

ARHAP Conference 2009

The 7th to the 11th of July saw an exciting and dynamic group of new and old partners converging upon Sea Point in Cape Town. The week was filled with a deluge of knowledge garnered from academics and NGO workers from around the world. Topics ranging from the mobilization of traditional health practitioners, to the relevance of religion in healthcare in Africa were presented over the course of four days. Along with a stunning location and



Vuyisile Zenani:
"Wow! What a wonderful, informative and well organized conference. I was so overwhelmed by the presentations from the different speakers, the comments and inputs from different parts of the globe. It made me realise that ARHAP is a huge family of committed individuals and organizations".

an impressive diaspora of people, the conference also provided a useful platform for the formation of new partnerships.

The ARHAP team would like to extend their sincere thanks to all who made the conference the positive experience that it was

(more information on page 2)

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

ARHAP conference 1

Sad Farewell 1

Exciting interns 4

PIRASH in Joburg 5

PIRAHNA 3

CHAMP 5

Other projects 6



New Horizons for ARHAPian Legend

August saw the end of an era for the ARHAP team, with a core member, Barbara Schmid, come to the end of her full time work at the UCT hub. Jim Cochrane said this of working with Barbara: The quiet integrity and thoroughly principled way in which Barbara carried out everything, her profound ability to keep track of multiple things simultaneously while gently prodding those who needed it, more than once if necessary (and it often was), and her overall grasp of what ARHAP is all about, were absolutely foundational for the success of ARHAP operationally. She

has been its rock upon which so much has been built. But more than that, and in her own spirit, she has been a thinker, a researcher -- frustrated by too many other things to do, but still taking on large scale research projects with aplomb. In the Masanganane Case Study, the Executive Sessions process in the Eastern Cape, the WHO mapping and assessment of religious health assets, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation work in Zambia, Uganda and Mali, Barbara has been a key member of the research team, leading the last with Liz Thomas, and



in each case, convincing those who funded the work of its quality through her own high standards. Barbara is hard to replace. She is, in fact, irreplaceable. But she remains part of the ARHAP management team, and that makes for gratitude upon gratitude. We have not heard the last of Barbara's contribution to this work."

Inside the ARHAP conference 2009

Director of the ARHAP-UCT Hub, Professor Jim Cochrane, when speaking about the conceptualisation of the ARHAP conference 2009, noted that: "One goal of the conference was to bring together as wide a group of people and organizations as possible, including some who had heard of ARHAP's work but with whom we have had no personal contact, to share some of the cutting edge thinking that still drives ARHAP forward and will continue to do so. Another goal was to hear from them what they are doing, so that the field as a whole is advanced, and the idea of collaborating across the field -- a necessary obligation where resources and knowledge should no longer be fragmented or hogged -- would be strengthened".

Some key themes that emerged from debates include:

- The growing visibility and importance globally of the work done by religious entities, faith-inspired or faith-based, for the health of the public. The fact that in some African counties, over 50% of healthcare facilities are run by faith-based or faith-inspired entities was noted as a significant aspect of the field of public health. This centrality of FBOs was picked up on by Christoph Benn, who noted faith communities as central to the much needed paradigm shift "not just in global health but in the early phase of a potential global social security system" (See Benn's article at: <http://www.arhap.uct.ac.za/conference2009.php>).
- The interest of major bodies previously inclined to ignore such religion in how to understand and work with this. This issue was expounded upon by Bongba in his paper entitled: "Rethinking Old Alliance: Religion and Public Health in the context of Poverty in Africa"
- The importance of networked and collaborative frameworks for doing so, both in practice and in reflection upon that practice.
- The need to utilize asset-mapping techniques to find and advocate good health practices. (for more info, go to <http://www.arhap.uct.ac.za/tools.php>)
- The vital dimension in such activity of the intangible factors which are crucial to religious ways of thinking and acting for enhanced health
- The critical need for grassroots intermediary organizations or larger alliances and associations that can support people at community level and prevent them being overwhelmed by external agents or money. (Cochrane's paper on credible intermediaries can be accessed at: <http://www.arhap.uct.ac.za/conference2009.php>).
- The urgency of the situation in the face of stressed or collapsing health systems - a point expounded upon by Frank Dimmock, who does extensive work with Christian Health Associations across Africa (See above web page for details)
- The fact that religious entities are not only relevant to public health, but are becoming increasingly so, reiterated the importance of the type of network that ARHAP has created, and reinvigorated the need for consistent and symmetrical collaboration between all who were present.

New developments at Emory..

American colleagues at Emory University in Atlanta have been long-standing partners in ARHAP's work. Two new developments at Emory offer important possibilities for ongoing collaboration between Emory and ARHAP. First, Dr. Ellen Idler has been appointed as Director of the Religion and Public Health Collaborative at Emory and as a Professor in two different schools at Emory. She will join the faculty in the Department of Sociology in Emory College and the Department of Epidemiology in the Rollins School of Public Health. Dr. Idler's appointment demonstrates Emory's ongoing commitment to inter-disciplinary research in religions and public health. Second, two new

joint-degree programs provide outstanding opportunities for scholarship, applied research, and practice in the fields of religion and health. The Rollins School of Public Health and the Candler School of Theology are offering these joint-degree programs, which offer students a Master of Public Health and a Master of Divinity degree or a Master of Public Health and a Master of Theological Studies degree. For further information on these programs or on any of Emory's work in religion and health, please contact John Blevins, Research Professor in the Hubert Department of Global Health at the Rollins School of Public Health at john.blevins@emory.edu.

ARHAP – Emory Paired Study – 29 August

We had one of the most amazing ARHAP-Emory paired study workshops on 29 August 2009 with youths from three locations within Pietermaritzburg.



We had 11 youths from Imbali Township, 8 from Dambuza Township and 7 from the refugee community. This was a life changing experience for most of the young people.

We ended the workshop with local action exercise and the youths thought of forming a committee of 6 youths, Dr. Wendy Hall and Sinatra.

Argument on whether the church should receive 2 beans or 1 bean. Youths at the workshop felt the church spends time addressing bible problems and not issues that affect youth. "Churches do not understand what we are battling with."

Transatlantic partnerships continue...



Paul and Waverley

In March of this year, I was introduced to ARHAP through Emory University. I had expressed an interest in a global field experience related to sexual health and was invited to participate in the PIRASH workshops being held in Atlanta, Georgia and Johannesburg, South Africa. I was very intrigued by the work being done by the ARHAP Wits team and jumped at the opportunity to be a part of it. I had no idea what to expect from the project but

coming from the bible belt of the South, I was no stranger to the struggles between sexuality and religion.

I have been so impressed by the PIRASH approach and its ability to not only gather and generate a wealth of data but to also inspire empowerment among the research participants. After the young people's workshop in Hillbrow, one of the young men told me that he had never felt that he had any power to

make a difference in his community but after the workshop, he now believed he did have the ability to create change. I have thoroughly enjoyed working with the ARHAP Wits team and will forever cherish the time I have spent here in South Africa.



...from page three

It was proposed that the committee meet soon to discuss the possibility of beginning to address some of the issues that were discussed during the Workshop.

Initial ideas are that Dr. Hall and Sinatra help support the youths to organize their friends in townships so they could frankly debate on issues affect-

ing youths such as drugs, alcohol abuse, HIV/AIDS, schooling etc, as a way of educating each other on these matters. This initiative was proposed by the youths themselves. They chose a chairperson and a secretary for the committee.

Group photo of PIRHANA youth participants - Pietmaritzburg



Let talk about sex...

The ARHAP Wits team has embarked on a Participatory Inquiry aimed at understanding the sexual health worlds of young people and how religious organizations can contribute positively to the sexual health of young people in Africa. With support from the Religion and Public Health Collaborative at Emory University we have developed and facilitated a Participatory Inquiry into Religious Assets and Sexual Health (PIRASH) engaging with young people and community leaders in a number of urban communities in South Africa, including Potchefstroom, Eldorado Park and Hillbrow and have conducted a pilot study in Atlanta Georgia

(in collaboration with SEATEC). These workshops approach the subject of religion and sexuality by: exploring sources of information about sex for young people, the predominant religious messages about sex, the complex nature of sex and the implications of this complexity for young people's response to religious messages like "no sex before marriage" and provides a platform for open dialogue about sex within and between divides of religion, age, race and gender. One of the most important aspects of PIRASH is the focus on young people and community leaders developing new strategies that emerge from the work-

shop process. A new mandate for improving the impact of religious and other interventions toward healthier sexual lives of young people is set by the community for the community. It is the hope of the ARHAP Wits team that these strategies empower and unite communities as they are taken forward.

For more information about PIRASH, contact Tessa Dooms at: tessagd@yahoo.com



CHAMP (Community Health Assets Mapping Partnership) Report Methodist LeBonheur Healthcare, Memphis, TN . August 2009

CHAMP conducted a specialty-focused PIRHANA workshop in Memphis, broadly centered on Eldercare (e.g., meal assistance, hospice, respite care, etc.) on July 24, 2009. This hybrid methodology was conducted with a mix of 24 providers and seekers and utilized the exercise that makes visible how religious and secular entities contribute to health as an icebreaker. The workshop focused heavily on social networking and facilitators explicitly shared data back with participants about how

MLH (our hospital system) is "mapping" and better aligning systems of care for the elderly (who are major utilizers of high end tertiary, expensive care and account for frequent readmissions). This initial participatory interpretation step was well-received by participants and stimulated discussion of ways to fill the gaps in Eldercare services in Memphis. Facilitators for this workshop included Drs. Teresa Cutts and Rick Thomas and doctoral candidate and intern from Boston University, Adrienne Lemon. Other

team members were MLH staff, Turner Scholars from Vanderbilt Divinity School and United Methodist Church leaders. Additional CHAMP work involves integrating care delivery services within the hospital for home health, hospice, case management and social work, with our Congregational Health Network navigators' roles, to expedite patient care. For more information about CHAMP, contact Dr. Teresa Cutts on: cutts@methodisthealth.org





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*When Religion and Health Align:
Mobilizing Religious Health
Assets for Transformation*



ARHAP mission statement:

The programme seeks to develop a systematic knowledge base of religious health assets in sub-Saharan Africa; thus to assist in aligning and enhancing the work of both religious health leaders and public policy makers in their collaborative effort to meet the challenge of disease, e.g. HIV/AIDS; and hence to promote sustainable health, especially for those who live in poverty or under marginal conditions.

Other projects:

Community Partnerships for Palliative Care – Mapping & Assessment Training

This project, run with the Hospice Palliative Care Association of South Africa, is well underway. The aim is for ARHAP to assist the HPCA, through a community asset based approach, to confirm or identify people, groups or organizations in local communities with whom it can partner on a sustainable basis in extending palliative care and in aligning its work with those in communities who provide support for palliative care.

In September, the ARHAP team, in consultation with HPCA, designed the set of tools and manual to match HPCA needs for uncovering potential community partnerships. The material was so well received that it was agreed to extend the workshops to an additional location, nearly doubling the number of participants. These workshops took place on 19 – 23 October.

PIRASH

Another PIRASH installment took place in Soweto in October. The workshops were run through the University of

Witwatersrand and the facilitation was led by Paul Germond and Tessa Doms. Once again, the aim was explore and unpack Religion and sexuality and how these things are perceived by the youth of Soweto.

Jill Olivier Goes to the WHO

In a very exciting development, Jill Olivier will be flying to Geneva in November to present the work of ARHAP and previous mapping studies to the WHO.