

Mental Health & Well-Being Foundation

formerly MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION OF GHANA



New Year New Name

You will have noticed (above) that we have changed our name!

This follows from the 3rd Mental Health and Well-being Conference of Ghana (see review below) and the subsequent conference evaluation from which it was obvious to the Board of Directors that our previous name, Mental Health Foundation of Ghana had become too geographically restrictive and therefore voted unanimously for a name change to **Mental Health and Well-being Foundation**.

The abbreviation will be MHWF or mhwFoundation.

We are currently designing new logos and updating our website and social media platforms.

More details will be published in our next newsletter.



3rd Mental Health and Well-Being Conference of Ghana

From 17-19 October 2016, we organised and delivered the 3rd Mental Health and Well-being Conference of Ghana at the University of Cape Coast (UCC) School of Medical Sciences. The theme of the conference reflected the theme of the World Mental Health Day: **Dignity in Mental Health**, Psychological and Mental Health First Aid for All.

The conference commenced with Professor Harold S. Amonoo-Kuofi, Provost of University of Cape Coast Ghana, (representing the Vice Chancellor) delivering the Welcome Address. This was followed by Opening Addresses delivered by His Excellency, The Honourable Andrew Barnes, Australian High Commissioner to Ghana and Dr Akwasi Osei, CEO of the Mental Health Authority of Ghana.



Opening Ceremony

Those present at the Opening Ceremony included the Patron of MHFGH, Queen Mother Anamabo Traditional area, Nana Mbroba-Dabo I, Dean of the School of Nursing, UCC, Prof. Ahmed Adu-Oppong; Dean of Applied Sciences UCC; Prof. Francis W. Ofei; Professor Malcolm Hopwood, President of the Royal Australian and New Zealand College of Psychiatrists; Professor Kathleen McCourt, Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Northumbria UK and Vice President of the Commonwealth Nurse and Midwife Federation UK; Dr Aishatu Yusha'u Armiya'u, Consultant Psychiatrist, University of Jos, Nigeria and Associate Professor Chris Kewley, University of Newcastle, Australia. There were further representatives from Australia, Canada, UK, United States and a large representation from across Ghana.

Key and Main Lectures

Professor Malcolm Hopwood delivered the Keynote Address speaking passionately about the stigma associated with mental health and the challenges this imposes on services for those living with mental health conditions.

Dr. Aishatu Yusha'u Armiya'u delivered a powerful and outstanding first lecture of the conference. Her topic was "Managing Forensic patients in Jos Maximum Security Prison". Our second day commenced with Professor Vincent Agyapong's main lecture on Task-Shifting in Mental Health Services followed by Professor Kathleen McCourt who delivered her lecture on Reforming Mental Health Legislation: An Essential framework to empower, protect and care. Day three's main lecture was delivered by Dr Patrick Amoateng, Pharmacist, Pharmacologist, Senior Lecturer; University of Ghana.



Plenary Sessions and Workshops

We were privileged to have a number of notable academics and other leaders in mental health chair our plenary sessions including Professor Anthony MAWULI SALLAR Chairman of the Board of Directors of Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Ghana; Ms. Ernestina AGYEPONG; Professor Vincent I.O. AGYAPONG, Consultant Psychiatrist, Alberta Health Services; Edmonton Zone Clinical Section Chief, Canada; Ms. Grace Owusu ABOAGYE, Department of Pharmacy and Department of Psychiatry, KBTH, Accra, Ghana; Professor Kathleen McCOURT, Executive Secretary/ Vice President, Commonwealth Nurses and Midwives Federation; Mr. Augustine Paapa SAGOE, Board Member, OPUS (Organisation for promoting Understanding of Society), UK and Mr. Lawrence Addo, MD, Relish Health Foods Ghana.



Closing Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony on day three was chaired Mr Lawrence Addo, Founder and Managing Director of Relish Health Foods Ghana, who, in the presence of the Provost of the University of Cape Coast delivered a motivational speech to students and audience.



Conference Summary

The conference was graced with rich blend of experienced professors, experts and novice presenters showing their academic and practical research undertaken in Ghana and elsewhere in the world. All together more than 600 persons, mainly mental health clinicians and students participated, threefold the number of participants from the 2013 and 2015 conferences. All the workshops were oversubscribed with several being repeated due to popular demand. Most conference attendees were local however; UK, Canada, Australia, USA and Nigeria were also represented which is proof of our growth.



In concluding the 3rd Mental Health of Wellbeing Conference of Ghana, Professor Vincent Agyapong is quoted as saying

"Well done for organising such a good conference in Ghana. You have made such a big impact on the Psyche of Ghanaians."





Post Conference Activities

The conference however, was not our only activity during our stay in Ghana. This year we also participated in and/or coordinated a variety of other post conference activities. Our keynote speaker, Professor Mal Hopwood gave a public lecture at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital Department of Psychiatry and Psychology; we joined in the 6th Inter University Public Speaking Competition organised by Professor Vincent Agyapong, Consultant Psychiatrist, Alberta Health Services; Edmonton Zone Clinical Section Chief, Canada with Professor Hopwood, A/Professor Chris Kewley and Francis Acquah forming part of judging panel; we coordinated a one-day Symposium at the University of Health and Allied Science which attracted over 70 students and Dr Anne Pulao-Dzadey, received the Dr Crosby Mochia Humanitarian Services Award for her 20 years contribution to the Mental Health System of Ghana, from Francis Acquah as President of the (former) Mental Health Foundation of Ghana.

We also visited several hospitals and other care facilities including the Jesus Divine Temple (Fanti Nyankomase) Prayer Camp near Cape Coast to observe if there had been any changes since our last visit a year ago. Due to the lateness of our arrival at the camp however, we were unable to see many of the patients who were further into the camp in the darkness. We noted an uncomplete building awaiting funds from the MHA for completion. The Prophet at the camp informed us that they have been allowing the Community Psychiatric Nurses to visit patients to provide medications. Sadly there were still patients suffering from mental health conditions or epilepsy chained to trees at this camp as well.

It is our vision that in the near future there will be no one chained to a tree in Ghana because of his or her untreated mental health condition.



AUSTRALIAN SCHOLARSHIPS IMPROVING MENTAL HEALTH CARE IN GHANA

University of Newcastle President's Ghanaian Scholarships for PhD Students 2017

The Faculty of Health and Medicine is offering three PhD scholarships for research projects in mental health that align to the Ghanaian mental health reform agenda. To be eligible, research projects must align with the Ghanaian mental health reform agenda in conjunction with the Mental Health and Well-being Foundation. In addition to the above the University of Newcastle has awarded a PhD scholarship to another Ghanaian to study Mining and Mental Health Issues a Comparative Study between Australia and Ghana.

Victoria University

Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia has also offered a PhD scholarship to a Ghanaian to study in the area of mental health. Yaw Amankwa Arthur is a professional teacher with experience in training spanning over eighteen years. Yaw holds a Bachelor of Arts degree with major in psychology, Masters in project management, and currently a PhD candidate in the College of Health and Biomedicine, Victoria University. Yaw's PhD research focuses on mental health literacy. As an Australian Accredited Youth Mental Health First Aider, he is an advocate for positive mental health attitudes and breaking the stigma surrounding mental health disorders in countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. His approach to facilitation is engaging participants in a friendly way that encourages strong involvement of participants to discover knowledge for themselves. Yaw is returning to Ghana in January 2017 to collect data for his research in Mental Health literacy.

IN CONCLUSION

We have a lot of exciting projects currently underway and a host of other goals and aspirations for mental health in Ghana. To help us achieve our aims we are recruiting volunteers in Ghana to help with our 'on the ground' activities and others anywhere in the world who could donate their time and energy to help us with our administrative tasks. If you feel you could help us in any small way at all, please contact us at info@mhfgh.org or ring the President, Francis Acquah on the number below.

DONATIONS are always welcome at www.mhfgh.org

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