

A rustic Christmas tree is constructed from several horizontal driftwood branches of varying lengths, arranged against a wall of light-colored, rectangular stone tiles. The tree is decorated with a variety of ornaments, including white stars, silver and white spherical ornaments, white heart-shaped ornaments, and circular wooden ornaments with different designs. Small white candles are also attached to the branches. At the base of the tree, a black clock with a white face and black hands is prominently displayed. The clock face shows the numbers 12, 3, 6, and 9. A red rectangular button with the text "ON CALL" is overlaid on the clock face. Two small green cacti in black pots are placed on either side of the clock base.

**NURSES & MIDWIVES LEADERS THINKTANK
(NMLTT) NEWSLETTER**
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NURSES AND MIDWIVES ON CALL FOR THE NATION

ON CALL

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COMMISSIONER OF NURSING AND MIDWIFERY, MINISTRY OF HEALTH MS AGNES CHANDIA



Greetings from the Department of Nursing and Midwifery Services Ministry of Health. The Department of Nursing and Midwifery is mandated to maintain professionalism and the quality of Nursing and Midwifery services in the country following government policies and priorities.

I take this opportunity to recognize and appreciate all Nurses and Midwives for the distinctive roles they play in their various areas of specialty despite the challenges faced in day-to-day work.

Nurses and midwives are part of human capital development with a significant impact towards accelerating the economic growth and development outlined in NDPIII, NHPIII, and Vision 2040. The current UDHS (2022) statistics on reducing maternal and neonatal mortality demonstrated the critical role Nurses and Midwives play in providing health services to the population.

For Nurses and Midwives to continue playing their roles positively towards achieving national and global goals, more efforts are needed for health system strengthening across

the six building blocks of the health system to improve efficiency in health service delivery.

I thank and comment on all the relevant sectors and agencies for the successful review and approval of the new structure for health work, which is out for implementation once wages are available. This requires streamlining our career development in various disciplines of Nursing and midwifery with a focus on areas of specialisation for access equity and quality service delivery.

I acknowledge and appreciate the efforts of our colleagues in Education for running various advanced nursing education programs/ courses. However, there is a need to open programs for areas of specialisation in Nursing and midwifery to fulfill the positions in the newly approved structure, thus improving service delivery at all levels.

I urge all Nurses and Midwives in Public and Private to embrace and implore soft skills like responsiveness and the right attitudes to meet

the population's expectations towards quality care at all levels.

Improving the quality of nursing and midwifery education and practice, scaling up capacity, and strengthening professional leadership at the frontlines need concerted efforts.

I humbly request all of us to embrace teamwork collaboration among the nurses and midwives at all levels to uplift the profession, and use existing platforms like the Think Tank, HEXA, and Country Nursing Now for information sharing and promoting the image of the profession.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to Partners and Organizations for their support towards Nurses and Midwives in providing Health Services through training, supplies, equipment, and networking.

Finally, I encourage all Nurse leaders to come out of the Past, Control the present, and secure the profession's future.

Blessed end of 2023

For God and My Country

THE ROLE OF THINK TANKS IN FRAMING POLICY AND 'KNOWLEDGE REGIMES'; THE CASE OF UGANDA NURSES AND MIDWIVES THINK TANK (NMLTT)

By Tracy Kobukindo Kamau and Assoc Prof. Rose Clarke Nanyonga, Editors, NMLTT Newsletter

Background

Think Tanks have evolved over the last century into well-respected, autonomous, non-governmental, not-for-profit, independent 'institutes' whose influence spans across sectors of health, education, economics, and although usually 'politically neutral'¹ or non-partisan², Think Tanks continue to have a significant impact on governments, politics³, often affecting policy environments, reforms that affect how people live, trade or access health care. Today, there are about 7000 Think Tanks worldwide, but only 500 of those are in Africa¹. The USA has the highest number of Think Tanks, Washington D.C. alone has 400¹.

This phenomenon isn't unexpected, considering that Think Tanks typically flourish in more developed regions. Moreover, they often thrive in places where intellectual respect is synonymous with

settings where political stability supports freedom of speech, 'freedom of criticism,' and an environment conducive to embracing alternative ideas, research, critical thinking, problem-solving, and constructive criticism. These locations often have authorities open to diverse perspectives, possessing both influence and financial resources that favor innovation and new approaches.

However, owing to their political impartiality and their independent role in research, policy formulation, problem-solving, and critical analysis, Think Tanks are increasingly sought after, even within authoritarian regimes like China⁴. Other BRIC nations have also experienced an increase in Think Tanks; Russia, Brazil, and India⁴. According to the [Rift Valley Institute](#), EAC has 117 Think Tanks with only 29 of them emanating from Uganda. Despite the low numbers in Uganda, Think Tanks are becoming more eminent with research being conducted on a

global scale to determine their impact on policy as well as influence.

Defining Think Tanks

Sometimes seen as “devices for gathering authority”⁴; Think Tanks are groups of experts in their professions or field - although sometimes membership can be multidisciplinary - with diverse backgrounds and experience who offer independent insight into issues arising, conduct research, brainstorm solutions to problems, and relay information to the public through workshops, media, conferences, research papers³ etc. And in so doing, shape the ‘knowledge regimes’, contributing to bodies of research and knowledge. Information generated from Think Tanks has been utilised by governments to inform policy³, drive strategic direction, and set health agendas. They establish connections with real individuals and networks, gathering data and information vital for decision-makers at the upper echelons who might be detached from the everyday challenges faced by people. In this capacity, they serve as advisors, providing essential and pertinent guidance. Although they participate in advocacy, they are not to be confused with advocacy institutions,

because as the name implies, they mainly ‘Think’, generate ideas, and information/data, and share it for the betterment of communities¹, inadvertently they are highly influential across many societal spheres⁴. Additionally, they help raise awareness of issues, encourage public debate, and build capacity, they will, if they choose to, play a critical role in the implementation or evaluation of initiatives. They may also play an advisory role as appointed members of governmental commissions, parliamentary committees, and public deliberations.

Characteristics of Think Tanks

Studies of Think Tanks from the 1980s and 1990s characterized Think Tanks as mainly nonpartisan and politically neutral².

Think tanks, frequently centered on policy and the public interest, comprise experts and professionals renowned for their research capabilities and high intellectual acumen. They maintain robust ties with the media, utilizing these connections to disseminate their ideas and research findings. Operating independently and autonomously, they champion evidence-

based decision-making, offering advice, shaping problem definitions, and advocating policy solutions³.

In Ghana, for example, Think Tanks were influential in the crafting and implementation of Ghana's first transitional³. In the USA, a 50-person invitation-only Think Tank conversation in 2018 at the University of Kansas School birthed the Professional Identity in Nursing Initiative where 4 domains of professional identity and competencies for each were formulated⁵. In Canada in 2015, The Canadian Nursing Simulation Research Collaboration was formed as a result of the Canadian Nursing Think Tank, they identified five primary themes that will help to direct future simulation research⁶. Another group formed a think tank in the USA to help devise means of increasing retention of minority⁷. Another Think Tank led to the establishment of the Nursing and Artificial Intelligence Leadership (NAIL) Collaborative, comprising interdisciplinary experts in AI development, biomedical ethics, AI in primary care, AI legal aspects, philosophy of AI in health, nursing practice, implementation science, leaders in health

informatics practice and international health informatics groups, a representative of patients and the public, and the Chair of the ITU/WHO Focus Group on Artificial Intelligence for Health in 2019⁸.

The Uganda Nurses and Midwives Think Tank (NMLTT)

Founded on 12th April 2020, the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Think Tank (NMLTT) was the first of its own, a Nurses-led TT (as it is informally known) comprising about 91 nurses and midwives leaders from the following institutions:: Ministry of Health, Department of Nursing, Ministry of Education and Sports (Health Education and Training), Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC), Uganda Nurses and Midwives Examination Board (UNMEB), Uganda Nurses and Midwives Union (UNMU), Professional associations like Critical Care Nursing Association of Uganda, Association of Graduate Nurses and Midwives, Nurses and Midwives Society, Nurses and Midwives in the Private Sector, Leaders from Training Institutions and Academia, Nurse leaders from respective National and Regional Referral Hospitals

among others. Nurses and Midwives from the Department of Nursing MoH, UNMC, HET, Heads of Training Institutions, as well as nurse leaders from National/Referral and Regional Hospitals both public and private, etc. Influential figures shaping and informing healthcare and global policies concerning nurses/midwives, and others serving as inspirations to individuals of all ages, from the young to old. Initially, the NMLTT was founded to represent the interests of Nurses and Midwives on the National COVID-19 Task Force at the Ministry of Health (MoH). The primary focus during the COVID-19 crisis was to support nurses and midwives at the frontline so that they are enabled to deliver

appropriate care to suspected or confirmed patients suffering from COVID-19. During the pandemic, Think Tank was tasked with various issues and prioritized personal protective equipment (PPEs) for frontline Healthcare providers in our objectives. We were able to raise a total of 19,700,000/= in the first fundraising drive in May. PPE items (Gloves, Surgical Masks, N95 Respirators, Aprons) were procured and were delivered to three locations:- Mulago National Referral Hospital, Entebbe Grade B Hospital, and Arua RRH ([see 2nd edition and 5th](#) of our newsletter attached for pictorial evidence).

Other notable Achievements include the following:

2020 - 2023

- Successfully conducted advocacy for the basic needs and protection of the Nurses and midwives, uplifting the Nursing and Midwifery profession whilst uniting various leaders at the National and Regional Levels
- [Members of TT](#) were appointed to the National task force in the Management of Covid 19 and supported surveillance.
- Demanded the appointment of a new Commissioner of Nursing at the MOH Department of Nursing and later worked with the office to organize capacity-building workshops, fundraisers, etc.

- Conducted multiple workshops on writing for nurses (creative and research writing), in collaboration with National Healthcare Conferences Uganda ([NHCC](#)) and Clarke International University (CIU).
- Created virtual platforms on Zoom and WhatsApp for nurses and midwives to discuss issues and raise these with appropriate bodies e.g. The Nurses Union, Nurses Council, other Nursing Associations etc.
- Members of NMLTT made up executive editor composition for the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Magazine Council at 100 Issue
- The establishment of the [Nurses and Midwives Newsletter](#) - A bi-monthly Nurses and Midwives news bulletin, the first in Uganda, allows the NMLTT to continue to deliver expert information and enables knowledge sharing. 15 Issues have been published to date, some on the [MOH website](#)
- Leaders' monthly meetings via Zoom facilitated by Seed Global Health.
- An initial fundraising drive for PPE in which we raised 19.7m. We procured some of these items and distributed them to two COVID-19 sites.
- Two successful webinars to run monthly from June 2020 (to enhance continued knowledge sharing and learning).
- A rapid national Nursing and Midwifery survey to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the workforce—is currently underway.
- Members of the TT published several articles in national newspapers, totaling X number making a case for investment in Nurses and Midwives as well as advocacy for PPE, inclusion indecision-making at the national level, etc.
- Conducted dissemination webinars to understand the scope of practice and understanding the different pillars of the Nursing Fraternity.
- Created a platform to recognize members' achievements.

Challenges that Think Tanks face

Globally, Think Tanks persistently encounter the challenge of limited or inadequate

funding. The NMLTT has received no funding from any entity since its founding. The newsletter, hosted on [ISSUU](#) exceeded the

basic package which meant we couldn't publish additional letters, a member of NMLTT has selflessly paid \$242 annually for the last 2 years to have the letter hosted. We hope to find funding for this so that more nurses, midwives, and healthcare leaders can access more letters (free of charge) from the [ISSUU](#) publication site.

Some Think Tanks exist in unsupportive political environments. Worse still, there is a lack of awareness or vagueness in recommendations for Think Tank establishment that fosters a learn-as-we-go attitude towards their formulation and day-to-day operations. While most rely on Think Tanks to present evidence from research conducted, there is not enough funding available for research despite widespread expectations of Think Tanks to conduct research and share findings that inform policy and add to the body of knowledge in their respective sectors. The “epistemic crisis” where there is a loss of faith in experts and information overload exerts further unnecessary pressure on Think Tanks to set themselves apart with data and evidence-based solutions to problems governments and societies face today ⁴.

Furthermore, due to the prolonged nature of policy and advocacy impacts, Think Tanks often find themselves in the position of needing to consistently justify their efforts, even when the results are not immediately quantifiable or tangible in terms of measurable output⁴. There is also competition from other research organizations that may be better funded.

The NMLTT is not immune to the above problems and also continues to have the challenge of no funding, despite running activities - often members contribute to the cause (as was the case during the COVID-19 pandemic), and will self-facilitate meetings, etc. Some organizations, notably Seed Global Health, and MoH have provided support in kind, to the activities of the Think Tank, but NMLTT continues to survive due to the kindness and generosity of its selfless members. Another hurdle arises from the perception of NMLTT solely as a platform for lodging all complaints within the Nurses and Midwives profession. To tackle this, we've implemented measures such as redirecting these concerns to relevant institutions or arranging webinars/spaces for public interaction.

Conclusion/Recommendations for the Future

As devices of influence, Think Tanks can play an even bigger role in shaping policy, building the capacity of the public, and influencing system reform. Maintaining the core characteristics of autonomy, and non-partisan positions, so that they can outlive political regimes and have a sustainable impact on systems.

By upholding diverse and multi-talented memberships while prioritizing research and evidence-based decision-making, they have the potential to elevate their standing within their sectors. Furthermore, they can transcend these sectors by establishing themselves as pioneers in setting standards, adept analysts, and exceptional communicators, whether through their writing or presentations at conferences.

Think Tanks can enhance their practices by bolstering the documentation of their activities and disseminating their learnings and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). This initiative could serve as a valuable guide for the formulation and sustainability of newer Think tanks. By convening Think Tank

meet-ups and fostering inter-sectoral sharing, Think Tanks could organically unite to establish National Associations of Think Tanks, thereby augmenting their global impact and influence. This approach also offers a potential solution to the absence of Think Tank registries, both nationally and globally. The lack of formal structure in organizational registries is a challenge as Think Tanks, neither being organizations nor companies, political groups, or religious entities, are essentially constituted by individuals volunteering their time, resources, expertise, and intellect to propel development and ensure a balanced narrative.

Ultimately, the Think Tank network could inaugurate a culture of conducting Think Tank audits, creating an environment conducive to addressing persistent challenges. This includes establishing a standardized framework to gauge Think Tanks' impact on policy or research, whether by quantifying research papers published or measuring the integration of ideas into national policies.

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The NMLTT Newsletter: 15 Issues so far Can be accessed here: <https://issuu.com/nmltt>



CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG NURSES & MIDWIVES IN UGANDA



Health care practice is such a dynamic venture that requires professionals to keep themselves abreast of the ever-emerging spills of knowledge and skills for effective and quality service delivery. Continuous Professional Development (CPD) ought to be among the top key priorities for every nurse or midwife; no matter the cadre, area of practice or field of specialization. With the changing disease patterns, treatment regimens that are adjusted more often based on emerging research and the digitalization of health, it's prudent that we continuously search for learning to acquire knowledge, endlessly improve skills and broaden our understanding most especially now that we

operate in an era with increasing public expectations and increased demand for quality services. On an individual basis, continuous learning improves job satisfaction, enables one to maintain a high standard of performance, increases one's professional status and chances of promotion, preparation for future career opportunities, respect and recognition among colleagues.

According to the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMC) CPD Framework (2016), Continuous Professional Development refers to educational activities aimed at maintaining, developing, updating, and increasing knowledge, skills, attitudes, competencies, relationships, and professional performance that a licensed health professional uses to provide services for patients/clients, public or the profession. Key areas for nurses' and midwives' continuous professional development include but are not limited to clinical skills and knowledge, patient safety, ethical considerations, communication skills, leadership and management skills, cultural competence, integration of ICT, professional ethics, and entrepreneurship.

Although CPD points are internationally required for the renewal of professional licenses, these have long not been used to renew licenses for nurses and midwives in Uganda. This is attributed to several challenges including the failure of professionals to track and record CPD sessions attended and the inability of some, especially in the private sector and remote areas, to access CPD sessions. It was also noted that in many facilities, lower cadre nurses are denied opportunities to attend CPD training as these are always attended by seniors (supervisors) who do not even ever pass on the information to those who directly need it in practice. Several CPD providers are not accredited thus not regulated and questions arise on the authenticity of the content they deliver to the CPD participants. A number of institutions like World Continuing Education Alliance, Aga Khan University, Seed Global Health and Intra Health have been in the lead of offering CPD opportunities to nurses and midwives in Uganda. For more details on CPD providers and their accredited CPD activities visit the Health Professionals Portal Uganda website: <https://www.ehealthlicense.go.ug/index.php/site/cpd-providers>

In an effort to increase demand for CPDs among nurses and midwives, UNMC ought to emphasize the need for a specified number of CPD credit points as a requirement for renewing licenses. All nursing and midwifery training institutions should have CPD Departments to design and offer dynamic and flexible CPD programs to nurses and midwives in the various regions across the country. Finally, health facilities and organizations should schedule routine CPD sessions and create opportunities in the work schedule for the nurses to participate and make CPD credits a key requirement during performance appraisals.

By Lubega D. Martin, RN, RNT

Director of Public Relations, Spark Nurses' Hub

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THE TIME TO EMBRACE AND ATTEND SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES IS NOW!



“What a fantastic conference!”. The presentations were of very high quality. This was by far the most informative conference that I have attended in the year 2023. I gained a lot of insight in the area of Human rights and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights. Congratulations Center for Health, Human Rights and Development!” I spoke.

In the month of July 2023, I happened to come across a call by the Center for Human Rights and Development

(CEHURD) requesting for submission of research abstracts at an upcoming conference then i.e. The Uganda National Conference on Health, Human Rights, and Development (UCHD). This was to be the first ever and one of its kind organized by CEHURD and Ministry of Health. It was scheduled to run from 26th to 29th Sep 2023. The theme for the conference was “A right to health: A vital component in achieving Sustainable Development Goals”.

I further went ahead to scrutinize the details of the conference and found that the research abstracts for submission were to fall in any of the following five tracks:

- Health systems strengthening
- Sexual and reproductive health and rights
- Health, policy, and the law
- Mental health, harm reduction and wellness
- Multi-sectoral collaboration, strategic partnerships, coalitions, and movements

This excited me as a Midwife and Women's Health Specialist, and I informed my research team about the opportunity and requested if we could participate in the dissemination of research study findings for some of our published works. This was well embraced, and I submitted two abstracts on teenage pregnancy and sexual violence that were successfully accepted for oral presentation and were well delivered.

The conference started off on 26th Sep 2023 with a workshop on SRHR movement building within the context of Uganda. In here, the rationale for social movements was discussed, a case study of the Movement for Community Led Development was shared. Through the Voices of Young People organization, a young person shared their experiences on SRHR and lastly, there was a provocative intersectional panel on SRHR movement in Uganda.

The official opening ceremony of the conference was held on 27th Sep 2023, featuring Dr. with Dr Charles Olaro-Director Curative Services at the Ministry of Health, giving opening remarks and officially opening the ceremony on behalf of the

Minister of Health-Dr Jane Ruth Aceng who was unable to make it.

As we dived into the conference, Prof Fredrick Edward Makumbi from the School of Public Health and Chair Makerere University-conference scientific committee shared with us deeper insights about the conference. Dr Charles Ayume – Chairperson, Uganda Parliamentary Committee on Health led a panel discussion on “our health needs and how the health system can address them. The panel portrayed inclusiveness with representatives of the young, those with multiple morbidities, another representing people with disabilities, and lastly, one who testified about darkness in the maternal and child health sector. Additionally, presentations were given by the World Health Organisation, the Commissioner of Planning, Policy, and Finance, and many others.

Interestingly, the conference also had a fundraising Legal Aid Dinner which occurred on 28th September 2023. This was aimed at supporting the Legal Aid Department at CEHURD to continue with this important legal aid support work for children and their families. More specifically, to strengthen

their legal aid support services to sexually abused children to integrate psychosocial support in their legal aid service. In the long run, the children would be able to live a normal, stigma-free meaningful life and thrive in all environments including school. I

was lucky to attend the dinner which was graced by Her Excellency the Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda Maria Håkansson. It was so touching to listen to one of the mothers testify about her daughter who was raped by the father.

It's important to note that more than 300 delegates from different corners of the world including Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, France, Sweden, the UK, the USA and more attended the conference. Over 100 abstracts were presented. I was privileged to listen to and learn from other researchers with exciting scientific discoveries while also advancing programs and policies to create more resilient health systems. I urge fellow scientists to embrace attending scientific conferences as this helps one to connect, network, grow, learn, and benefit greatly from interacting with the best minds in their respective disciplines.

Lastly, the conference ended on 29th September 2023 with The Kampala Declaration on Human, Human Rights and Development document generated, which was one of the results from the UCHD conference.

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THE NATIONAL SAFE MOTHERHOOD CONFERENCE: WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND SUCH CONFERENCES! PART 2



“I sincerely congratulate NASMEC on the success of the 03rd National Safe Motherhood Conference, which was well-organized, well-balanced, and had a very topical agenda”. “The speakers were all highly respected professionals, and the debate was dynamic”, I spoke.

I believe that attending conferences gives one a chance to see what others in his/her field are doing. Secondly, it gives one an

opportunity to also meet with their peers and exchange views on current problems of interest and to get to know each other and possibly collaborate on problems which with combined expertise may result in solvable outcomes. Thirdly, I believe that attending conferences allows one to present their work to a larger audience and hopefully get useful feedback. Lastly, I believe that it also helps to grow one's reputation in their field and possibly get good recommendations for

future opportunities as this is a networking platform.

Around June 2023, I came across a communication from The National Safe Motherhood Experts Committee (NASMEC) about the upcoming National Safe Motherhood Conference scheduled from 23rd to 25th Oct 2023 at Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala Uganda. The theme for the year 2023 stated, “Reach every mother, Reach every newborn”. I got excited but at the same time, the theme increased my curiosity, and vowed to attend this year’s conference. I also went ahead and read about the thematic areas for abstracts to be presented during the conference, which included maternal health, newborn, infant, child and adolescent health, family planning, MPDSR & Quality Improvement. I said to myself, as a Midwife and Women’s Health Specialist, this is the exact place I needed to be at the right time and with the right people.

Worldwide, maternal survival and well-being is challenged by complications of pregnancy and childbirth. The major causes of maternal death include excessive bleeding during pregnancy or after childbirth, sepsis, hypertensive disorders of pregnancy, obstructed labour, and abortion

complications. On the other hand, infections, asphyxia, and prematurity are the leading causes of death in the newborn. The recent results from the 2022 Uganda Demographic and Health Survey portrayed an improvement in the maternal and newborn indicators, with the maternal mortality ratio reducing to 189/100,000 live births and the newborn mortality ratio to 34/1,000. For us to further avert maternal and neonatal mortality, the aspect of Safe Motherhood needs to be strengthened.

The National Safe Motherhood Conference started with pre-conference activities like the Adolescent Health Conference and other media engagements. The main conference began on 23rd Oct 2023 and ended on 25th Oct 2023. Over 600 delegates were in attendance including the Hon Minister of Health, Permanent Secretary-Ministry of Health, Chairperson of the Parliamentary Health Committee, Members of Parliament, religious leaders, representatives from both government and non-government entities, frontline health workers and leaders, and academicians among others. Over 300 abstracts were presented. The conference concluded with some resolutions which included;

- Improving maternal service delivery such as identification and management of risk pregnancies, accelerating establishment and tracking functionality of ANC risk clinics in each region.
- Working through MoH structures to include calibrated drapes onto the essential supplies list (replace the 'kaveera' in the mama kit) for management of postpartum hemorrhage.
- Developing an action framework targeting RMNCAH issues in this population category.
- Re-shaping messaging on teen pregnancy and establishing a toll-free hotline/call centre for Adolescent Girls and Young Women consultation and counselling.
- Embracing self-care for health, as the MoH will fast-track the adoption of the national self-care guideline and finalization of all policy frameworks in which self-care has been integrated.
- Strengthening community engagement and sensitisation on RMNCAH- ANC attendance, risk pregnancy, FP, AGYWs, newborn care, and TBAs.
- Health financing by strengthening working relations with GoU structures at the national and regional levels.
- Fast tracking the adoption and implementation of innovative approaches such as the National Health Insurance Scheme and the Total Market Approach for increasing domestic health financing, advocating for increased allocation of public resources towards health, and bilateral and multi-lateral funding that contribute to SDG.
- Improving partner coordination for resource optimization at national and subnational levels.

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DIASPORA NEWS

Colleagues in the diaspora UK under the umbrella association - Uganda Nurses and Midwives Association- UK (UNMA-UK) held a successful 3rd-anniversary celebration.


As a professional body for diaspora Ugandan nurses, midwives, students, and healthcare workers working both in the UK NHS and in the private sector, the association, co-founded by Elizabeth Pearson and Primrose Magala, both Nurses, saw over 250 Nurses and Midwives meeting in the prestigious Leonardo Royal Hotel in one of their regional clusters - Oxford and themed: - **Diaspora Contribution to Strengthening Healthcare Systems**. Winnie Gasana and Tim Mugerwa led the Oxford Cluster Team.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Ben Simms, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET), used the opportunity to praise the contribution of NHS diaspora staff to developing healthcare at home in the UK and abroad in countries of heritage. About THET's programme, the expert in our midst, Mr. Simms, talked about how diaspora staff are contributing to the ambition of creating a world where everyone, everywhere, has the right to access quality healthcare that is accessible at the point of use.

Mr. Ben Simms celebrated the ties between the UK and Uganda health systems, including the several Health Partnerships that have focused on diverse issues from AMR to mental health, before reflecting on the impact of the cuts to UK Official Development Assistance (ODA), also known as its overseas aid budget funding in recent years ([full speech available here: https://www.thet.org/thet-chief-executive-address-to-uganda-nurses-and-midwives-association-uk/](https://www.thet.org/thet-chief-executive-address-to-uganda-nurses-and-midwives-association-uk/)). Among other dignitaries was the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Union President, Mr. Justus Cherop, who urged the association to support the training and development of the specialist field in Uganda's curriculum. Other dignitaries included Uganda's High Commissioner to the UK and Ireland Ambassador Madhavi, the Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Oxfordshire, Mrs. Moira DARLINGTON DL, the Chief Nursing Officer (CNO) Oxford Health NHS Trust Mrs Marie Croft, and the Oxford City Mayor Lord James Fry.

Mr. Simms recognised the work of some members participating in both "home" and "away" to show their contribution to strengthening healthcare systems with tokens of appreciation.





UNMA-UK organised and held their annual **FREE** community health promotion event - where a selection of diaspora healthcare professionals participated to showcase how they contribute to strengthening healthcare systems in the UK and Uganda through their various specialist fields and initiatives. This was held successfully on 27th May 2023. Highlights of the work were showcased during the anniversary celebration.

A report of their annual celebration and activities is available on their website.

Authors: - Winnie Gasana Nurse Manager, NHS Trust, Executive Member and Professional Lead UNMA-UK

Elizabeth Pearson, Lecturer in Nursing, Co-Founder, and Inaugural President UNMA-UK.





Some executive members of the association with the dignitaries, including High Commissioner Uganda to the UK, Her Excellency Nimisha Madhavani.



THE EVER-PRESENT HEROES: NURSES AND MIDWIVES ON CALL FOR OUR NATION



When you think of a Nurse or Midwife, what comes to mind? The people answered.

Dear Nurses and Midwives of Uganda,

As the year draws to a close, we want to take this moment to extend our deepest gratitude and appreciation to every one of you for your unwavering commitment and dedication to serving our people throughout this year. Your tireless efforts, resilience, and compassion have been nothing short of extraordinary.



Sr. Celina Bako Winner Midwife of the Year HIHA Award 2023

In the heart of every healthcare system lies an unsung hero - the nurse and the midwife. You are the stalwarts who stand resolute, irrespective of time, day, season, or year. Your commitment to serving the nation transcends the ordinary, embodying a dedication

that remains unmatched globally.

In the early hours of the morning or amidst the stillness of the night, it's the nurses and midwives who don their scrubs and answer the call of duty. You navigate the complexities of healthcare, not confined by the constraints of a

clock or calendar. Your service is perpetual, an unwavering commitment that holds the fabric of our healthcare together.

Amidst holidays, celebrations, or even in the face of adversity, you remain steadfast. Your

devotion extends beyond the ordinary realms of a job; it's a calling deeply ingrained within your ethos.

When emergencies strike, when illness knows no time or season, it is the nurses and midwives who are the reassuring presence by the bedside. Your expertise, empathy, and unwavering dedication make you the unsung champions of our healthcare narrative.

You are the ones who ensure the vulnerable receive care, the ones who hold the hands of the frightened, the ones who comfort the ailing, and those who grieve. And this holiday you will be doing the same. Your

commitment goes beyond the clinical; it is a blend of expertise and unwavering compassion that defines the essence of your service.

As we celebrate the resilience and selflessness of these remarkable individuals, let us remember their tireless efforts, their sacrifices, and the immeasurable impact they make on our lives. They are the heartbeat of our healthcare system, the guardians of our well-being.

We are delighted that the sacrifices, professionalism, and dedication to your patients have not gone unnoticed. We want to celebrate nurses and midwives who were

recognised this year at the Heros in Health Awards ([HIHA](#)). HIHA is a rewards initiative instituted to recognize outstanding individuals, entities, organizations, services, products, and programs. This is a public choice award, where members of the public will nominate and vote for their heroes. This year, we congratulate Sr. Celina Bako, winner of the Midwife of the Year HIHA Award as well as Sr. Agnes Nambozo, winner of the Nurse of the Year Award (who also received a scholarship offer to pursue her bachelor's degree in nursing from Deputy Speaker of Parliament of Uganda, Hon. Thomas Tayebwa. Bravo!



Sr. Agnes Nambozo, winner of the Nurse of the Year HIHA Award 2023

As the holiday season approaches, while many will be enjoying well-deserved rest and time with loved ones, we want to acknowledge that you, our nurses and midwives, will continue to stand on the frontlines, ever ready to answer the call of duty. Your selflessness and commitment to serving our nation are noteworthy, and for that, we are immensely grateful.

In your tireless service, you remind us that heroes don't always wear capes; sometimes, they wear scrubs and stand ready to serve, ***always on call for our nation***. Wishing you strength, peace, and moments of rest this holiday season. Your service is an inspiration to us all.

With deepest appreciation and gratitude

Dr. Safinah K. Museene

Chair of the NMLTT

Associate Professor Rose Clarke Nanyonga

Chief Editor, NMLTT Newsletter

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 organisations

Education and training Standards:- Department of Nursing at Ministry of Health

HET (Min of Education and sports) 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 the 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.

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. Advocate for Nurses and Midwives. 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 in this international year of the Health and Care Workers by WHO - 2021. 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 of Nursing Services, Ministry of Health
Commissioner of 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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