

# Masaka, Uganda



## Third Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan Africa and Launch of the Suubi4Her Study

# 2018

# Conference Report



SECURING OUR  
CHILDREN'S  
FUTURE TODAY



SMART Africa Center  
Brown School

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

JULY 30<sup>th</sup>-AUGUST 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018  
MASAKA, UGANDA

The SMART (Strengthening Mental health And Research Training) Africa Center and International Center on Child Health and Development (ICHAD) co-hosted the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan African in Masaka, Uganda, from July 30<sup>th</sup> - August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018. Bringing together a total of over 300 conference participants from Ghana, Kenya, Uganda and the United States, the conference provided a platform for participants to discuss how to achieve sustainable impact on child behavioral health.

Conference participants comprised of various stakeholders, including teachers, parents and community health workers (CHWs) from the SMART Africa-Uganda study, religious leaders (including the Bishop of Masaka Diocese), Junior Scholars, SMART Africa Global Fellows, NGO representatives, researchers as well as Central Government Officials from the Ministry of Education; and the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, local government officials (LC5 Chairperson of Masaka and the Mayor of Masaka). In addition to workshops and presentations, the conference also included the SMART Africa-Uganda Field Research & Implementation Report addressed to community stakeholders.



Dr. Fred welcoming conference participants

Hon. Dr. John Chrysestom Muyingo, State Minister for Higher Education (representing the Minister of Education and First Lady, Mama Janet Museveni), Hon. Florence Nakiwala Kiyingi, State Minister of Gender, Labor and Social Development, and Dr. Benjamin Ola. Akande, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and Director of Africa Initiative at Washington University in St. Louis were the Guests of Honor for this year's conference.

## Junior Scholar Conference Travel Award Program

This year's conference marked the launch of a new program, the Junior Scholar Conference Travel Award for the Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan Africa.

- Travel scholarships were awarded to 19 young Ugandan scholars (13 senior six students in high school and 6 university students from a total of 11 different Ugandan schools).
- The Junior Scholars were able to attend sessions throughout the entire conference day on July 31<sup>st</sup> and to further inquire about professional and academic experiences from a panel of young scholars at SMART Africa and ICHAD.
- Through this annual program, SMART Africa and ICHAD intend to generate interest in child behavioral health and research among the new generation of students, and further strengthen the pipeline of child behavioral health researchers and practitioners in Sub-Saharan Africa.



## JULY 30<sup>th</sup>

Dean Mary McKay, Dean of the Brown School at Washington University in St Louis and Co-Director of the SMART Africa Center welcomed the conference attendees in absentia. Dr. Fred Ssewamala, *William E. Gordon Distinguished Professor*, and Director of the SMART Africa Center and ICHAD welcomed all the conference guests and provided a brief overview of SMART Africa and ICHAD's work. Hon. Godfrey Kayemba, the Mayor of Masaka, and Hon. Jude Mbabaali, LC5 Chairperson of the Masaka District also provided welcoming remarks.

### **Panel sessions and keynote speeches**

#### **1. Global Programs and Africa Initiative at Washington University in St. Louis: Opportunities for Collaboration**

A panel of faculty at Washington University in St. Louis discussed the global research programs they direct and the potential collaboration opportunities these programs offer. This panel comprised of:

- **Ms. Tammy Orahood**, the Director of Global Programs at Washington University in St. Louis
- **Dr. Carolyn Lesorogol** (the MC for the session) who is currently using ethnography and mixed methods to investigate the transition from communal to private land among Samburu pastoralists in Kenya, and its long-term effects on land-use, cooperation, social norms and livelihoods
- **Penina Acayo** whose work centers on human-centered approaches to solving social problems and currently conducts summer design workshops in Uganda to equip young people with skills in design and creative problem-solving
- **Dr. Shanti Parikh**, whose research in eastern Uganda focuses on how regimes of regulation and discourses of sexuality have shifted since independence and, more recently, during the HIV/AIDS epidemic
- **Dr. Krista Milich**, a primate behavioral ecologist and socio-endocrinologist focused on wildlife conservation

#### **2. Keynote Speeches from Guests of Honor**

**Hon. Dr. John Chryestom Muyingo, State Minister for Higher Education** in the Ugandan Government represented the Minister of Education and First Lady of Uganda, Mama Janet Museveni. In his speech, he emphasized the importance of investing in young people, their education, and their wellbeing. He highlighted some of the SMART Africa Center's accomplishments from the report Mama Janet

Museveni's office had been given. These accomplishments, which augment the government's efforts in education include:



**Hon. Dr. John Chryestom Muyingo presenting to conference attendees**

- Recruitment of close to 3,000 school-going children aged 8-13 years in the greater Masaka region has been finalized
- Recruitment, selection and training of over 60 village health team members who are ready to deliver child and adolescent mental health services in schools and communities, a key goal of task shifting in public health
- Provision of essential textbooks and exercise books in Mathematics, Science, English and Social Studies to 30 primary schools
- Provision of lunch in the form of porridge to over 2,700 children, in the greater Masaka region
- Along with the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Education, SMART Africa was able to distribute literature on guidelines and best practices for addressing child and adolescent behavioral health as recommended by the Ministry of Health

In her Keynote, **Hon. Florence Nakiwala Kiyingi, State Minister for Gender, Labor and Social Development (Youth and Children Affairs)**, Government of Uganda, reminded the conference attendees that:

- The current global youth population is the largest in history
- The global youth population is predicted to grow by over one billion within the next decade
- Sub-Saharan Africa will play a big role in this growth
- Uganda's youth population is growing very fast as well



**Hon. Florence Nakiwala Kiyingi presenting to conference attendees**

Against this backdrop, the Honorable Minister called upon local governments in the region, NGOs, researchers and academics to invest in children and youth programs and policies, including ones explicitly focused on behavioral health to ensure healthy development of young people, and their contribution to the demographic dividend and overall economic growth and development.

### **3. The SMART Africa-Uganda Field Research & Implementation Report to Community Stakeholders**

This meeting was facilitated by Ms. Phionah Namatovu (Project Coordinator), Dr. Apollo Kivumbi (In-country Principal Investigator), and Dr. Abel Mwebembezi (In-country Implementation Lead) in which the following accomplishments were shared with the stakeholders:

- Distribution of textbooks to 30 schools in the greater Masaka region
- The recruitment of over 2,700 school going children
- The recruitment and training of research assistants (including high school students) to work with and learn from SMART Africa senior researchers
- The recruitment and training of peer parents and community health workers to address issues of child and adolescent mental health in schools – in line with task shifting in public health



- The adaptation of an MFG manual to be used by community health workers and peer parents

A Social Work doctoral student at the Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis and research assistant for SMART Africa center and ICHAD, Mr. William Byansi also reported findings from the study's baseline data on the prevalence of behavioral challenges among children participating in the study.

The 1<sup>st</sup> day of the conference concluded with a cocktail dinner organized by the SMART Africa and ICHAD. The dinner offered the opportunity for over 250 attendees to professionally interact, exchange notes, make new connections, and for SMART and ICHAD to thank the community collaborators for their investment in the two projects over the years.



Conference attendees enjoy a light meal during the cocktail dinner organized by SMART Africa and ICHAD



## **JULY 31<sup>st</sup>**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the conference constituted several activities such as the Theory of Change (ToC) workshop, the junior scholars' panel and the inaugural poster presentation session. These activities are further explained below.

### **1. Theory of Change Follow-Up Workshop**

Building on the Theory of Change (ToC) Workshop from the Second Annual Conference on Child Behavioral Health in Sub-Saharan Africa, this follow-up meeting consisted of:

- Moving beyond solely defining or outlining the steps to a ToC model, an evidence-based systematic framework for implementing interventions and programming to checking in on actual field practice and application following the training
- Participants who were in attendance at the previous year's workshop were asked to discuss how they applied the ToC model to their own line of work
- The group discussion not only allowed for sharing of invaluable insight across teams and generated great interest in ToC among the new attendees



Junior Scholars' Panel with Dr. Apollo Kivumbi, Ms. Scovia Nassazi, Ms. Miriam Mukasa and Mr. Wilberforce Tumwesige

### **2. Junior Scholars' Panel**

During the Junior Scholars' Panel, Dr. Apollo Kivumbi, Ms. Scovia Nassazi, Ms. Miriam Mukasa and Mr. Wilberforce Tumwesige from SMART Africa Uganda and the International Center for Child Health and Development (ICHAD) provided an overview of their academic and professional careers.

In addition, the panel provided a platform for the Junior Scholars' to inquire about the research lifestyle, especially as it relates to studying child behavioral health in Sub-Saharan Africa.

### **3. Poster Session**

This year's conference also marked the launch of a poster session, which is expected to be held annually. The poster presentation session showcased the research findings from projects conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa focused on a range of issues including mental health, perceptions on academic learning, and post-conflict physical/sexual violence.



- The poster presentations provided the opportunity for an interactive session where participants, including Conference Travel Awardees, could learn more about specific projects.
- The posters were evaluated by three independent judges and the three highest ranked posters were acknowledged with awards.

#### 4. Guest of Honor: Dr. Benjamin Ola. Akande

Dr. Benjamin Ola. Akande, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and Director of Africa Initiative at Washington University in St. Louis, presented on the current status and future of the continent of Africa. More specifically, Dr. Akande focused on:

- Economic development
- Promoting gender equality
- Reducing conflict
- Promoting technological advancement
- Increasing physical and mental health services.

Although there has been much headway made in improving conditions in Africa, Dr. Akande acknowledged the importance of continuing and increasing initiatives focused on policy, research, education and recruitment of gifted academics.

#### 5. Featured Topics in Child and Adolescent Mental Health



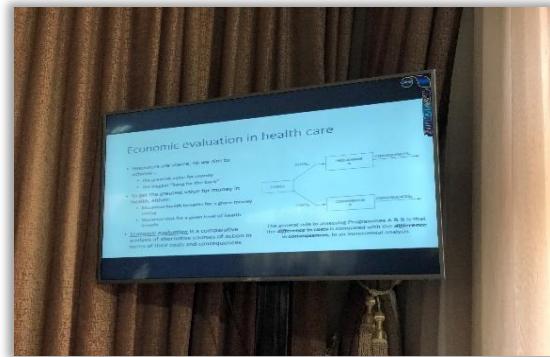
Dr. Yesim Tozan presenting on the importance of public health cost effectiveness analysis in low-resource settings



Dr. Benjamin Ola. Akande presenting on the Africa Initiative at Washington University in St. Louis

A panel of scholars from both the United States and Uganda discussed their research related to child and adolescent mental health. This panel comprised of:

- Dr. Yesim Tozan from New York University who presented on the importance of cost effectiveness analysis and the tools one can use in public health, particularly in low-resource settings.



One of Dr. Yesim's presentation slides



Dr. James Mugisha presenting on the policies, practices and infrastructure of mental health services in Uganda

- Dr. James Mugisha from Kyambogo University who provided an overview of the policies, practices and infrastructure currently surrounding mental health services in Uganda; the best interventions to closing mental health gaps; and questions to consider moving forward.

- Dr. Alexis Decosimo from NGO Playing to Live! who presented on a needs and resource assessment of mental health services in four Uganda refugee settlements and *Playing to Live!*'s pilot project "*Care for the Caregiver Pilot Program*," which strives to provide mental health frontline service providers with support systems.

## 6. Policy Maker-Researcher Engagement Panel



Mr. Dan Ferris and Mr. Timothy Opobo presenting on policy engagement with their moderator, Dr. Muthoni Mathai

Mr. Dan Ferris from Washington University in St. Louis along with Mr. Timothy Opobo from ChildFund International Uganda presented on a panel about engaging in policy work to promote social change. The objectives of the panel were to:

- Provide an overview of the importance in engaging in policy work.
- Suggest strategies and tools for researchers and NGO partners to effectively advocate for policy amendments.



## **AUGUST 1<sup>st</sup>**

The 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the conference was specific to SMART Africa colleagues, and allowed for teams to consider and plan their own study implementation as well as troubleshoot current or anticipated challenges under the guidance of the Ugandan team leaders.



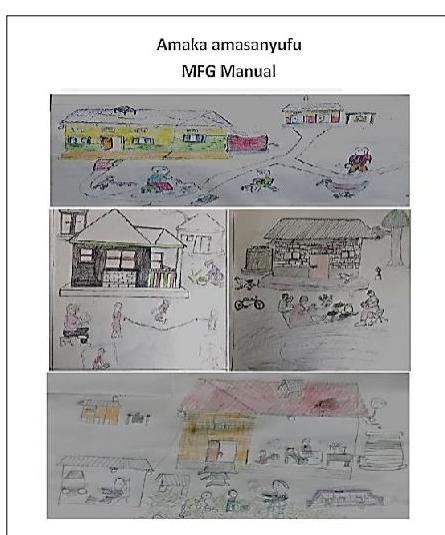
The SMART Africa Kenya and Ghana Team Meeting

### **1. Updates from Kenya and Ghana Teams**

The Ghana and Kenya teams provided updates on their efforts to plan and implement the SMART Africa study in their respective countries. With guidance from the Uganda team (who have already initiated field activities) and support from the U.S. team, the Kenya and Ghana teams thought through:

- Implementation design
- Adaption of the Multiple Family Group (MFG) intervention manual into their respective cultural contexts

### **2. Multiple Family Group (MFG) Workshop**



SMART Africa-Uganda In-Country Principal Investigator Dr. Apollo Kivumbi and SMART Africa Global Fellow Dr. Tyrone M. Parchment, who is involved in the MFG study in New York City, co-led the workshop on MFG child behavioral intervention implementation. They coached the Ghana and Kenya teams to:

- Anticipate challenges and proactively determine solutions in regards to training facilitators on the intervention.
- To create a space to envision their facilitator trainings

Both Ghana and Kenya teams appreciated the opportunity to exchange knowledge and experience, and brainstorm together as a larger team.

### **3. Field Observations**

SMART Africa team members from Ghana and Uganda had the opportunity to observe one of two field activities, either the parent peer MFG manual training or the Suubi4Her interviews, both being conducted in schools in the local language of Luganda.

- The parent peer MFG training is conducted through role play, where during each session, two parent peers act as the MFG facilitator, and the remainder of the group members act as students or caregivers.



- The Suubi4Her interviews are conducted individually in ICHAD tents in order to maintain confidentiality and privacy of the participants.



Suubi4Her field interviews in progress



The SMART Africa Kenya and Ghana teams' discussion after their observation of a multiple family group training session in the field



Wilberforce Tumwesige, an MSW student with Brown School, having a fun moment during his field work in Uganda with SMART Africa and ICHAD



The Washington University ICHAD team, including research assistants Hayden Blair, Joelynn Muwanga and Charlotte Hechler travelled to Uganda to support field operations

# Suubi4Her

## Launch of Savings Accounts

JULY 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
MASAKA, UGANDA

The ICHAD team successfully launched the opening of the Suubi4Her study intervention savings accounts on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at the Kimaanya Church grounds in Masaka.

- Dr. Fred Ssewamala officially welcomed all in attendance and gave the relevance of the study. He also gave a brief background about some of the work he has done in Masaka
- Youth Development Accounts (YDAs) were opened for participants from 15 schools in the treatment arms of the study
- Over 600 guardians and participants attended the function
- Centenary Bank Kyotera and Stanbic Bank Masaka officials graced the occasion and facilitated the account proceedings

Schools that attended the launch received English, Mathematics and Introduction to Biology textbooks. The launch was also attended by SMART Africa colleagues and affiliates, ICHAD staff, RTY members, and political and religious leaders. Dr. Ozge Sensoy Bahar, a Co-Investigator of the SMART Africa study, was in attendance and helped with the distribution of books to the Suubi4Her study participants.



Student participants of the Suubi4Her study opening savings accounts



Dr. Ozge, Hon. Godfrey Kayemba and Hon. Jude Mbabaali giving out books to some of the Suubi4Her study participants on behalf of their schools

The Commissioner for Private Schools Hon. George Muteekanga, the District Education Officer of Masaka, Hon. Betty Namagembe Kizito, the Mayor of Masaka Godfrey Kayemba, the State Minister for Higher Education Hon. Dr. John Chrysestom Muyingo, the LCV Chairperson of Masaka Hon. Jude Mbabaali, the Reverend Father Joseph Kato, Dr. Benjamin Ola. Akande, Senior Advisor to the Chancellor and Director of Africa Initiative at Washington University in St. Louis, gave welcoming remarks during the event.

This event as well as the conference have been covered in the media: <https://www.newvision.co.ug/newvision/news/1482290/scheme-initiates-teenage-school-girls-savings-accounts>

# Suubi+Adherence

## Study Closing Ceremony

AUGUST 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2018

MASAKA, UGANDA

The Suubi+Adherence closeout meeting was held on Friday August 3<sup>rd</sup>. This event was attended by representatives from the 39 clinics that were affiliated with the Suubi+Adherence study, ICHAD staff and other study collaborators such as Reach the Youth Uganda (RTY), Masaka Catholic Diocese and Rakai Health Sciences Program (RHSP).

- The research team welcomed and presented a brief overview of the recently concluded study, including the study background, research methodology and results dissemination process.
- The Suubi+Adherence Implementation Partner and Reach the Youth Executive Director, Dr. Abel Mwebembezi presented on how the income generating activities (IGA) trainings were conducted during the Suubi+Adherence study course. He reported that the most common activity taken up by the participating families was poultry farming, with piggery farming coming in close second and crop farming following in third place.
- Dr. Ssewamala emphasized the importance of



Welcoming remarks at the Suubi+Adherence closeout meeting



Question and answer session at the closeout meeting

using combination interventions to address issues of poverty among HIV/AIDS impacted communities in Sub-Saharan Africa. He explained some of the factors that hinder HIV positive children from adhering to their medication such as food shortages and the fear of being stigmatized by neighbors when travelling long distances to health centers.

- Dr. Ssewamala informed the meeting participants that those who received the study intervention (the child development accounts) did significantly better in adherence to ART compared to the study participants in the control arm during the course of the study.

- Dr. Ssewamala stressed the importance of raising awareness to the intersection of financial security, HIV prevention and treatment. He concluded by acknowledging the funders of the Suubi+Adherence study and all the partnering agencies who saw the study to completion. He shared that the next step would be the dissemination of study findings through presentations and publications, as well as the effort to obtain funding to extend the study for another five years.
- The Mayor of Masaka congratulated the ICHAD team upon concluding the study and acknowledged Dr. Ssewamala's role in supporting children and families in Uganda. He expounded on the relevance of the work ICHAD was doing in the community and emphasized the importance of research-informed policy and government intervention in order to bring positive change in society. He expressed gratitude to all participating parties, including Dr. Sensoy Bahar and the rest of the ICHAD team for investing in strengthening the Masaka community.
- The LCV vice chairperson of Masaka District, Hon. Janet Kisekka thanked all participating parties for choosing to conduct research in the Masaka region. She echoed the readiness of the district's officials to support all future ICHAD studies. She thanked the meeting attendees for coming in such large numbers and concluded by wishing the ICHAD team the best in their future endeavors.



**The Reverend Father Joseph Kato, Hon. Godfrey Kayemba and Dr. Abel Mwebembezi at the Suubi+Adherence closeout ceremony**



**Dr. Fred Ssewamala, Dr. Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Hon. Janet Kisekka, Hon. Godfrey Kayemba and Rev. Kato Bakulu expressing gratitude to the partners of the Suubi+Adherence study**

- staff. Ms. Miriam Mukasa, the head of operations, was given an award for being an exemplary leader.
- Rev. Kato Bakulu praised Dr. Ssewamala for the work he had conducted in the region and echoed the Diocese's willingness to work with the ICHAD team on future projects.
- The ceremony concluded with the distribution of ICHAD team's thank you gifts to participating clinics and a prayer by Rev. Kato.





Dr. Fred Ssewamala, Dr. Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Hon. Janet Kisekka, Hon. Godfrey Kayemba and Rev. Kato Bakulu giving out awards to partners of the Suubi+Adherence study



Mr. Simba Machingaidze, Dr. Benjamin Ola. Akande, Dr. Fred Ssewamala and Ms. Elizabeth Kasirye share a joyful moment at the end of the conference



Conference Organizing Committee: Dr. Keng-Yen Huang, Dr. Rabab Ahmed, Joelynn Muwanga, Charlotte Hechler, Edward Nsubuga, William Byansi, Dr. Ozge Sensoy Bahar, Hayden Blair, Miriam Mukasa, Phionah Namatovu and Dr. Fred Ssewamala