

PROJECT/INNOVATION TITLE:

Establishing a Holistic Student Support System with Emphasis on Financial Assistance for Needy Nursing and Midwifery Students in Ghana

Project Summary:

As a Deputy Chief Health Tutor with 19 years of professional experience (five in clinical practice and fourteen in nursing education) I have witnessed firsthand the adverse effects of financial hardship on nursing and midwifery students. At St. Joseph Nursing and Midwifery Training College, Jirapa, I have personally observed promising students withdraw from their academic programmes due to a lack of financial support. This recurring challenge informed my motivation to design a sustainable, institution-based project aimed at strengthening holistic student support services, with a focus on financial assistance for needy students.

Project Rationale:

Currently, most nursing and midwifery training colleges in Ghana lack a well-structured and proactive support system to identify and assist students facing financial and psychosocial challenges. Given the socio-economic vulnerabilities in the Upper West Region, where I serve, a targeted intervention is imperative. Beyond academic guidance, students need timely support for tuition, accommodation, feeding, and mental well-being. The absence of such systems compromises retention, performance, and the long-term development of quality healthcare personnel.

Project Objectives:

1. To design and pilot a *Holistic Student Support Desk* at St. Joseph NTC to coordinate financial, academic, and psychosocial support.
2. To develop a needs-based financial assistance model for timely intervention to at-risk students.

3. To mobilize internal and external resources, including alumni and local health stakeholders, to sustain this initiative.
4. To use findings from my PhD research to inform policy and institutional replication in other training colleges across Ghana.

Key Activities:

- Conduct needs assessment to identify the scope and nature of student support needs.
- Develop criteria for identifying and supporting needy students.
- Establish a “Student Support Committee” made up of faculty, alumni, and social welfare officers.
- Create a transparent, accountable, and confidential support request and disbursement process.
- Initiate partnerships with benevolent individuals, NGOs, and government agencies to sustain the fund.
- Integrate training for faculty on identifying and referring students in need to the scheme.

Innovation and Impact:

This project introduces a *structured, faculty-driven support model* that goes beyond academic tutoring to address the real-life challenges impeding student success. It aligns with national and global goals of promoting equity and inclusive education in health training institutions. If successful, it can be scaled up across the seven NMTCs in the Upper West Region and beyond. Ultimately, this innovation will contribute to improving student retention, academic outcomes, and the development of emotionally and socially resilient healthcare professionals.

Conclusion:

This project is more than an academic exercise. It is a personal and professional mission rooted in nearly two decades of service to nursing education. The initiative reflects the core values of the Dr. Kwaku Asante-Krobea Educator Award: innovation, compassion, and commitment to transforming health education in Ghana. The knowledge and insights I will gain from my ongoing PhD research will provide the academic foundation to strengthen and scale this innovation nationwide.