Improving Nursing and Midwifery in ECSA through Professional Regulatory Framework PRF- ECSACON

Alphonce Kalula  RN, MSN
SENIOR PROGRAMME OFFICER - ECSACON
ECSACON membership is drawn from 14 countries Namely;
Botswana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Mauritius, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa.

Rwanda and Southern Sudan are in the waiting list.
• Health Needs of the populations in the ECSA region are enormous.
• Some countries > 2/3 of people live below poverty line.
• In many countries HIV infection rate is increasing unabated.
• MMR and IMR in some ECSA countries are among the highest in the world.
• In ECSA Nurses and midwives form 70-80% of the health workforce.
• Nursing and midwifery interventions include promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care.

• Nurses and midwives are expected to be autonomous and competent professionals who provide scientifically based, holistic and comprehensive care, guided by principles of caring in response to clients’ health care needs and demands.
PRF- ECSACON

In 1997 nurses and midwives and cooperating partners identified and discussed issues and challenges facing the nursing/midwifery profession.

The discussion culminated in the production of PRF document outlining standards of education and practice of Nursing and Midwifery in the ECSA.
Purpose of PRF

To ensure adequate and effective regulation of nursing and midwifery in the ECSA region. Professional regulation is a means by which order consistency and control are brought to a profession and its practice for the purpose of ensuring quality care (ICN, 1992).

ECSACON- PRF identifies who and what is to be regulated.
ECSACON – PRF Regulatory elements.

1. Scope of Practice for Nursing and Midwifery
2. Standards of Practice
3. Nursing and Midwifery Education Standards
4. Core Competencies and Content
1. **Scope of practice**

- Defines parameters of practice for the entry level nurse and midwife.
- Describes the full range of nursing and midwifery practice within legal and self regulated boundaries.
- Focus on health care needs and demands of individuals, families, groups and communities to which the nurse/midwife must respond.
Although the scopes of practice are broad, they emphasize on understanding the determinants of health, causes and treatment of diseases/illnesses as well as psychological, cultural, economic and political context of the health care system.

It defines the nurse/midwife as an independent practitioner who functions within the healthcare team in collaboration with clients, health team members and other stakeholders.
2. Standards for Professional Nursing and Midwifery Practice

- It defines what standard means;
- The standards forms the base for developing the core competencies and content for the entry level practitioner.
- ECSACON standards provide clear description of the major roles and functions of the nurse that are attainable within reasonable expectations in the region.
ECSACON standards for professional practice are based on three categories of nursing and midwifery roles;

- Provider and collaborator role
- Professional role; and
- Advocacy role
3. Competencies and content

Competencies refer to the basic knowledge, skills and behaviors required of the nurse/midwife for safe practice in any work setting. They are behaviors that indicate the nurse/midwives’ ability to perform at an expected level.

ECSACON core competencies to entry level practice are broad and flexible and serve as a guide in the development of competencies and content relevant to nursing and midwifery.
4. Standards for Nursing and Midwifery Education

• They are broad statements that describe the minimum requirements for educational programs to adequately prepare graduates to respond appropriately to clients' needs and health care demands.
Purposes of educational standards:

• Ensure that the graduates have acquired expected core competencies required.
• Provide for safe practice and quality care for clients.
• Serve as a guide to evaluate nursing education programmes; and
• Provide direction in designing educational programmes and various steps in curricula implementation.
• Educational standards are designed also to guide public, current and future students to ensue that the program is achieving its stated goals and objectives.

• Educational standards should include the following components;
  » Structure
  » Process and
  » Outcome
Conclusion

• PRF need be operationalized for the benefit of the clients, stakeholders and Nursing and Midwifery professions.

• Adaptation require leadership and commitments of the following;
  » Policy makers
  » Regulatory bodies
  » Professional associations
  » Collaborators/partners
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