Lessons from a global partnership between two national nursing organisations

The RCN-ZUNO partnership project
Background

- 2014: the RCN and the Zambian Union of Nurses Organisation (ZUNO) signed a Memorandum of Understanding, undertaking to work closely together to develop a strong partnership.
- The two organisations developed a pilot project together to support the development of nurse leadership in Zambia; to promote good clinical practice to improve patient care; and to strengthen ZUNO’s capacity to shape the health policies that enable good practice.
The two-year RCN-ZUNO partnership project

- Funded by THET and the RCN’s own funds, for two years (began on 1st April 2015).
- Goal: that ZUNO can influence nursing policy and improve nursing practice in Zambia as it continues to develop as a professional organisation.
- The project has a particular focus on theatre nursing, looking at the role that nurses can play in changing team dynamics.
Project approach

1) Build ZUNO’s capacity in advocacy to develop as the voice of nursing in Zambia
   (advocacy workshop with staff and provincial reps; mentoring to develop letters, briefings etc.)

2) Support nurse leadership and teamwork in UTH theatres
   (training of theatre teams in adaptation and use of WHO safe surgery checklist; building capacity of ZUNO to mentor, support and monitor team progress; training of multidisciplinary team of champions to embed checklist use)
Project approach continued...

3) Use issues highlighted in theatres through enhanced teamwork to advocate for improved working conditions at UTH

(support to nurse-in-charges to maintain glitch books; develop advocacy documents based on team experiences in theatre)
What have we achieved so far?

- Advocacy training workshop for 14 ZUNO NEC and staff; encouraging more proactive as well as reactive advocacy
Launch attended by PS of MoH and CE/GS of the RCN
99 UTH theatre team staff trained 2015; 86 theatre team staff trained 2016 so far (surgeons, anaesthetists, nurses, porters and maids)
Three theatre teams regularly doing briefings, mostly doing debriefs

‘communication is so much better than it was’; ‘surgeons used to come in, ask for the list, and call for the patient; now we all know what we have to do and can raise problems.’

(UTH theatre staff)
Provision of scrub suits to trained theatre team members, thanks to sponsorship from Grahame Gardner.
What have been the challenges?

- Long-distance relationship management for both partners
- Challenges of working in Zambia (power/internet cuts)
- Hierarchy in Zambian theatres/hospitals
- Data collection
Data collection

- Lack of mortality/morbidity data at UTH
- So… glitch counters; counter system for assessing checklist; qualitative statements
The Teamwork in Theatres today

Was poor – It was stressful

Could have been better

Fantastic!
We were cohesive and enjoyed good communication

Don't forget to cast your vote at the end!
Next steps…

- Two-day advocacy training workshop with ZUNO provincial coordinators and SIGs
- Intensive training with team of multidisciplinary ‘champions’ from UTH, coordinated by ZUNO
- Support to ZUNO to develop an organisational advocacy plan
- Improved engagement with SSZ
- Identify how we want to use data/learning from the project
What lessons have we learned?

- Ensure adequate time for joint project planning
- Interventions led by an NNA can have an impact on other professions; and can enable improved communication in multidisciplinary teams
- Joint training can help to mitigate hierarchy
Informal training methodologies (role plays, group work etc.) are very useful in mixed professional groups

Hospital staff without formal professional development opportunities have proven to be excellent champions
Thank you!