

Case Study 6: “The Scotland Malawi Mental Health Education Project” (SMMHEP)

The Scotland Malawi Mental Health Education Project was established in 2006 as a collaboration between Scottish psychiatrists and the College of Medicine (COM), Malawi’s only medical school. When SMMHEP was established, there was 1 psychiatrist in Malawi for a population now reaching 17 million. With Scottish Government funding, SMMHEP helped develop medical student teaching and has ensured that over 500 Malawian doctors graduated with key skills in mental healthcare and positive attitudes to people living with mental illness. Under the project, over 100 volunteer psychiatrists, the majority of whom have been senior trainees and consultants working within NHS Scotland, have made teaching visits to Malawi.

SMMHEP has also helped establish postgraduate psychiatry training at COM in a collaboration with University of Cape Town, with additional expertise from University of Edinburgh. Malawi’s first 3 locally-trained psychiatrists qualified in 2017 and are working in clinical leadership positions in the Malawi public health service. The Scottish Government is now funding scholarships for 4 further trainees. Other SMMHEP activities have included training primary care health workers and establishing a mental health service users and carers organisation. This successful project is a positive example of personnel from NHS Scotland working collaboratively to help strengthen the health workforce of a partner country in the global South.

A video showing the positive response to the project by medical students in Malawi:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=2&v=ozJkdlVmMw&app=desktop

SMMHEP website: <http://www.smmhep.org.uk>

SMMHEP email: mail@SMMHEP.org.uk

Contact: Rob Stewart, Consultant Perinatal Psychiatrist, Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer Edinburgh University and Honorary Senior Lecturer, University of Malawi.

Email: robcastewart@mac.com