

## NEWS FROM:

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### **New master's programme to build mental health care capacity in Africa UCT/SU joint initiative aims to help improve economy, development through mental health care**

The Alan J Flisher Centre for Public Mental Health (CPMH), a joint initiative between the University of Cape Town and Stellenbosch University (SU), has launched Africa's first postgraduate training programme in public mental health, to help build capacity in mental health care in Africa.

The master's programme in public mental health is the flagship course of the CPMH's capacity development plan. It aims to build the much-needed human resources for mental health care in Africa.

UCT Associate Professor Crick Lund, the Director of CPMH, said: "Growing international evidence shows that mental ill health and poverty interact in a negative cycle in low-income and middle-income countries, and that mental health interventions are associated with improved economic outcomes. Such research indicates that scaling up mental health care in Africa should be not only a public health and human rights priority, but also a development priority."

The programme's 11 participants include psychiatrists, psychologists, doctors, nurses, development workers and programme managers, from Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zimbabwe. On Friday, 27 January 2012 they completed two weeks of coursework at UCT and SU, and have now returned to their home countries to conduct field research. They plan to complete their dissertations within a year under the guidance of their supervisors based at UCT or SU.

In addition to the institutional support provided by the CPMH, students are also supported by institutional partners such as Columbia University and Johns Hopkins University, partners working as part of the Africa Focus on Intervention Research for Mental health. The MPhil is also linked to a broader DFID-funded research consortium to develop mental health care in low- and middle-income countries in Africa and Asia.

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