

August 2026

AGCA Newsletter

A newsletter made by the African Genetic Counsellors Association
Board



**AFRICAN GENETIC COUNSELLING
ASSOCIATION (AGCA)**

Inside, we
also
talk about:

- GGNET- Pg 3
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Do you have news,
events or research to
share?
Contact us!

Email:

info@africangcassociation.org

Message from the Chair

By Nakita Laing

Dear Colleagues,

Wow, how are we already in the 2nd half of the year?!

This year has been busy but the AGCA committee has been hard at work behind the scenes trying to advance the profession and the act of genetic counselling across the African Continent.

Since our official launch in October 2025, many of the committee have been busy and invited to join on various other committees and boards independently, bringing awareness in their different circles. We hope that you enjoy reading about the updates and we would also like to invite you to get more involved. Please send us your research updates as well as events and awareness programmes in your respective countries so we can elevate the reach and help disseminate this information further if possible.

We would also like to invite you join one of our working groups - more information below.

Global Genomics Network for Education and Training (GGNET)

By Nakita Laing, Michelle Bishop and Mohamed Zahir

One of the most exciting developments is that we had three board members invited to Bogota, Colombia, to the 3rd GGNET Summit (as one of only 100 invitees). GGNET's focus is on workforce education and training as the critical "last mile" in implementation and delivery of genomic medicine aiming to bring this into routine practice in a way that is scalable, affordable, sustainable and equitable. We presented a poster on the data from our inaugural meeting as well as AGCA's development and goals.

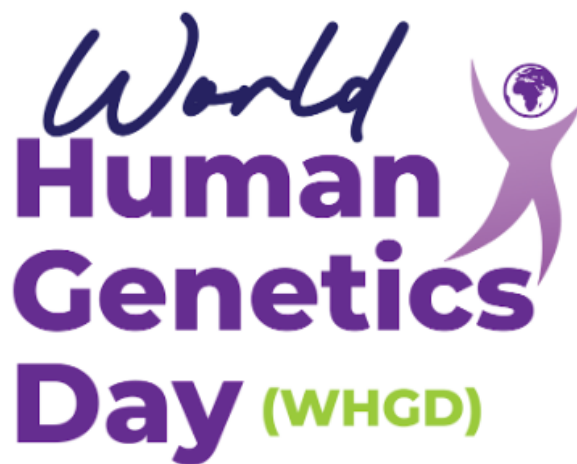
"Workforce education and training as the critical "last mile" in implementation and delivery of genomic medicine"

GGNET is divided into regional groups and the African regional group is being co-led by our very own Mohamed Zahir. Priorities were set and one of the key activities that AGCA will be assisting with under this banner is clinical genetics workforce mapping. Please look out for upcoming surveys. Your participation will provide us with an accurate picture of what is happening in Africa and we can use this information to leverage for more resources in our settings.



Inaugural World Human Genetics Day (WHGD) with Human Genetics Awareness Association (HuGAA)

By Mohamed Zahir



We are very proud that Mohamed Zahir (AGCA board member) was invited to participate in the inaugural World Human Genetics Day (WHGD). An initiative organised by the Human Genetics Awareness Association (HuGAA) to promote public engagement in human genetics. This event was held on the 30th March 2026 in Gambia and was founded by Sainabou Laye Ndure.

The event brought together clinicians, researchers, educators, advocacy groups, and community members to explore the role of genetics in health across African contexts. The programme was structured around key themes including genetics as a public health concern, disease-focused discussions such as kidney disease and sickle cell disease, and the psychosocial dimensions of genetic conditions, including caregiving and mental health. Dr. Mohamed Zahir Alimohamed delivered a talk titled "Why Africa matters for the future of medicine?", which challenged conventional narratives by positioning Africa not only in terms of need or burden, but as central to shaping the future of genomic medicine.



Theme:
Human Genetics for Health, Awareness,
de-stigmatization, and the Future of
genomics in Africa

Connecting Research, Medicine, and Communities

The talk "challenged conventional narratives by positioning Africa not only in terms of need or burden, but as central to shaping the future of genomic medicine"

Please visit the [HuGAA website here](#)

The talk emphasised the importance of African populations, data, and perspectives in advancing global understanding of health and disease. The event provided a valuable platform to highlight the role of genetic counselling in supporting individuals and families to understand and navigate genetic information, particularly in settings where awareness and access remain limited. It also reinforced the need to move beyond technical discussions of genomics and towards more inclusive, accessible conversations that reflect the lived realities of patients and families. This aligns closely with AGCA's mission to strengthen genetic counselling across Africa and to ensure that the expansion of genomic medicine is accompanied by appropriate support, education, and advocacy. AGCA looks forward to continued engagement in initiatives that promote genetics awareness and strengthen the integration of counselling into clinical and community settings across the continent.

Africa-Asia Society of Medical Genomics (AASMG)

By Nakita Laing

Contact: thanyachai.sur@gmail.com



We have also been invited to join AASMG which is also pushing genetic counselling as an agenda. This is a group of clinical genetics professionals coming together across Africa and Asia. They are looking for more people to join the society so if you are working in a clinical setting as a medical geneticist or genetic counsellor in Africa please consider joining. They have an exciting conference coming up from 25-27 November 2026 in Bangkok, Thailand (likely to be hybrid). This will be the Second Africa Asia Society of Medical Genomics Joint Conference with the Thai Medical Genetics and Genomics Medicine Association. They are looking at very exciting topics with speakers from Asia and Africa and promises to be a wonderful learning experience. We encourage all of you make contact with them or attend. Please contact Professor Thanyachai Sura (email above)



HUGO - Genetic Counselling Standing Committee

By Nakita Laing

Since the launch of AGCA, many of the board members have been invited to join international collaborations. One of these major collaborations has been with HUGO as a member of the GC Standing committee. Their goals are to bring genetic counselling to low- and middle-income countries which align well with AGCA. Part of the mandate of the HUGO GC standing committee is:

- Provide a global voice for upskilling and capacity building in genetic counselling, with a focus on equity and inclusion across regions, particularly LMICs.
- Advocate for access to training in genetic counselling for non-genetic healthcare professionals involved in genetic and genomic testing.

As part of this they have asked that each organisation, represented by its chair on the committee, also please nominate a young emerging leader within their organisation for education on how these committees work, upskilling in leadership skills and continuity in future committees. We are pleased to announce that Mr Ahmed-Sherrif Kanvela Yussif was nominated to this role and he has also become the secretary for the group which was much appreciated. Learn more about Ahmed later in our "Spotlight on a genetic counselling professional or student" section. Learn more about HUGO here: [HUGO](https://www.hugo-international.org/)

Research Survey Opportunity

By Augustine Gyening

To participate
click here:

10 Minute
survey link

One of our very own genetic counselling students is conducting research about genetic medicine awareness in African undergraduate and postgraduate students. Lets support him and pass this invitation to our colleagues and, if possible, to faculties for dissemination.

Invitation: Survey on Genetic Medicine Awareness (African Undergrad/Postgrad Students)

Dear Students,

We invite you to participate in a brief research study exploring knowledge, awareness and perceptions of genetic diseases, genetic testing and genetic counselling in Africa.

Who can participate?

- Current undergraduate students in Africa.
- Current postgraduate students in Africa.

Why participate?

This study is being conducted by a postgraduate student at the West African Genetic Medicine Centre (WAGMC), University of Ghana. Your responses are entirely anonymous and confidential. Your insights will directly help researchers understand public awareness, inform educational efforts and guide future healthcare policy across the continent.

Thank you for your valuable time and contribution to African medical research.

Warm regards,

Augustine Gyening

Postgraduate Researcher, West African Genetic Medicine Centre (WAGMC)

University of Ghana

Email: gyeningaugustine@gmail.com



**AFRICAN GENETIC
COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION**
(AGCA)

*Empowering Genetic Counsellors. Advancing Genetic Healthcare.
Strengthening Africa.*



Spotlight on a Genetic Counselling professional or Student

By Ahmed-Sherrif Yussif



"With advances in genomics and genetic counselling across the African continent, genetic counsellors have the opportunity to be part of a movement shaping the future of genomic care on the continent."

Ahmed-Sherrif Kanvela Yussif is a Genetic Counsellor intern with the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Unit in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, Ghana. He provides genetic counselling and coordinates multidisciplinary care for individuals and families navigating complex pregnancies, inherited genetic conditions, and rare diseases.

Beyond his clinical work, Ahmed-Sherrif is the co-creator and host of the GeneStories series, an initiative of the GoldCoast Report Network that promotes genetic literacy and raises awareness of genetics and rare diseases in Ghana through accessible public education and storytelling.

Passionate about advancing genomic medicine in Africa, Ahmed-Sherrif aspires to become a professor who trains the next generation of genetic counsellors in Ghana. He also hopes to expand GeneStories into a podcast that amplifies the voices and lived experiences of individuals and families affected by genetic disorders, promoting greater understanding, advocacy, and inclusion.

He believes that the rapid advances in genomics and genetic counselling across Africa present a unique opportunity to transform healthcare across the continent. Through education, research, clinical service, and advocacy, he hopes to contribute to a future where genetic services are accessible, equitable, and fully integrated into routine healthcare for all.

"With advances in genomics and genetic counselling across the African continent, genetic counsellors have the opportunity to be part of a movement shaping the future of genomic care on the continent."

Join us today - Become a member!

We can only grow with people working together!

Become a member and enjoy access to our listserve where we share upcoming course information, access to expert genetic counsellors across Africa and potential collaborations as well as free webinars.

With more members, collective power becomes possible and we can bring increased opportunities to our continent.



[Become a member today](#)

New Intern Volunteer

By Aphiwe Khoza



"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

My name is Aphiwe Khoza. I am currently an intern genetic counsellor at UCT. I am originally from KZN, SA. One area that I am particularly passionate about is genetic education. My thesis explored nurse educators' perspectives on genetics in the nursing curriculum, has reinforced my belief that strengthening genetics education is fundamental to improving healthcare delivery across the continent. Because of the findings of my thesis, I have been involved in facilitating and assisting of genetic teaching to undergraduate and postgraduate nurses at Groote Schuur Hospital and Western Cape College of Nursing.

I envision a future where genetic counselling is no longer a niche service in Africa but an integral part of equitable healthcare, accessible to individuals and families regardless of where they live. In my spare time, I binge watch crime documentaries. I guess solving mysteries is one of the reasons I was drawn to genetics! Both require curiosity, careful observation, and connecting the dots to uncover the bigger picture.

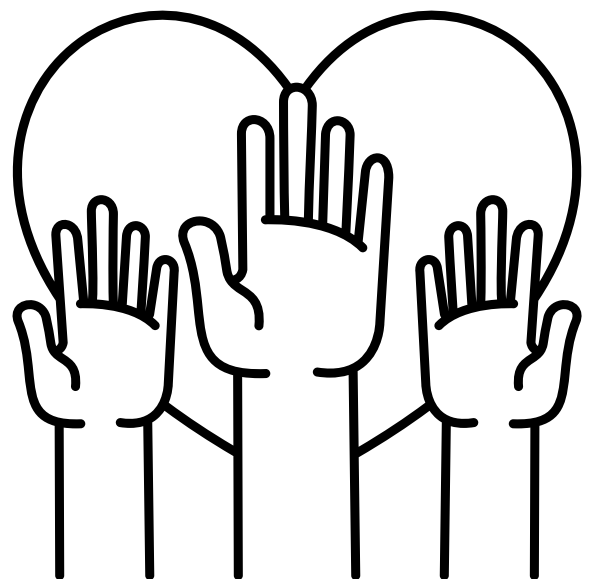
One quote that continues to inspire me is by Maya Angelou:

"Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better."

To me, this quote reflects the heart of genetic counselling. As our understanding of genetics continues to evolve, so too should our commitment to learning, improving, and ensuring that advances in genomic medicine benefit all people across Africa.

Volunteers Needed

We are so excited about all of these conversations coming together and bringing opportunities for growth of genetic counselling in Africa. In order to do the work we aim to do we need your help! As an Exco committee we are a small number, but with all of you by our side we can achieve so much more! We would like to take this opportunity to invite you to join our association by signing up as an official member. In addition, if you would like to serve on one of our sub-committees and assist with advancing this profession we invite you to submit your CV to: info@africangcassociation.org





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Strengthening Africa.*



Clinical Directory of Services

One of the tasks the AGCA would like to do is to capture a clinical directory of services in Africa. We have been receiving emails from around the world from genetic counsellors seeking services in various countries across Africa. Without having this information it has been difficult trying to match them up in order to benefit shared families across the globe. In addition, we have been approached by patients seeking services in their country of residence.

Considering this, we have developed a form to capture practice and service information from clinicians and relevant qualified healthcare professionals offering medical genetic consultation services, genetic counselling and facilitating genetic testing. It also includes support groups. We invite you to complete this form if you are interested:

[Clinical Service Directory Form](#)

First African Rare Disease Clinical & Genomic Workshop

A wonderful opportunity awaits you to participate in the First African Rare Disease Clinical & Genomic Workshop, which will take place from 24–27 August 2026 in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo. Organized by the African Rare Diseases Initiative (ARDI), African Society of Human Genetics (AfSHG), and the Centre de Référence des Maladies Rares et Non-Diagnostiquées (CRMRND), this workshop is designed to strengthen clinical and genomic expertise for the diagnosis of rare diseases across Africa. Unlike a traditional scientific conference, this workshop emphasizes hands-on, case-based learning. Participants will work alongside an international faculty of experts through practical sessions.



Important Date or Events

What: First African Rare Disease Clinical & Genomics Workshop

When: 24–27 August 2026

Where: Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo

Apply: [First African Rare Disease Workshop](#)



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Online Course: Introduction to Clinical Genetics

Stellenbosch University's Medical Genetics and Genetic Counselling Unit invites applicants for its **fully online short course** with enrolment now open. This course is aimed at individuals interested in increasing their knowledge in the area of clinical genetics including those considering enrolling into a genetic counselling programme.

Participant will engage with a broad range of content across the following topics:

- Chromosomal abnormalities, genetic variation, and conditions
- Genetic and genomic testing
- Establishing a genetic diagnosis
- Multifactorial disorders
- Genetic counselling and ethical considerations
- Ethical, legal, and social considerations in the genomic era
- Living with disability and equity

**COURSE DATES**
8 Weeks | 07 Sept – 01 Nov 2026

**FORMAT**
Online

**COURSE ENROLLMENT FEE**
R3000.00

Apply here (or QR Code below):
[Application link](#)

Application:


Enquiries:
Ms Malebo Malope
 mmalope@sun.ac.za



Medicine and Health Sciences
EyeNzululwazi ngezoNyango neMpilo
Geneeskunde en Gesondheidswetenskappe



Important Information

What: Introduction to Clinical Genetics Online Short Course (Stellenbosch University)
When: 7 Sept - 1 Nov 2026 (8 weeks)
Where: SUNOnline – fully online short course
Apply: [Register here](#)
Enquiries: mmalope@sun.ac.za

— Next issue loading —

Watch this space!

There is more to come!



AFRICAN GENETIC COUNSELLING ASSOCIATION (AGCA)

New Webinar Series (Dates TBC)

- Prenatal Genetic Counselling in Africa
- Pedigree drawing workshop
- African Genetic Services Research Showcase
- Cancer Genetic Counselling in Africa

Don't miss out on these
as well as other
opportunities - join
today!

We would like to highlight you!

If you are a member please send us news of your research or activities related to genetic counselling so we can amplify your work and bring awareness of genetic counselling in Africa as well as the need for it!

✉ info@africangcassociation.org

🌐 <https://africangcassociation.org>

📷 <https://www.instagram.com/geneticcounselafrica>

✂ https://x.com/agca_official



A special thanks to AfSHG for being the parent organisation and encouraging this association to be formed.

Thank you for your engagement

By Nakita Laing (Chair of AGCA)

By now, we hope we have shown you that our small group of volunteers has been hard at work and are forming connections and collaborations, the starting point to get the real work done. Now we need you! We hope that you will be joining the journey with us!