Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA)

July 2016 Report
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Background
The Guidance, Counselling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA) is an inter-governmental non-profit making organization established by African Ministers of Education in 1994. African Ministers of Education established GCYDCA as a Regional Centre to coordinate and manage the guidance, counseling and youth development programme in Africa. It has 54 participating countries which comprise French-speaking countries, English-speaking and Portuguese-speaking countries. The GCYDCA (fondly known as the Centre) has been granted full diplomatic status by the Government of Malawi and all legal capacities comparable to the UN agencies and other International organizations.

Mission
The Guidance Counselling Youth Development Centre for Africa seeks to promote, support and protect the source and future of Africa: The young people!

Our Vision
The Guidance Counselling Youth Development Centre for Africa envisions that African girls and boys of school-going age attain a quality life from preventable social problems such as poverty, disease, sexual abuse or violence through guidance, counselling and youth development services.

Purpose
The Centre seeks to develop and institutionalise guidance, counselling and youth development services as academic support with needs of girls as a special focus.

Aim
The Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA) as a regional institution seeks to develop and institutionalize guidance, counseling and youth development services as non-academic support with the needs of girls as a special focus. The ultimate aim is to give girls and boys the information and skills to handle complex social issues that are part of their daily life such as mental health problems, HIV & AIDS, adolescent sexual reproductive health, drug and substance abuse, communication and technology, enterprise education and youth leadership.
Guidance and Counselling Training in Africa

Guidance and counselling have been proven to be the most effective tool and strategy in guiding young people to grow holistically and become positive citizens of their countries. Guidance aims at helping the young people realize their potentials, their capabilities and how to use their skills to better their lives and that of other people in the nations. It evokes the aspirations of the youth and motivates them to be keen to reach their self-actualization. Guidance can open or confidentially conducted but its aim is to help individuals live an independent and productive life. Where there is an effective guidance programme, the attributes are self-respect, human rights, avoidance of conflicts and wars, peace education, respect of gender, good health, good socialization and good programme management.

Counselling is a process where young people are helped to cope with their personal, social, vocational and educational challenges. Through counselling, the youth are helped to understand themselves as individuals and how to appreciate the self. They are also helped on how to maintain positive and healthy behaviours and maintaining a high positive self-esteem and self-awareness. Socially, counselling helps the youth to develop and maintain good interpersonal relations with others and help them appreciate the other people around them. Vocationally, counselling helps the youth to make decisions on their career pattern and lifestyle, commensurate with their aspirations, capabilities, potentials, interests, skills and experiences. Educationally, counselling also helps the youth to make informed decisions on their educational paths, also matching with their aspirations, capabilities, interests, skills and experiences.

Counselling can be done on a one-on-one mode but can also take the form of group counselling. Whichever mode is used, the aim of counselling remains the same to assist the clients in making informed decisions through provision of adequate and relevant information in areas of concern.

**Areas of training:**
The GCYDCA has a standard training manual with ten modules. These modules are:

1. Counselling
2. Guidance
3. Social work
4. Enterprise education
5. Programme development
6. Sexual reproductive health
7. Gender sensitivity
8. Behavior modification
9. HIV & AIDS counselling
10. Workshop administration

Complementary packages include the following:

1. Mental health facilitation
2. Peer education
3. Classroom connections
Structure of the modules

The modules are interactive and take the form of both face-to-face and e-learning. Currently, the modules are in electronic form and hard copies, readily available for use. Each module has an introduction, rationale, content material and exercises that promote application of the skills in real life situations. During training, participants are encouraged and assisted to put the skills into practice.

Proposed implementation strategy for January to June 2017

1. The GCYDCA to train each member country – participants to be trained to trainer level.
2. To cluster countries into five zones determined by either proximity or language. Each country will have five country trainers trained by the GCYDCA team in their clusters. After the training, the five will form international Trainers to be responsible for training and monitoring and evaluation of country-specific programmes.
3. In-country trainings to be conducted by the international trainers in the clustered countries.

The clusters will be as follows:

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Proposed implementation strategy for July to December 2017

To also cluster the remaining countries. The GCYDCA will announce its 2017 work plan soon.
The bilateral relations - GCYDCA and NBCC-I

The GCYDCA is being supported by the US based National Board of Certified Counselors International (NBCC-I) to implement Mental Health Facilitation programme in Africa, complementary package in counselling service delivery as part of the efforts to help professionalize counselling in the African region.

The NBCC-I was founded in 2003 as a division of the National Board for Certified Counselors, Inc. and Affiliates (NBCC) in response to an increasing number of requests from colleagues and agencies outside the United States for help in promoting counseling and developing counselor credentialing mechanisms around the world.

There are more than 40,000 certified counselors worldwide in education, career and mental health settings. NBCC provides professional counseling to specially trained individuals who provide:

• academic career or individual guidance
• problem-solving support and expertise
• support and/or expertise specific to certain biological threats
• support and expertise to individuals, families and communities

Contribution of Mental Health Facilitation Programme in Africa

The Mental Health Facilitation Programme is being implemented in Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The GCYDCA has so far trained over 900 mental health facilitators in the programme.

The programme is aimed at equipping change agents such as teachers, health workers, social welfare workers and administrators on mental health issues and providing professional counseling skills to trained individuals. MHF is a transdisciplinary process that cares for individuals with psycho-social and emotional needs and assists them and their communities in achieving self-determined goals.

In most cases, younger people such as school going pupils benefit most from MHF services. Some of the modules on the training package include stress management, effective communication, human development, suicide preventing, listening skills, personal care and making referrals.

The MHF workshop is based on developing relationships that promote a state of well-being thereby enabling teachers and learners to realize their abilities, cope with the normal stresses of life, work productively and fruitfully and make a contribution to their communities and improve their quality of educational life. The workshop also addresses fundamental mental health care needs to reflect the social, cultural, religious and psychological realities of the school-going youths as well as the communities.

There are plans to scale out the programme to other countries in Africa. Countries interested in introducing Mental Health Facilitation Programme are encouraged to express their interests by writing to the Deputy Executive Director.
Benefits of Mental Health Facilitation
The person who comes to you may begin to:
1. Feel better about self
2. Be able to manage life
3. Be clearer about feelings, wants, needs and values
4. Be better in problem solving and decision making skills

List of MHF Training Modules:
There are 19 modules that cover up the 30 hour curriculum training workshop. The MHF workshops run for 5 days for 6 hours per day. The modules have gone through two revisions to incorporate the emerging issues.

Module 1: Investing in Mental Health
Module 2: Preparing for Mental Health Facilitation
Module 3: Understanding Feelings
Module 4: Communicating in Mental Health Facilitation
Module 5: Using Questions in Mental Health Facilitation
Module 6: Reflecting in Mental Health Facilitation
Module 7: Understanding Human Development
Module 8: Understanding Differences – Diversity
Module 9: Understanding Problems
Module 10: Solving Problems and Setting Goals
Module 11: Recognizing Stress, Distress, Disorder
Module 12: Facilitating in Crisis, Disaster, Trauma, Abuse and Violence
Module 13: Working with Child Maltreatment
Module 14: Working with Migrants, Refugees and Victims of Torture
Module 15: Recognizing and Helping with Suicide
Module 16: Making Referrals and Consulting with Helping Professionals
Module 17: Ending the Helping Relationship
Module 18: Benefits of Contextualizing the MHF Programme
Module 19: Unlocking the MHF Modules – Key Points

PRIORITY AREAS IN MENTAL HEALTH FACILITATION
The following strategic areas have been highlighted as key approaches that will assist in Mental Health Facilitation of the youth in Africa. These strategies will also assist in promoting good health and an improved quality of life among youths in Africa.

These approaches include:
Social mobilization and advocacy
This will include the creation of awareness which will result in community support of Mental Health Facilitation issues amongst stakeholders, especially "gatekeepers", such as parents, traditional, rulers, religious leaders, the media, politicians and other policy makers.
Added to this, advocacy will significantly contribute to achieving, political commitment, policy makers' and opinion leaders' support for Mental Health Facilitation, allocation and mobilization of adequate resources for Mental Health Facilitation activities, as well as improved youth involvement in Mental Health Facilitation programmes.

Equitable Access for quality Mental Health Facilitation services
Efforts must be made to establish sustainable Mental Health Facilitation services in communities regardless of location such as rural, urban and other under-served communities.

**Youth Involvement and Participation**
Young people constitute about 40% and above in most African countries. They have an important role in the promotion and success of their own programmes. As such they must be empowered through the provision of information and services within the home, schools, workplace and communities. This would enhance their involvement and participation as major stakeholders in the implementation of various aspect of the strategic plan.

**Capacity building and skills development**
This will promote the development of human resources in the delivery of quality Mental Health Facilitation information and services. Specifically, training will be geared towards bridging the gap between the Mental Health needs of young people and development of the skills through the set training materials, to enable young people to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.

**Monitoring and Evaluation**
The management information systems (MIS) must be strengthened for effective monitoring and evaluation of Mental Health Facilitation services. In addition, the implementation capacities of Mental Health Facilitators will be strengthened for effective monitoring and supervision of Mental Health programmes.

**Research**
Capacities of human resources must be developed especially for Mental Health Facilitation oriented researches in the collection of required data, rational use of existing data sources and interpretation of its analysis for program planning as well as for the conduct of relevant operational researches.

**Resource mobilization:**
The success of the Strategic Plan and the achievement of its set objectives depend on the ability to mobilize and commit resources to its implementation. Therefore, efforts should be directed at actively generating sufficient resources to facilitate the efficient & timely execution of all the programmes included in the Strategic Plan. Financial resources will be mobilized from the National Board for Certified Counsellors (NBCC), government annual budgetary allocations, grants from international donors/development agencies and contributions from the private sector and persons of goodwill.
Collaboration and Networking:
The concept of collaboration and networking will serve the purpose of enhancing effective
delivery of Mental Health Programmes as well as setting a base for inter-connectivity and
information sharing.

MHF Testimonies

By Kennedy Mlauzi

MENTAL HEALTH FACILITATION ON THE MOVE

MHF has improved lives of students who meet astray in Chinsapo Secondary School and sur-
roundings areas.

There was once a girl by the name Atusaye. Atusaye was a beautiful and intelligent girl raised
in good family. Until one day her parents had a road accident and died on the spot. This made
Atusaye’s performance to become down because of the stress she had. She started isolating
herself and tried to committee suicide once but it failed to happen because she was integrated
by people. Days come and went on until she stopped coming to school.

The school got aware of her absence from school. It then instructed peer educators from her
class to pay her a visit. They found her wondering in the street. They approached her but she
couldn’t respond to their questions. Since they were too young to handle a situation like that
they referred her to a teacher counsellor. She had a number of counselling sessions which
helped her very much. She started having friends, joined sporting activities and later she was
back on track and passed her MSCE with flying colours. Atusaye was one of the students who
were offered a place at Malawi Collage of Medicine. She is now in her second year.

By Agness Mmina

MHF ON THE MOVE AT LILONGWE GIRLS SECONDARY SCHOOL

Lilongwe Girls Secondary school has different groups of people. Among them, some are rich
while some are poor. There was once a girl at the school called Sara. She was in form three
and was coming from a poor family. This disturbed her education and studies though she was
intelligent.

She had some friends who were as poor as herself, but they always had some stuff that she
also wanted to know how to get things like these. One day she asked one of her friends how
she got the things she had. The friend told her that the only way she managed to get all the
stuff she had was through prostitution. Sara was really amazed but her friend went on to tell
her that was the easiest way around her problem of poverty.
After some encouraging stories from her friend, Sara decided to join prostitution. Sara’s friend started taking her along to trips, to bars where they slept with all sorts of men. Soon enough Sara had a string of boyfriends as well as sugar daddies. As time passed, people began to realise that Sara was a prostitute. This really embarrassed her and she felt really ashamed. To get rid of the shame she started abusing drugs and alcohol. This led to her carelessness of having unprotected sex.

Two months later she was found pregnant and HIV positive. The friends she had abandoned her. She wasted her days crying and taking drugs which worsened her HIV infection. Her appearance began to look more and more neglected by the day. After delivery she discovered that what she was doing did not have any solution but the situation was becoming worse every day.

After some counselling sessions the girl was able to go back to school starting from the third year of her secondary school. She succeeded and wrote her form four examination. After the results came out Sara was one of the best girls to get a scholarship to China.
Mental Health Facilitation trainings

The Centre, with support from the National Board for Certified Counselors International (NBCC-I) provides Mental Health Facilitation (MHF) programme which trains various Centre member countries to build the capacity of the key national school counsellors and teachers as Mental Health Facilitators (MHFs), Trainer of Trainers (TOTs) and Master Trainers (MTs) in the programme. The MHF programme is being implemented in Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. In these countries, the MHF programme has equipped the change agents such as teachers, health workers, social welfare officers and administrators on mental health issues and has provided professional counselling skills to the trained individuals.

The following are the programme activities that the Centre has implemented from January to July this year:

- 24 Malawi Prison Service officers successfully trained in MHF
- 25 Primary Teachers successfully trained in MHF IN Ntcheu District
- 12 Roman Catholic Sisters trained in MHF
- 5 University of Brunswick, Canada - Interns were trained in MHF
- 24 Primary and Secondary School teachers trained in Chipata Zambia

Some of the sisters who undertook Mental Health Facilitation (MHF) training in Lilongwe
The Centre organized and coordinated Prof. Kenneth Hamwaka memorial service, as way of remembering and cerebrating all the good works that the late Hamwaka did to uplift the Centre. The late died with short illness and was laid to rest at his home country in Zambia.

Among some of the people present during the service were USA delagation which comprised the NBCC-I Chief Executive Officer and President Dr. Thomas Clawson.

In his remarks Dr. Thomas Clawson, didd not mince the words but saluted the late Hamwaka how he played a big role in making sure that Centre moves higher.

Other members present include officials from Zambian Commission, AU-Saro, Malawi government and members of various organisations.

Late Prof. Kenneth Hamwaka (second from right hand side) showing off the ward presented to one of the students.
University of New Brunswick, Canada-Interns

The Centre continues to collaborate with international organizations and Universities in its programmes. A notable internship programme exists between the Centre and the University of Brunswick, Canada. The University of New Brunswick annually sends young interns to Malawi to work on various programmes. The beginning of this year the Centre saw five interns from the University of New Brunswick to assist in its programming.

The Centre and University of New Brunswick Memorandum of Understanding ceremony was covered by journalists. Above, is that story which appeared on 17th June, 2015 in the Nation Newspaper, one of local newspaper.
International Counsellor Symposium

We are pleased to announce that this year we were part of the Bridging the Gap (in counselling) Symposium which took place in the United States of America. The Symposium was organized by the National Board for Certified Counsellors – International (NBCC-I) (USA). The Symposium offered the GCYDCA a multicultural immersion experience where counsellors shared their best practices, opportunities and growth prospects for the profession.

The GCYDCA made a presentation on the growth and prospects of counselling in Africa. The Symposium also provided a foundation for the GCYDCA to build new relationships for the advancement of counselling in Africa. Notable collaborations were sought with the University of New Wake Forest and the University of North Carolina (Greensboro). Dr. Jacqueline Chazema, the Deputy Executive Director represented the GCYDCA at the Symposium.
Promotion of African Youth Volunteers

The GCYDCA also runs a youth exchange programme. Currently the GCYDCA is implementing the Mandela Washington Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Fellowship programme in collaboration with the NBCC-I and IREX of the United States.

The African Union Charter provides for youth involvement and participation in order for them to have access to interact with experienced members in existing programmes and organizations in different countries. Youth volunteers are not considered as permanent workers but as visiting young people whose objective is to gain the much needed experience for their current and future jobs. During their attachments, the young people benefit in the following manner:

1. Personal growth – volunteers learn to understand their potentials and how to develop them. They are given a conducive environment in which they have freedom of movement, speech and association and subsequent benefit is that they gain the much needed experience of understanding who they are, understanding others and learn how to maintain relationships.

2. Social growth – the interaction opportunities that are accorded to them assist them to know how to interact with other people as well how to contribute in different discussions intellectually and physically. Through volunteering, they gain the experience of socialization, an ingredient that they require in their lives.

3. Educational growth – most volunteers are teenagers and in the process of developing their educational paths. The search for education is made easier through volunteering because the volunteers get the opportunity of matching the theories to the actual best practices that are taking place in different countries in the African continent. In this regard, it can be said that youth volunteering makes learning easier and promotes practical platform for the volunteers.

4. Vocational growth - volunteers have the opportunity to work at the GCYDCA as well as having been attached to other organizations where their skills and knowledge are appreciated. Volunteers in this regard get a clear picture of what it means to be in a world of work in a simple, entertaining and most enjoyable manner.

Recommendation for the programme

The GCYDCA will gladly appreciate taking the leading role in the selection, guidance and monitoring of youth volunteers from member countries. Deliberate processes will be put in place to ensure that monitoring mechanisms and reporting structures are put in place so that youth volunteers are further monitored after the expiry of their assignment and to ensure that their skills and knowledge are put to best use wherever they go. It is an important component of youth development which need to be further embraced by all member states. Member states are encouraged to express their interest in the exchange programme.
Acknowledgements

The Guidance, Counseling and Youth Development Centre for Africa (GCYDCA) wishes to express its compliments and heartfelt thanks to all the member countries and its partners for unwavering support rendered during the implementation of its programmes.

The following are some of the partners:

• National Board for Certified Counsellors – International (NBCC-I)
• African Union (AU-SARO)
• Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Malawi
• Ministry of Health, Malawi
• Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Malawi
• GIZ
• CIDA
• UNESCO
• Life Strategies
• Blantyre International University
• University of New Brunswick (UNB)