Welcome to the 12th Issue of the Nurses & Midwives Leaders Think Tank Newsletter

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And much more…
we can see a lot of shining moments of how our leaders across the country have successfully led the Covid-19 response despite mounting challenges.

Leading in a crisis is about being proactive, taking initiative, sustaining purpose, clarity of vision, and empathy. The goal of the NMLTT is to amplify advocacies for all Nurses and Midwives in Uganda. With each issue, the NMLTT leaders have been proactive, undertaken initiatives such as fundraising and supplying PPE to nurses and midwives at the frontline, establishing platforms to galvanize nursing and midwifery Covid-19 response efforts, started this Newsletter as a critical tool to expand Nursing and Midwifery reach and connectivity, and have continued to highlight stories of nursing and midwifery leadership impact across the country.

IT'S A WRAP...REMARKS BY PROF. NANYONGA

Dear Nurses and Midwives, I cannot believe that this is our 12th issue in the Nurses and Midwives Leaders’ Think Tank (NMLTT) Newsletter. When we embarked on this journey in 2020, we were in the thick of the Covid-19 Pandemic. This crisis would go on to define, challenge, and stretch every nursing and midwifery leader across the country.

Recently, I was having a conversation with one of my colleagues about what it has been like to lead during the pandemic—her response was swift, it was overwhelming but hey... “heavy is the head that wears the crown” . This is a Shakespeare quote adapted from the original “uneasy is the head that wears a crown”. The sentence is an English idiom that implies that leadership is a tough job and those in leadership bear multiple responsibilities that keep them awake. And that is exactly what the NMLTT has demonstrated over the last 18 months. And as we look back at the eleven issues of the letter,
We caught up with the newly appointed registrar to hear her plans for her First 100 days in office.

**TT: Congratulations on your appointment as the new registrar of the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC). Tell us about yourself.**

Christine Nimwesiga is an AfyaBora Fellow working as Registrar Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council since December 2021. She is a Nurse by profession with a diploma in nursing and midwifery Mutolere School of Nursing and Midwifery, a Degree in Nursing from Mbarara University of Science and Technology, and master's in nursing from Uganda Christian University, Mukono. She holds a Master of Science in public health from Clarke International University (Formerly, International Health Sciences University), Uganda, and holds a Diploma in health services management. She is an experienced nurse practitioner, educator, researcher, and leader for the last 18 years. She is passionate about evidence-based practice, and she is a specialist in Public Health, Maternal Child Health, and Adolescent Health a field she has been in for the last 11 years.

**TT: What are your plans/priority activities for your first 100 days in office? The top 3 things/changes you want to be known for as registrar of the Nurses and Midwives Council? (Measurable -smart)**
→ Digitalization of registration, Enrolment and Renewal of Licenses for Nurses and Midwives both locally and nationally trained

→ Strengthen Research for evidence-based practice

→ Revive UNMC image through offering timely and efficient services

TT: At your appointment, many nurses and midwives have been disgruntled about several issues

(Not sure if you are included ... laughs) but these included:

Local offices: - poor customer care with a very low turnaround time for registration and exams, poor control of the large numbers, limited number of staff at council to fasten the process, high registration fees vs pay, numerous complaints about so many interviews - UNMEB and addition to council interviews (consolidate interviews).

TT: What are some solutions you have put forward/considered to address some of these challenges?

→ Online registration and renewal are coming to answer most of the questions raised

→ Process to procure a bigger office has started

   God willing we shall have improved offices

→ We are planning to recruit more staff

→ Pre-licensure assessment at UNMC will continue but in an improved way through an online system. The online system will enable the assessment to be objective with the aim to elicit entry onto the register or roll practice competencies. Exams done by UNMEB are completely different from those done at the council. At the council, it is a quality check. We are interested in checking practice competencies that are needed for nurses and

→ midwives to be safe practitioners on entry into service. This is aimed at ensuring the safety of the community which is our key mandate.

→ Sensitize nurses and midwives on the fees charged, the quality mechanisms in financial management, and where accountability reports could be found.

TT: How do you plan to improve nurses’ and midwives’ experience at the council? Have you been able to identify your supporters and opposers? What support do you need from nurses, midwives, associations, leaders, or other key stakeholders to perform your job better?

It’s hard to tell who a supporter is or an opposer currently, but I know they are there. However, whether they are there or not, what I want is collaboration, coordination, communication—especially consultation and feedback. I, therefore, call upon all nurses and midwives to support the changes that they want to see in the Council. Alone, I cannot. Yet together, we can.

TT: Did you foresee any challenges? What is your contingency plan to address them?

Foreseen challenges

Increasing new schools where the council has limited control

→ High intakes into nursing training schools that may compromise the quality of nurses and midwives joining practice areas

→ Upcoming merger of government agencies following the presidential directive that may hinder the implementation of new innovations

→ COVID-19 pandemic that may increase on the number of unregistered nurses and midwives

→ Accessibility to stable internet and laxity in use of technology by nurses and midwives may hinder utilization of the online registration and licensure system.
My Contingency Plan

→ Sensitization and continuous support to nurses and midwives on the use of the Digitalized systems for council services, CPDs, registration, enrolment, and renewals
→ Engaging the Ministry of Education and Sports and other key players in Education on the best way quality in education and training can be ensured in nursing and midwifery training Review the strategic plan to guide the council during merger process.

INSIGHT INTO EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE AND HOW IT CAN WORK

"The why and how of the NMLTT Newsletter in brief" By Elizabeth Pearson

After realizing a gap in communication between the nurse leaders and the nursing fraternity, during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown, Elizabeth shared the idea of a newsletter with one of the senior leaders and mentors.

There was evidence from the onset that to fight the pandemic information sharing would play a vital part in ensuring that decisions made at policy level from the WHO to MoH, would have to be disseminated for the colleagues in every corner of the country. From Issue One that we published in April 2020 to this 12th issue, we have covered a variety of different but useful information about how to deliver better-improved care, how to look after yourselves as health care workers, and participated in the research, among others. We have witnessed a growing desire for nurses to write for publication as well.

The most recent issue was published on the Ministry of education and sports website here https://www.education.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NML-ISSUE-11-FINAL-RCN.pdf and the Ministry of Health website https://www.health.go.ug/cause/the-nurse-midwives-leaders-think-tank-2/ All these avenues are really critical in enhancing information sharing which is EBP.

The editing team has made all the issues available for FREE on a very friendly platform feel free to go through the various articles here https://issuu.com/nmltt?issuu_product=header &issuu_subproduct=publisher-suite-workflow&issuu_context=link&issuu_cta=profile

We would like to hear from you. Your stories, your insights, and most especially what you have learned during the pandemic lockdown. Your evaluation is important to use. Please take time to complete this short survey to help us improve and to monitor the usefulness of this communication channel. If you have not completed this evaluation form, please take a minute, and complete it here https://forms.gle/QvGv4FNxwaoij9DG7 . We value your thoughts.

Thank you very much. Elizabeth Pearson Editing Team NMLTT. @ezabe2
WELLNESS, THE FUTURE OF HEALTH

by Nakalanda Maria (Nurse, Public Health Officer): Nurse and Wellness Consultant (nakalanda.m@gmail.com)

According to the Global Wellness Institute (2022), wellness is the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health. The events of the past two years of the pandemic had people across the globe reacting differently to the changes brought by the pandemic. For the health workers and other front-liners, a sudden wave of panic at the start was replaced by a collective pause. We all had to rethink our way of life and approach as we confronted the new challenges. Our behaviors and those of our patients changed. Everyone found a need to take control of their well-being. What sprung out of this was a newfound sense of awareness about our health and wellness. But what did this imply?

The Pandemic re-defined our understanding of wellness. The endless lockdown forced us to craft creative ways of keeping fit and eating healthy on a budget; especially for those of us in countries where vaccine coverage is still painfully low. There was an urgent need to adapt to a more workable and simplified wellness routine. For survival, we all had to take matters into our own hands and figure out what we could do to improve our mental and physical health; despite the Covid-19 restrictions. What came out of this was a new way of practicing wellness.

Wellness Trends to Look Out for in 2022

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed gaps in the traditional way of implementing wellness for individuals, families, and organizations. The new trend puts emphasis on preventive health through a wide range of complementary approaches to keep people healthy. For example, steaming with herbs became a common household practice. Taking bitter lemon, guava leaves, jackfruit and other herbal remedies replaced taking tablets and injections. People grew more cautious about what they ate, and physical exercise was commonplace as streams of people were often seen jogging, walking, or engaging in some form of physical activity, during the lockdown. This mandated all wellness practitioners to adapt simpler and more affordable wellness approaches to serve their clients better. As nurses and midwives, we are constantly going to interact with people who are not only in need of medical attention but are also interested in knowing how they can live healthier and more productive lives. The question then, is how prepared are we for this paradigm shift?

“A greater focus on wellness for nurses & midwives”

**Improved Nutritional Approaches**

There’s an adage that says, “You are what you eat”. The health of individuals is greatly influenced by the nutritional choices they make. Across Africa, the number of men and women living with obesity is increasing gradually. The current statistics on people living with obesity in Africa indicate a rise from 12% to 18.4% for women and a rise of 4.1% to 7.4% for men. There’s a growing body of research on Gut health that has been proved that the gut has direct communication with the brain. The state of the gut impacts the quality of sleep, emotions, and overall productivity. Most people’s foods, which are a source of nourishment, cannot provide the energy they require to perform at work. This is a major contributing factor in issues of depression, obesity, and other non-communicable diseases. A great place to start is looking back to our roots. A retired Professor of Nutrition once said to me that “If your ancestors ate it, eat it.” - I have never had a clearer approach to nutritional counseling ever since. While a pizza or KFC bucket might be cool, it is time for us to choose the traditional steamed matooke, groundnut stew, and katunkuma (sour berries), an assortment of fruits over the readily available fast - foods.

**Mental Health Prioritization**

In 2013, the World Health Assembly approved a “Comprehensive Mental Health Action plan for 2013-2020”. The plan was a commitment by all WHO member states to take specific actions to improve mental health and contribute to the attainment of global targets (WHO, 2013). Good mental health is

related to mental and psychological wellbeing, especially in the wake of pandemic and related effects. Organizations are now placing a greater emphasis on prevention and management of depression and anxiety related disorders in the workplace. It is now important that everyone in the nursing profession take note of stress triggers in their work environment and devise ways of managing the job stress. In a life dictated by technology, where spending hours on the smartphone, laptop or television is commonplace, it will be more helpful to disconnect once-in-a-while and take a retreat. Spend time in nature, read a good book or listen to soul music.

The emergency of wellness resorts and spas for people to retreat was just as timely. In Uganda, the Great Outdoors Wellness Resort

www.greatoutdoorsuganda.com in Luweero is one of the many places that come to mind. The place, provides a unique outdoor experience, where you can enjoy nutritious meals, premium accommodation set in a forest environment which gives clients a chance to reconnect with Mother Nature - away from the noise of the city.

**Wellness Tourism**

While luxury travels are quite popular, the new trends in the wellness industry are characterized by individuals enjoying luxury with curated meals, supervised workouts and an emphasis on mindfulness and enlightenment. Imagine waking up in a luxury hotel to a nutrient rich meal of your local cuisine (Kashera or your favorite katogo of matooke and groundnut stew) before hiking with a veteran fitness trainer? How about a few days in a forest resort or private beach with regular meditation sessions? This is what wellness tourism is all about.

**A greater Focus on Wellness for Nurses and Midwives**

Depression ranks among the top three workplace problems for employee assistance professionals, following only family crisis and stress. Nurses and other Health care-workers’ pay heavy prices with hundreds dying or ailing due to occupational hazards.

This is in part due to the fact that most nurses have workplaces that do not support their wellness. Numerous studies have listed nursing as one of the most stressful occupations; with an estimated 68% of all nurses suffering job related stress. Poor wellbeing of nurses affects their productivity at work and at home. For health service delivery to be effective, the welfare and wellness of nurses should be prioritized at all levels of management. Coaching programs can be incorporated to bridge the gap between their knowledge and action in achieving healthier lifestyles.

Otherwise, I hope this will be the year where we make a deliberate choice to invest in the wellness of nurses and midwives for improved health service delivery.
CELEBRATING NURSES: INTERNATIONAL WOMEN’S DAY #BREAK THE BIAS

On March 8th Nurses and Midwives in Uganda joined many women around the world to celebrate International Women’s Day. Two of our very own Nurses (Jamillah) and Midwives (Phiona) were featured in Frontline Health Workers’ Coalition Intl Women’s Day Campaign. Health Workers in various Hospitals also joined in sharing their photos in line with this year’s theme #Break the bias.
NURSES AND MIDWIVES WINNING

Congratulations Dr. Rose C Nanyonga, is now Associate Professor.

On 5th March, during the 12th CIU graduation, Dr Rose Clarke Nanyonga became Associate Professor Rose Clarke Nanyonga, effectively making her, to our knowledge, the first female nurse to become an associate professor in Uganda. We are all very proud of you Prof. Rose. This is a well-earned place for Dr Rose and serves as a reminder for all aspiring nurses and midwives in this country that our place is not just to earn a place at the table, it is about using our talent and gifts to advance the profession.

**Short Bio**

Dr. Rose Clarke-Nanyonga is a Vice-Chancellor and now, Associate Professor at Clarke International University (CIU). Dr. Nanyonga is a well-established and inspirational healthcare leader, educator, learner, researcher, nurse, mentor, policy influencer, and global health enthusiast.

She has more than 26 years of clinical experience, health systems & administrative leadership, and has previously worked as the Director of Nursing and Midwifery services at International Hospital Kampala, and Director of Clinical Services for International Medical Group, Kampala, Uganda. She was instrumental in helping Dr. Ian Clarke to establish the International Hospital School of Nursing in 2005, which subsequently formed the first faculty of CIU in 2008.
Dr. Nanyonga received a Bachelor of Science-Nursing from Arkansas Tech University, USA in 2002; a Master of Science in Nursing from Baylor University, USA in 2005 (Family Nurse Practitioner); a Ph.D. in Nursing from Yale University, USA in 2015; and a Graduate Certificate of Concentration in Global Health from the Whitney and Betty McMillan Center for International Studies at Yale University, USA in 2015. Prof. Nanyonga is a Jonas Scholar (Yale University); Distinguished Alumnae (Yale-2018); and a Hall of Distinction Alumnae (ATU-2020).

Dr Nanyonga is interested in research that explores issues related to Health Systems Strengthening, Management of Chronic Illnesses, Health care and Higher Education Leadership & Policy, and Nursing Workforce studies. Her Ph.D. work examined Leadership, Followership, and the Context, an Integrative Examination of Nursing Leadership in Uganda. She is a co-Principal Investigator in multiple research studies exploring hypertension care in Uganda, optimising nurse-led interventions for hypertension management, and is currently an institutional faculty mentor for the Health Professions Education and training for strengthening the health system and services in Uganda program (NIH Grant No. 1R25TW011213) in which CIU is a participating institution. Her impressive CV highlights a wide range of platforms where her research has been disseminated through publications in peer review journals, conferences, webinars, and relevant presentations.

In terms of outreach, Dr. Nanyonga is the founder of the Rose’s Journey Scholarship Fund which was established in 2009 to support and increase the number of nurses and midwives with baccalaureate degrees in Uganda. She also spearheads the Lead, Inspire, Enable leadership training programs for nurses and midwives in practice. She serves on numerous committees and boards, holds multiple speaking engagements and mentoring webinars annually, and is passionate about enabling young people through thought and value-oriented leadership.

In 2009, Dr. Nanyonga pioneered a grassroots campaign to end child sacrifice and crimes associated with ritualistic child sacrifice in Uganda. She has remained an avid advocate for change in this area.

She is a member of the American Association of Critical Care Nurses, American Association of Nurse Practitioners, American Nurses Association and Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society for Nurses.

For the last 7 years, Dr. Nanyonga has successfully led the CIU leadership and staff to transition the university from a disadvantaged state to a position where CIU is well-established as one of the leading private universities in Uganda. In recent months, with the country besieged with the Covid-19 Pandemic, she and her team demonstrated leadership by collaboratively working with the National Council of Higher Education to foster continuity of learning through the Emergency Open Distance and E-Learning for health professional students at CIU.

She has done so while remaining passionate about issues that impact the nursing and midwifery profession and has remained a key leadership figure for the NMLTT. She loves people, good food, pragmatic conversations, travel, writing, enabling others, and solitude. The NMLTT is very proud of you Associate Prof. Nanyonga. Thank you for being a pathfinder, and Congratulations.
IN OTHER NEWS

COMMENT ON INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT TO THE UK BY UGANDA NURSES AND MIDWIVES’ ASSOCIATION UK (UNMA-UK)

Background

Following a series of workshops to explore how the diaspora can engage in the global engagement campaign, the lockdown in the pandemic highlighted a massive gap in how the health care diaspora workers could support each other. The Uganda Nurses and Midwives Association - UK (UNMA-UK) was created in July 2020, at the backend of the second wave of the Covid 19 pandemic.

UGANDA’S GLOBAL REPRESENTATIVES TO INTERNATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF MIDWIVES

Nakatudde Hadijja and Anitah Kusaasira are 2 of 20 midwives from around the world that have been selected for the Executive Midwife Leader program and Young Midwife Leadership program respectively at the International Confederation of Midwives. In addition to that, Anitah Kusaasira was appointed communications and advocacy lead for Young Midwife Leaders in Uganda.
As an International Nursing Organisation (INO), UNMA-UK embraces Internationally Recruited (IR) health care professionals (HCP). We are identified as a Black and Ethnic Minority group (BME/BAME) in the UK belonging to the wider Diaspora Nursing and Midwifery consortium. You can read more about this here https://www.england.nhs.uk/nursingmidwifery/international-recruitment/

Members

Many UNMA-UK members have experience working in the National Health Service (NHS) and the private sector. We have a wide variety of skill mixes, from retired modern matrons to students and newly qualified colleagues.

IR

There has been a lot of news about IR of both qualified nurses and midwives, and none of the qualified care workers are given the shortage of human health resources worldwide in the UK in this case. UNMA-UK, a key stakeholder, is exploring the opportunity for our colleagues in Uganda since the launch of the unique “Health and Care Visa” in August 2020; that gives fast-track visas to all health workers from anywhere in the world come to Britain. Please see https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-health-and-care-visa-to-ensure-uk-health-and-care-services-have-access-to-the-best-global-talent

We would like to encourage all interested colleagues to contact us at www.unma.org.uk at whatever stage they are at in the process of relocating for any advice and guidance. Be vigilant of any fraudulent activity, attracting many business-minded organisations who may not have their colleagues' interests at heart. So, we encourage that anyone looking at this opportunity ensures that they get and use only reputable registered agencies to have a clearly explained, signed, and dated contract with them. Make sure the process at each stage is also presented clearly.

Most exporting agencies will require you to have at least two years of working experience, a pass in the English test - IELTS (For nurse roles, the passing score is 7), and an additional Computer Based Test (CBT) for those applying for Staff Nurse or Registered Nurse posts; a practice license not older than two years, a full health check and for females - a negative pregnancy test (is advisable), valid passport and references. If in doubt, please seek advice.

We are working closely with the NHS IR team, NHSI, Florence Nightingale Foundation (FNF) and other stakeholders to offer pastoral care and support for all Internationally recruited colleagues. We have developed a 90-day integration/mentorship program for you on your arrival. All this is available on our website www.unma.org.uk.

We look forward to working with you.

From UNMA-UK Management

Strength In Unity
The Scope of Practice Policy is a key regulatory tool that defines the who, the when, the how, the why, the what and the where of nursing and midwifery practice. It is a guidepost for professional and best practices. Nursing and Midwifery Leaders (above) recently met to finalize the writing of this important document. The NMLTT will continue to track and communicate progress.

Also, this month, one thousand and four hundred (1400) intern doctors, nurses and pharmacists completed their internship recently. The Federation of Medical Interns organised a post-internship training and dinner. Ms. Irene Atuhairwe, Country Director of Seed Global Health (who received a certificate of recognition at the event) while speaking with the newly qualified health professionals, urged them to get the skills required to save lives through education and training, mentorship, embracing technology, working in multidisciplinary teams, and acquiring leadership skills. The guest of honor was the PS Ministry of Health, Dr. Diana Atwine who also urged the health workers to get mentored by their seniors, listen, and pay attention to patients, be passionate about their profession and specialize in different fields as the country urgently needs specialists.
USEFUL CONTACTS

Please find below a list of useful contacts to forward your concerns appropriately.

UNMC queries: info@unmc.ug
UNMU: info@unmu.ug
CPD APP concerns: martin@unmc.ug

National organizations
Education and training Standards: Department of Nursing at Ministry of Health

Health Education & Training (MOES) QUESTIONS? CALL: 0417 893600 (PRO) Mobile 0777108170
Benevolent fund: Department of Nursing at Ministry of Health, Uganda

Some of the associations
AGNMU: graduates@agnmu.org
Critical Care Association: president@ccnau.org
Midwifery Association: nationalmidwivesassociationug@gmail.com
Nursing and Midwives Society: info@nursesandmidwivessociety.org
Emergency Care society of Uganda: admin@ecsuganda.org
Palliative care Association of Uganda: pxau.admin@pcau.org.ug

Others
NMLTT (Think - Tank Leaders): uganursemidwife.leaders@gmail.com
Writing articles for publication on NHCC Uganda website: editors.nhccuganda@gmail.com

Global networking
Nursing Now Campaign Uganda: nursingnowuganda@gmail.com

ACADEMIC RESOURCES

Access to Health Care journals (Discounted at 30%)

In partnership with UGANDA NURSES and MIDWIVES ASSOCIATION UK (UNMA-UK), Markallen group UK (https://www.markallengroup.com/ma-healthcare/) has offered a 30% discount on their online subscriptions (MA Healthcare titles only) for UNMA-UK members. This has also been extended to Nurses and Midwives in Uganda as per the UNMA-UK mission.

Use the confirmed discount code [UNBA30] to access a range of their healthcare journals.
ONGOING

NMLTT continues to work in collaboration with the National Task Force in the Management of COVID-19.

The Think Tank Newsletter editing team accepts articles on a rolling basis under the sub-themes below.

→ Research and Innovation
→ Continuing Professional development (CPD)
→ Policy Leadership/Governance
→ Clinical Practice
→ Covid Response.

The Think Tank is committed to supporting nurses and midwives through strategic advocacy for Nurses and Midwives. We thank Seed Global Health for the continued support for hosting the webinar series. We urge all nurses, midwives, and all nurse/midwife leaders to attend these insightful meetings. Please send us your current email address to be included on our mailing list.

Our faith in you is steadfast. May you continue to rise to the challenge. This is a new year and probably the statement doesn’t apply anymore. More than ever, this nation needs you. We thank you and May God bless you.

Copy to: The Hon Minister for Health
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health
The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports
Commissioner Nursing Services, Ministry of Health
Commissioner Health Education & Training, Ministry of Education and Sports
The Chairperson, NATIONAL TASK FORCE COVID 19
The President of the Uganda Medical Association
All Nurses and Midwives in Uganda

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Informed disclaimer: All editing team members are Nurses, and they are all volunteering their time and expertise. However, the views expressed in the articles are of the authors or writers solely. Although the editing team does the very best and is responsible for vetting the information, the authors’ opinions remain. It is, therefore, upon the authors to make sure that what they submit is referenced appropriately and accurately.