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ChildFund, in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation, launches nurse-training program for Zambian youth

Innovative \$7.6 million e-learning program will train 6,000 young people to become nurses and midwives and expand capacity of nursing schools in Zambia

RICHMOND, Va. – Aug. 28, 2014 – 6,000 Zambian youth will receive nursing training through an e-learning program developed by ChildFund International, a global child development and protection organization, and the African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF), in partnership with The MasterCard Foundation. The Zambia Nurse and Life Skills Training Program will offer Zambian youth the opportunity to train in the field of nursing through e-learning and help address the shortage of trained health professionals in the country.

Currently, Zambia does not have enough human resources to meet health care demands. At present, the nurse population ratio stands at 1 nurse for every 1,500 people, which is far lower than the World Health Organization's recommended nurse-to-population ratio of 1 to 700. The major cause for the shortage is the limited capacity of nursing schools that can train students to meet the growing health care needs of the general population.

Within five years, the project is expected to train 6,000 young people as nurses and midwives, and expand the capacity of nursing schools in Zambia. Additionally, 1,631 financially disadvantaged young people will have access to full and partial scholarships.

"We want to tap into the potential that is inherent in young people – the energy, the curiosity and exploration," said Doras Chirwa, program director with ChildFund Zambia. "I think the use of e-learning provides a fantastic platform to reach more youth at any time with lower costs, and it facilitates self-learning."

The e-learning component will allow nursing and midwife training schools in Zambia to reach more students through technology and will integrate a life skills curriculum that will give students the interpersonal skills needed for the workplace. Students will be able to access study materials and complete assignments at e-learning centers or at home.



"We are excited to partner with ChildFund on this innovative program that will help address some of the human resource challenges faced by the health care system in Zambia," said Deepali Khanna, director of youth learning at The MasterCard Foundation. "Through the use of technology, the e-learning model has the potential to reach disadvantaged young people, particularly young women, so they can gain the skills they need to become nurses and midwives."

In June 2014, the program introduced the first intake of 131 student nurses – 72 percent of whom are female – into the newly designed e-learning track.

Maureen Bwalya, a 19-year-old who lost both her parents when she was a child, is one of the first students enrolled in the e-learning program and is a recipient of a partial scholarship. With a limited income, Bwalya is excited about the prospect of a brighter future.

"Thank you so much for awarding me with this scholarship," Bwalya says. "I am very grateful. The scholarship that you have given me will help me a lot. I promise to work hard and not disappoint."

As valued stakeholders integral to the development and adoption of this program, ChildFund and AMREF engage and work alongside colleagues with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and General Nursing Council (GNC) to increase the number of students enrolled in health training institutions in Zambia.

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About ChildFund

ChildFund International is a global child development and protection agency serving more than 18.1 million children and family members in 30 countries. For 75 years, we have helped the world's deprived, excluded and vulnerable children survive and thrive to reach their full potential and become leaders of enduring change. As a member of ChildFund Alliance, we create supportive environments in which children can flourish. For more information about ChildFund visit www.ChildFund.org.

About The MasterCard Foundation

The MasterCard Foundation is an independent, global organization based in Toronto, Canada, with more than \$9 billion in assets. Through collaboration with partner organizations in 46 countries, it is creating opportunities for all people to learn and prosper. The Foundation's programs promote financial inclusion and advance youth learning, mostly in Africa. Established in 2006 through the generosity of MasterCard Worldwide when it became a public company, the Foundation is a separate and independent entity. The policies, operations and funding decisions of the Foundation are determined by its own Board of Directors and President and CEO. For more information on the Foundation, please visit www.mastercardfdn.org.