

# Cell phones to simplify distance learning for nurses-midwives

By Gadosa Lamtey

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IN efforts to increase the number of midwives in the country, nurses who are enrolled in distance learning will soon be able to access learning materials through their mobile phones.

This was unveiled yesterday in Dar es Salaam by Tanzania Programme Manager for AMREF Health Africa, Dr Pius Chaya during a stakeholders' consultative meeting.

He said the organization will soon set up a mobile-based platform which will include all topics for nurses pursuing diploma courses.

He said the objective of the campaign is to raise awareness about the plight of African mothers and raise funds to train midwife nurses.

He said the new initiative, dubbed 'Jibu m-health project' will help nurses who opted for e-learning studies to avoid leaving their work stations in search for learning materials which as a result increases the shortage of staff in health facilities.

"AMREF consider this unacceptable, that is why we are looking for innovative solutions to address the problem. We are employing the newest technologies to educate more medical professional and in turn save more lives," he said.

"The use of mobile phones is booming in Africa, a large

number of people in Tanzania own mobile phones," said Dr Chaya.

He said the M-learning programme offers midwife nurses the opportunity to further their professional knowledge and keep their medical skills up to date by using their mobile phones.

Dr Chanya added that once the nurses are awarded with diploma certificates, it means that they can also work as midwives, hence fill in the gap and as a result reduce maternal deaths caused by shortage of skilled health staff.

The programme which targets 2,000 nurses comes as a fresh spice to e-learning programmes to upgrade midwife nurses from certificate to diploma level which the AMREF Health Africa initiated back in 2012.

Currently, there are 10 e-learning centres in 9 regions which have in total enrolled 176 students.

"We have conducted a research to determine the types of mobile phones used by the majority of the nurses, so we will set up a mobile platform which can be easily accessed by many," he said.

Deputy Country Director for AMREF Health Africa, Dr Rita Noronha said the M-learning programme offers midwife nurses opportunity to advance their profession through mobile phones.