

**CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT
RECOGNITION HARD WORK AND
REWARD**

The Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation and its partners have been busy this last six months both in Ghana and Australia. Check out our activities and the achievements of our members and partners inside.



**MENTAL HEALTH AND
WELL-BEING FOUNDATION
NEWSLETTER**

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CONGRATULATIONS DR YAW AMANKWA ARTHUR

Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation wishes to congratulate Dr Yaw Amankwa Arthur, our Treasurer on the successful completion of his PhD in Mental Health Literacy

On August 8th 2019, Yaw was officially awarded a Doctor of Philosophy specializing in mental health literacy at a well-attended and impressive graduation ceremony organised by Victoria University, Melbourne -Australia.

Yaw conducted a cluster randomised controlled trial and evaluation of a mental health literacy programme with community leaders (Assembly members). Of particular concern was the lack of adequate knowledge about mental illness that was actually expressed by some members of these groups that had negatively impacted on their attitudes towards individuals with these conditions. Yaw delivered a three-hour mental health literacy programme, using a Story-bridge approach. After evaluating the programme

immediately and three-months after completion, study outcomes indicated improved knowledge about mental illness. The community leaders expressed how the programme had instilled positive attitudes such as help-seeking attitudes, being empathetic and non-judgemental, being supportive of and willing to engage with people with mental illness and their families.



These findings suggest that there is the potential to enhance the public's knowledge and positive attitude towards mental illness if targeted interventions are aimed at improving mental health literacy levels. Interestingly, governments in Western countries have strongly embraced mental illness as a major health concern because of the debilitating consequences that individuals and families experience and also its negative impact in the

workplace. Subsequently, they are channelling a lot of financial resources into mental health including interventions at improving mental health literacy that would translate into better outcomes for all. It is time the Ghanaian government and corporate bodies reallocate financial and material resources to support the mental health system.

GHANA HIGH COMMISSIONER TO AUSTRALIA VISITS UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE



On July 29th 2019, His Excellency Mr Edwin N. Adjei visited the University of Newcastle (UoN). He was warmly welcomed on behalf of the University by Pro-Vice Chancellor Tony Travaglione.

During the day, 20 Ghanaian PhD students had the opportunity to meet His Excellency and 15 presented their research (abstracts commence on page 11). His Excellency was impressed with the UoN's commitment to Ghana and Africa in general.

His Excellency committed to:

- Briefing his Government on the quality of educational training and research provided through UoN
- Promoting UoN as the preferred Australian university for Ghanaian students
- Exploring opportunities for further scholarships
- Working with his Government to increase employment opportunities for graduates on completion of their studies
- Continuing to support the work of UoN in Ghana.
- Discussing the above at the Australia/Africa University Network (AAUN) Forum at the University of Western Australia in early September

Also attending the occasion were: Dr Sidsel Grimstad, Dr Patricia Johnston, Professor Jim Jose, Associate Professor Frank Agbola, Dr Janet Dzator, Ms Elaine Terry, Executive Office for the Faculty of Health and Medicine, Ms Jodi Davis, Associate Director UniAccess, Dr Francis Acquah and Dr Yaw Arthur, Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation of Ghana.

THE CENTRE FOR AFRICAN RESEARCH, ENGAGEMENT AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Centre for African Research Engagement and Partnership (CARE-P) is a virtual Organisation located in the University of Newcastle (UoN) under the direction of Associate Professor Chris Kewley.



This flagship centre was created to provide a unique platform to showcase how UoN is committed to engaging with universities within African countries particularly those within the sub-Saharan African region.

To illuminate the research projects that African students within UoN are undertaking and the contributions of African academia within UoN, the 29th July 2019 was set aside to showcase the fantastic research work that Ghanaian PhD candidates are undertaking in mental health and economics.

Associate Professor Chris Kewley has undertaken research in Ghana and has been instrumental in the organisation of four conferences of the Mental Health & Well-Being Foundation (MHWBF). He has secured full scholarships and provides academic support for five PhD students.

Since this initial enterprise, between 2016-2019, about 92 Ghanaian students including 26 PhDs have enrolled in UoN pursuing qualifications in Mental Health, Nursing, Public Health, Politics, Economics, Business and Education.

This information as well as the high level of commitment of UoN to Africa and Ghana in particular, was highlighted during the visit of His Excellency Mr Edwin Adjei (Ghana High Commissioner to Australia). His Excellency indicated his decision to be part of the programme and was in attendance to witness the presentations.

The presentations by the Ghanaian PhD candidates were the highlight of the programme. The presentations were about research into various aspects of mental health such as policy formulation and implementation, suicide, crime, and mental health in the mining sector. The second group of presentations focused on research into economics, business and law. Candidates demonstrated an excellent display of scholarship in their areas of study. The interactions during question time were verified the hard work that candidates and supervisors had expended into their research projects.

Overall, the programme was very successful because while it illuminated the various research projects, it further provided the opportunity for candidates and their colleagues to network with highly experienced faculty members who enthusiastically engaged with these early career researchers.

Prior to the presentations, His Excellency Mr Edwin Adjei had a brief meeting with some representatives of UoN including: Pro-Vice Chancellor Professor Tony Travaglione, Faculty of Business & Law, Professor Jim Jose, Professor Mike Hazelton, Mental Health Nursing, Honorary Fellow of MHWBF. Others present were Associate Professor Chris Kewley, Director-Centre for African Research Engagement and Partnership & Director-MHWBF and Dr. Francis

Acquah 'H.C.' (Mental Health Nurse & President, MHWBF) and Dr. Yaw Amankwa Arthur (Treasurer, MHWBF). The objective was to discuss how collaboration between Universities in Ghana and the UoN could further be strengthened. At the end of the meeting, there was the mutual understanding that there were potential areas of collaboration such as blended methods in teaching & learning, exchange programmes, research and scholarships that could be explored. Further engagement among stakeholders was stated as a necessary ingredient to facilitate collaboration in some areas that would be mutually beneficial to the parties.



Images from 29th July 2019 at UoN



Ghanaian PhD Students at University of Newcastle Australia

Launch of CARE-P 27th November 2019

Associate Professor Chris Kewley will be formally launching the Centre for African Research, Engagement and Partnerships (CARE-P) on Wednesday 27th November 2019 in the presence of the Vice Chancellor Professor Kevin Hall. It is anticipated that His Excellency Edwin N Adjei and diplomats from the High Commissions of Uganda, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Botswana and Kenya will also be in attendance along with the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade Secretary responsible for Africa and the Middle East. Dr Francis Acquah and Ghanaian colleagues and MHWBF will be recognised at the official launch of the Centre.



THE FESTIVAL OF PRAISE AT BREMAN FAWOMANYO

The Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation participated in The Festival of Praise at Breman Fawomanyo on Friday 16th August to Sunday 18th August 2019 at Breman Fawomanyo, Ajumako-Enyam-Essiam District, Central Region, Ghana. We were accommodated in a basic guest house with limited facilities for this event.

Programme and theme

The programme was their annual festival of praise; “Appreciating the goodness of the almighty and his faithfulness towards Breman Fawomanyo”.

The special guests for the programme were;

Archbishop Yinka Sarfo, Bishop of Kumasi in the Anglican Church,

Ohemaa Abena Nyarkoaa 1, Queen mother of Breman Fawomanyo,

Bishop Ike Iweama, US Army soldier and Bishop endorser,

Professor Dr Ato. Duncan, CEO of Centre of Awareness, Global Peace Mission.

Introduction and background

Breman Fawomanyo is located in the Breman essiam traditional area within the Ajumako -Enyan- Essiam District in the central region of Ghana. It is a Fante-speaking, farming community with the population of about 600 people with no health facility. The community is a Non-Denominational Christian village with a chief who is a minister of the gospel, Nana Kwadwo Tanno II (Rev. Dr John Kwasi Ansah) and his vision is geared towards education, health, portable drinking water, a community centre and income generating ventures. The community has the holy bible as its stool, the source with rod of authority being the cross and the symbol of unity for the Yaa Akoto family. The main activities of the day were health screening by keystone medical screening and world medical team, entrepreneurship class by VODEC Africa Youth, quiz competition, soccer gala competition, and great commission movement outreach.

MHWBF team members participating:

NAME	EMAIL	SKILL
DEBORAH EFFAH	deborahEFFAH4@gmail.com	COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH NURSE
WILLIAM K. MENSAH	mensahwilliam123.wm@gmail.com	FIELD MARSHALL
PRINCE OBENG BOATENG	donsself67@gmail.com	CLINICAL RADIOLOGIST
KINGSFORD KOMMEH- SEY	kcommeh20@outlook.com	IT PERSONNEL
MAWUSI CONFIDENCE	mkconfidence1@gmail.com	SDG ACTIVIST
EMELIA OBIRI DUKU	lyiahobiri@gmail.com	GENERAL NURSE

MHWBF engagement

We created awareness of our services including and delivered free health scanning, checking of vital health signs, partnership of the SDGs goals, communal labour and engagement.

Outcomes / Achievements:

- Professor Dr Ato Duncan promised to build a community centre
- Other project promises such as health centre, library, chief palace, scholarship for needy but intelligent students by Live and Reign Institute and the River Island Village Foundation, referral and documentary on various health issues
- We identified two talents (artist and a chemical manufacturer) and will endeavour to follow up on them
- We identified three chronic health issues (kidney, liver and heart diseases) and will endeavour to follow up on them
- We were able to plan a project in October with other organizations present
- We were able to achieve our aim of rendering optimum care and services to the people who attended.

Future plans:

To collaborate with keystone event medical services on 13th October to have free health screening at the KITHS mental home in the morning and the prisons in the afternoon in Takoradi.

Conclusion

The programme was successful with the goals fully met. We are hoping that the challenges identified will be fully addressed into the future.

Congratulations and thanks to Ms Deborah Effah for responding and participating in this initiative on behalf of the Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation.

Images of various Festival activities





THE AUSTRALIA AWARDS SHORT COURSE – QUEENSLAND UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Mental Health Care Professionals, from nine African countries, attended a three-week intensive short course at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) in August–September 2019, funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Australia Awards Short Course aims to enhance skills in delivering mental health care in a public health context and was established as a result of the work conducted by the Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation.

Dr Francis Acquah, the President of the Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation provided practical input into the three-week course. Participants from Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe were introduced to good practice, tailoring mental health treatments to fit the cultural context and address prevention, early intervention, clinical skills and leadership, underpinned by the principles of gender equality and social inclusion. The course was delivered in partnership with Stellenbosch University, South Africa, where participants will undertake the second phase of the course.

MBWBF hope to collaborate on future projects and one opportunity is the following link QUT Development Scholarships for the Master of Philosophy.

<https://www.qut.edu.au/study/fees-and-scholarships/scholarships/qut-master-of-philosophy-development-scholarships>



Short Course participants from Botswana, Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar, Nigeria, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe with Dr Francis Acquah (back row in the red hat)

RENOVATION OF THE MHWBF NINGO-PRAMPAM OFFICE



Before and after...



We are pleased to announce that our office in Ningo Prampram has been renovated and is no-longer bright pink! We are waiting for our new sign board to put in place. The next major project is the building of the New Wellness Rehabilitation Centre on the grounds of the Old-Ningo Health Centre. We are pleased to inform members that Ningo-Prampam District Assembly (NiPDA) has formally allocated land for the purpose of building the Centre however, other projects such as the building of toilet blocks at the Accra Psychiatric Hospital and the Cured Lepers Village might take priority as they are more lightly to be completed within the funding timelines. We are now awaiting funding approval from the Australia High Commission through the Direct Aid Program. Watch this space for further development.

The Mental Health and Well-Being Foundation wishes to commend His Excellency Mr Andrew Barnes for his going support for the work of the Foundation.

Associate Professor Chris Kewley had the opportunity meet with Australian High Commissioner to Ghana, His Excellency Mr Andrew Barnes and was briefed on the outstanding outcome at the Australia/Africa University Network (AAUN) as part of Africa Down-Under program in September 2019.

Prevalence and Associated Factors of Psychological Distress among Ghanaian Gold miners.

Winifred Asare-Doku

The mining industry is faced with work-related stressors like job insecurity, conflict with colleagues/managers, job isolation and long working hours with commonly reported issues being anxiety, depression and substance use. They experience more psychological distress compared to other occupation types. The focus of this study is to determine the prevalence of psychological distress and its associated workplace factors in the mining industry in Ghana. A cross-sectional survey was conducted in a gold-mining population in Ghana. Both operational and non-operational workers (1165) completed measures of psychological distress and key variables across two categories (socio-demographic characteristics, work attitudes and characteristics, health behaviors). Associations between psychological distress and key variables were tested using logistic regression models and chi-squared test of association. Analysis concluded / suggested that the following factors; psychological job demands, financial factors, social networks, high recent alcohol use, employment category, and shift type were significantly associated with psychological distress. The findings indicate that social, personal and work factors are associated with psychological distress. This is the first study to examine the characteristics associated with mental health problems in the Ghanaian gold mining industry and to understand the support systems available for employees. The study provides information towards development of appropriate workplace strategies to assist in improving mental health awareness, overcoming stigma and to improve help-seeking behaviours.

Suicide bereavement in families: Exploring the experiences and postvention among families in Ghana

Jennifer Peprah, Associate Professor Frances Kay-Lambkin, Dr Conor Gilligan, Associate Professor Joseph Osafo

The World Health Organization (2014) estimates indicate that 1,000,000 people worldwide die by suicide each year. This makes suicide one of the leading causes of death and an important public health problem across the world. The individual as well societal burden of suicide is reported to include emotional and psychosocial ill health, lost productivity and personal distress to family members and friends and community members (Whitlock, Wyman & Moore, 2014). Suicide continues to be criminalised in Ghana with a lot of stigma, negative attitudes and cultural beliefs. When someone dies by suicide, people usually focus on the deceased. However, those bereaved are the real victims of the circumstance as they are left with the difficult task of making sense of the loss. Using a qualitative approach, the current study sought to explore the experiences of families, community reactions and postvention following suicide bereavement in Ghana. The preliminary findings show that, there is still a lot of stigma associated with suicide in Ghana and many people including some professionals feel uncomfortable to talk about it. The study will further provide guidelines and recommendations for postvention programs in Ghana based on what has worked in Australia.

Whitlock J, Wyman PA, Moore SR (2014) Connectedness and suicide prevention in adolescents: pathways and implications. Suicide Life Threat Behav 44:246–272

World Health Organisation (2014). Preventing Suicide: A Global Imperative. WHO. Geneva

Barriers and Enablers for implementation of the 2012 Mental Health Act in Ghana

Kenneth A. Ae-Ngibise

Previous mental health laws since 1888 Lunatic Asylum Act and 1972 Mental Health Degree have never been implemented fully resulting in lack of resourcing and widespread human rights violations. Majority of the population continue to seek care from unregulated traditional and faith-based practitioners resulting in neglect and continued human rights violations. Little has been done to understand the complex practice-interface between traditional or faith-based healers and conventional health services. With the introduction of the Mental Health Act (MHA) 846 in 2012, there is limited evidence of implementation progress.

Using a mixed method, participants were sampled across local government ministries, health professionals, traditional or faith-based practitioners, law enforcement agencies and law makers to determine the level of awareness, motivation, capacity, resource availability for the implementation of the MHA. Preliminary findings indicate barriers for implementation of the MHA include lack of commitment by central government to provide funding, limited knowledge of the MHA, inadequate psychotropic medicines, dependence on donor funds, absence of legislative instrument and limited access to mental health care. Enablers for implementation of the MHA include advocacy, central government intervention through increased funding, collaboration with traditional and faith-based practitioners through guidance and regulation to minimise human rights abuse by these practitioners.

Therapeutic Justice: How Do Judges Incorporate Mental Ill- Health into Decisions regarding Offenders?

Gordon Donnir

The justice and correctional systems are heavily over represented by persons with various mental health/behavioural challenges compared to the general population. Evidence of an offender or defendant's mental illness or documented mental illness is intended to decrease the likelihood of prison sentence or avoid prison altogether. This study is directed at understanding the established interface between the Justice and Mental Health Systems in Australia with the view to applying learnings to the fledgling forensic system in Ghana that is emerging under the recently introduced Mental Health Act, Act 846 of 2012. The target population for the study will be Judges and Psychiatrists. The study will be focusing on three types of crime, which are murder, rape and major violence (operationally defined in this study as armed robbery, robbery, sexual assault and assault). Framework Analysis will be used to analyse the qualitative data to provide knowledge and understanding of the phenomena that is being studied.

A Re-examination of the Poverty-Growth-Inequality Triangle Hypothesis: new evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa

Mary Amponsah¹, Frank W. Agbolaa and Amir Mahmood²

Poverty alleviation continues to be a pervasive issue across both developed and developing countries. Despite the theoretical debate that economic growth reduces poverty, there is evidence that the growth approach may not necessarily create equitable income distribution for the citizenry. While the empirics remain unresolved, the poor economic performance has engendered renewed interest among governments and policymakers towards inclusive growth as an evidence-based approach to alleviate poverty. This paper provides new evidence on the Poverty-Growth-Inequality using a comprehensive panel data set with a newly constructed inclusive growth data over the period 1980-2015. We explicitly took into account country heterogeneity and time-fixed effects and employed the Instrumental Variable-Generalised. Method of Moments estimator to provide a causal interpretation of our findings. Our assessment is based on Bourguignon's (2004) P-G-I theoretical framework but accounts for the role of gender and rural-urban inclusiveness. We find that an increase in inequality worsens poverty, but poverty tends to decrease when growth is inclusive. We document that while inclusive growth does not have a clear and direct impact on inequality, we uncover robust evidence that it dampens the adverse effect of inequality on poverty. These results are consistent with the P-G-I theoretical hypotheses, and also robust to alternative model specifications across gender, income groupings and regional differences. We highlight the importance of policies that take cognisance of an employment-based inclusive growth, gender and rural-urban inclusiveness, quality education and effective governance to alleviate poverty.

¹ Newcastle Business School, The University of Newcastle, Australia

² School of Business, Western Sydney University

Presentation Title: Building Electoral Institutions, Peace and Stability in Ghana

Christopher Appiah-Thompson

This study critically examines the nature and limits of adopting the formal institutional theories such as the Historical Institutionalism (HI) and Rational Choice Institutionalism (RCI) in accounting for the variations in the effectiveness of democratic conflict management institutions in the mitigation of electoral violence and the peaceful resolution of electoral conflicts in Ghana. Hence, this study argues strongly for the promotion of some of the understudied positive elements in the political culture of Ghana as such tolerance, consensus and the need for peaceful co-existence. Employing the “Comparative Historical Analysis” as the Research Design, the study drew on the empirical reports of the international and domestic election observers, as well as the views of the government and opposition leaders as reported in the local newspapers, judicial records, and other relevant primary and secondary sources. The analyses helped to reconstruct a comparative historical narrative based on the selected 1992 and 2012 disputed (presidential) elections in Ghana. During the 2012 post-electoral (presidential) dispute, the findings show how powerful traditional political actors such as (the Ashantehene) and religious actors through the National Peace Council (NPC) can complement democratic institutions by infusing some important traditional innovations, sustainability and creativity to these formal political institutions in their efforts to mitigate and prevent “deadly” electoral violence as well as the peaceful resolution of electoral disputes. In both the 1992 and 2012 electoral conflicts, the rich Ghanaian cultural values of tolerance, consensus, and the need for peaceful co-existence irrespective of existing political and social difference played a key role in the peaceful resolution of these electoral disputes. The key lessons from the findings indicate that there is the need for the promotion of positive democratic values such as tolerance, consensus building, and moderation through the formal and informal educational institutions and channels.

What drives Foreign Aid? New Empirical Evidence from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Elliot Boateng and Frank W. Agbola³ and Amir Mahmood⁴

In this paper, we revisit the drivers of foreign aid flows to Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) by extending the Dudley-Montmarquette aid supply model to accounts for institutional quality. Utilising a comprehensive panel data spanning the period 1980–2015, we estimated an aid transfer model using the Instrumental Variable Two-step Generalised Method of Moments (IV2S-GMM) estimator. The findings reveal that economic growth, terms of trade, population growth and human capital attracts aid transfers, while increased domestic savings and investment rates inhibit aid flows. Second, we show that while these macroeconomic factors play a crucial role in driving aid supply, the quality of SSA’s institutions has a more significant impact. Specifically, by accounting for both donor’s and recipient’s heterogeneities, we find that economic and legal institutions of SSA attract aid flows relative to the prevailing quality of political institutions, with magnitudes varying across donors, income groupings and regions levels. Our findings are robust to alternative model specifications and highlight the implications of institutions in driving aid flows to SSA.

³ Economics Discipline, Newcastle Business School, University of Newcastle, Australia

⁴ Business School, Western Sydney University, Australia