



THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

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SONAM

News

A NEWSLETTER OF THE SCHOOL OF NURSING & MIDWIFERY, EAST AFRICA

# Message from the Dean

Warm greetings to everyone across our three campuses as we come to the end of the first quarter of 2017.

I am pleased to share this issue of SONAM NEWS with our SONAM family here in East Africa. This is the second issue of what, as I indicated in my last message, would be one of

a series of newsletters designed to share and celebrate the achievements of SONAM faculty, alumni, and staff. This second issue celebrates more of our recent successes and provides an early glimpse of our progression against our key priorities for 2017.

Thank you all for working with me through the initial 3 months of this year in consolidating the gains we made in 2016, and further our focus

on excellence in teaching, learning, clinical connection, and research. We will continue these undertakings during 2017, along with a strong focus on faculty development and enhanced competence in teaching.

This first quarter witnessed further engagement with Johnson & Johnson, one of our major stakeholders, when it launched its new centralized office hub in Nairobi. More importantly, it provided SONAM alumni who benefitted from Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust scholarships opportunity to share their experiences on training at SONAM and how it impacted their lives. In addition, a workshop reviewing our mental health curriculum was held in Nairobi, bringing together mental health faculty from all our campuses. The workshop was supported by the attendance and expert input of Dean David Arthur from SONAM in Pakistan. You can read more about this and other stories in this newsletter.

Thank you again for your efforts. I look to your continued support in the coming months in realizing our mission to provide nurses and midwives with internationally benchmarked, quality education that is contextually relevant to the people we serve.

**Professor Sharon Brownie**  
*Dean*  
*SONAM-EA.*

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**Dr Columba Kokusiima Mbekenga** has been appointed Academic Head, SONAM-EA Tanzania. Dr Mbekenga holds a PhD in International Health (majoring in maternal and child health)

*Dr Mbekenga, holds a PhD in International Health majoring in Maternal and Child Health from Uppsala University*

from Uppsala University, Sweden and a Master of Science in Public Health from Umeå University, Sweden. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Tanzania. Her appointment positions SONAM-Tanzania as the campus with the highest number of PhD qualified faculty.

Before joining AKU faculty, Dr Mbekenga worked for 15 years at MUHAS in different academic and administrative posts, including Associate Dean, School of Nursing and lecturing in the Department of Community Health Nursing. Before joining MUHAS, she worked as an Assistant Lecturer at Hubert Kairuki Memorial University. For the past 5 years, she has been a visiting lecturer and researcher at Uppsala University.

Dr Mbekenga has extensive experience and interest in maternal and child health and qualitative research methods. She will provide high quality teaching and research leadership for SONAM.



**Dr Tumbwene E. Mwansisya** has joined the Tanzania SONAM faculty in the discipline of psychiatry and mental health. Dr Mwansisya holds a PhD in Psychiatry and Mental Health from Central South University, China. He also holds a Master of Science in Mental Health Nursing from Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, and a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

Before joining AKU, he worked as the Head of Department of Clinical Nursing and Community Health at the University

*Dr Tumbwene E. Mwansisya holds a PhD in Psychiatry and Mental Health from Central South University in China*

of Dodoma for 2 years, a lecturer at the University of Dodoma for 7 years, and a mental health specialist at Mirembe Psychiatric Consultant Hospital for 2 years. He also undertook a mental health and clinical psychiatry apprenticeship with St. John's House of Hospitality in Malawi. Dr. Mwansisya has extensive experience in mental health nursing, psychiatric neuroimaging, and quantitative research.

Dr Mwansisya will provide high quality teaching and research at SONAM, and will help to lead the review of our mental health curricula across East Africa.



**Yvonne Mathu** joins SONAM in the capacity of Executive Officer. She is attached to the Office of the Dean in Nairobi, where she will be handling stakeholder engagement and managing the strategy guide, among other tasks.

She holds a Bachelors in Public Health from Temple University and a Masters in Nursing from the University of Maryland. Ms. Mathu has a background managing grants, budgets, and regulatory compliance.

Her most recent experience includes working as a certified pediatric nurse at a Children's Hospital in Washington DC, while simultaneously working as a clinical instructor at Georgetown University, School of Nursing.

She recently moved back to Kenya after living abroad for over 30 years. Ms Mathu is excited to start her local experience at AKU-SONAM and is looking forward to the many

*Yvonne Mathu holds a Bachelors in Public Health from Temple University and a Masters in Nursing from the University of Maryland*

opportunities that will arise from this experience.

# Strengthening nursing organizations

A 3-year project aimed to strengthen professional nursing and midwifery organizations is currently being implemented by SONAM. This project is supported by *Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizen Trust*, and is coordinated by Mr Frederick Kimemia of SONAM.

The project's key results areas are strengthening organizational development support services for nine nursing and midwifery organizations in East Africa. This is expected to develop their capacity to attract more members, and improve their leadership capabilities and systems to influence the training and practice of nursing and midwifery. It is also expected to improve the image of nursing and midwifery, and promote the professional influence of both professions. The project aims to influence over 120,000 nurses in East African healthcare systems.

This outcome is significant, particularly as nurses and midwives make up about 85% of health workers in East Africa, and

therefore form the backbone of care, education, and preventative services. Nurses and midwives need resources, skills, support, and training. To achieve meaningful progress in the standards of health services, there needs to be collaboration with a focus on policy, access to resources, training, and development, and harmonization of regulations, education, licensing, and schemes of service across East Africa. Strong professional support organizations can support such endeavors.

This year, which is the project's second year, a number of activities will be conducted to support organizations to implement their plans. This includes launch of the East Africa regional initiative to build capacity to develop sound business cases on how organizations are run, and build governance structures to enable organizations to become accountable to their stakeholders. These activities have cross-cutting themes in nursing and midwifery, and will be implemented by selected leaders of the nine participating organizations.



From left (standing): Stephen Nganga, Moses Chirchir, Matt Reeves, Fredrick Kimemia, Jael Achieng, Jacinta Moki, Boniface Mwaura, Alfred Obengo. From left (seated): Mariana Xavier, Winnie Sheena and Collins Ajwang.

## Faculty pursue doctoral programmes

Supported by the SONAM Faculty Development Plan, 14 faculty members are currently pursuing PhD studies. Eight at the University of South Africa (UNiSA) and six at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.

Six of the faculty enrolled at UNiSA have successfully received confirmation of their research proposals and gained ethics approval, and can now proceed with data collection for their thesis module.

They are: Stewart Mbelwa (Tanzania) whose research area is *Resilience and coping strategies among homeless adolescents within juvenile justice systems*, Jane Kabo (Kenya), *Exploration and description of high impact low cost interventions implemented to enhance the quality of care given to preterm babies in Kilifi County-Kenya*; Esther Wanjiku (Kenya), *Breast cancer screening in a rural community, Kenyan Coast*; Cliff Aliga (Uganda), *Behavioral strategies to enhance the reporting of adverse events by healthcare practitioners in Uganda*; Gladys Mbutia (Kenya), *Guidelines for enhanced support of part-time*



From left (standing): Unisa faculty, Joan Musau (Kenya), Grace Nakate (Uganda), Dr Eunice Ndirangu (Kenya), Cliff Aliga (Uganda), Grace Mbutia (Kenya), Sindu Ramalingam (Uganda), Stewart Mbelwa (Tanzania), Professor Grace Edwards (Uganda), Dr Johana Mathebi-Neke (South Africa), and Jane Kabo (Kenya). From left (seated): Professor Gisala (South Africa), Esther Nderitu (Kenya), and Dr Nganga Limado (South Africa).

*Bachelor of Science nursing students in Kenyan universities*; Sindu Ramalingam (Uganda) *Storytelling: An innovative educational strategy for teaching midwives in Uganda*; Mary Grace Nakate (Uganda), *A model for facilitation of integrated patient care documentation at Jinja Regional Referral Hospital, Uganda*; and Joan Musau (Kenya), *Hospital disaster and mass casualty incident preparedness in Nairobi county, Kenya*.

Faculty members attending Stellenbosch University completed their 2-week pre-doctoral program in February 2017, and are now working to further develop their research proposals for formal confirmation.

They are: Joseph Mwizerwa (Uganda) whose research area is *EN-RN education in Uganda*; Judith Mutyabule (Uganda), *Non-communicable diseases*; Victor Mathias (Tanzania), *Home for the elderly*; Diana Kassaman (Kenya), *Health literacy*; Sam Mulongo (Kenya) *Controlled trial units*; and Isabel Kambo (Kenya), *Workplace health promotion*. The group was joined by Edna Tallam, CEO/Registrar Nursing Council of Kenya. Her research topic is *Midwifery competencies*.



From left: Professor Sharon Brownie, Sam Mulongo, Isabel Kambo, Diana Kassaman, Joseph Mwizerwa, Victor Mathias, Dr Doreen K. Mugendi M'ritaa (Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Stellenbosch University), Judith Mutyabule, Professor Anita Van Der Merwe (Head of Department of Nursing and Midwifery, Stellenbosch University) and Edna Tallam (CEO/Registrar Nursing Council of Kenya).



Jane Kabo (left) consulting with UNiSA supervisor Dr Johana Mathibe-Neke.



Sindu Ramalingam (left) consulting with UNiSA faculty Professor Gisela Van Rensburg.

# Faculty of Health Sciences research workshop

At AKU Nairobi (AKU-N), research is supported at many levels, including through the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) Research Support Unit (RSU). The unit's mandate is facilitating and developing a strong health research base at AKU in East Africa.

The FHS RSU recently held its first Annual FHS East Africa Planning Retreat. The 3-day research retreat was held in Naivasha from September 29 to October 1, 2016. SONAM-EA was represented at the workshop by Dean Professor Sharon Brownie, Dr Eunice Ndirangu, Joseph Mwizera, Tayreez Mushani, Joan Musau, and Sam Mulongo among others.

The workshop provided an opportunity for the joint exchange of ideas across the institution, and reviewed structures, policies, and practices. The workshop also reviewed the performance of FHS research programmes and assessed local capacity (faculty, support staff, facilities, and budgets). Participants formulated strategies, set priorities, and engaged in research mapping and reviewing collaborations in research. In addition, the workshop sought to identify the culture and support systems required to build faculty research capacity and to increase engagement in higher research degrees, as well as to identify mechanisms to increase research supervision capacity and opportunities.

Over the years, research activities at AKU-N have increased, from residents' dissertations, undergraduate projects, faculty intra- and extramural projects, collaborations with local and foreign institutions and the establishment of a Population Health Sciences Unit. Recently, the Institute of Human Development identified clinician practitioner and clinician researcher tracks in addition to faculty career restructuring. These activities have



From left: Eleanor Holroyd, Joseph Mwizera, Joan Musau, Sam Mulongo, Dr Eunice Ndirangu, Professor Sharon Brownie, Tayreez Mushani and Jane Kabo.

made a strong contribution to the institution's increased research output, enhancing the University's visibility in the region as an important contributor to new health knowledge.

The workshop's desired outcomes included increased quality and number of grants and publications, translation of research findings to clinical and public health practice and policy, and increased research understanding among faculty and graduate students to impact clinical decision making and improve faculty supervision.

These outcomes will be achieved through improved graduate student research proposals, earlier submission and approval of graduate student projects, funding for faculty projects, improved grant application processes, assistance to faculty and graduate students, grant and manuscript writing, routing of grant applications, and collaborations. Engagement in FHS research activities provides a further forum for strengthening research capacity building efforts.

## 2017 PUBLICATIONS

## JAN- MARCH

Assaf, G. N., **Holroyd, E.**, Lopez, V. (2017). Isolation and prayer as means of solace for Arab women with breast cancer: An in-depth interview study. *Psycho-oncology*.

**Atsali, E., Edwards, G.** (2017). Historical influences on utilising upright positions for birth in Africa. *MIDIRS Midwifery Digest*, 27(1).

**Mwansisya, T. E.**, Hu, A., Li, Y., Chen, X., Wu, G., Huang, X., Lv, D., Li, Z., Liu, C., Xue, Z., Feng, J., Liu, Z. (2017). Task and resting-state fMRI studies in first-episode schizophrenia: A systematic review. *Schizophrenia Research*.

Ngugi, A., Agoi, F., Mahoney, M. R., Lakhani, A., Mang'ong'o, D., **Nderitu, E.**, Armstrong, R., Macfarlane, S. (2017). Utilization of health services in a resource-limited rural area in Kenya: Prevalence and associated household-level factors. *PLoS One*, 12(2).

Pallangyo, E., **Mbekenga, C.**, Källestål, C., Rubertsson, C., Olsson, P. (2017). "If really we are committed things can change, starting from us": Healthcare providers' perceptions of postpartum care and its potential for improvement in low-income suburbs in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. *Sexual and Reproductive Health Care*, 11, 7-12.

Wong, W. C., Cheung, S., Miu, H. Y., Chen, J., Loper, K. A., **Holroyd, E.** (2017). Mental health of African asylum-seekers and refugees in Hong Kong: using the social determinants of health framework. *BMC Public Health*, 17(1).

Yen, Y. Y., Hong-Gu, H., Yee, L. S., **Holroyd, E.**, Shefaly, S., Serena, K. (2017). Perceptions of parents with preterm infants hospitalized in Singaporean neonatal intensive care unit. *Journal of Perinatal and Neonatal Nursing*.

## Mental health workshop

A 3-day workshop to review the mental health course in the Diploma to BScN program was held at SONAM Kenya recently.

The workshop aimed to review and update the conceptual basis and content of the current program, ensure relevance of assessments, strengthen clinical placement materials, and improve alignment/consistency across all campuses. It also aimed to update readings and associated resources, and improve Moodle postings.

The workshop review team included international and AKU experts in mental health. The core team comprised Professor Sharon Brownie (Dean, SONAM-EA), Dr Tumbwene Mwansisya (Lead Mental Health Faculty SONAM-EA), and Professor David Arthur (Dean, SONAM Karachi, Pakistan and specialist mental health nurse).

Other participants included Professor Rachel Jenkins of Kings College, London; Moses Wankiiri from SONAM Uganda; Gladys Mbuthia from SONAM Kenya; and Stewart Mbelwa from SONAM Tanzania.

Commenting on the workshop, Professor Rachel Jenkins said, “Nursing is the backbone of East African health services, and the role of nurses is crucial for mental health. This week we have been reviewing the mental health curriculum and aligning it to the East African context and the role of the nurses in East Africa in meeting the mental health needs of the populations in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.”

Dr Moses Wankiiri observed, “I have been teaching mental health for the last 8 years and can confirm that mental health is central to our core curriculum and it is important to ensure regional consistency of content and standards. However, although all the three East African countries are interlinked geographically, they also have their own unique characteristics that affect mental health. Things that cut across need to be harmonized.” He added, “Updating and harmonization of the curriculum was the thrust of the workshop, I will now be able to know what the students in Tanzania and Kenya are learning because we will be using the same document.”

Dr Wankiiri also commented that “Other key areas of emphasis included community involvement and positive mental health. Relatives of patients are important carers because they understand the patient’s environment such as religion and other social aspects and provide much of the day-to-day support and care! This review helped bring out more helpful measures, unlike the older custodial method.”

Dr Tumbwene Mwansisya said, “The old curriculum that was being used was strongly theoretical, but the proposed one strengthens the emphasis on nurses’ practical clinically-based competencies in mental healthcare. The proposed curriculum

will equip nurses with communication skills, and understanding of pathways to care and biopsychosocial management that are appropriate for the respective countries in East Africa populations.” He also reported that “The expectation from the revised curriculum is to improve the mental health and well-being of individuals, special populations, and the general population rather than just the treatment of mental illness. Ultimately, this will improve the quality of life in East Africa. We brainstormed, identified curriculum and service provision gaps, and exchanged our different experiences in EA and beyond.”

On the sidelines of the workshop, Dean Professor Sharon Brownie and her counterpart, the SONAM Karachi, Pakistan Dean Professor David Arthur held discussions relating to the two schools. They committed to cooperate on a range of areas including curriculum review and collaborative research. Both Deans will work together to systematically review all courses across the curriculum, with an entire curriculum review to be scheduled every 5 years.



Workshop participants from left: Professor Sharon Brownie, Dr Moses Wankiiri, Gladys Mbuthia, Stewart Mbelwa Professor Rachel Jenkins, Professor David Arthur, and Dr Tumbwene Mwansisya.



Professor David Arthur and Professor Sharon Brownie

## Tanzania case studies

### Easter Malugala

Easter graduated with a Diploma in General Nursing and Midwifery from the Muhimbili School of Nursing in 1983, and was employed in the government sector for the following 2 years. In 2002, she joined the first intake of BScN nurses at AKU-SONAM, Dar es Salaam. After graduation in 2005, she returned to the Aga Khan Hospital in Dar for 1 year. In 2007, she joined the Benjamin Mkapa HIV Foundation in Zanzibar, where she made a considerable contribution to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality rates in Michiweni District, Pemba Island.

“There was no theatre in the District Hospital, so we took our clients to Chakechake District. The nurses and healthcare providers caring for the pregnant mothers and newborns had big knowledge gaps in the management of emergencies,” she said, “They did not know when to refer so I trained them in the main elements of dangerous deliveries. We made sure all nurses became knowledgeable in the signs and symptoms of dangerous labor. Sometimes I assessed the patient myself, and nurses observed me; and the next morning they would practice, while I supervised. This ensured sustainability of care in the labor ward.” She added, “In Pemba, some of my colleagues didn’t know how to apply for further education. I encouraged them and showed them the way. One nurse from Michiweni later graduated from AKU.”



Easter Malugala with colleagues at work

In 2008, Easter was appointed National Training Coordinator (Malaria programme) at World Vision in Dar es salaam, before joining the International Centre for AIDS Care and Treatment Programmes (ICAP) in 2011. While at ICAP she helped establish the Tanzania Health Promotion Support. She also served as a field officer at Prevention of Mother to Child HIV Transmission Services, where she oversaw the availability of HIV-related services to coastal communities in Tanzania, building the capacity of healthcare workers.

Currently, Easter is a Health Field Officer at the Walter Reed Foundation, which operates in the southern highlands of Tanzania, where she is contributing to the reduction in HIV-related mortality through testing of mothers, fathers, and infants.

**Pendo Bukoli** is a Supervisor, Cervical cancer screening at Tanzania Health Promotion Support. A nurse and midwife, Pendo is a product of AKU Tanzania, where she graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. At the time, she was in charge of the Cervical Cancer Screening Unit at the Ocean Road Cancer Institute, where she worked for over 8 years.

After graduation, she joined a Tanzanian non-government organization (NGO), Tanzania Health Promotion Support, where she has been for the past 4 years.

The NGO operates in Pwani and Mtwara. As supervisor, she credited with the establishment of 12 cervical cancer screening sites in districts and health centers in the Pwani Region. In Mtwara, she established 10 sites and trained healthcare providers on how to use cervical cancer screening equipment.

“We monitor healthcare providers to ensure that they adhere to what we have

taught them, taking into consideration the culture and practices of the community they serve,” stated Pendo.

Pendo is also involved in the prevention of mother to child transmission (PMCT) of HIV. As she carries out PMTC screening, she speaks to women and their husbands about the importance of cervical cancer screening. “We are now training our nurses in the antenatal and



labor wards so they can counsel and help mothers understand the importance of keeping PMCT appointments when they are asked to,” Pendo explained.

Pendo says that owing to her training at AKU, she is now handling more responsibilities. She attends meetings, supervises nurses and activities, documents all registers, and writes monthly and quarterly reports. At AKU, she learnt leadership and management skills that made it possible for her to confidently manage the centers. She also teaches nurses how to screen for cervical cancer.

“At AKU, I learned patient assessment and leadership skills, which have enhanced my ability to supervise several projects as well as staff. I also improved my nursing competencies and learned about trends and issues in nursing, and that nursing is like a journey where we get somewhere after sometime. Additionally, I learned to deal with psychiatric cases.”

# Celebrating International Women's Day

International Women's Day was an opportunity for Johnson & Johnson and SONAM to celebrate their 15-year partnership.

At the celebration, three women alumni who were able to enroll in the Bachelor of Nursing programme with the support of *Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust* funding spoke about their professional experiences in the field.

Caroline Ndichu, based at Githunguri Health Centre in Kiambu County, Anastashia Mbatha, serving at Kenyatta National Hospital, and Diana Kassaman, who is teaching at SONAM and now pursuing her PhD recounted how their education had changed how they practiced nursing.

"I rediscovered myself—the mentor, the critical thinker, and the leadership potential in me was awakened...the scholarship also opened up opportunities for me pursue further education in the field of nursing, which explains why I am pursuing a PhD at Stellenbosch University," said Diana.

"Being a nurse has been the best experience in my life," Anastashia Mbatha remarked, "The confidence and knowledge I gained at AKU has also benefited my institution (Kenyatta National Hospital) in different ways. Immediately after my training, I was appointed a Clinical Instructor in my current department, a position I hold to date. I also mentor student nurses, nurse interns and nurses sent for Nursing Council orientation in the hospital."

Caroline said that when she joined Githungiri Health Centre, "there were up to 25 births. Today there are between



Jane Griffiths (left), Company Group Chairman of Janssen in Europe, Middle East & Africa and Professor Brownie, Dean SONAM-EA (right).



From left: Mr Luis Diaz Rubio, Janssen Managing Director Emerging Markets, Alumnus Anastashia, Jane Griffiths Group Chairman JnJ for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Alumni Caroline and Diana, Professor Brownie, Dean SONAM-EA and Mr Sereni Vittorio, the Head of Johnson & Johnson in Nairobi.

100 and 150 deliveries. On a single day we see 500–700 patients. I have encouraged up to six nurses who are currently pursuing nursing degrees.” See video “*Day in the life of a nurse*” (<http://jjcct.org/videos/?page=videos>).

Jane Griffiths, Company Group Chairman of Janssen in Europe, Middle East, and Africa, thanked the alumni for sharing their “great stories,” and spoke about how the establishment of a Johnson & Johnson operations hub in Nairobi would bring together the various dimensions of the company and enhance interaction with its partners in Kenya. In turn, this would help in the drive to increase human resource capacity for health and promote the healthcare system in Kenya.

Commenting on the partnership with SONAM, Vittonio Sereni, Head of Johnson & Johnson in Nairobi, said that the 15-year partnership laid a solid foundation for further cooperation between the two organizations. The SONAM study *Supporting Healthy Futures in East Africa* was particularly helpful to gauge the impact of the partnership, as it provided an assessment of the effect of the scholarships and how nursing skills had been upgraded to improve the quality of health care and foster nurse leadership.

“This partnership also commemorates the commitment His Highness the Aga Khan made towards the advancement of quality health care in East Africa; a commitment made over 100 years ago that continues today,” said Professor Sharon Brownie, Dean, SONAM-EA. “To date, the investment has supported 2,138 nurses in East Africa. All alumni who have benefited from this partnership are women—our contribution to International Women’s Day and the 2017 theme of women taking leadership positions in the workplace. All are doing exceptionally well in their respective responsibilities, including those in rural areas.”



The three alumni with Jane Griffiths – JJCCT (2nd from left). From Left: Anastashia Mbatha of Kenyatta National Hospital, Diana Kassaman of SONAM-EA and Caroline Ndichu of Githunguri Health Centre.

## Celebrating 15 years of partnership with Johnson & Johnson in London



Alumni Mary Mwakini and Professor Sharon Brownie in London

# CELEBRATING JJCCT/AKU 15



From left to right Matt Reed CEO, Aga Khan Foundation UK; Mary Mwaniki, 2015 Nurse Alumni; Jane Griffiths, Company Group Chairman Janssen EMEA and Chair of the Trust; Sharon Brownie, Dean, Aga Khan University School of Nursing & Midwifery East Africa; Yasmin Amarsi, Former Dean, Aga Khan University School of Nursing & Midwifery East Africa; Firoz Rasul, President, Aga Khan University.

A series of events marked the celebrations signifying 15 years of partnership between SONAM and JJCCT. The celebrations which were held both in Kenya and the UK featured the launching of the official launch of the *Healthy Futures Report* followed by visiting alumni beneficiaries Mary Mwakini in London and field visits to Caroline Ndichu in Githunguri Kenya and alumni Sr. Esther ending with celebrating three alumni beneficiaries in Nairobi during this year's International Women's Day. *Sonam News* walks you through the exciting pictorial aspects of the celebrations.



Previous SONAM Leaders, Dean Yasmin Asmari and Dr. Khairunnisa Dhamani (KD) join 15 yr celebrations

# YEARS OF OUR PARTNERSHIP

## JJCT team visit alumni Sr Esther

The Johnson & Johnson Corporate Citizenship Trust (JJCT) senior Executive team visited Sr. Esther, an alumni at her place of work at St. Francis Community Hospital in Nairobi during a field trip. Esther received a JJCT scholarship which enabled her to study and earn a BScN degree. The team was led by Jane Griffiths – Chair JJCT and Professor Sharon Brownie – Dean SONAM EA. Other members were Annet Eijkelkamp Director EMEA and Frank Welvaert Managing Director JJCT.



From left: Annet Eijkelkamp, EMEA Director; Frank Welvaert, JJCT Managing Director; Sr. Esther, alumna; Jane Griffiths, JJCT Chair; and Professor Sharon Brownie, Dean, SONAM-EA and Mr. Benjamin Davies, Partnership Director, JJCT

## Preparing Healthy Futures Report



Special thanks to Walter Robb and Lyndal Hunter - Volunteers and major contributors to *Healthy Futures Report*.

# Oncology nursing course

The SONAM - EA pioneer oncology specialist nurses' diploma program introduced last year is making significant progress in the midst of increased student enthusiasm.

This initial intake of 16 pioneer oncology nurses are expected to graduate in December when they will have completed 18 months of training. In the initial phase of the course, the nurses were trained on the basics of oncology – the various types of cancers that afflict humanity and their prevalence.

The trainees are now in the second phase of training which builds on the foundation of the course namely what they have so far been taught. It entails training them on the values surrounding their course such as the 'whys' of cancer which feeds on how to effectively treat the affliction. This is yet another level of this training which imparts skills and competencies necessary for better treatment and management of cancer.

“We have learnt how to handle reluctant cancer patients with compassion. Some of the patients may be in pain and a great deal of discomfort. Sometimes, it is a difficult moment for me but I have to do the right thing with compassion.” says a trainee. And another trainee quoting an appreciative doctor remarks “whatever you are doing (managing cancer patients) will take you far...far!”

The course has been received well and according to Senior Instructor Tayreez Mushani ‘the students are very responsive’. The programme, the first of its kind in East Africa, will help increase the number of nurses with critical skills in handling cancer patients. It represents

a partnership between the Princess Margaret Cancer Center (Toronto, Canada), the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (Nairobi) and SONAM Kenya campus. The Princess Margaret Center provided partial funding for an expert oncology nurse educator, namely, Tayreez Mushani to develop the program in Kenya.

The school recently received further support in respect of this programme from the Oncology Nursing Society of the US which donated print and e-books on oncology.

SONAM - EA has now opened fresh admissions for nurse students who wish to train as specialist oncology nurses.

Those admitted will start training in August this year. Plans are now underway to expand the program to Uganda.

Cancer ranks high up the ladder in Kenya as a leading cause of death after infectious and cardiovascular diseases. It is estimated that some 41,000 new cases of cancer were reported in the country in 2012 and 28,500 deaths, according some accounts. The most common cancers in the country are prostate, cervix, breast and oesophagus for women, and blood and blood forming organs, kidneys and brain for children. The disease burden in Kenya mirrors the trend worldwide of the rise in non-communicable diseases and mortality in developing countries.



Tayreez Mushani leading students in an Oncology skills testing session



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