### Towards a Solution

A Memorandum of Understanding between MIH and UNFPA was signed aimed at strengthening regional cooperation in the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH). The aim is to continue to build capacity development across sub-Saharan Africa in SRH and related areas.

The training offered by MIH, including distance

UNFPA - Mauritius



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learning courses, focused on family planning and maternal health, STIs/HIV AIDS, gender issues and security of reproductive health commodity supplies, among other topics and was geared towards priority needs in countries of the region. Related research, on the other hand, dealt with health systems, epidemiological studies and program evaluations.

### Result

Some 1,500 health personnel had been trained by MIH coming from the Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Namibia, Seychelles and Zambia as well as local health personnel in Mauritius, including MIH training coordinators.

Financial assistance was provided to support participation of selected candidates in various short-term and long-term courses.

To ensure that the specific needs of countries were addressed, MIH tapped the expertise of UNFPA, WHO, ILO and various universities. Moreover, MIH engaged additional partners such as UNICEF, Southern African Development Community and the Francophonie University Association.

### Lessons Learned

The family planning centre of excellence was in a viable position to support partnerships among countries under the South-South cooperation framework. The challenge is to continue to innovate in order to sustain its comparative advantage both at the regional and global level.

### Partners

Mauritius Institute of Health, Mauritius  
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<sup>1</sup> References to Kosovo shall be understood to be in the context of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999)