



# Mental Health and Poverty Project

**The purpose of the Mental Health and Poverty Project is to develop, implement and evaluate mental health policy in poor countries, in order to provide new knowledge regarding comprehensive multi-sectoral approaches to breaking the negative cycle of poverty and mental ill-health.**

Improving mental health, Reducing poverty



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## Project summary

The Mental Health and Poverty Project (MHAPP) will undertake an analysis of existing mental health policies in four African countries, provide interventions to assist in the development and implementation of mental health policies in those countries, and evaluate the policy implementation over a 5-year period. The interventions will be undertaken to assist policy implementation at macro (national), meso (provincial) and micro (district) levels.

The programme will be conducted in the following countries that represent a variety of scenarios in mental health policy development and implementation:

- Ghana
- South Africa
- Uganda
- Zambia

Strategies for making mental health care accessible to poor communities will be implemented and documented, for instance, through primary health care and non-health sectors. The emphasis will be on promoting mental health and providing care for those who most need it and can least afford it. Capacity will be built in mental health research, policymaking, service planning and service delivery. The MHAPP will provide a coherent body of high quality policy relevant new knowledge to assist other developing countries to break the cycle of poverty and mental ill-health.

# Mental health and poverty: what's the connection?

Mental ill-health and poverty interact in a negative cycle: mental ill-health impedes people's ability to learn and to engage productively in their economies, and poverty in turn increases the risk for developing mental disorders, and reduces people's ability to gain access to much needed promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative mental health interventions.

This cycle can only be broken through national (and at times international) policies that provide a comprehensive multi-sectoral approach to the problem:

- In the health sector, there is a need for evidence-based cost-effective mental health interventions that are accessible to the poorest communities of a population.
- In other sectors, such as social welfare, criminal justice, housing, education and labour, policies need to address the range of financial, social, educational, employment and residential needs of people with mental disorders.

Through an analysis of existing mental health policies in the study countries, and interventions to assist in the development and implementation of mental health policies, MHAPP will generate lessons for national level mental health policy development and implementation that can assist other developing countries to break the negative cycle of poverty and mental ill-health.



# Partners

**MHAPP homepage:** <http://workhorse.pry.uct.ac.za:8080/MHAPP> **Funding:** DFID Contract no: RPC HD6 2005-2010

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