

UMSAEP UMSL-UWC
Visit to Cape Town Feb. 19- Mar. 1, 2019
African Men for Culture & Education (AM4CE): An Explorative Cultural Comparison of
Male Success with Traditional Initiation.

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Overview

I'm thankful for the opportunity provided through UMSAEP to visit University of Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa early this year. During the last week of February and early March, I conducted a 9-day visit to University of Western Cape and engaged with my host, Dr. Anam Nyembezi. Although this was our initial face to face contact, I'm confident that this is the beginning of a long collaboration to enhance our scholarship around African male identity, initiation practices and masculinity. As indicated in my UMSAEP application, the purpose of this visit was to prepare a foundation for enhancing a partnership that would allow us study social initiation practices and their effect on the general wellbeing and identity of young men of African origin.

Proposed Objectives:

1. To explore an international partnership between faculty at UMSL's COE and the School of Public Health at UWC that might promote development of male support initiatives for men of African origin.
2. Consult with various faculty and stakeholders regarding ways in which UMSL and UWC might collaborate to promote education and cultural exchange among African men.
3. To promote the collaboration and further the outreach to communities in Uganda, Kenya and South Africa, where male circumcision is rampant.
4. To explore collaborations for research in other areas with UWC faculty especially in minority health, mental health, sexual health, substance abuse and other youth risk behaviors, and academic performance.
5. Expand my knowledge about the South African culture, education, and health systems in ways that they meet needs of their differing populations.
6. To share my knowledge and current research in areas of mental health, depression and academic performance as being impacted by a variety of youth behaviors.

7. To explore the impact of traditional practices on health and educational outcomes among youth.

Status of Proposed Objectives

The initial visit conducted at UWC was necessary to lay foundation for the AM4CE program as it provided an avenue for initial discussion and programming with my collaborator. This proposed project is intended for conducting both individual interviews and focus groups among men of African origin and to disseminate findings through presentations and scholarly publications on the proposed topic(s).

1. I was able to explore partnerships with faculty at the School of Public Health and UWC through formal and informal discussions both in and outside class. In addition, during my engagement with Master of Public Health (MPH) and Post Graduate Diploma (PGD) students at UWC, I was able to identify students, who are working in the field but with similar research agendas in areas of mental health, violence and male circumcision.
2. Initial consultations with faculty and staff at UWC suggested that this project could benefit from connections with UWC scholars such as Dr. Kopano Ratele, who is a known authority on African male masculinities. We ought to connect Dr. Ratele's expertise (Ratele, 2008) on masculinity to the psychological impacts of male circumcision. The psychological impacts of male circumcision have been previously studied, with reports of long-term negative consequences (Beggs et al, 2003; Cansever, 1965; Gaskill & Perry, 2012).
3. This project is still in its early phases, where connections to communities in Uganda, Kenya and South Africa are in their earliest stages. In many African cultures, traditional male circumcision is often a practice that initiates young males into adulthood. In some communities in Uganda and South Africa, this practice is of great cultural significance (Sabet Sarvestani et al, 2012; Vincent, 2008).
4. My scholarship with Dr. Anam Nyembezi is initially spearheaded by a scholarly piece that is under preparation. "Initiation and Traditional Male Circumcision Among Young Men in South Africa: Unmet Mental Health Priorities among Vulnerable Groups". The targeted journal is *South African Review of Sociology*
5. During my short term visit, I was able to experience the diversity in cultures, language and food among people of South Africa living in Western Cape. My future visits will explore more about education and lifestyles of indigenous people.
6. During my visit, I was engaged in the class sessions of MPH and PGD students where I disseminated information on my current research areas of youth behaviors of physical activity.
7. An exploration of the impact of traditional practices on health and education is the next phase of this project. I will conduct the next phase of this study by interviewing and conducting focus groups with participants from the [African Diaspora Council](#) (ADC) in St. Louis and [UMSL Pan African Student Association](#) (PASAA) Upon receiving approval from the University of Missouri- St. Louis' Institutional Review Board, I will recruit members of ADC and UMSL PAASA to study their perceptions of traditional practices and how they impact health and educational outcomes among youth living in

diaspora. For many youths that end up migrating in to the diaspora, cultural related concerns are on top of their lists (Venters, et al, 2011)

Timeline of Activities and Meetings

- Feb 20- Arrived in Cape Town.
- Feb 21, 2019- UWC, City of Belleville and Cape Town tours.
- Feb 22, 2019- Sports Science Institute of South Africa tour (Samuel Lubega- UCT PhD Candidate; Samuel is a graduate of UWC's Masters in Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science under the supervision of Dr. Susan Bassett- UWC).
- Feb 23-24: Preparation of weekly presentations.
- Feb 25, 2019- Determinants of Health, Health Promotion concepts and principle (Dr. Peter Delobelle-UWC); Health issues work group (Ms. Neo Sematlane-UWC); Health Promotion Approaches using Beattie Model (Dr. Anam Nyembezi)
- Feb 26, 2019- Intervention Planning for Health Promotion (Dr. Anam Nyembezi), Setting Aims and Goals (Drs Anam Nyembezi & Timothy Makubuya); Health Promotion Evaluation (Dr. Martina Lembani- Orbis International).
- Feb 27, 2019- Models of Change (Dr. Anam Nyembezi); Health Communication (Ms. Lucilla Blankenberg- Community Media Trust
- Feb 27, 2019- Meeting with faculty in the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science (Dr. Susan Bassett).
- Feb 28, 2019- Partnerships in Community Health Promotion (Ms. Neo Sematlane-UWC); Philani (Ms. Nomzamo Matodlana); Health in All Policies (Dr. Peter Delobelle-UWC); Policy Processes (Prof Ziyanda Mchiza-UWC); Advocacy (Ms. Aadielah Makerer- South African Policy Alliance). At the conclusion of the activities, Dr. Nyembezi and I met and discussed our project and started preparation of a manuscript for a special issue in South African Review of Sociology.
- Mar 1, 2019- Competencies for Health Promotion (Dr. Anam Nyembezi- UWC). At the conclusion of the day's class activities, Dr. Nyembezi and I met for our project and continued preparation of a manuscript.
- Mar 1st, 2019. Departed Cape Town.

Summary

The AM4CE program is a promising project for both myself and my colleague and host. As early career faculty, I believe that this is an opportunity to design a long term trajectory of research ideas that would span from the AM4CE proposed objectives. The UMSAEP investment will not only be impactful to us, but also to the students at UMSL and UWC, and the communities in various South Africa, Uganda, Kenya and the U.S.

Presentations:

During my visit to School of Public Health at UWC, I interacted with my host, faculty and students during class meetings and co-presented a lecture session;

Nyembezi, A. & Makubuya, T. (February 2019). Current Thinking & Practices in Health Promotion: Intervention Planning for Health Promotion (Setting Aims and Goals). *Lecture at School of Public Health, University of Western Cape: Western Cape, South Africa.*

Publications:

Nyembezi, A. & Makubuya, T. (In- Preparation). Initiation and Traditional Male Circumcision Among Young Men in South Africa: Unmet Mental Health Priorities among Vulnerable Groups. *South African Review of Sociology*

Moving Forward

1. Finalize the special issue manuscript for South African Review of Sociology
2. Prepare an IRB application for AM4CE project.
3. Upon IRB approval, collaborate with Dr. Nyembezi to finalize his travel to St. Louis to aid in data collection through Africa Diaspora Council and UMSL Pan African Student Association.

Other Relevant Activities

In addition, I was introduced to UWC faculty in the Department of Sport, Recreation and Exercise Science (Dr. Susan Bassett) and had a discussion on a possibility for future scholarly engagements.

References

Gaskill, R.L. and Perry, B.D. (2012) Child Sexual Abuse, Traumatic Experiences and Their Effect on the Developing Brain. In: Goodyear-Brown, P., Ed., Handbook of Child Sexual Abuse: Identification, Assessment and Treatment, Wiley, New York, 29-49

Beggs, S., Currie, G., Salter, M.W., Fitzgerald, M. and Walker, S.M. (2003) Priming of Adult Pain Responses by Neo- natal Pain Experience: Maintenance by Central Neuroimmune Activity. *Brain*, 135, 404-417. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/brain/awr288>

Cansever, G. (1965) Psychological Effects of Circumcision. *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, 38, 321-331. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.2044-8341.1965.tb01314.x>

Ratele K. (2008). Masculinity and male mortality in South Africa. *African Safety Promotion*, 6(2), 19-41.

Sabet Sarvestani, A., Bufumbo, L., Geiger, J. D., & Sienko, K. H. (2012). Traditional Male Circumcision in Uganda: A Qualitative Focus Group Discussion Analysis. *PLoS ONE*, 7(10).
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Vincent, L. (2008). Cutting tradition: The political regulation of traditional circumcision rites in South Africa's liberal democratic order. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 34(1), 77–91.
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