

TRAINING AND EDUCATION REPORT

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The Africa Society for Blood Transfusion (AfSBT) has identified training and education as a key activity to strengthen the practice of blood transfusion in Africa. The Society also considers that it is an area where it can play an important role to facilitate such an activity, particularly by utilising the AfSBT website as a communication tool and as a repository for training and educational activities that are available for its members. The AfSBT, sponsored by Ilex, arranged a Training and Education Workshop in Nairobi on 24 June 2009. The meeting was attended by important stakeholders and decision-makers. The outcome of the discussions was reported to delegates attending the AfSBT Blood Transfusion Congress held immediately afterwards.

It was agreed that the first step should be to assess the current status of blood systems in Africa. Such a need analysis will be an appropriate basis to decide on the way forward on how best to develop the human resource capacity of the blood services. It was considered that establishing regional training and education centres may be the most suitable tool to achieve this. It was agreed that the AfSBT would be the most suitable coordinating body. The participation of the regional intergovernmental organisations would strengthen and give credibility to the initiative and make regional training centres viable and sustainable. The Internet and distance learning could also be utilised as powerful tools to reach the maximum number of blood transfusion professionals in Africa and to share resources that are available in other countries.

Presentations were given at the workshop to provide an overview and background of what has been achieved and what is possible. These viewpoints reflected those of important attending stakeholders such as PEPFAR, WHO, AABB, Safe Blood for Africa, Sanquin, African Institute for Transfusion Medicine, ISBT, AfSBT, Ministries of Health, and commercial corporations with an interest to promote sustainable blood services in Africa. The input and participation of the delegates was maximised by allocating them to four discussion groups who made recommendations on the following important aspects:

1. Collaboration, funding and sponsorship
2. Developing education and training materials
3. Distance learning and web-based training
4. Accreditation and evaluation of courses

OUTCOME GROUP I: COLLABORATION, FUNDING AND SPONSORSHIP

Task team led by Prof Anthon Heyns to action the following:

- AfSBT to establish a directorate of training and education
- Task team to decide on initial resources required e.g. staff and finances
- AfSBT directorate to organize meeting of regional stakeholders to discuss synergy and collaboration
- Strategic plan to be developed with key stakeholders

OUTCOME GROUP II: DEVELOPING EDUCATION AND TRAINING MATERIALS

Task team led by Dr Arthur Bird to action the following:

- Identify categories of personnel who need training
- Develop web-based resource list/links and repository of available materials located on the AfSBT website appropriate for different categories
- Identify country representatives with education and training leadership positions
- Identify outcomes and provide a mechanism to report outcomes of training
- Identify gaps in training and determine mechanisms to address them

OUTCOME GROUP III: DISTANCE LEARNING AND WEB-BASED TRAINING

Task team led by Dr Sam Gulube to action the following:

- Practicality and availability of internet
- Scope and costs and infrastructure

- User training and support services

OUTCOME GROUP IV: ACCREDITATION AND EVALUATION OF COURSES

Task team of AfSBT working committee in collaboration with representatives from the ISBT, AABB, WHO and others

- Minimum standards should be established
- Standards should be accepted by international/regional accrediting body/ies
- Cross-border recognition: Individuals sit proficiency exams, Individuals certified/accredited
- Audit/Monitor training facilities
- Market the product through advocacy (Ministries of education, Ministries of Health, Blood Transfusion Services, Individuals)

Monitoring and evaluation

It was agreed that in order for the initiative to go forward there should be an agreed timeline for critical activities:

Phase 1: year 1: business plan

Phase 2: years 2-5: implementation

Phase 3: year 6 onwards: number of students, courses, countries, work output

ADDITIONAL POINTS RAISED AT THE WORKSHOP

- Identify persons responsible for education and training in AfSBT countries
- Make contact information available on AfSBT website
- Foster leadership development in education and training through society-based conference sessions and mentoring

There was general agreement at the meeting on the following important point:

The AfSBT is an appropriate entity to coordinate training activities within Africa.

PROGRESS ON ACTIVITIES WILL BE REPORTED AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL BLOOD TRANSFUSION CONGRESS PLANNED TO TAKE PLACE IN JOHANNESBURG FROM 15 TO 18 NOVEMBER 2009.