



# ENABLING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH IN SIERRA LEONE (EAMH-SL)

Quarterly Newsletter Volume I Number I

July 2011 Edition

Inside this issue:

**TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THESE THREE (3) IMPLEMENTING BODIES - see inside**

	Page
<b>CITY OF REST REHABILITATION CENTRE</b>	2
<b>UNIVERSITY OF MAKENI</b>	2&3
<b>COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES (CAPS)</b>	3
<b>OTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND RECOGNITION</b>	4

**“Giving voice to the mentally challenged in Sierra Leone”**

**Check us out on our weblog!**

<http://enablingaccesstomentalhealthsl.wordpress.com/>

## General Update

Enabling Access to mental Health in Sierra Leone (EAMH – S/L) is a European Commission sponsored Project, designed to meet mental health needs in Sierra Leone. It is a five (5) year Project.

### THE TARGET GROUP AND FINAL BENEFICIARIES

- ⇒ **FINAL BENEFICIARIES:** People with mental health issues in Sierra Leone. In five (5) years time, it is expected that Primary Health Centres (PHC) services would reach 50% of persons with severe mental health illnesses (around 250,000 people) and 10% of people with common (less severe) mental health illnesses (around 150,000 people). Having a general population with increased awareness of MH issues in order to present some onset of illness and promote behaviour leading to good mental health.
- ⇒ **DIRECT TARGET GROUPS:** Personnel working in primary health care (>10), staff of NSAs/NGOs involved in mental health care and policy in Sierra Leone (>130).

### THE IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS OF THE EAMH - S/L PROJECT

Enabling access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone is fashioned to meet three (3) major goal and has partnered with three (3) main organisations in achieving its desired goals.

Goals and partners comprised

- ⇒ **TRAINING** – An aspect which is conducted by the University of Makeni (UNIMAK).
- ⇒ **ADVOCACY** – A wing which the City of Rest (CoR) coordinates.
- ⇒ **SENSITISATION** – A sub set which Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS) presides over.

The Project is implemented with two international organisations, which are:

- \* Global Initiative on Psychiatry (GIP)
- \* CBM

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011 saw the commencement of this very important Project. It is now three (3) months since Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone (EAMH – S/L) started and work is ongoing at a sure and steady pace.

## CITY OF REST REHABILITATION CENTRE – Fort Street, Freetown

City of Rest Rehabilitation Centre is a residential care setting, based in Freetown, for forty people struggling with substance abuse and/or mental illness.

Joshua Abioseh Duncan (Project Coordinator) and Claudius Sawyerr (Project Administrator) have been working assiduously under the immediate supervision of Heleen van den Brink (Organisational Development and Technical Adviser) and Rev. Morie Ngobeh (Director) both from the City of Rest to meet the desired goal(s) of the Project.

### ACTIVITIES

Several relevant meetings were organised and attended by the Project. This is to enable EAMH-S/L -

CoR, to get itself accustomed with both the issues relating to Mental Health (MH) and approaches to effective advocacy at a broader scale. July 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011, EAMH-S/L - CoR as one of its major activities conducted a sixty man stakeholder's consultative meeting. The adviser from CBM International – Dr. Julian Eaton gave a lecture on “*Mental Health – Challenges and Possibilities*”. He also helped to facilitate other major aspects of the Meeting. This major stride was not only de-



Project Administrator - CoR at work

signed to raise awareness about mental health needs but to take necessary steps in forming a coalition that will be a voice for these vulnerable and voiceless people.

A follow-up meeting and workshop on coalition building is yet to be done in August this year. Lots of other Organisations have expressed their willingness to be part of the coalition.

### CONTACTS

A weblog was created through which interested organisations and persons all around the globe would know more about the Project. (see front page)

List of coalition members and other MH organisations and the nature of work they are doing will be posted on the blog. It will also serve as the organisations' database.

For more information on EAMH-S/L – CoR, please see the under mentioned:

Email: [enablingaccesscorp@gmail.com](mailto:enablingaccesscorp@gmail.com) / [enablingaccesscorpa@gmail.com](mailto:enablingaccesscorpa@gmail.com) / [cityof-rest.heleen@gmail.com](mailto:cityof-rest.heleen@gmail.com)

Tel: +232 (0) 78 982 554 / +232 (0) 76 280 246 / +232 (0) 33 749 757

Address: 34 Fort Street, Freetown.



Dr. Julian Eaton facilitating the Consultative Meeting

## UNIVERSITY OF MAKENI – (UNIMAK)

University of Makeni (UNIMAK) emerged from a community based Catholic Institution formerly known as Fatima's Institute. As one of its goal, the University caters for community care which includes Mental Health. UNIMAK is based in Makeni (one of the Provincial head quarter towns in Sierra Leone).

The Project Coordinator for EAMH-S/L - UNIMAK is Mohamed Kallon. The Project at UNIMAK has Sylvester Mallah as its immediate supervisor. EAMH-S/L UNIMAK is focused at training MH providers from each district's head quarter town to be able to administer under supervision basic MH care to mentally ill persons.

### ACTIVITIES

EAMH-S/L - UNIMAK was also involved in lots

of meetings to ensure that the training goals are actualised. In May, 2011, it hosted about twenty-five (25) people in planning a curriculum for training psychiatry nurses. The direct involvement of the Director of Health and other main stream educationalists both from the College of Medicine and Allied Health

Sciences – University of Sierra Leone and the University of Makeni were directly involved in this process. This also included major stakeholders



from the World Health Organisation – Sierra Leone (WHO - S/L) and implementing partners, City of Rest and Community Association of Psychosocial Services.



The project awaits the approval of the College of Medicine and Allied Health Sciences (COMAHS) senate for the course to commence in the 2011/2012 college year. Lots of other activities are still been lined up by UNIMAK. They also spearheaded the employment of the pending Programme Coordinator in July. The vehicle had been very instrumental in aiding their work.

**CONTACTS**

For more information on EAMH - S/L UNIMAK, see the under mentioned:  
 Enabling Access to Mental Health – Sierra Leone, University of Makeni could be contacted at:  
 Email: [enablingaccessunimark@gmail.com](mailto:enablingaccessunimark@gmail.com)  
 Tel: +232 (0) 78 729 391

**COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION FOR PSYCHOSOCIAL SERVICES (CAPS)  
 Babadorie, Lumley, Freetown.**

Community Association for Psychosocial Services (CAPS) is a locally based institution designed to help communities which had suffered from post war mental challenges with adequate restorative and healing processes. They operate in three (3) main towns (Kailahun, Freetown and Kono). At present they have two (2) main offices in Kono and Freetown. Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone—CAPS is charged with the responsibility of ensuring effective sensitisation for all (nationwide) on mental health issues. Amadu Kargbo is serving as the Project Coordinator for Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone – CAPS along side with a Project Administrator. They are supervised by the Director of CAPS-S/L, Edward Bockarie.



Project Coordinator - CAPS at work

These contacts had been shared with the City of Rest to form the database of mental health related organisations. Also with the unified questionnaire more information about identified organisations were/are been obtained.

The provincial towns are yet to be reached – This is awaiting the vehicle to be purchased. During the rains, routes leading to some town/villages are very difficult to ply. Non the less, they are making the necessary strides to reach possible target groups with the already provided motor cycle.

Work plan from June to August 2011 is being prepared, which is designed as a road map to ensure effective sensitisation.



Project Administrator - CAPS

**CONTACTS**

For more information on EAMH - CAPS, see the under mentioned:  
 Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone - CAPS could be contacted at:

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**ACTIVITIES**

EAMH S/L – CAPS has been laying the ground work in ensuring that effective sensitisation is done. Addresses and contacts of major stakeholders’ organisations were collected from the Sierra Leone Alliances of Non-Governmental Organisations (SLANGO).

## OTHER DEVELOPMENTS AND RECOGNITION

The Director of Health, Dr. Bash Taqi and the Matron of the Sierra Leone Psychiatry Hospital (SLPH), Dr. Muana had been very supportive to the European Commission projects in Sierra Leone. They are very much appreciated.

Interview was also conducted by Dr. Julian Eaton of CBM international and adviser to the Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone for the Programme Coordinator for the Project in Freetown.

Thanks to him (Dr. Julian Eaton) again for helping to facilitate the Consultative Meeting organised by the EAMH S/L – CoR held in Freetown.

World Health Organisation – Sierra Leone (WHO – S/L) has also been very instrumental in making their facilities and other resources available for meetings/programmes.

Mr. Bockarie Conteh has also been providing advise and guide as and when necessary and those have been very helpful.

### LOOK FORWARD

- ⇒ Be enrolled into the MH programme at COMAHS should the curriculum be approved next college year.
- ⇒ Be a part of the forth coming “World Mental Health Day” in October 2011.
- ⇒ Get involved, sign in your organisation for the first forth coming Mental Health Conference to be held in November 2011.
- ⇒ Look forward for volume two (2) of our Newsletter come September 2011.

### Take a look at this weblog and register your interest.

Weblog: <http://enablingaccesstomentalhealthsl.wordpress.com>

Short Link: <http://wp.me/1>

You can also follow us on Face book. If you're having a face book account, on the search engine, please type: Enabling Access to Mental Health in Sierra Leone and click on the like button so as to partner with us, which will enable us speak with one voice.

Thanks.



**Coalition Partners**

City of Rest Rehabilitation Centre  
34 Fort Street,  
Freetown

Quick Contact:  
Phone: +232 (0) 78 982 554  
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