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Transforming midwifery education in Somaliland through film

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In many low resource settings, health worker trainers are looking to technology to help deliver meaningful training in remote areas where literacy and language can create barriers to learning and where transport is a challenge for face to face teaching. Education and training films offer a low cost, highly scalable and sustainable method of reaching and teaching large numbers of health workers that is applicable in many low resource settings. Medical Aid Films' partnership with the Somaliland Nursing and Midwifery Association (SLNMA) is an innovative example of how film has been used to help transform midwifery education. This autonomous region in Somalia has among the highest rates of maternal and child mortality in the world - there is urgent need for midwives in Somaliland to provide essential care. Funded by the Pharo Foundation, and using newly developed emergency obstetric and newborn care (EmONC) country protocols, Medical Aid Film created a suite of EmONC films in Somali to help support effective training of midwives working in health facilities and community midwives serving remote areas. There is a lot of evidence of the impact that film and visual media can have on learning: Audio-visual training allows trainers to communicate large amounts of complex information effectively which may be lost through other forms of teaching; a short video can portray 1.8 million words of text and is therefore a reliable and effective method of information-sharing and increasing understanding; using film can also help create a more interactive and engaging teaching environment and increases the viewer's ability to recall information as visual images are linked to long-term memory. Recall is further increased if the film uses story-telling and personal testimonies and; visuals also cause faster and stronger reactions than words, helping users engage emotionally with the content, which in turn influences points of view and behaviours, forms a connection between people and catalyses support. Fouzia Ismail Mohamed, Director of the Somaliland Nursing and Midwifery Association (SLNMA), recognizes the transformational role that educational films can play: "there is a real need to train our nurses and midwives working in health facilities and our health workers who provide essential care to our communities in remote areas. When they see what they are supposed to do in a film, it's so helpful". Catherine McCarthy will present the learning from this project, future aims for the partnership and how it continues transformed midwifery education in Somaliland.

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