

Rolling out Training the Trainers in Ophthalmology across East, Central and Southern Africa

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Aims

The Royal College of Ophthalmologists (RCOphth) and the College of Ophthalmologists of East Central and Southern Africa (COECSA) are collaborating to roll out a Training the Trainers (TTT) Programme across the COECSA Region. Within the Vision 2020 Links Project, it aims to develop a skilled motivated workforce who can deliver high quality eye care. It will train 2 faculty and a facilitator in 8 countries, who can cascade the programme to local trainers.

Methods

In phase 1 (2013/14) two 3-day courses were run for 16 selected delegates each, by 3 UK faculty. In phase 2 (2015/16) 1 UK faculty member ran shorter courses for 25 delegates each, associated with COECSA events (Congress and Exam).

Later courses introduced preparatory work for delegates, creating more face-to-face time to learn high-level practical skills.

A Lead was appointed after the first course, and selected delegates were promoted as facilitators then faculty on successive courses. They were given appropriate materials, preparation, training and mentoring.

Results

A questionnaire completed by delegates after 6 months demonstrated how they were implementing new skills:

Over half of delegates ≥ 4 times in a 3 month period:

- Delivered a formal teaching session
- Supervised a trainee or others
- Gave formal feedback / appraisal
- Formally assessed a trainee

Over half of delegates often or always:

- Wrote aims and objectives for teaching
- Used a variety of teaching styles and interactive techniques
- Used the 4-step technique for teaching practical skills
- Gave feedback after supervision, using the 4-step technique

The impact was assessed using the number of eye-care workers that delegates had trained, and the number of patients seen by those workers each year. The figures suggested that approaching 1 million patients per year were treated by eye-care workers who had benefited from training delivered by those who had been on the courses.

After 3 years, the Programme had trained 1 Lead, 4 Faculty, 4 Facilitators and 60 delegates.

Development of the Programme in Africa initially followed the UK model, but the need to address more extensive challenges overseas, stimulated new ideas for the UK courses.

Conclusions

The Programme has developed a pyramid of trainers capable of cascading knowledge, skills and teaching in training with RCOphth support. The third phase will extend the number of facilitators and faculty, and develop on-line preparatory and teaching materials. The final phase will see local cascade in all 8 countries, and sustainability as UK support is withdrawn.