

# **TAPA 8<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND FIRST SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE 2024.**

## **THEME**

### **The Role of Psychologists in Enhancing Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing in Tanzania.**

We are thrilled to report that the 8th Annual General Meeting and the First Scientific Conference was held successful from 27th to 28th June 2024 at Vizano Dodoma Hotel in Dodoma. For the first time ever, TAPA conducted the AGM and the scientific conference outside Dar es salaam, with 100+ participants from different regions in Tanzania.

The event hosted by the Tanzanian Psychological Association, served as a platform for exchanging ideas and discussing the latest research developments in the field of Psychology with a strong focus on enhancing the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing in Tanzania and to conduct the Annual General meeting of our association.

The guest of honor, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Community Development, Gender, Women and Special Groups represented by the Assistant Commissioner of the Ministry Mr. Baraka Makona offered insightful highlights on the government efforts to include psychologists in the scheme of service and enacting a law that will regulate psychological services in the country. He also urged TAPA to expand her reach to recruit more members and work closely with the government to implement programs that will promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of the society. On behalf of the members, our President Dr. Magolanga Shagembe appealed to the government to higher more psychologists under the social welfare department and speed up the process of the psychology services regulation law so as to prevent potential harm to the society from unprofessional practices.

Key note speakers were Dr. Budeba Petro Mlyakado from the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) who presented on “Why do we still have low utilization of Psychological Help in Tanzania: Experience from adolescent victims of sexual exploitation” and Ms. Ikunda Kissamo from Peak Performance International Ltd who presented on “Enhancing Wellness with mBIT.” Other presentations are listed below according to their sub-themes;

### **Digitalization and Technology in Psychology**

1. Developing in the digital age: Experience from Tanzanian children and youth by Dr. Hezron Onditi from Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE)
2. Leveraging digital innovation for mental health: The AHADI digital mental healthcare facility by Dr. Juliana Busasi from Tanzania Health and Medical Education Foundation (TAHMEF).
3. Leveraging Digital Health Solutions to promote access to mental health services in Tanzania by Ms. Beatrice Goodluck from Cloud script Psychological interventions in mental health and well-being.
4. Dr. Shagembe Magolanga from University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) presented on Workplace wellbeing and psychological interventions in domestic work: Reflections from the lived experiences and psychosocial wellbeing of domestic workers in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania.

5. Jacqueline Owden from Wajamama on the inception of the mental health component into the group prenatal care program in Zanzibar.
6. Albano Michael From Bahi District Hospital on the significance of psychological services during emergencies: A case of Hanang District in Tanzania
7. Barnabas Nkinga from University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) on Fostering Wellbeing through Character Coaching: A flagship program of the Positive Psychology Association of Kenya (PPAK)
8. Eric Bunono from University of Dar es Salaam on Investigating mental health challenges facing secondary school students in Tanzania for proper treatment.
9. Neema Kessy from University of Dodoma on the practice and challenges of Eurocentric approaches in offering guidance and counseling services in Tanzanian educational settings.
10. Lucas Mataguli from Mirembe National Mental Health Hospital (MNMH) on Psychology and substance interventions at Mirembe National Mental Health Hospital

There were also presentations from the counseling units of the University of Iringa (UoI) and University of Dar es Salaam (UDSM) on the services they offer and how they manage cases professionally.

**During the AGM, the following leaders were elected to serve the term 2024 – 2026;**

1. Dr. Shagembe Magolanga – President
2. George Boniphace Chacha – Vice President
3. Barnabas Nkinga Michael – Secretary General
4. Albano Sabino Michael – Deputy Secretary General
5. Monica Ngatuni – Treasurer
6. Samwel Marko Mgilitwe – Students Representative

**The second day of the conference was utilized for a city tour and a visit to Mirembe National Mental Health Hospital, that gave participants an opportunity to digest knowledge at the Department of Psychology and Forensic Department (Isanga) to learn the services provided in the hospital to the mental health patients in different wards, nursing station units and observed how the categories operate the services under laws and regulation.**

We are grateful to our partners and sponsors of this conference, University of Dar es Salaam, University of Dodoma, St. John's University of Tanzania, University of Iringa, Mirembe National Mental Health Hospital, DAMAX Solutions, Peak Performance International Ltd., Empathea Consulting, Conscious Minds, Kilimanjaro Drinking Water, Behavior Modification Center, Tanzania Counseling Academy, Vanessa Amada Foundation and Sustain Digital.

To the organizing committee, partners, sponsors, speakers, and delegates we send a very big thank you for making "The Role of Psychologists in Enhancing Mental Health and Psychosocial

Wellbeing in Tanzania” event an enriching and memorable event. It was an exceptional forum for sharing knowledge and advancing the psychology workforce and services in Tanzania. Your hunger and thirsty to take psychology to new heights in and beyond the boundaries of Tanzania and to enhance the Mental Health and Psychosocial Wellbeing is commendable.

***We look forward to seeing you all at our next gathering!***

**Written by Albano Michael and Barnabas Nkinga**