Benchmarking Experience

A team consisting of two faculty members in the College of Health Sciences (Prof. Erastus Amayo and Dr. Peter Njoroge) and PRIME K Program Manager (Mr. Collins Owek) from University of Nairobi, Kenya visited Walter Sisulu University(WSU) in Eastern Cape, South Africa for a benchmarking visit on decententralised training for Medical Students between March 3 and 9, 2014.

The benchmarking visit was characerised by meetings with the faculty members of WSU, experience from the Medical students on decentralised training and field visits to two of the decentralised sites (Dr. Malizo Mpelhe Hospital and Mt. Flere Hospital) including the Regional teaching hospital, Nelson Mandela Academic hospital. The college of health sciences has five departments which include; School of Medicine, Clinical Associates, Nursing, Social Work and Health Promotion. WSU is supporting decentralised training for Medical students targeting Medical Students, Nursing and Clinical Associates.

There are a total of 10 decentralised sites under WSU where about 10-12 students are placed every year with the nearest being 30 km while away and the furthest being 500 km away from the university. The university has appointed a coordinator for the purpose of decentralised learning. The University has a joint establishment with the Department of Health in support of decentralised learning which majorly funds the initiative. The funding from the department of health supports students' accommodation, transport and allowances during their stay in the decentralised sites. In addition,the department of health has deployed two doctors to each decentralised site to facilitate learning for medical students. The WSU is currently in a transition from the initial six weeks' training at the decentralised sites to 20 weeks which is part of the revised curriculum at the fifth year starting July, 2014. The curriculum for WSU is usually reviewed after every two years. The students cited peer mentorship as having facilitated their learning experiences among other approaches.