



Republic of Mozambique  
Ministry of Health  
Human Resources Directorate



Human Resources  
for Health  
Observatory of  
Mozambique



# CURRENT SITUATION OF NURSING IN MOZAMBIQUE

International  
nurses day





## Current situation of nursing in Mozambique

### International nurses day

In the National Health Service, nursing includes the following areas: General Nursing and Maternal and Child Health Nursing (MCHN). On the occasion of the celebration of the international

nurse's day, 12th of May of 2013, the Human Resources Observatory for the Mozambican Health (HROMH) spoke with Dra. Olga Novela (Chief of the Nursing Department, in the National Directorate of Medical Assistance - NDMA), to assess the current status of nursing in Mozambique.

### What is the role of the nurse?

«The nurse must take care of, assist and advice the patients, in order for the patient to regain his health. The nurse must interact with the patient, his family and community. Must know how to plan activities, know how to prioritize his tasks, know how to communicate to the patients the reason of his decisions», clarified Dra. Olga.

We also seek to know the motivation for choosing this career, to which Dra. Olga replied that «unfortunately most

of the individuals that register for nursing courses, do so in the search for employment». So how do we find out if someone is really fit to perform this craft? «The candidates are tested with a psycho-technical test to assess» -she explained. «However, if the candidate is not able to perform this activity, our advice is: exteriorize the nurse that is inside you, and give your best. We have chosen to be nurses but the patient did not choose to be sick» - concluded the Chief of the Nursing Department.

## Current Status of the General Nursing and Maternal and Child Health Nursing (MCH) Areas

Is the country well served with nurses in quantitative and qualitative terms? «In quantitative terms we have 10 thousand nurses» that represent around half the workforce of the special health regime (49.21%), but are not enough.

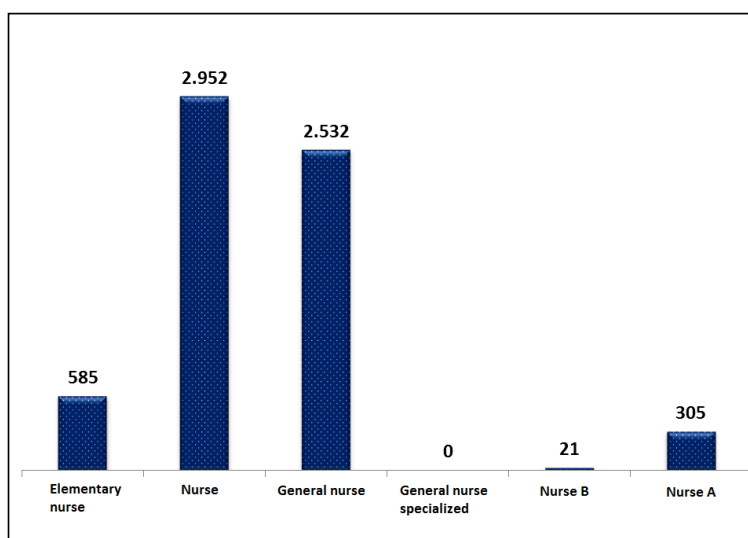
In order to achieve the international standard of 230 doctors, nurses and MCH nurses per 100.000 inhabitants, we would need more than 50.000 nurses. «In qualitative terms, I believe that we have trained nurses that live up to the expectations» - affirmed Dra. Olga. «The country comes from a colonial training regimen, where elementary, basic and medium level nurses were trained.

Therefore, we can say that there is quality if there are basic and elementary level nurses, because this is what is needed. After the independence there was a great need of nurses, it was necessary to close

this gap; nurses were trained in 6 months, however we were aware that the quality would be below the desirable. However, nowadays elementary level nurses are no longer being trained, but there are still those trained at that time, for which we are working to upgrade to basic level. Now who has the 10th grade is encouraged to take the General Nursing course, in order to obtain this quality. There were some failures, but it was necessary to respond to the historical moment» - clarified Dra. Olga.

As of 31/12/2013 the National Health Service (NHS) had a total of 6395 nurses and 4187 Maternal and Child Health Nurses, with the following distribution by occupation: in the nursing area, there are more basic level nurses (named Nurse), followed by medium level nurses (named General Nurse and specialized general Nurse). There are few higher level nurses (named Nurses A and B that possess high level degree and bachelor ones, respectively), (Graph 1):

**Graph 1:** Distribution of occupation of the nurses in the NHS, until 31/12/2013

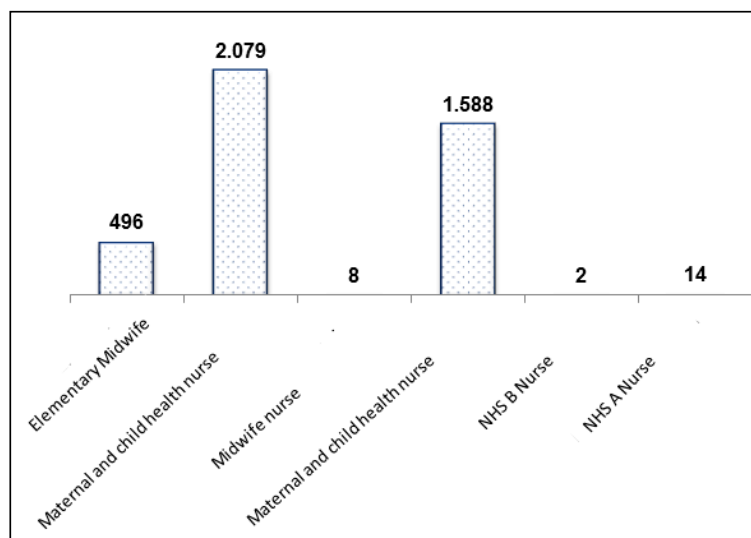


Source: MISAU/DRH/SIP

In the MCH area, there are more basic level nurses (named maternal and child health Nurse), followed by medium level nurses (named maternal and child health Nurse, midwife Nurse and MCH

specialized Nurse). Until the reference date there were only 16 MCH higher level nurses (MCH Nurses A, MCH Nurses B and Pediatrician Nurse), (Graph 2).

**Graph 2:** Distribution of the MCH nurses in the NHS by occupation, until 31/12/2012



Source: MISAU/DRH/SIP

## Challenges

The nurse's class faces some significant challenges, such as:

1. Quality health care: According to Dra. Olga «the nurses have knowledge, but they have to work on the attitude, anyone who approaches a nurse should receive quality of care.

That is why we are working in the Humanization Program, through which we have the Model Wards, that remind the nurse that: must be diligent, learn how to deal with the patient and apply the techniques he has learned. She explained also that we could have hospitals with better quality but, due to the social situation, some things are failing».

2. Valorization of the nurse: «culturally, the maximum exponent in the health system is the doctor, although both professions are important. The leaders have to value the nurse. However, the nurse himself must value himself and we are working on this matter», shared Dra. Olga.
3. Training by specialty: «At this moment, most of the Mozambican nurses are of General Nursing, MCH-Maternal and Child Health and Public Health. It is necessary that these professionals embrace other specialties such as pediatric nursing, psychiatry, nursing management, etc. The persistence in the choice of MCH by students refers to historical reasons.

The Superior Institute of Health Sciences (Instituto Superior de Ciências de Saúde -ISCISA) is training nurses specialized in Intensive Care. There is a need for nurses specialized in surgery» - she highlighted.

Other difficulties faced by nurses are:

- «Lack of working material or use of inappropriate material;
- Excessive working hours.

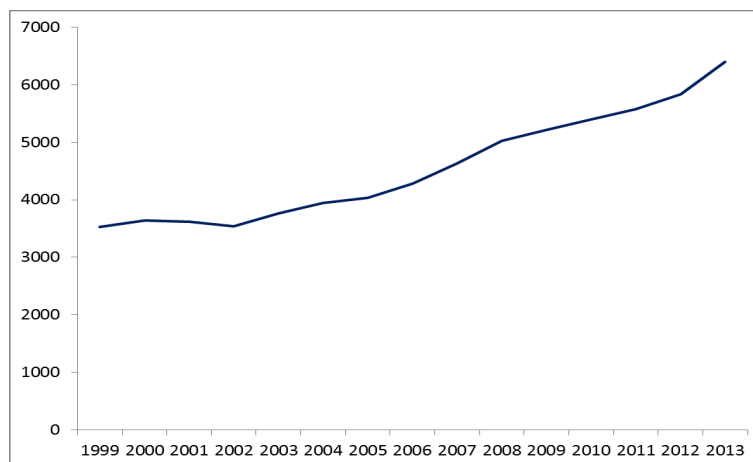
This and other poor working conditions affect their performance, not just the salary. For this reason we are working in a Program to provide psychological support to the nurses. Some hospitals are already applying it. But, the most important is to build more health networks and to train more nurses», she added.

### Evolution of the staff in the nursing and maternal and child health nursing areas from 1999-2013

From 1999 to 2013, which means in 15

years, the number of nurses doubled (from 3.525 to about 6.395). The growth trend was stronger between 2005 and 2008 as a result of a policy of accelerating the initial training of the same nurses to respond to the care needs of the patients with HIV/AIDS (Graph 3)

**Graph 3:** Evolution of the staff of the nursing area in the NHS from 1999-2013

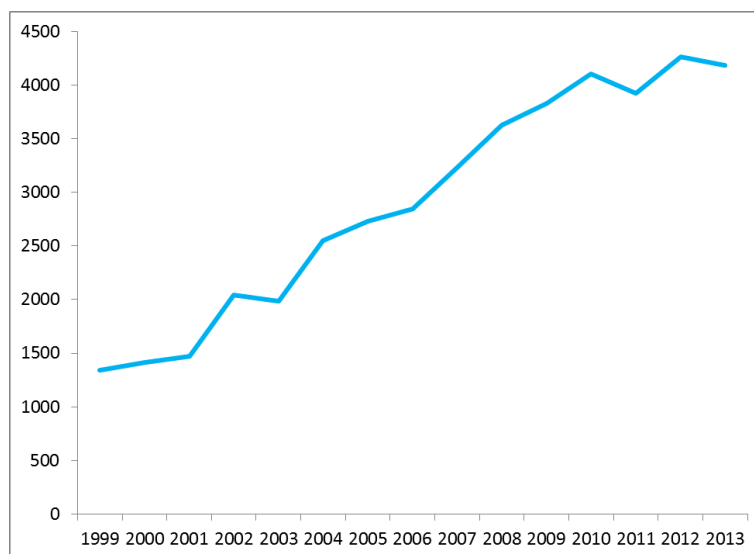


Source: MISAU/DRH/SIP

From 1999 to 2013, which means 15 years, the number of professionals in the maternal and child health nursing area almost tripled (from 1.342 to 4.187). The growth trend was stronger compared to the nursing staff growth and it reflects the

priority policies of the training of people in this area, in order to, mainly, reduce the maternal and child mortality and provide care to pregnant women and children with HIV/AIDS, as well as to prevent the mother to child transmission (Graph 4)

**Graph 4:** Evolution of the number of MCH nurses in the NHS, from 1999 to 2013

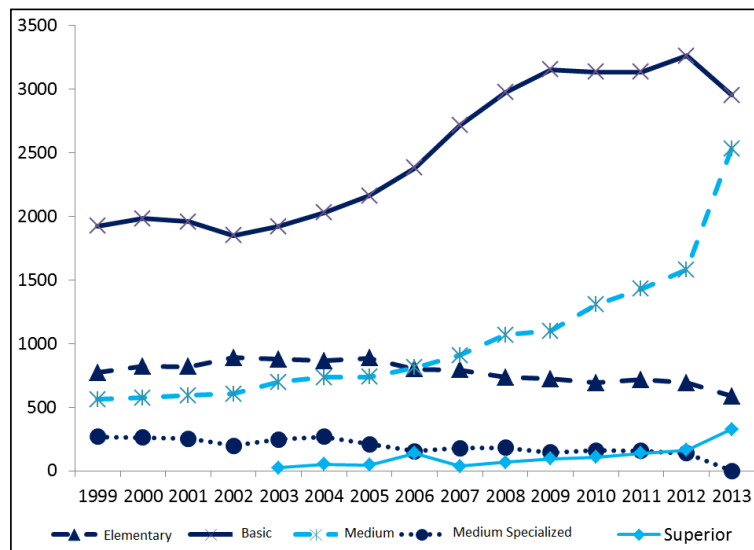


Source: MISAU/DRH/SIP

In terms of the level of professional occupation, there is, as of 2006, a downward trend regarding the number of people of the elementary level and specialized medium level in the nursing area, while the number of people from medium and basic level has increased

drastically, reflecting the priority policies in the training of more qualified people. The number of professionals of the higher level has increased as of 2006 reflecting the recruitment of graduates from the higher level institutions, such as ISCISA (graph 5).

**Graph 5:** Evolution of the staff of the nursing area by level of occupation in the NHS, from 1999-2013



Source: MISAU/DRH/SIP

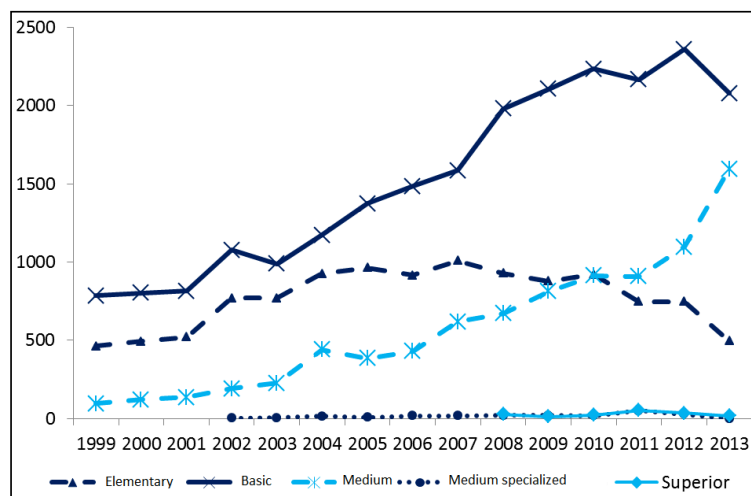


As regards to the evolution of the levels of professional occupation of MCHN, there has been an increasing trend in the number of elementary level professionals from 1999 to 2007 and a downward trend from 2007 to 2013. The number of people from basic and medium levels has a strong growth trend during the period in question (almost tripled), reflecting the changes in the priorities policies regarding the

training of basic and medium level people and stop the training of elementary level staff. It may be noted that from 2012 to 2013 the basic level staff has reduced. (Graph 6).

The higher level MCHN appeared in the effective staff as of 2008 and the effective gradually increased from 2009 to 2011, but is still very minor.

**Graph 6:** Evolution of the MCH nurses by level of occupation in the NHS, from 1999-2013



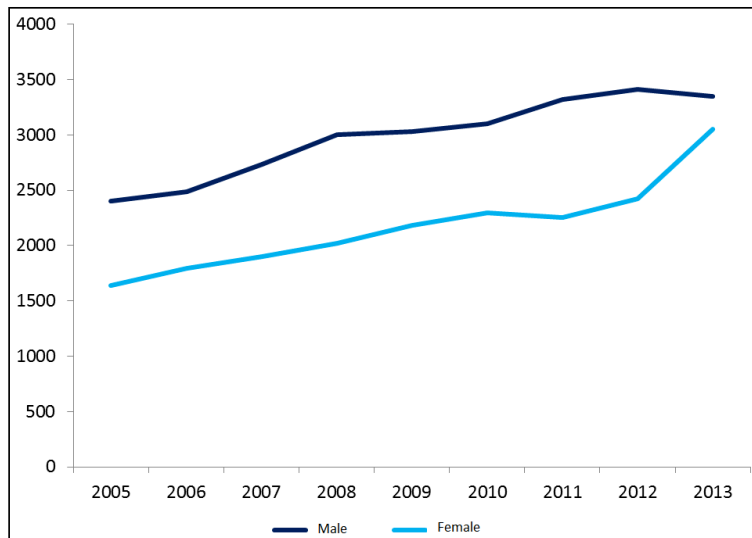
Source: MISAU/DRH/SIP

### Nursing, is a female profession?

«Although in a first phase, nursing has begun as a female profession, today we have 3.049 female nurses versus 3.346 male nurses. Notwithstanding, there is an area where female prevails, the Maternal and Child Health Nursing (MCH), for

cultural reasons; although there are male obstetrician and gynecologists, male MCH nurses or waiters are still not accepted at the district level» - Dra. Olga shared. Excluding the MCH nurses, the majority of the nursing area staff was always males, during the period of 2005-2013 (Graph 7)

**Graph 7:** Evolution of the Nursing area staff by gender, in the NHS from 2005 to 2013



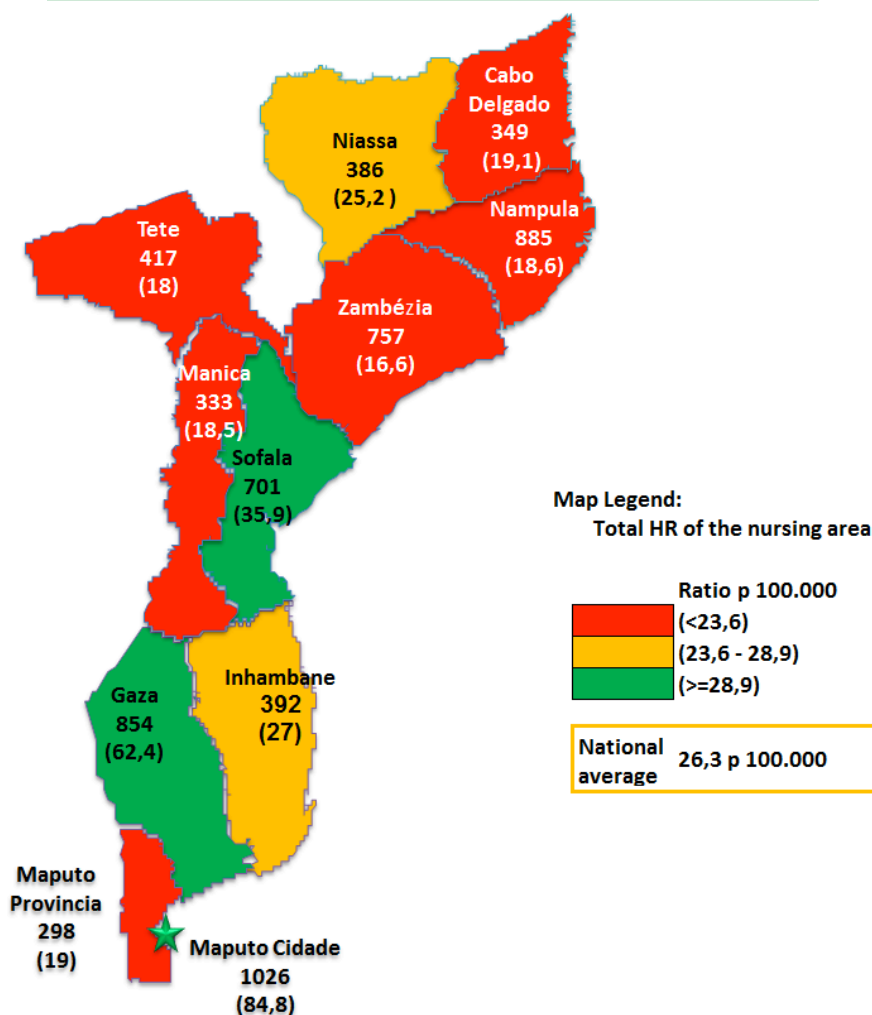
Source: MISAU/DRH/SIPTraining

## Ratios of human resources density in the Nursing and MCHN areas

Ratio of the Nurses per 100.000 inhabitants per province, year 2013  
 The national average is 26.3 Nurses per 100.000 inhabitants. The provinces of

Sofala (35.9), Gaza (62.4) and Maputo City (84.8) are the only ones that present the nurses ratios by 100.000 inhabitants above the national average. Niassa (25.2) and Inhambane (27) are the ones that present the ratios around the national average. The other provinces present the ratios below the national average. (Map 1).

**Map 1:** Ratio of the Nurses per 100.000 inhabitants, per province, year 2013



Source: MISAU/DRH/DPG

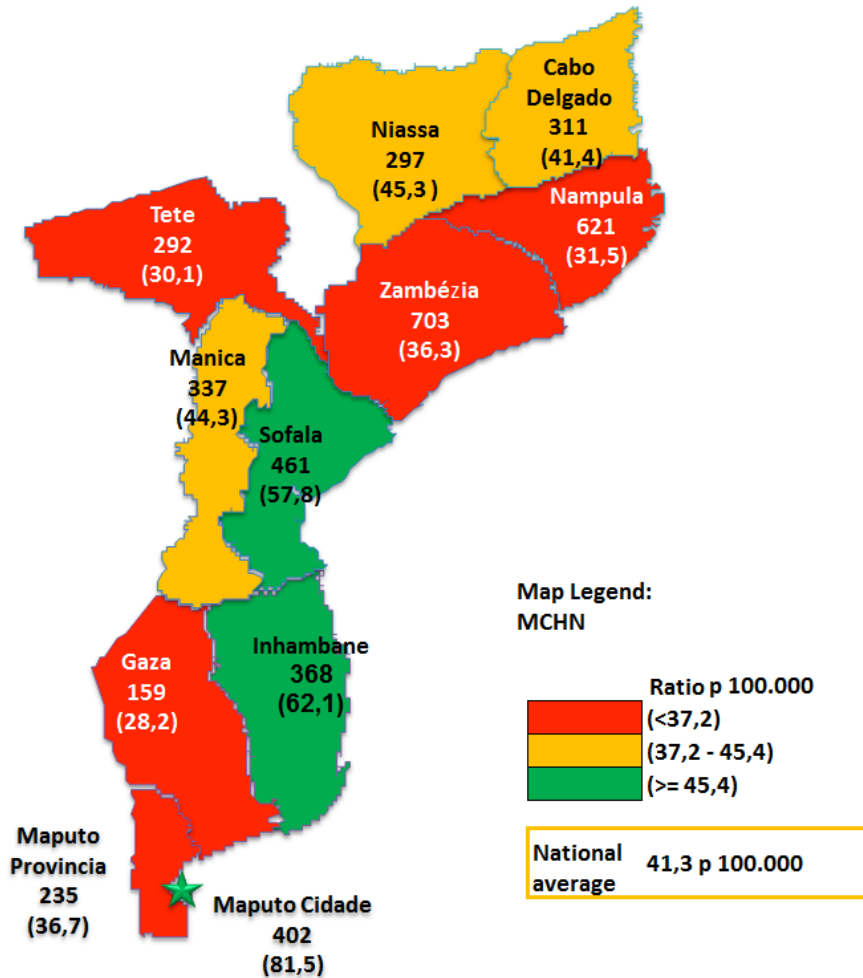
### Ratio of the MCHN by 100.000 Women in fertile age and children from 0-5 years per province, year 2013

The national average is 41.3 maternal and child Health Nurses per 100.000 women in fertile age and children from 0-5 years. The provinces of Sofala (57.8), Inhambane

(62.1) and Maputo City (81.5) are the ones that present the ratio above the national average.

The provinces of Cabo Delgado (41.4), Niassa (45.3) and Manica (44.3) present the ratios around the national average. The remaining provinces present the ratios below the national average. (Map 2).

**Map 2:** Ratio of maternal and child health Nurses per 100.000 women in fertile age and children from 0-5 years



Source: MISAU/DRH/DPG

International nurses day

«The training of the Nurses and MCH Nurses takes place in all MISAU training institutions at a national level, providing training of basic and/or medium level staff, based on the statistical data collected since 1999 in all training institutions. At a higher level the nurses are trained at the Superior

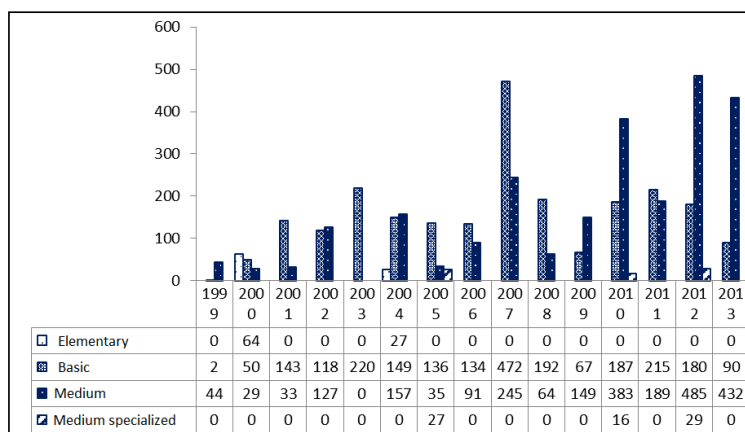
Institute of Health Sciences (Instituto Superior de Ciências de Saúde) - ISCISA, Catholic University (Universidade Católica) and Lúrio University (Universidade Lúrio). At this level were recently trained 275 nurses».

### Evolution of the training of nurses and MCH nurses during the period of 1999 -2013

Although the number of graduates varies a lot from one year to another due to the variable duration of the basic level (18

months) and medium level (24 months) courses, there has been an increasing trend in training of the medium level nurses mainly from 2008, reaching a maximum in 2013. While for the basic level staff the maximum was reached in 2007 (Graph 8)

**Graph 8:** Distribution of the students graduated in the nursing area during the period of 1999 - 2013

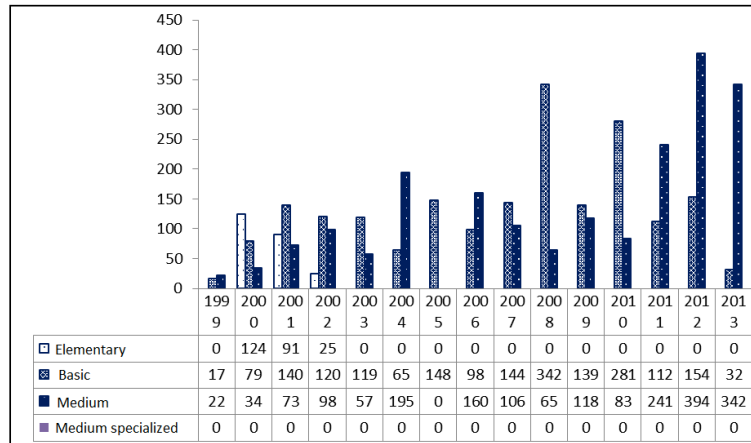


Source: MISAU/DRH/minutes of the end of the course

A similar analysis to the one done to the MCHN training: In the same period, the year of 2012 was the one during which more medium level MCHN were trained,

followed by 2011 during the period under analysis; in 2008 were trained more basic level MCHN followed by 2010 (Graph 9).

**Graph 9:** Distribution of the students graduated in the MCH area during the period of 1999 - 2013



Source: MISAU/DRH/minutes of the end of the course



## The Model Wards, a good practice

There are 66 model Wards in the country, in any hospital and health facility (sf),. The goal is to move to a Model Hospital, so that its good practices influence the other wards. It is up to the HF to see how people are working and expand. It is not only the quality of care that improves, but also the training, for the trainees that are practicing in these facilities.

This work began in Surgery 2 of the Maputo Central Hospital, but at this moment the following are recognized as model wards: the Provincial Hospital of Xai-Xai, there is one model ward in Tete, while in Beira and in Chimoio are still to be recognized. The one from HCM has lost its value as model ward.

Each nurse must attend 15 beds, in these wards we have 3 nurses per bed, hence the quality of care increases. There are performance standards, and if the ward reaches 80% (established as the maximum)

in each area, if reaches in all areas 80% of ICP (Infection Control Prevention), it is recognized as a Model Ward. The wards become model only for a year, during the next year they have to reapply. These assessments are done once a year, and it is with the results of this ones that the wards can be recognized as models (in case they reach the standards in each area), since the internal assessments carried out on a quarterly basis count towards the monitoring of the implementers. For example, the Provincial Hospital of Xai-Xai has reached the 80% required in terms of ICP quality for 4 consecutive years.

The prize for these dedicated workers is awarded through the aid of a partner. The award has been established also to motivate a honor roll for the hospital, for the ward and diplomas for the nurses. Besides this, we try to give the ward what is needing, such as a set of dishes, computers, etc.



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1. Obtained from <http://pt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Enfermagem>
2. Source: interview with Dra. Olga Novela (Chief of the Nursing Department of MISAU)
3. Ministry of Health, Human Resources Directorate - HRD, «Statistics of 36 years of Training in the Training Institutions of the Ministry of Health 1975-2010», 2011

## Technical file

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