

# CONFERENCE REPORT

2019

## 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan Africa



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Brown School

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SECURING OUR  
CHILDREN'S  
FUTURE TODAY

Washington  
University in St. Louis



National Institute  
of Mental Health



## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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#### ***ChildFund International***

Kampala, Uganda

#### ***AfriChild Center***

Kampala, Uganda

#### ***Reach the Youth (RTY)***

Kampala, Uganda

#### ***The Africa Initiative***

Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA

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#### ***Global Programs***

Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA

#### ***Global Health Center***

Institute for Public Health, Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, USA

#### ***SMART AFRICA study participants***

We would also like to thank the children, caregivers, community healthcare workers, parent peers, school health education program coordinators, and schools participating in the SMART Africa studies in Uganda, Ghana, and Kenya.

***The SMART Africa Center is funded by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis. The content presented at this conference and this report is solely the responsibility of the authors and does not represent the official views of the NIMH.***

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# Fourth Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan Africa

JULY 29-31, 2019  
MASAKA, UGANDA

SMART Africa Center and the International Center for Child Health and Development (ICHAD) co-hosted the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan African in Masaka, Uganda, from July 29-31, 2019. Bringing together more than 450 child behavioral health researchers, policymakers, and stakeholders from Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa and the United States, the conference provided a platform for participants to discuss this year's theme of *"Bridging the Gap Between Research, Implementation, and Policy."*

## Conference Hallmarks

- A keynote speech from Her Royal Highness, Sylvia Nagginda, Nnabagereka, Queen of Buganda and Founder of the Nnabagereka Development Foundation.
- New this year, the conference featured a "scholar day" designed around the National Institute of Mental Health-funded [Researcher Resilience Training \(RRT\)](#) program.
- Opening remarks from the National Institute of Mental Health's (NIMH) Deputy Director, Dr. Shelli Avenevoli.
- The official launch of Washington University's Africa Initiative on the African Continent.
- Perspectives from SMART Africa study stakeholders.
- A new Suubi4Her Travel Award for 93 Suubi4Her study participants and their teachers.
- An Award Recognition Ceremony.
- Entertainment from renowned Ugandan award-winning entertainer and comedian, Ms. Anne Kansiime and her band.

## Conference Attendees

Conference participants comprised of various stakeholders from Uganda including the Buganda Kingdom, represented by Her Royal Highness the Nnabagereka of Buganda Sylvia Nagginda; representatives from the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education; Members of Parliament (Hon. Benard Atiku) and District Level Government Officials (Hon. Janat Kisekka, LCV Vice Chairperson of Masaka and Godfrey Kayemba, the Mayor of Masaka); and community-level representatives including school teachers/head teachers, parents, and community healthcare workers (CHWs) from the SMART Africa-Uganda study, religious leaders (including the Rt. Rev. Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa, Bishop Emeritus of Masaka Catholic Diocese), Junior Scholars, SMART Africa Global Fellows, RRT Fellows, NGO representatives, researchers and potential collaborators. Also joining us were officials from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) –the primary funding body for both SMART Africa and ICHAD. These included: Dr. Shelli Avenevoli, NIMH Deputy Director; Dr. Beverly Pringle, Director of the Center for Global Mental Health Research; Dr. Collene Lawhorn, Health Science Policy Analyst; and Dr. Holly Campbell-Rosen, NIMH Program Officer.

**JULY 29<sup>th</sup>**

SMART Africa Co-Directors, Dean Mary McKay, the Dean of the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis, and Dr. Fred Ssewamala, the Founding Director of ICHAD, welcomed attendees to the conference and provided an overview of the packed agenda. NIMH Deputy Director, Dr. Shelli Avenevoli, also provided welcoming remarks and highlighted the importance of global collaborations and the role of implementation science to address challenges around child behavioral and mental health.

### **Launch of the Africa Initiative**

Dr. Proscovia Nabunya, ICHAD Co-Director and Assistant Director of the Africa Initiative at Washington University in St. Louis, officially launched the Africa Initiative on the continent. She discussed the Initiative's progress and accomplishments since its establishment in 2018. Most notably, the Africa Initiative took an inventory of all Africa-focused engagements across the university, and found that more than 120 faculty across all disciplines were currently engaged in 36 countries in Africa. She also highlighted some of the key efforts being undertaken to strengthen Washington University's efforts in Africa, including:

- Supporting faculty and student research focused on the African continent.
- Helping to establish formalized institutional relationships between Washington University and collaborative partners in Africa.
- Enhancing engagement through student recruitment, internships, fellowships, workshops and conferences at Washington University and in Africa with partner institutions.



*Africa Initiative Assistant Director Dr. Proscovia Nabunya addresses conference attendees*

She concluded by pointing out some of the strategies of the Africa Initiative, including establishing an entity for Africa-focused initiatives at Washington University, supporting interdisciplinary and innovative collaborations within the university, as well as exploring the possibility of establishing a Washington University hub in Africa, among others.

### **PANEL SESSIONS AND KEYNOTE SPEECHES**

#### **1. SMART Africa-Uganda Study Updates and Stakeholder Perspectives**

SMART Africa-Uganda Study Coordinator, Phionah Namatovu, gave the updates regarding the SMART Africa scale-up study in Uganda. To date, the study has:

- Completed four waves of data collection (baseline to wave 4) in 10 control arm schools.
- Completed three data collection cycles (baseline to wave 3 (16 weeks follow-up assessments)) in 4 treatment arm schools.
- Completed two data collection cycles (baseline to wave 2 (8 weeks follow-up assessments)) in 4 other treatment arm schools.



Moving forward, the team hopes to deliver the Multiple Family Group (MFG) intervention in the remaining 12 treatment schools. By the time of the conference, the team had disseminated their findings and engaged with policymakers through the following:

- Presented members of Ugandan Parliament with three-part policy briefs underlining the importance of child and adolescent mental health.
- Publications about the prevalence of behavioral disorders among school-going children (*Kivumbi et al., 2019 and protocol paper, others underway*).
- Conference presentations.

*“MFG sessions have helped us build good relationships in our home.”*

**-MFG Child Participant**

Conference attendees also heard from study stakeholders including a community healthcare worker, two parent peers and child representatives. The stakeholders talked about the impact of the study on them as individuals, their families and their communities at large. They were grateful to the SMART Africa team for doing this important work in their communities, and urged the team to continue supporting child mental health.



*A participant from the SMART Africa-Uganda study sharing her experiences from the Multiple Family Group intervention*



*A participant from the SMART Africa-Uganda study sharing his experiences from the Multiple Family Group intervention*

*“The sessions have had an effect in regards to how I relate with my child. Communication gaps have been filled and I am happy with how things are going with my child. I consult with or seek my child’s opinion about everything I do at home these days.”*

**-MFG Parent Participant**

## 2. Keynote Speech from Guest of Honor

Our guest of honor was Her Royal Highness, Sylvia Nagginda, the Nnabagereka (Queen) of the Buganda Kingdom. She was accompanied by a team from her foundation, the [Nnabagereka Development Foundation](#), which is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Ugandan children, youth and women.

Her Royal Highness welcomed the conference attendees to the Greater Masaka region, on behalf of the King of Buganda, Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, and the Buganda Kingdom at large. She talked about the obstacles including HIV/AIDS, sexual and interpersonal violence and poverty that children and adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) face, and how these obstacles impact their health physically, mentally and emotionally, and future outcomes. She also talked about the Nnabagereka Foundation's work and message focused on the essentials of human virtues, compassion and humanity (also known as "*obuntu bulamu*" in the Luganda language), and how it closely aligns with SMART Africa's MFG intervention goals of involving and engaging each family member in raising and caring for the wellbeing of the child. She called for a joint effort to advance this work by addressing three important questions:

1. What can be done to take the lessons from the field to scale /next level of implementation?
2. How do we as a people create institutions that will be able to implement child and adolescent mental health services in our region?
3. How do we harness public-private partnerships to invest in this really important field?

She urged the audience to join as one and contribute to innovative solutions, aimed at providing a better future for the African child. The Queen concluded her address by giving awards to selected researchers and implementers of the SMART Africa study, alongside Dean Mary McKay and Dr. Beverly Pringle. The awardees included: the Queen; the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Rebecca Kadaga; the Minister of Education and Sports, Hon Janet Kataaha Museveni; Dean Mary McKay, the NIH, the Diocese of Masaka and the Greater Masaka region, to name a few (a complete list of recipients can found on page 18).



*Her Royal Highness, Sylvia Nagginda, The Nnabagereka of Buganda addresses the audience during her keynote address*



*Her Royal Highness The Nnabagereka of Buganda poses for a photo with the team. From left to right: Dr. Holly Campbell-Rosen, Dr. Colleen Lawhorn, Dr. Beverly Pringle, Dr. Shelli Avenevoli, Princess Ssangalyambogo Katrina, Rt. Rev. Bishop Kaggwa, Dean Mary McKay, officials from the Nnabagereka Development Foundation, Dr. Fred Ssewamala, Hon. Godfrey Kayemba, Mr. Simba Machingdaize and Hon. Benard Atiku*



Dr. Fred Ssewamala also received an award from Hon. Godfrey Kayemba (the Mayor of Masaka Town), for his efforts and investment in the socioeconomic status and educational outcomes of children and families in Masaka Town.



*Dr. Ssewamala receives an award from Hon. Godfrey Kayemba Afayo on behalf of the people of Masaka*

### 3. Research Collaboration and Training Opportunities for African Scholars at Washington University in St. Louis

This panel consisted of faculty from Washington University's Brown School and School of Medicine, and was moderated by Dean Mary McKay. Panelists included:

- **Dr. Patricia Cavazos-Rehg:** Associate Professor of Psychiatry at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine; Co-Principal Investigator of the LEAD program.
- **Dr. Sean Joe:** Associate Dean for Faculty & Research at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis; Co-Principal Investigator of the RRT program.
- **Dr. Von Nebbitt:** Associate Professor at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.

The panelists talked about some of the training and mentorship opportunities available at Washington University. They also talked about their individual projects and how they have been able to collaborate with other faculty throughout the University and affiliate networks.



*Faculty from Washington University in St. Louis address the audience during the research opportunities panel. Seated from left to right: Dean Mary McKay, Dr. Patricia Cavazos, Dr. Von Nebbitt and Dr. Sean Joe*



#### 4. Child Behavioral Health Research Collaboration Opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa

This panel consisted of faculty from three major universities in Africa: Makerere University (Uganda), University of Ghana (Ghana), University of Nairobi (Kenya), and MildMay Uganda –a national NGO established as a Centre of Excellence for provision of comprehensive HIV & AIDS prevention, care, treatment and training services. This panel was moderated by Dr. Fred Ssewamala. Panelists included:

- **Dr. Mavis Dako-Gyeke:** Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Social Work at the University of Ghana.
- **Dr. Anne Mwayo:** Lecturer and Clinical Psychologist at the Department of Psychiatry, University of Nairobi, Kenya.
- **Dr. Noeline Nakasujja:** Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of Psychiatry at Makerere University, Uganda.
- **Dr. Barbara Mukasa:** Executive Director of MildMay-Uganda.



*Seated from left to right: Dr. Fred Ssewamala, Dr. Mavis Dako-Gyeke, Dr. Anne Mwayo, Dr. Josephine Nakasujja and Dr. Barbara Mukasa*

The panelists talked about their work and highlighted gaps that exist in the field, as well as the potential collaborations that could be formed with their departments to address some of these gaps.

#### 5. Child-Focused Policy Priorities: Collaboration Opportunities for Researchers, Policymakers, and Practitioners in Uganda

Associate Dean for External Affairs and Director of the Clark-Fox Policy Institute at the Brown School, Gary Parker, moderated a session with local policymakers: Hon. Benard Atiku; Hon. Janat Kisekka, LCV Vice Chairperson of Masaka; and Simba Machingaidze, Executive Director of ChildFund International. The session addressed efforts being made on a national level to address adolescent mental health, including the new recommendations supporting early interventions that were recently introduced in the Uganda Mental Health Bill.



*Hon. Benard Atiku (center) discusses efforts made to address adolescent mental health, alongside Mr. Gary Parker and Mr. Simba Machingaidze*

## 6. Junior Scholars' Panel

This year's junior scholars' panel featured: ICHAD-Uganda Head of Operations, Ms. Flavia Namuwonge; Kyaterekera Project Coordinator, Mr. Joshua Kiyingi; ICHAD-Brown School Research Assistant Ms. Joelynn Muwanga; and the 2018 Junior Scholar Travel awardee and current ICHAD staff member, Mr. Kennedy Ntambi. The panel was moderated by Dr. Apollo Kivumbi, SMART Africa-Uganda In-Country Principal Investigator. Each panelist provided an overview of their academic and professional careers and shared tips that helped them attain their academic goals.



*Seated from right to left: Dr. Apollo Kivumbi, Flavia Namuwonge, Kennedy Ntambi, Joshua Kiyingi and Joelynn Muwanga*

## Suubi4Her Scholars

As part of ICHADs' effort to train and support the next generation of young scholars, 33 Suubi4Her study participants and their teachers were selected through an essay competition to attend the conference this year. These participants had the chance to attend sessions and interact with junior researchers that served on the junior scholars' panel. In addition, the panel provided a platform for junior scholars to inquire about the research lifestyle, especially as it relates to studying child behavioral health in Sub-Saharan Africa.

## Junior Scholar Conference Travel Award Program

This conference marked the second installment of the junior scholars' conference travel award program. 20 junior scholars were selected from a pool of over 80 applicants, including 12 high school students and 8 university students from a total of 9 different Ugandan schools. Through this annual program, SMART Africa and ICHAD intend to generate interest in child behavioral health and research among high school and college students, and further strengthen the pipeline of child behavioral health researchers and practitioners in Sub-Saharan Africa. Following the Junior Scholar panel discussion, the 20 Junior Scholar Travel Award Recipients were awarded certificates by Dean Mary McKay from Washington University in St. Louis and Drs. Pringle and Campbell-Rosen from the NIMH recognizing their achievements.



*The 2019 Junior Travel Awardees pose for a photo after receiving their certificates. Awardees came from 9 different schools in Uganda*



## 7. Senior Fellows Panel

This panel consisted of four panelists representing SMART Africa Global Fellows and Researcher Resilience Training Fellows from the United States and Uganda. This panel was moderated by Dr. Alice Boateng from the University of Ghana. Panelists included:

- **Dr. Riana Anderson:** Researcher Resilience Training Fellow and Assistant Professor of Health Behavior & Health Education at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.
- **Robert Motley:** Research Resilience Training Fellow and Doctoral Candidate at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.
- **Ashley Jackson:** Research Resilience Training Fellow and Doctoral Student at the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis.
- **Timothy Opobo:** SMART Africa Global Fellow and Acting Executive Director, AfriChild Center Uganda.



*Ms. Ashley Jackson discusses her research on the historical pattern of gun violence in St. Louis, Missouri. Seated from left to right: Dr. Alice Boateng, Dr. Riana Anderson, Mr. Robert Motley and Mr. Timothy Opobo*

Riana Anderson spoke about “recasting racial stress and trauma” and her family-based intervention that is designed to improve adolescent psychology and academic outcomes by providing self-efficacy and coping skills development through engaging stress management and bonding. RRT Fellow Ashley Jackson highlighted her research focused on exploring historical patterns of police violence, and whether these patterns are linked to concentrated poverty and race. Robert Motley talked about his upcoming work around community violence, racism and substance use among Black emerging adults. Timothy Opobo discussed the current initiatives of the AfriChild Center which include the use of research to inform and advocate for policies that address issues affecting the African child.

## 8. Poster Session

The poster presentation session showcased the research findings from projects conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa that focused on a range of issues including mental health, HIV, perceptions on academic learning, and post-conflict physical/sexual violence (see complete list in appendix).

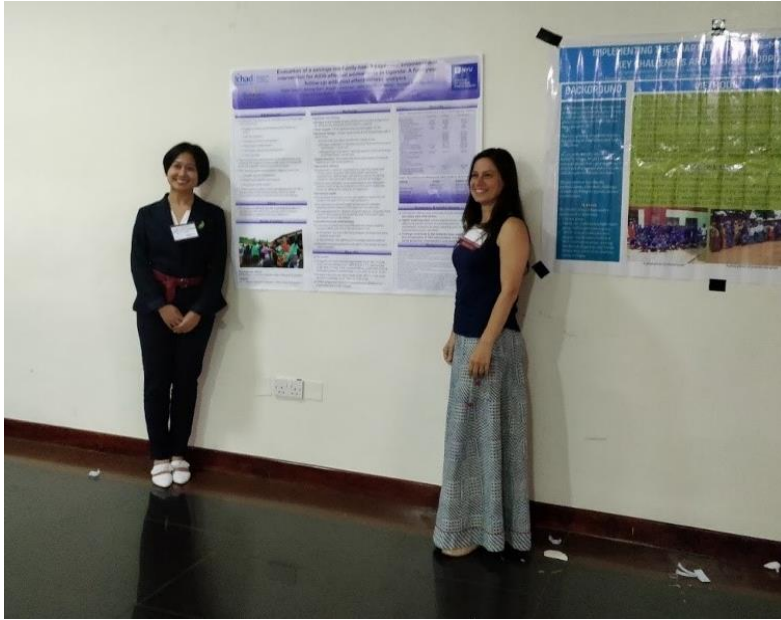
- The poster presentations provided an opportunity for an interactive session where participants, including Conference Travel Awardees, could learn more about specific research projects.
- The posters were evaluated by three independent judges, and the three highest ranked posters were acknowledged with awards. ICHAD faculty affiliate Dr. Yesim Tozan and colleagues won first prize for their poster, “Evaluation of a savings-led family-based economic empowerment intervention for AIDS-affected adolescents in Uganda: A four-year



*Sicong Sun and Kingsley Kumbelim presenting their posters at the conference*



*follow-up with cost-effectiveness analysis.” Research Assistant Professor and ICHAD Co-Director Dr. Proscovia Nabunya came in second place with her poster, “Gender, family communication and social support factors associated with HIV disclosure, and HIV-related stigma among adolescents living with HIV in Uganda.” The third-place award went to Dr. Anita Arinda of Makerere University for her poster looking at autism spectrum disorders among children in Uganda.*



***From left to right: Poster session winners, Brown Doctoral Student Sicong Sun and Dr. Yesim Tozan; Second place winner, Dr. Proscovia Nabunya, standing beside their posters***

The first day concluded with a cocktail dinner. The dinner offered an opportunity for the more than 300 attendees to network and reflect on the day’s content and to thank the community collaborators for their investment in the two projects over the years. Attendees were entertained by the Senkubuge dance group and renowned Ugandan entertainers, Daniel Omara and Ms. Anne Kansiime.



***The conference dinner set-up at the Hotel Brovad***



***Timothy Opobo (SMART Africa Global Fellow), Simba Machingaidze (Childfund International Country Director, Uganda) and ICHAD Research Associate William Byansi pose for a photo with renowned Uganda entertainer Anne Kansiime***





*Ms. Kansime entertains the guests alongside her band*



*The ICHAD Uganda team joins Ms. Anne Kansime in a dance*



*SMART Africa and ICHAD staff and affiliates join in on the fun at the cocktail party*



### Introduction: Scholar Day

Dr. Ssewamala and Dean McKay welcomed everyone back to the conference for the “scholar day,” a day designed to build capacity around advanced research methods and technical skills for researchers engaged in adolescent behavioral health studies in low-resource settings. There were more than 70 participants on this day including our SMART Africa Global Fellows, Researcher Resilience Training Fellows, PhD students and faculty from local universities, SMART Africa colleagues, and ICHAD staff.

### Applying to the National Institutes of Health for Research Funding: An Overview of the Pre- and Post-Award Process

Dr. Beverly Pringle, the Director of the Center for Global Mental Health Research at NIMH and Holly Campbell-Rosen, Program Officer at NIMH delivered an overview of some relevant NIH grant funding mechanisms, the NIH peer review process and tips for grant submissions. They focused on the K43, the Emerging Global Leader award, which supports research scientists from low or middle-income countries. For all submissions, they stressed the importance of speaking with a Program Officer prior to submission, not being too ambitious with your research design and ensuring that your career development plans align with your research plans.



NIMH program officers Drs. Holly Campbell-Rosen and Beverly Pringle discuss the grant writing process

### Scientific Integrity and Ethical Conduct in Research

Dr. Tom Lutalo, the Assistant Director of Research and Chair of Research Ethics Committee at the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UCRI), gave a presentation on the importance of research ethics and the roles of Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) to protect the dignity, rights and welfare of research participants. This is key to any research study, and if done incorrectly, scientific misconduct can undermine the results of any study and even result in loss of funding. Dr. Lutalo went on to share some good research practices such as appropriate training, monitoring and supervision and ensuring strong data practices and management in line with the FAIR Principles (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable).

*“This presentation was excellent... disseminating the study findings with other institutions will strengthen our networks and give a basis of where to go with (future) research.”*

**-Conference Participant**



## Concurrent Sessions

### Advanced Research Methods

Sean Joe, Associate Dean for Faculty Research at the Brown School, and Arvin Bhana, Chief Specialist Scientist at the South African Medical Research Scientist, led a discussion around advanced research methods that included their personal experiences and issues they encountered with study design including challenge points, randomization in real world settings, and taking into account cultural sensitivities. For example, with his Mental Health Integration Program, Dr. Bhana has found that continuous quality improvement is a good vehicle for change management to facilitate changes regarding organizational roles and values.



*Drs. Sean Joe and Arvin Bhana leading an advanced research methods session*



*Drs. Von Nebbitt, Philip Hong, and Keng-Yen Huang conducting a research methods session*

### Multilevel Social and Behavioral Prevention and Intervention Research Methods

In the other session, Philip Hong, Associate Dean for Research at the School of Social Work at Loyola University, Keng-Yen Huang, Associate Professor at New York University and Von Nebbitt, Associate Professor at the Brown School, discussed prevention and intervention research methods based on their own experiences. Discussions included how they selected specific study designs and the advantages of using hybrid designs.

### Carving out a Research Program as an Early Stage Investigator: Opportunities and Challenges

During lunch, Dean Mary McKay led a panel discussion with early career investigators Proscovia Nabunya, Research Assistant Professor at the Brown School, Manasi Kumar, Sr. Lecturer at the University of Nairobi, and Tyrone Parchment, Assistant Professor at Boston College. The researchers discussed the challenges of embarking on their own independent research careers, including balancing teaching responsibilities and finding independent funding. They closed on an uplifting note by disclosing the things that they were most proud of during the year, which included receiving their first grants and becoming faculty.



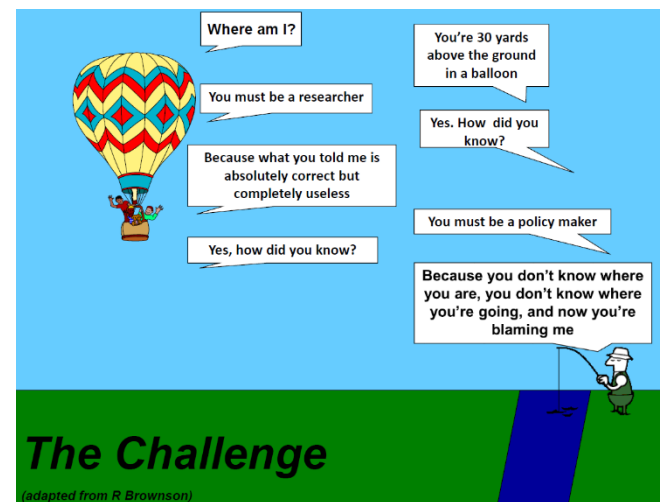
*From left to right: Dean Mary McKay, and Drs. Manasi Kumar, Proscovia Nabunya, and Tyrone Parchment*



*Dr. Arvin Bhana leading a panel discussion with SMART Africa team members (left to right) Mr. Kumbelim and Drs. Mbwayo and Kumar*

## Learning Opportunities when Implementing an Intervention Research Study: Discussion with SMART Africa-Ghana and Kenya teams

Dean Mary McKay and SMART Africa Co-Investigator, Arvin Bhana, led a panel discussion with members of the SMART-Africa Kenya team, Manasi Kumar and Anne Mbwayo, and SMART Africa-Ghana team member, Kingsley Kumbelim, to discuss program accomplishments as well as highlight challenges that were encountered along the way. Both teams faced some logistical challenges around programming sessions and shared some solutions such as working closely with local partners and stakeholders.



*The Challenge, from Gary Parker's Flash session, adapted from R. Brownson*

## Flash Sessions: Amplifying Impact: Moving Research into Action for Social Change and Publications: Responding to Reviewer Comments

With only 15 minutes to deliver a concise overview, tips and strategies around 1) policy change and 2) publications, facilitators Gary Parker, Associate Dean for External Affairs at the Brown School, and Jami Curley, Associate Professor at St. Louis University, had a tall task. In an entertaining 15 minutes, Gary Parker spoke of the disconnect between policymakers and researchers and the need to be precise and clear with your dissemination efforts to move research agendas forward. In the other session, Dr. Curley led an interactive session with advice on how to address negative comments from reviewers.

## Elective Sessions

To close out the day, participants were able to select one of the following five sessions to attend.

- ***Transforming Impossible into Possible (TIP): Psychological Self-Sufficiency***  
Philip Hong
- ***Digital Therapeutic Interventions for Mental Health***  
Patricia Cavazos-Rehg  
Rogers Kasirye
- ***Psychotherapy Research: An Introductory Workshop***  
Manasi Kumar
- ***Implementation Science***  
Keng-Yen Huang
- ***Cost-Effectiveness***  
Fred Ssewamala  
Yesim Tozan





*Drs. Yesim Tozan and Fred Ssewamala leading an elective session on cost-effectiveness*



*Philip Hong hosting an elective session on (TIP) Transforming Impossible into Possible*



*Dr. Patricia Cavazos leading a session on mHealth*



**July 31<sup>st</sup>**

## **1. Field Observations**

On the third day of the conference, participants visited project field sites including schools, health clinics, and a fishing village. At the schools, participants observed MFG sessions in action; clinic attendees saw HIV care and treatment facilities; and those who went to Kasensero fishing village observed the delivery of the HIV risk reduction sessions for women engaged in sex work, as part of ICHAD's Kyaterekera Project. According to the participants' feedback, these visits were powerful and impactful for all.



*Conference attendees being welcomed by a local school participating in the SMART Africa-Uganda Study*



*ICHAD, SMART Africa and Collaborators visited the Kasensero fishing village, one of the sites for ICHAD's Kyaterekera study. This photo was taken after observing an HIV risk reduction session conducted by the ICHAD Field Research Team led by Mr. Joshua Kiyingi—Field Study Coordinator*



*From left to right: Dr. Holly Campbell-Rosen, Dr. Collene Lawhorne, Dr. Shelly Avenevoli, Dr. Fred Ssewamala, Dr. Beverly Pringle, Dean Mary McKay, Mr. Gary Parker and Dr. Sean Joe at a Suubi4Her participating school. Suubi4Her is a 5-Year NIMH funded study focused on reducing sexual risk-taking behaviors among Ugandan girls ages 14-17 years old. The study is being implemented in 47 secondary schools in Southwestern Uganda.*

## POSTER ABSTRACTS

### **1. Child Labor in Ghana: Implications for Children's Behavioral Health**

**Presenters:** Alice Boateng & Mavis Dako-Gyeke

This poster presentation explored: 1) the push and pull factors contributing to child labor, 2) implications of child labor on children's behavioral health, 3) the legal framework, and 4) policies in place for tackling child labor. The presentation offered suggestions for the role of social workers in addressing child labor, with specific emphasis on how social workers could be involved in the design and implementation of relevant and culturally responsive interventions that would help address the behavioral health needs of children and adolescents engaged in economic activities.

### **2. Mental Health Experiences of Street Children in Ghana and the Sustainable Development Goals**

**Presenters:** Ernestina Korleki Dankyi & Keng-Yen Huang

This study sought to add to the growing body of literature on street children by examining the level of psychological distress among street children and some of the factors associated with their overall wellbeing.

### **3. South African Adult Caregivers as Protective Shields: Serving as a Buffer between Precarious Neighborhood Conditions, Food Insecurity, and Youth Risk Behaviors**

**Presenters:** Latoya Small, Tyrone Parchment, Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Hadiza Osuji, Aminda Heckman Chomanczuk, Arvin Bhana, & Mary McKay

This study examined the potential mediating effects of caregivers' mental health on the relationship between neighborhood conditions (social cohesion, disorganization, and social control) and youth risk behaviors.

### **4. Implementing the Adapted Multiple Family Group (Dang-Malgu) Intervention in Ghana: Key Challenges and Learning Opportunities**

**Presenters:** Kingsley Kumbelim, Peter Yaro, Abdallah Ibrahim, Emmanuel Asampong, & Ozge Sensoy Bahar

This study described the implementation process of the multiple family group (MFG) pilot study in Ghana, focusing on the challenges encountered during the process and key lessons learned.

### **5. Engagement and Capacity Building in Developing School Mental Health in Kenya: A Process Paper**

**Presenters:** Anne Mbwaiyo, Manasi Kumar, Muthoni Mathai, Teresiah Mutavi, Jane Nungari Njuguna, Rosemary Githara, Joyce Kingori, & Keng-Yen Huang

This poster examined two areas focused on the development of mental health services in the Kenyan school context: 1) South-South partnership and local stakeholder engagement experience, and 2) pre-implementation planning experience, including the adaptation of the MFG intervention in Kenya.

### **6. Prevalence and Factors Associated with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Symptoms in Children Attending Pediatric Neurology Clinic in Mulago Hospital**

**Presenters:** Anita Arinda, Noeline Nakasujja, & Raymond Odokonyero

This study examined the prevalence and factors associated with ASD symptoms among children attending a pediatric neurology clinic in Mulago Hospital in Uganda.

### **7. Racial Centrality, Non-Adult Parental Socialization & Depression among Black Adolescents in the United States: An Intersectional Examination**

**Presenters:** Kasim Ortiz, Riana E. Anderson, Adaurennaya C. Onyewuenyi, & Sean Joe

This presentation utilized an intersectional within-group (ethnicity and gender) approach to assess the role of racial centrality and moderating influence of non-parental adults as racial/ethnic socialization agents in shaping Black adolescents' depression.

#### **8. HIV and AIDS Health Knowledge, and Attitudes Among Adolescents Living with HIV in Southwestern Uganda: Does Gender Matter?**

**Presenters:** William Byansi, Proscovia Nabunya, Joelynn Muwanga, Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Fred M. Ssewamala, Christopher Damulira, & Flavia Namuwonge

This study sought to examine gender differences in HIV prevention attitudes and HIV/AIDS knowledge among adolescents living with HIV in Uganda.

#### **9. Gender, Family Communication and Social Support Factors Associated with HIV Disclosure and HIV-Related Stigma among Adolescents Living with HIV in Uganda**

**Presenters:** Proscovia Nabunya, William Byansi, Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Mary McKay, Fred M. Ssewamala, & Christopher Damulira

This study examined family communication and social support factors associated with HIV disclosure and HIV-related stigma among adolescent boys and girls living with HIV in Uganda.

#### **10. Access and Utilization of Financial Services among Poor AIDS-Impacted Children and Families in Uganda: Evidence from a Randomized Controlled Trial**

**Presenters:** Sicong Sun, Proscovia Nabunya, William Byansi, Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Christopher Damulira, Torsten B. Neilands, Shenyang Guo, Flavia Namuwonge, & Fred M. Ssewamala

This study examined the individual and institutional determinants for access and utilization of financial services among AIDS-orphaned children in southwestern Uganda.

#### **11. Evaluation of a Savings-Led Family-Based Economic Empowerment Intervention for AIDS-Affected Adolescents in Uganda: A Four-Year Follow-Up with Cost-Effectiveness Analysis**

**Presenters:** Yesim Tozan, Sicong Sun, Ariadna Capasso, Julia Shu-Huah Wang, Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Damulira Christopher, & Fred M. Ssewamala

This poster presented the efficacy and cost-effectiveness analyses of the Bridges Study, a savings-led family economic empowerment intervention among AIDS-orphaned adolescents in Uganda.

#### **12. Effects of Three Modified Strategies on African Immigrant Mothers Stigmatizing Attitudes, and Building Optimism for Seeking Professional Psychological Help**

**Presenters:** Hadiza Osuji, Angela Paulino, Agnes Nzomene Kahouo Foda, Gregory Chibuko, Anita Lasbrey, Amarachi Ikuwagwu, Funmi Olanrewaju, & Mary McKay

This study examined the effects of three strategies: Protest, Education and Contact (PEC), for changing stigmatizing attitudes, enhancing mental health literacy, reinforcing cultural protective factors and seeking mental healthcare among African Immigrant women in the United States.



### 2019 JUNIOR SCHOLAR CONFERENCE TRAVEL AWARDEES

Kevin Patience Apio	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
Matia Kasule	Kaddugala Senior Secondary School
Denis Kimbugwe	Gulu University
Julia Kuganja	Kaddugala Senior Secondary School
Charles Joy Matovu	Kikungwe Secondary School
Kennedy Matovu	Holy Family Kyamulibwa Secondary School
Gavin Mbabazi	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
Athanasius Miyingo	Holy Family Kyamulibwa Secondary School
David Muganzi	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
Stephen Mukaaya	St. Benard's Secondary School, Mannya
Emmanuel Mwesigwa	Gulu University
Edith Mary Nalubega	Sseke Secondary School
Sophia Namatovu	St. Benard's Secondary School, Mannya
Zaharah Nanyonjo	Kikungwe Secondary School
Viola Nahurira	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
Gloria Nakalinzi	St. Benard's Secondary School, Mannya
Lydia Namubiru	Kyambogo University
Joan Nkamushaba	Mbarara University of Science and Technology
Shadic Ssempijja	Gulu University
Frank Ssenoga	Sseke Secondary School

### 2019 SUUBI4HER ESSAY COMPETITION AWARDEES

Veronica Atugonza	St. Aloysius Bwanda Secondary School
Sylvia Kisakye	Ndagwe Secondary School
Aphia Mukazi	St. Aloysius Bwanda Secondary School
Annet Nabakooza	St. Michael Butende Secondary School
Haawa Nakabuye	Sseke Secondary School
Justine Nakalema	Nativity of Our Lady Bisanje Secondary School
Shakirah Nakaliisa	St. Edward Kkingo Secondary School
Rosette Kyanukuzi	Nakanwagi Secondary School
Resty Nakasagga	St. Edward Kkingo Secondary School
Recheal Nakate	Holy Family Kyamulibwa Secondary School
Catherine Nakatemwa	St. Clement Nkoni Secondary School
Sharon Nakimbugwe	St. Andrew's Matale Secondary School
Proscovia Nakkazzi	St. Michael Butende Secondary School
Reticia Nalugooti	Nativity of Our Lady Bisanje Secondary School
Fauster Namayega	Holy Family Kyamulibwa Secondary School
Benitah Namayiga	Archbishop Kiwanuka Secondary School
Hellen Namazzi	St. Clement Nkoni Secondary School
Sylvia Nambejja	Lwaggulwe Secondary School
Justine Namubiru	Kyanukuzi Secondary School
Ritah Namugabi	Nakasoga Secondary School
Evarista Namugerwa	Archbishop Kiwanuka Secondary School
Juliet Jovia Namugga	Sseke Secondary School
Hanifah Namugumya	Nakasoga Secondary School
Betty Namwanje	St. Raphael Kabira Secondary School
Namwenda Beatrice	Lwaggulwe Secondary School
Nansamba Catherine	Ndagwe Secondary School
Barat Nansubuga	Kabukunge Muslim Secondary School
Jackline Nyanzi	St. Adrian Kasozi Secondary School
Judith Nassuuna	St. Raphael Kabira Secondary School
Annet Nayiga	St. Adrian Kasozi Secondary School
Brendah Nayiga	St. Andrew's Matale Secondary School
Jazirah Ninsiima	Kabukunge Muslim Secondary School

## 2019 SMART AFRICA CONFERENCE AWARDEES

Dean Mary McKay, the Neidorff Family and Centene Corporation Dean of the Brown School at Washington University in St. Louis  
The Catholic Diocese of Masaka  
National Institute of Mental Health  
Dr. Beverly Pringle, Deputy Director of NIMH Office for Research on Disparities and Global Mental Health  
Dr. Susannah Allison, Program Officer at National Institute of Mental Health  
Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni, the Minister for Education and Sports, Uganda  
ChildFund International Uganda  
Her Royal Highness, Sylvia Nagginda, Nnabagereka (Queen) of Buganda  
Reach the Youth Uganda  
Uganda National Council for Science and Technology  
Uganda Virus Research Institute  
Hon. Godfrey Kayemba, the Mayor of Masaka Town  
Rt. Hon. Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga, Speaker of Parliament, Uganda  
New Vision  
Daily Monitor  
The People of the Greater Masaka Region



*Dean Mary McKay presenting an award to Rt. Rev. Bishop John Baptist Kaggwa, accepting an award on behalf of the Catholic Diocese of Masaka*



*Her Royal Highness Sylvia Nagginda, Nnabagereka of Buganda accepting an award from Dean Mary McKay and Dr. Beverly Pringle*



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

## THE FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON CHILD BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Bridging the Gap Between Research, Implementation, and Policy

Hon. Minister of State for PHC - Dr. Joyce Muriku Kaducu

HOTEL BROVAD, MASAKA, UGANDA

July 29, 2019

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**Honorable Members of Parliament, Honorable Ministers, Universities Represented, Professors, Researchers, Policy makers & Practitioners, Academia, The Organizer of this Conference and Ladies & Gentlemen**

I would like to thank the Washington University in St. Louis, BROWN SCHOOL, through Prof. Mary McKay and Dr. Fred Ssewamala for having organized yet the Fourth Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health for Sub-Saharan Africa and most particular to host it in Uganda, the Pearl of Africa. We take pride as the Country to host such meetings for they not only strengthen our linkages and additional Economic/developmental values but give opportunity for our indigenous Experts to engage deeper at International level. I am further informed that the Annual Conference was established with the objectives of: sharing Research findings, developing Leadership & Partnerships and advocating for Improved Child behavioral health services.

That in this Meeting over 200 researchers, practitioners and policy makers has invited to continue discussion on evidence - based strategies to reduce child mental health services and Research gaps in Sub- Saharan Africa. Hereby Academia and governments partners from: Uganda, Republic of Ghana, Republic of Kenya, Republic of South Africa and the United States of America have been invited to attend this important Conference. You are all warmly welcome and please ensure to get time to feel the Pearl of Africa by visiting our various Tourist sites.

Globally, about 20% of children and adolescents experience Mental Health problems. As a result of these problems, the sufferers miss opportunities and can experience long lasting consequences. Children and adolescents are vulnerable to certain specific Mental, Neurological and Substance use disorders due to their incomplete physical, mental and social growth and development, Children affected by mental and neurological problems such as epilepsy, are less likely to be well integrated into school and other developmental programs.



Mental Health problems interfere a child's ability to participate in education, relationships and work. As a result (s)he is cannot develop her/his full potential and is less likely to live a productive adult life. When no appropriate intervention is put in place, these Mental Neurological & Substance (MNS) health problems continue into adulthood.

In Uganda, about 57% of the population is contributed to by children and adolescents yet their MNS health needs largely go unmet, with severe and often irreversible consequences for their emotional and psychological development. Many of the Ugandan children have experienced psychological trauma during war, abductions as child soldiers, physical or sexual abuse and bereavement, especially from AIDS, poverty and increasing disparities.

Failure to address MNS needs of children and adolescents may derail attainment of some SDGs targets such as Universal access to quality education (Goal 4), abuse and neglect (Goal 16) bridging the gender disparity, poverty reduction and reduction of mortality in infants and mothers giving birth. Studies in Uganda have indicated high burden of child and adolescent MNS disorders and the prevalence of anxiety disorders among this age group is high as 26.6%, with rates higher in females (29.7%) than in males (23.1%).

While Uganda aspires to achieve Universal healthcare coverage (UHC), inadequate health financing remains a huge challenge. Health expenditures are rising with significant repercussions to individuals and households especially in poorer population quintiles. Uganda ratified the UN Convention on Rights of Children (1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1990) which recognize that due to the needs of his/her physical and mental development a child requires particular care with regard to health, physical, mental, moral and social development with Legal protection on conditions of freedom, dignity and security. In that line, the Children's Act 1997 (amended in 2016) provides for full rights of the child and protection of Children from harmful customary practices (such as Child marriage, FGM/C).

Government has put in place programs and has supported Interventions that are geared towards enhancement of the quality of life and productivity of people. The Health Sector Development Plan (HSDP) is aimed at achieving Uganda's Vision 2040 of a Healthy and productive population that contributes to socio-economic growth and National development through Universal Health Coverage (UHC). Likewise, under the Global wave of addressing Reduction of Maternal child mortality (EWEC), Uganda developed the Reproductive maternal newborn child adolescent health (RMNCAH) Sharpened plan OR Investment case as the roadmap/ Strategy.

In order to address these gaps, a comprehensive approach to scaling availability and increasing accessibility of quality MNS services as well as providing a framework for the promotion of Mental Health of children and adolescents in different settings need to be in place and supported.

The first strategic shift in the Country's Investment case for RMNCAH emphasizes use of evidence-based technical interventions across the continuum of care ensuring effective universal coverage under the RMNCAH framework. As a point of emphasis, the Ministry has prioritized data use for planning and decision making thus the term E evidencing Action. This has called for Government to strengthen research, Monitoring and Evaluation of programs.

Through the National Research body, the Ministry has supported Research in areas of policy development, service implementation and governance. However, research, monitoring and evaluation in child/adolescent Mental Health in Uganda still needs to be greatly improved. Furthermore, there is need to strengthen the mechanisms to coordinate research to ensure that priority research questions are answered.

Lastly, through Collaboration and partnerships such as this one where opportunities for both International and Sub-regional Engagements are permissible, will give wider opportunity to share and develop country adapted solutions in addressing issues of Child behavioral health as we address bridging the gap between Research, Implementation and Policy. Government will continue to support such Collaborations geared to addressing Collaborative Research for Health and Development.

Thank you,

Hon. Dr. Joyce Moriku Kaducu

## **Keynote Address:**

**HER ROYAL HIGHNESS SYLVIA NAGGINDA,**

**THE NNABAGEREKA (QUEEN) OF BUGANDA KINGDOM, UGANDA**

At the 4th Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan Africa

Monday, 29th, July 2019; 11:00—12:00 Noon.

Hotel Brovad, Masaka, Uganda

**Ladies and Gentleman,**

It is a privilege to be here this morning at the 4th Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan Africa. I understand that this conference is supposed to rotate through different countries that make up SMART Africa, but for the 4th year in a row, it is being held in Uganda, and for the second year in a row, in the Greater Masaka region. I am honoured that this year you have brought it back to Masaka and that you invited me to give the keynote. I would like to begin by thanking our conference sponsors and hosts. Thank you to the National Institutes of Health, to SMART Africa, and to ICHAD for allowing me to address your stakeholders and share a bit more about how your support has positively impacted our region, Buganda; our country, Uganda; and Africa as a continent. Thank you to Dr. Mary McKay, Dean of the Brown School at Washington University for her commitment to Africa and to Uganda in particular. I was meant to understand that Dean McKay, working with Professor Fred Ssewamala, a Ugandan-born Washington University-based Distinguished Professor-whom I met recently, are the Brainchildren behind SMART Africa Center, which is our host today. Thanks Professor Ssewamala for reaching out to my office, and for extending this invitation to address your collaborators. Professor Ssewamala's research, supported by the National Institute of Mental Health, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, and the National Cancer Institute, assesses innovative economic empowerment interventions to reduce high-risk health behaviors and increasing treatment adherence. He received funding for more than six on-going U.S. National Institutes of Health studies in the greater Masaka region, all focused on children and adolescent health. These are the same issues our Foundation, the Nabagareka Foundation, is focused on. That is partly the reason why when I was invited, although I had other commitments, I accepted this invitation to come and speak to you because the work SMART Africa and ICHAD are doing is exactly the same work that the Nabagareka Foundation, which I founded almost 20 years ago, supports, promotes and believes in. Thanks for being a partner in empowering young people! I have heard, from Dr. Ssewamala and his colleagues, the benefits their work has brought to our communities, especially the greater Masaka region, as has the work of all SMART Africa teams bring to the SSA continent. Buganda as a region, and Uganda as a country, are honoured to take part in this tremendous opportunity to impact the lives of vulnerable African children and adolescents through Child and Adolescent global Mental Health research supported by NIMH.

As you may all know, and I am sure the previous speakers have mentioned the same, adolescents in Sub-Saharan Africa and Uganda face multiple, intersecting obstacles which too often prohibit healthy development and realization of future opportunities. 38% of children in Uganda live in poverty and may be deprived of adequate nutrition, clean water, sanitation, healthcare, shelter, and education. In addition, over 12% of children in Uganda under the age of 18 are orphans, of which a significant portion have lost one or both parents to HIV/AIDS. We must also acknowledge that these young people are living in communities where interpersonal violence is all too common. They are exposed to both physical and sexual violence in their homes, schools and communities. Together the impacts of HIV/AIDS, poverty, orphan-hood and exposure to violence can have serious mental health implications for our children and adolescents. The situation becomes even graver when we consider that currently 57% of Uganda's total population is below the age of 18.

Though the circumstances facing vulnerable young people sounds dire, we know that Buganda as a region, and Uganda as a country are resilient and we have overcome adversity before. The Ugandan Government, the Kingdom of Buganda, and the Nnabagereka Development Foundation, which I established in 2000, are working hand in hand to empower our young people, including young girls and women in education, healthcare, and the advancement of good cultural values

and practices for sustainable development. Indeed, our efforts through programs like “Kisakate” and those of others in the same space, for example the multiple family groups (or MFGs) being promoted by SMART Africa, and the family economic empowerment interventions by ICHAD have been instrumental in confronting the HIV/AIDS epidemic, poor child and adolescent mental health functioning and promoting family cohesion.

As many of you know, Uganda has been at the forefront of fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region. In the same vein, Uganda is excited to once again have the opportunity to lead, through the work of Drs. Ssewamala, McKay, SMART Africa in addressing an extremely important issue for the continent of Africa- a focus on child and adolescent global mental health—as we learn from a wide range of evidence-based studies being carried out in the greater Masaka region. How do we take what has been learned in the field to the next level of implementation! How do we create institutions that will be able to implement child and adolescent mental health services? How do we harness public-private partnerships to invest in this really important field? I know that the Buganda government, the Central Government, and Foundations like the Nnabagereka Foundation, need the support of businesses, civil societies, and foreign entities to implement the evidence generated from studies and Centers like SMART Africa. I know the challenges faced by each institution working with young people in Uganda are great, but I also know that we in Uganda and Buganda are ready to fight for the children and adolescents of Africa and to fight for the children and adolescents of Uganda and Buganda and move the children and adolescents agenda to the next level.

Our young people face adversities that are complex and wide. We must face these challenges head on with interventions and programs that use evidence to influence young people’s future wellbeing. Interventions and programs must address our vulnerabilities by utilizing the existing strength and resiliency of our families and our communities. Human development rooted in cultural values is critical. We cannot shy away from the positive elements of our culture, including aspects of “ubuntu bulamu”. In South Africa, they call this “Ubuntu”. The essential of human virtues, compassion and Humanity. In Buganda we call this “Obumu” or “Obuntu bulamu”. We know the power of addressing and investing in material and social support for our young people. Each one of us has to play a part. That is what is good about SMART Africa’s multiple family groups. Involving each member of the family in raising and caring for the mental wellbeing of our children. That is what we advocate for in the Nabagereka Foundation. Very important!

At the government level, the Ugandan government’s provision of free primary education and universal secondary education has enabled poor families to send their children and adolescents to school. But many of these children still need books and meals or lunch. These are issues that impact children’s mental health and overall wellbeing. That is where each one of us needs to play a role. The government has played its part, and we as society and parents have to play ours as well in order to keep these children in school. Availability of free anti-retro viral therapy drugs has greatly improved HIV/AIDS health outcomes for youth and their families. But we also know that there are several children who are not adhering to medication or taking their medication as prescribed by the healthcare professionals or doctors because of lack of food or poverty. Again, each one of us needs to play a role to support well-meaning government initiatives. The rest of this conference promises to be thought-provoking and enriching, as some of the most talented minds not only in the field of children and adolescent health but also evidence-based and implementation science have come together to discuss bridging the gap between research, implementation and policy, overcome implementation challenges and ultimately support the development of robust collaborations among scientists, non-governmental organizations, field and program implementers, and policymakers.

On behalf of myself, the King of Buganda, Kabaka Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II, the Buganda Kingdom, and the country of Uganda, I welcome you all here in the greater Masaka region, at Hotel Brovad, and say thank you for contributing to this important field of work. In Buganda, Uganda and in other countries, people depend on the innovative work and science that you do to improve and/or save lives. Working together, we can improve outcomes for young people, including girls and young women in the Buganda region, Uganda and around the world. Thank you for your dedication.

Let us join together to contribute innovative solutions, so Africa, the country of Uganda and the Kingdom of Buganda can provide a better future for our children and adolescents. Thank You.





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SECURING OUR  
CHILDREN'S  
FUTURE TODAY



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National Institute  
of Mental Health