



PRESS RELEASE

eLearning for Africa: Amref Shares Crucial Lessons at Continental ICT Conference

Amref: Africa's Flying Doctors will showcase its innovative eLearning programme that is being used to train and upgrade health workers in Africa during the eLearning Africa Conference which takes place in Dakar, Senegal from May 27 to 29.

Training of human resources for health has been at the core of Amref's operations since 1962. To date, Amref has trained over 500,000 health workers and reaches nearly 60 million people in Africa worldwide. With over 50 years of health development in Africa, Amref is now using modern technology to revolutionise the skilling and upscaling of health workers in Africa to help alleviate the critical need for health workers on the continent.

While there is no doubt that eLearning has made a profound impression on rapid, large-scale training, most implementation guides have been tailored for the developed world. A key challenge to introducing eLearning in Africa has been lack information to provide guidance on costs, logistics, policies and implementation. Caroline Mbindyo, who manages Amref's eLearning programme, will present a paper in Dakar on 'Implementing a large-scale eLearning programme' based on Amref's experiences to help institutions that are considering introducing similar programmes in Africa.

"Although there is no one right way of implementing eLearning, we will share lessons learned and critical success factors identified by Amref from implementing an eLearning Programme in Kenya and from the replication studies done in Uganda, Ethiopia and South Africa. We have used these lessons to develop an implementation guide that can be used as a reference by countries and institutions on the continent," said Mbindyo.

Another presentation will be on the use of ICT to upgrade Kenyan nurses using lessons learnt from Amref's Virtual Nursing School (AVNS), which was set up as a laboratory for researching into and testing eLearning best practices as a method for training health workers in Kenya and Africa as a whole.

Angela Nguku, the coordinator of the school, says AVNS has been testing innovative eSolutions to address challenges faced in low income countries, such as poor connectivity, limited ICT skills and and shortage of funds for education. “We have made some initial findings and recommendations that can be used as a guide in implementing an eLearning Programme in a context like Kenya’s. Our presentation at the conference will highlight some of the key lessons that are bound to affect any training programme for nurses, and to a larger extent health workers, in sub-Saharan Africa.”

Besides the presentations, Amref will have an exhibition stand at the conference showcasing its innovative eLearning and other training programmes and how these can be used to scale up human resources for health in Africa.

For more information, contact Caroline Mbindyo on Tel: + 254 6993000 or email caroline.mbindyo@amref.org



Note to Editors

Amref: Africa’s Flying Doctors is an international African organisation based in Nairobi, Kenya. Amref has been working with African communities for 50 years to improve health and health care for the most disadvantaged people. In 2005 Amref won the Gates Award for Global Health in recognition of its work in Africa. See www.amref.org