

## 2009 - Sub-Saharan Africa

Chronic poverty and HIV/AIDS continue to be significant issues in Sub-Saharan Africa. Mental health problems have been associated with these conditions in addition to being attached to stigma that has put individuals with emotional problems at risk for physical and emotional abuse.

Studies in resource-limited areas within Sub-Saharan African countries suggest that making mental health education and services available through capacity building (i.e. training general health practitioners in basic mental health interventions) can be a key element in: a) breaking the poverty-mental illness link; b) decreasing neuropsychiatric and psychosocial problems associated with HIV/AIDS; and c) decreasing stigma associated with physical and emotional abuse toward individuals with mental conditions. Our group collaborated with university, ministry of health, and other health agency administrators from countries that have recently examined these issues (e.g. South Africa, Uganda, Ghana, Zambia) with the aim to assist in the capacity building effort.

During August and September of 2009, PWB assisted the Mental Health and Poverty Project (MHaPP) in South Africa, a collaboration among the World Health Organization, South African Department of Health, and the University of KwaZuluNatal. In the resource-limited region of Hlabisa, located in the KwaZuluNatal province, we trained hospital and primary care health workers (e.g. nurses, social workers) to identify signs and symptoms of mental health conditions commonly encountered and to make basic counseling interventions and appropriate referral to medication evaluation. For more project details, contact us at [info@pgtn.org](mailto:info@pgtn.org) for the 2009 Annual Report .

## 2) Other Activities

Other PWB activities for 2009 included helping individuals identify mental health resources (Kern County, California; Los Angeles County, California); providing a new nonprofit organization advice on creating a health-oriented organization (California); and providing clinicians in the community educational materials on basic mental health concepts and interventions (Kern County, California; San Joaquin County, California).