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ISSBD SPECIAL SECTION

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Introduction to Developmental Research in Africa and Beyond: A Focus on Bame Nsamenang's Scientific Contribution

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In 2018, Bame Nsamenang, one of the most influential African developmental scientists, passed away, as reported in an earlier issue of the Bulletin. Nsamenang showed a life-long commitment to shaping the discipline towards the needs of all people around the globe, moving from the dominating westernized view on human development to a global perspective. Thereby, Bame Nsamenang not only aimed at understanding human development in cultural context, he also actively applied findings in order to improve the lives of children in Africa.

The Special Section of this issue of the ISSBD Bulletin honors the academic contributions and rich legacy left behind by Prof. Bame Nsamenang. We hope that this collection of papers will help the readers to get a closer understanding of Prof. Nsamenang's research and to carry his thoughts and ideas forward in their own research.

We are very thankful to Prof. Anne Petersen, Prof. Therese Tchombe, and Prof. Julie Robinson for actively approaching us and developing with us the idea of a special section on Bame Nsamenang's work. They invited the authors and went through the papers – many thanks for that! We believe that the result of this cooperation will definitely be interesting to our readership and will be a highlight of the Special Sections published during the past years.

Please let us know if you have further ideas for topics for upcoming Special Sections. – The feedback and input from all members of the society is highly appreciated!

Honoring the Scholarly Legacy of Professor Nsamenang: What He Accomplished and Why It Matters

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Introduction

Augustine Bame Nsamenang was a renowned professor of psychology and counseling in his home country of Cameroon, who championed the relevance of human development research as well as his distinctive Africentric epistemology for Africa and global developmental science. His training and career were broad and inclusive of all aspects of academic life – research, teaching, administration, and mentoring, and he also used his knowledge and wisdom to benefit his family, community, country and beyond. Especially noteworthy here is his long dedication to ISSBD. He has left a rich and broad legacy.

This overview does three things: (1) it provides a synopsis of Nsamenang's many academic achievements and scientific contributions to national and international research; (2) it also documents the significance of his scholarship not only for African human development research but also for global developmental science and capacity building; (3) finally, it describes the papers in this special section of the ISSBD Bulletin. We note that another special section honoring the scholarship of Nsamenang is being published in 2019 in the *Journal of Psychology in Africa*.

Nsamenang's Rich Academic Background

Tchombe (2018) provided a detailed description of Nsamenang's academic background and accomplishments so we will summarize the highlights here. Bame started his academic journey in his natal Nso village in Cameroon. Like most Cameroonian children, he faced enormous challenges, yet developed resilient skills and ingenuity. By secondary school, he was identified as one with great leadership qualities and positive interpersonal relationships as well as creativity, imagination, and endurance. His university education was earned at the University of Ibadan (Nigeria), one of the most outstanding in Africa. His baccalaureate degree began with nursing, which gave him sound knowledge of human biology that was valuable throughout his career. Motivated by a commitment to serve humanity, Bame completed his masters and doctoral degrees in guidance and

counseling and clinical child psychology, respectively. His prestigious three-year Fogarty Fellowship for Advanced Training in Developmental Research at the US National Institute of Child Health and Human Development in Professor Michael Lamb's laboratory continued to build his research capacity and introduced him to Euro-American leaders in developmental psychology. He capitalized on this experience to establish strong links and networks with top developmental and cross-cultural psychologists, who accompanied him throughout his academic and professional life. Moreover, Bame opened for these scholars a window to view psychology from an Africentric perspective. His university education as well as his postdoc impelled him to consider why African epistemology was not used for understanding development and treatment. All of his interactions during those years were used to formulate his theoretical perspectives. He continued his probing throughout his life. The tributes to Bame received upon his death (Tchombe, 2018) made clear that he had earned the respect of many international scholars. Importantly, Bame consistently provided opportunities for scholars from Cameroon and other African countries to benefit from his experiences. Bame did not grow alone; his disciples are many, in Africa and globally.

Scientific Contributions

Prof. Nsamenang's contribution to human development is best known through his research. He adopted a lifespan perspective, with special attention to Africa's children and youth. Bame was one of the earliest leaders in developing an indigenous African psychology. His research was informed by a theoretical perspective in which the determinants of human development, health, and relationships were seen to be anchored in both interactive contextualism and biology. His prolific academic writing led him to be one of Africa's most visible scholars in developmental science.

As Prof. Robert Serpell, a close collaborator of Prof. Nsamenang, points out (Serpell, this issue), although it is difficult to summarize Bame's diverse contributions, the most outstanding contributions can be grouped into what he has termed the triangle of Bame's scientific contributions and research interests (Figure 1):

- (1) An Africentric theorization of human development that was the foundation for his Social Ontogenetic Theory. Although this was grounded in primary local research, it was also enriched by reflection on personal experience, a critical reading of

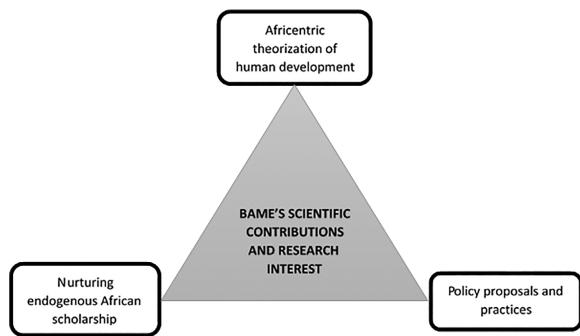


Figure 1. The triangle of Bame's scientific contributions and research interest (Serpell, 2018)

contemporary Western psychology, and a wide-ranging review of African culture, philosophy, history and politics;

- (2) A critical engagement with policy proposals and practices by applied social scientists, policymakers and educators regarding appropriate ways of designing Early Child Development Care and Education services in Africa; and
- (3) Sustained and productive efforts to nurture endogenous African scholarship on child development and education.

Prof. Nsamenang's publications include eleven books/monographs/briefs, six edited volumes, thirty-five book chapters/encyclopedia entries, and forty publications in refereed journals. His theoretical contributions are represented most strongly by his important volume articulating his theory (Nsamenang, 1992), also described in several articles (e.g., Nsamenang, 1997, 2006). Although Prof. Nsamenang initially focused on using his knowledge to benefit African scholarship and practice, his ideas quickly began to have an influence on global developmental science (e.g., Nsamenang, 2015). His focus on the enmeshing of context, culture, biology and development was relevant for all continents and all domains of development. He specifically incorporated cultural theories and practice into his work, a strategy that is now understood to be universally important.

Moving clockwise around the triangle, his many policy and practice contributions are exemplified especially by the teacher education curriculum he developed with Tchombe (Nsamenang & Tchombe, 2011). He also wrote in other educational sites about his Africentric perspective (e.g., Nsamenang, 2014). And he has many articles focusing on early child development (e.g., Pence & Nsamenang, 2008; Serpell & Nsamenang, 2014, 2015). Beyond his scholarship, he searched and advocated for ways of educating children and youth that were culturally-appropriate and contextually-sensitive, which he saw as a prerequisite for achieving the African Union's vision of an integrated, peaceful, and prosperous Africa, controlled by its own people and able to take its rightful place in the global community and the knowledge economy (African Union, 2015). In addition, Nsamenang contributed directly to numerous policy efforts including his invaluable contributions at both national and global levels to

UNICEF, UNESCO and WHO as a consultant and in commissioned work. In addition, his expert input enhanced the proficiency of faith-based organizations, community-based and civil society organizations and some other local and international non-governmental organizations in Cameroon. His contribution was particularly significant in the arenas of lay counselor training and interventions with youth concerning HIV/AIDS.

Turning to the last point of the triangle: nurturing endogenous African scholarship, Bame was generous in sharing his time and knowledge to build research capacity in the next generation of African developmental scientists through mentoring graduate students and interns and serving on thesis defense panels in Cameroon and beyond. Nsamenang's publications are far exceeded by the number of academic presentations he made to regional and global conferences/seminars/workshops in all six inhabited continents of the world. One example of his many presentations at workshops and conferences can be found in the video recording from a presentation in Brazil (<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Jo9LxL74wVwhFjVfxGmQtVHaU1LGW4-r/view?usp=sharing>). He also advanced developmental scholarship by convening many workshops, including the ISSBD African Regional Workshops in 1992 and 2003. For ISSBD, he was involved from the beginning of the ISSBD African Regional Workshop series, and spoke at most. The most recent Africa workshop was in Ghana, where we celebrated Africans becoming 25% of ISSBD members, largely



A characteristically joyful Bame.

through these workshops. Bame was a leader in making all this happen.

National and International Research Affiliations and Responsibilities

Bame was an active member of ISSBD for most of his scholarly life, and served on the ISSBD Executive Committee for about 20 years. He played an active role in building the capacity of early career scholars through ISSBD and other organizations. By 2010, Bame was an active member of at least 20 professional organizations at both the national and international level.

At the national level, Bame co-founded in 1995 the Human Development Resource Centre (HDRC), a research and service facility in Bamenda, Cameroon, which he directed until his death. In 2012, together with Emeritus Professor Therese Mungah Shalo Tchombe, Professor Nsamenang and seventeen others signed the Cape Town Declaration that led to the creation of the Pan African Psychological Union (PAPU). In the same year, Prof Tchombe and Prof Nsamenang co-founded the Cameroon Psychological Association (CPA); Bame became its inaugural President.

Papers in this special section

This special section followed from a symposium and memorial session organized at ISSBD 2018 in Gold Coast, Australia, shortly after his death. Participants in the symposium included Serpell and Mpofu included in this section; Esther Akinsola was the third participant in this symposium but was unable to contribute to this section. Petersen and Robinson organized and facilitated the symposium. Sheri Nsamenang, the final author here, led the memorial session as Bame's daughter and staff

psychologist at McMaster's Children's Hospital in Toronto, Canada.

Serpell (this issue) reviews Nsamenang's legacy, especially his Africentric theory of human development, his critical engagement with policy and practice regarding early child development/child education in Africa, and his commitment to nurturing endogenous African scholarship on child development and education. He provides important examples of each significant contribution.

Diale, Mpofu, and co-authors (this issue) focus on the ways in which social systems at the family, school, and community levels influence African children's development, using Nsamenang's (2006) social ontogenesis theory. They use evidence from their studies of orphan children and adolescents in Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe.

S. Nsamenang (this issue) diversifies the application of A. B. Nsamenang's sociogenetic theory and supports his advocacy of Africentric research by discussing obesity in Cameroon. She demonstrates how current best practice approaches for understanding and addressing obesity from a Eurocentric point of view do not fit in Cameroon. She thus highlights the importance of Africentric research in all areas of human development, with the aim to inspire others to apply A.B. Nsamenang's concepts to a variety of aspects of human development.

Conclusion

Professor Augustine Bame Nsamenang leaves an enduring intellectual legacy in Africa and globally. His life provides testimony of a scholar who never permitted political ideologies and quest for power to derail him from his professional call to service as a teacher, researcher, and community developer. He has set an important example for the rest of us to follow.



Africentric engagement with child development theory and education: the legacy of Bame Nsamenang

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Bame Nsamenang's career was centered on Africa socially, politically and epistemologically, through theoretical reflection on human development, critical engagement with educational policy commitment in Africa, and a sustained and productive commitment to nurturing endogenous African scholarship on child development and education. His most outstanding contributions strike me as (1) an Africentric theorization of human development, grounded in primary local research, enriched by reflection on personal experience, critical reading of contemporary Western psychology and wide-ranging review of African culture, philosophy, history and politics; (2) a critical engagement with policy proposals and practices by applied social scientists, policymakers and educators regarding appropriate ways of designing ECDCE services in Africa, and (3) a sustained and productive commitment to nurturing endogenous African scholarship on child development and education.

An Africentric theorization of human development

In his seminal book on *"Human development in cultural context"*, Nsamenang (1992) advanced an interpretation of human development from an African perspective. Drawing on Mazrui's (1986) historical analysis of Africa's triple cultural heritage, Nsamenang argued that in order to understand how Africans develop over their lifespan we need to situate them in a context where the cultures of the so-called Western world, and of Islam intersect with a cultural perspective endogenous to Africa. Like an earlier, outstanding indigenous African psychologist, Michael Ogbolu Okonji, Bame Nsamenang told me that he regarded the existence of cultural commonalities across Africa's many ethnic and national groups as self-evident. In his 1992 book he used the expression "West African worldview", but in his later publications he often referred to the endogenous strand of the continent's cultural heritage as "African", following the lead of the East African scholar Ali Mazrui.

The rationale for this explicit centering of his work on Africa, as I understand it, was as follows. Scientifically inspired systematic interventions to enhance the quality of human development in ecocultural context must connect with endogenous practices and ethnotheories of

child-rearing, in order to generate sustainable progressive social change. Scientific validation of theories of human development requires that they make sense to relevant stakeholders, including parents, community leaders, national governments and regionally respected experts. But, historically, Africa has been neglected by scientific theories of human development, with only minimal participation by African subjects, African researchers (and authors) and African audiences. Interventions inspired by such a science lack validity. Many observable intervention programs (eg schooling) not only rely on locally untested theories, but also manifest a goal of modernization, equated with industrialization, urbanization and Westernization. Yet, arguably, those tendencies reflect attitudes generated by the colonial experience and require revision in the post-colonial spirit of liberation from oppressive Western domination.

Addressing this challenge calls for an explicit emphasis on indigenous African cultural concepts and values, because, relative to the Western and Islamic traditions, the indigenous African strand of Africa's triple cultural heritage has received little recognition in the formulation of public policy. Its influence on indigenous child-rearing practices is sustained by intergenerational transmission, informed by ethnotheories that can be gleaned from observation and interviews of parents and authoritative elders in rural African communities. Nsamenang, therefore set out to theorize key parameters of endogenous African practices and ethnotheories of child-rearing in eco-cultural context, to identify systematic strengths within that theoretical framework, and to advocate for their inclusion in the design of progressive interventions, such as education, health promotion, counseling, and early childhood care and education (ECDCE)².

In two key publications, Nsamenang (1992, 2006) theorized a distinctively African lifespan social ontogeny, delineating seven phases in the development of social selfhood, each characterized by a distinctive set of developmental tasks defined within the culture's primarily socio-affective developmental agenda. Developmental progress is achieved within this kind of traditional enculturation, not so much through explicit instruction, but rather by culturally programmed opportunities for children to observe and participate in everyday community activities.

Key features of Nsamenang's Africentric social ontogeny that set it apart from Western developmental theories such as those proposed by Freud, Erikson and Piaget are its embedding of child development within a life-cycle that connects the person to his or her ancestors and progeny, its emphasis on social contextual factors as the drivers of

ontogenetic change, and the notion of *priming* as the anticipatory socialization function of parental delegation to pre-adolescent children of responsibility for the care of their younger siblings.

The focus of socialisation in the first, 'pre-social' phase in Nsamenang's African social ontogeny is on social priming. Babies are cuddled and teased to smile along with adults. Parents and other caregivers among the Nso of Cameroon offer infants food items and playthings and lure them through both verbal and nonverbal communication to return the 'gifts' - a prelude towards induction into the 'sharing and exchange norms' that bond the social system. Rabain (1979) in her study of Wolof child rearing in rural Senegal and Mtonga (1988, 2012) in his reflections on Chewa children's play in rural Zambia both reported similar interactions of adults with toddlers, which were interpreted as cultivating generosity and preventing the development of greediness or selfishness.

Critical engagement with policy development for ECDCE in Africa

The integrative power of the distinctive strengths Nsamenang identified within the indigenous African tradition of child-socialization formed the basis of his advocacy for their inclusion in the design of ECDCE services:

"ECD stakeholders in general, and African policy planners, researchers, and practitioners in particular, need to open up creatively to the reality that African parents raise culturally competent infants and toddlers according to a different set of standards . . . most of which have not been theorized or formulated into ECD policy." (Nsamenang 2008, 138)

Earlier in the same chapter, Nsamenang complained:

"When Euro-American ECD programs are applied as the gold standards by which to measure forms of Africa's ECD, they forcibly deny equity to and recognition of Africa's ways of provisioning for its young, thereby depriving the continent a niche in global ECD knowledge waves . . . The dominant ECD narrative assumes that children can learn a universal culture and has introduced an insidiously destructive force in the field - acquiescence to the institutionalization of ECD . . ." (Nsamenang, 2008, 136)

In our joint position paper prepared for UNESCO, Serpell and Nsamenang (2014) argued that "Africa has its own legitimate conceptions of child development and strategies for supporting it and a rich store of often neglected resources which should be incorporated into ECCE and higher education strategies and inform future research" (p.7). Rather than designing a universalist package of "best practices" and importing them, we recommended that

"The design of ECCE services in Africa should focus on local strengths including indigenous games and music, emphasize community-based provision, incorporate participation by preadolescent children; use indigenous African languages and local funds of knowledge; and accord priority to inclusion of children with special needs." (p.5)

In a special section of the ISSBD Newsletter devoted to indigenous approaches to developmental research, Nsamenang (2000, 3) contended that "research framed by social ontogeny, through resonating with African life-journeys, can fill an important gap. It can inform scholars, practitioners, and development agents about how African communities will relate to interventions for their children."

The constructive thrust of Nsamenang's sometimes harsh critique of the dominant mainstream of international ECDCE programming in Africa received recognition by the African Early Childhood Network (AfCEN) with a posthumous award at its first international conference in Nairobi in October 2018 of the title of African ECD Champion.

Nurturing endogenous African scholarship on child development and education

As an applied scientist, Nsamenang aspired to build up a regional cadre of respected experts whose theoretical understanding of human development is grounded in first-hand experience of indigenous child-rearing practices, and in direct communication with parents and community elders, to advise national governments and development agencies on how to connect with indigenous stakeholders, and generate sustainable, progressive social change. I vividly recall the excitement with which he mobilized the first ISSBD African regional workshop in Yaounde, Cameroon in 1992. Reflecting on it in the *Journal of Psychology in Africa South of the Sahara, the Caribbean, and Afro-Latin America*, Nsamenang (1993) declared that the workshop represented "an effort to 'open up' African developmentalists to each other and to the international psychological community . . . and to initiate a network for information exchange and stimulation of an African presence in the arena of international developmental science."

The seeds planted in that workshop series bore fruit over the next 25 years, with meetings in Cote d'Ivoire 1994, Zambia 1996, Namibia 1998, Uganda 2000, Cameroon 2004, South Africa 2006, Kenya 2009, Nigeria 2011, South Africa 2013, Kenya 2015 and Ghana 2017. An impact evaluation commissioned by ISSBD President Chen concluded that "the workshops have unquestionably developed research capacity in human development, increasingly added loyal ISSBD members from Africa and exponentially increased human development knowledge with contributions from Africa" (Serpell, Nsamenang, Verma & Petersen 2017, 20).

In 2009, on the fringe of a regional IACCP³ conference in Cameroon, Nsamenang and Tchombe convened a formative workshop at which several African scholars were invited to plan chapters for a "generative teacher education handbook" on *African Educational Theories and Practices*. In a stirring introduction, Nsamenang articulated his vision for the Handbook, which was eventually published in 2011, with 36 chapters by authors based in 10 African countries, to which teachers throughout the continent have open access on line (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011). A French translation was also published (Nsamenang, Tchombe & Sabatier 2019). The pedagogical goals of the Handbook were stated as follows:



"The teacher must prepare to walk in both worlds of indigenous knowledge and received imported knowledges and techniques. The generative curriculum model enables you to focus on the co-construction of concepts and practices relevant to school learning in the local community through the consideration of both indigenous and Western knowledge systems. . . . This format invites you to become an active partner in the renewal of Africa and the co-creation of culturally relevant understandings of African education that is poised for exchanges within international educational discourse networks and global knowledge waves." (Nsamenang & Tchombe 2011, 17)

Nsamenang's legacy and impact

The impact of Nsamenang's multi-stranded efforts can already be seen in research, policy and practice. Three notable examples of strengths of endogenous African cultural practices relevant to ECDCE are the *Child-to-Child* approach, music and dance; and riddling.

Mweru (2017) reviewed studies of sibling caregiving in several African countries and presented her own research with videotaped naturalistic observations in Kenyan Abagikuyu families, showing how "older children can be teachers to their younger siblings. The findings also clearly illustrate that older siblings are cultural brokers who introduce younger children to the daily activities found in their communities." (p.109). A series of studies in Zambia has documented the feasibility of integrating the Child-to-Child (CtC) approach to outreach monitoring of early childhood growth and development by primary school learners in a small rural town, with positive outcomes for the older children in terms of personal agency, cooperative disposition, and civic responsibility in early adulthood (Serpell, Mumba & Chansa-Kabali 2011). And in Ethiopia a CtC School Readiness Programme was scaled up to more than 3,000 schools in seven regions with a positive impact on the younger children's academic and social skills (Mundy et al. 2012).

Okwany, Ngutuku and Muhangi (2011) described several initiatives in Kenya and Uganda that attempted to 'leverage indigenous knowledge for child care', by deploying local traditional songs, proverbs, and food production, preparation and preservation practices as resources for the enrichment of children's intellectual, emotional and nutritional development. The accessibility and cognitive affordances of indigenous music and dance forms in rural Zambian communities have been documented by Mukela (2013). He is engaged with government curriculum development and teacher training in efforts to establish appropriate local quality standards of ECD and primary education to counter the influence of exogenous media promoted by television.

Riddling, a neglected educational resource of indigenous African cultural traditions has recently begun to receive attention from researchers. Among the Basoga people of Eastern Uganda "riddling is a distinct form of social communication that uses metaphor and indirection to address issues of interest in the lives of people and communities The riddle also sets up a balance between concealing and revealing. It presents interpretative challenges that must be ultimately solved. . . . <In childhood socialization, riddles function> as word-games that play on ambiguity and ambivalence" (Gulere 2016, 10-13). Among the Lozi of Zambia "riddles are known as *mayumbo* (challenge), and regarded as mental testing games which require the participants to have an accurate knowledge of objects in the environment" (Serpell & Mukela 2019, 152). Abiria (2011) explored ways of implementing the national language policy and new thematic curriculum in rural primary schools in Northwestern Uganda. She found that

"cultural resources <like stories, songs, and riddles> 'travel' from the community settings where they are traditionally performed to new sites in the classrooms as hybrid forms ranging from strong (retaining a large number of key elements from their place of origin) to weak (with limited elements from their place of origin). Strong cultural resources have great potential to transform classroom practices and enhance language teaching and learning, whereas weak cultural resources are stripped of their transformative potential. . . . Teachers thus need further training to understand how the cultural resources function as both community and classroom resources to make their best use as pedagogical tools."

Notes

1. This paper is an expanded version of a presentation in the Invited Symposium "Honoring the Scholarship of Professor Bame Nsamenang" (Co-convenors: Anne C Petersen & Julie Robinson) at the 25th Biennial Congress of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development (ISSBD) Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia, July 2018.
2. The acronym ECDCE stands for Early Childhood Development Care and Education, and is used interchangeably in the literature with ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education). It serves as an "umbrella" for the more narrowly focused terms ECD (Early Childhood Development) and ECE (Early Childhood Education) used at various junctures below.
3. International Association of Cross-Cultural Psychology

Social Function Acquisition among Sub-Saharan African Culture Children and Teenagers with Orphanhood

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Worldwide, childhood and adolescent development is an actively negotiated process that is influenced by a set of historical, cultural and social relationships. Bame Nsamenang (1992; 2005) explored the influences of cultural contexts on child development among the Nso of the grasslands on Northern Cameroon in which the children acquired developmentally appropriate social roles and value orientations from their community participation. Nsamenang's social ontogenesis study of child development proposes social ecology and participatory learning to illuminate the process of child development in African culture settings. In his view, children are co-participants and co-constructors of their own learning and development facilitated by family and community. Following Nsamenang's social ontogenesis theory, children's sense of community is grounded in the cultural realities that prioritize one developmental agenda over others in cognition, socio-emotional development and participation.

In the past two decades, Nsamenang questioned the universality of Western models and theories of human development which marginalized the rich knowledge of indigenous African cultural heritage communities (Nsamenang, 1992, 2000, 2007). Western models and theories of child development seemed to propose a monolithic cultural frame for all children regardless of cultural heritage (Pence & Nsamenang, 2008), an interpretation at least misleading if not unproductive for understanding the central role of culture in child development (see also Serpell & Marfo, 2014). Nsamenang (1992) proposed a theory of social ontogenesis in which human development is inextricably linked to the ecology and social system within which development occurs. Ontogenesis relates to the developmental unfolding or lifetime development of an individual while social ontogenesis relates to the development of an individual within a social system and it is the *social* ontogenesis that anchors human development. (Nsamenang, 2005).

In this brief review, we explore the ways in which social systems at the family, school and community levels influence African children's development, applying constructs from

Nsamenang's social ontogenesis theory (2006). Specifically, we examine the evidence for a social ontogenesis perspective citing our studies from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe

Children's sense of community

Nsamenang proposed that during this developmental period, family, peers and community play an important role orienting children to the core values, beliefs and practices of their societies. From their co-participation in community activities, Nso children acquired social role orientation and the behavioral scripts for the roles (Nsamenang, 1992). Cultural scripts serve to predispose behavioral tendencies (Kelman, 2006; Goddard & Wierzbicka, 2004). This notion of social ontogenesis asserts that an individual's environment influences certain aspects of their development. Nsamenang was of the view that culture is a multidimensional or multifaceted phenomenon, with nuanced, non-linear effects upon evolving child behavioral scripts. Moreover, cultural overlays on child behaviors are intergenerational, context sensitive, and mediated by family (Nsamenang, 2007). Within these socially constructed learning pathways, children acquire culturally grounded understandings about the nature and limits of permissible social activity in a particular setting (see also Crocetti, Erentaite, & Zukauskienė, 2014; Ntinda, Mpofu, Benza, & Moagi, 2014; Serpell, 2011).

Sub-Saharan African child populations have diversity in their growth and development not only by family, culture and geographical affiliation (Diale, 2014; Louw, Dunbar-Krige, & Fritz, 2010; Mpofu, Doh, Mattise, Montsi, Muchado, Mutepfa, Phasha, & Shumba, 2010), but also from experience of orphanhood (Mutepfa, Phasha, Mpofu, Tchombe, Mwamwenda, Kizzito, & Jere-Folotiya, 2008). Orphanhood is a life course changing event, and Nsamenang's social ontogenesis theory would explain the ways in which children develop their sense of self and also the relations in which they participate through cultural scripting.

Cultural Framing of Social Development by Teenagers with Orphanhood

Orphanhood is a grim reality for many children in sub-Saharan Africa, mostly from the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, and marginally developed health care systems. With orphanhood, children contend with lack of access to essential resources for social wellbeing, including material possessions, relationships, identity, power and control. We applied Nsamenang's social ontogenesis concepts of



participatory social identity development to explore the ways which children with orphanhood in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe interpreted influences on their access to resources for social wellbeing to include conditional social wellbeing, survivorship orientation and early household care. In doing so, we prioritized the perspectives and voices of the children and teenagers themselves from their lived experiences.

Conditional social wellbeing

In our studies in Botswana, South Africa, and Zimbabwe (e.g., Diale, 2014; Mpofu, Ruhode, Mhaka-Mutepfa, January, & Mapfumo, 2015; Mutepfa et al., 2008; Ntinda, Maree, Mpofu, & Seeco, 2014, Pillay, 2012; Mwoma & Pillay, 2015), we explored orphan children's sense of community and their behavioral scripts for it. We observed that when children enact value consistent behaviors across social settings and with contingent reinforcement by family and community, they acquire a role identity, and the cultural scripts for those roles. For instance, teenage orphans in Zimbabwe adopted a distant cousin social role identity perceiving to be conditionally accepted by extended family even with good access to material resources and strong relationships with a carer family (Mpofu et al, 2015). We observed a similar sense of social distancing of South African orphan children in their perceptions of relationships with educators (Mwoma & Pillay, 2015), peers (Mpofu et al., 2010) and child welfare community organizations (Mutepfa et al. 2008; Pillay, 2012). Orphan children in Botswana felt themselves to be treated in disempowering ways by carers and families, with unequal access to resources for social wellbeing or being not listened to for their needs (Diale, 2014; Mutepfa et al., 2008; Mwoma & Pillay, 2015; Ntinda et al., 2014).

Survivorship orientations

Children and teenagers with orphanhood self-perceived as social survivors and also cherished hopes for happy futures despite their present deprivations (Diale, 2014; Pillay, 2012). They reported having allies in the community, including extended family, as well as civic and governmental organizations. Yet, each of the types of orphaned children's allies presents them with both opportunities and vicissitudes on the children's path to recovery and psychosocial habilitation. For instance, South African teenage orphans reported a steep social learning gradient from social tensions with the child welfare service providers. They perceived child welfare agency personnel to stigmatize them as of less worth than non-orphan children in the community (Pillay, 2012). As was the case with Botswana and Zimbabwean peers, the South African teenagers acquired cultural scripting for negotiating relationships with family caregivers,

educators and community child welfare organizations for enhancing their social wellbeing (Mutepfa et al. 2008).

Early household care roles

Consistent with social ontogenesis theory, teenage orphans from South Africa and Botswana acquired early household leadership roles from the grim realities to look after themselves and surviving siblings (Mutepfa et al., 2008; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006). They reported acquiring these leadership roles as they enacted them, or in participatory ways (Mutepfa et al, 2008). Yet nothing would have prepared them for household leadership roles in which their age mates with surviving parents would engage a decade later. For instance, in appraising their evolving sense of social wellbeing with no adult caregivers, the teenagers said they had to contend with chronic social ill-being, based on the uncertainty and unpredictability of their daily lives, fears of social marginalization and risk for unwanted school dropout (Pillay, 2012; Pillay & Nesengani, 2006). Yet, many of the teenage orphan heads of household also reported that they cope creatively with their life situations, managing their daily living and achieving community developmental milestones (Pillay, 2012). For these evolving social capabilities, the teenagers with orphanhood reported using partnership building and social networking skills for their day-by-day community living. The teenage household leaders adopted a strength-based rather than deficit approach to sustainable community living, which made for resilient living in the face of chronic social uncertainty.

Summary and conclusions

We sought to explore and discover the cultural scripts that orphan children and teenagers from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe constructed for their community participation. From our studies on children and teenagers growing up with orphanhood in Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe, we observed evidence of role scripting and re-scripting of socio-cultural competences necessary for family and community participation. While the broad cultural world view provided a framework for evolving social agency capabilities growing with orphanhood, lived experiences by the survivor children contoured their adaptation within their communities. Findings from our studies are consistent with Nsamenang's social ontology hypothesis that within communities, children enact functional social roles for their personal and collective wellness with others. In sub-Saharan African cultural heritage settings, cultural connectedness allows children to use their evolving behavioral scripts to shape their own development within their communities of habitat.

A Review: Exploring Obesity in Cameroon Using A. B. Nsamenang's Concepts

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Human Ontogenesis

A. B. Nsamenang made significant contributions to human development research in Africa. He is well known for his theory on human ontogenesis, which defines human development as the acquisition and growth of the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional competencies required to engage fully in family and society (A. B. Nsamenang, 2005). His human ontogenesis theory describes three spheres of life (A. B. Nsamenang, 2006): (1) spiritual selfhood is from conception to the naming ceremony, which is a baby's initiation into a community and occurs a few days after birth; (2) social self-hood consists of seven stages that begin with the newborn period and end with old age and death; and (3) ancestral self-hood, whereby the dead join the transcendent world and serve as intercessors for the living. A. B. Nsamenang was bold and unapologetic about researching, writing, and talking about the realities of human development in an African context.

In his seminal concept of *sociogenesis*, he asserted that development among sub-Saharan African individuals is perceived and explained as a function of social influences, and that genetics manifest in different ways depending on social context (A. B. Nsamenang, 1992). He maintained that the zone of developmental change occurs at the interface of biology and culture (A. B. Nsamenang, 2000). Accordingly, personhood is achieved through a combination of incremental maturation through ontogeny as well as experientially via social integration in the community/family and status roles (A. B. Nsamenang, 2003). He illustrated ways through which the development of individuals in sub-Saharan Africa focuses on the development of social self-hood via guided participation.

Africentric Research

A. B. Nsamenang advocated an Africentric view on human development fostered by methodology that is sensitive to African patterns of development, which goes beyond studying aspects of behavior that are convenient and rely on Eurocentric methods (A. B. Nsamenang, 2003). A. B. Nsamenang challenged the tendency for researchers to compare indigenous psychology to Euro-American baseline data and encouraged a science that acknowledges human diversity grounded in ecoculture and acknowledges the reality of the "researched" (A. B. Nsamenang, 2000; 2017).

He described the differences between the developmental focus on social selfhood in sub-Saharan Africa versus the focus on cognitive competence and independence in Western societies. Among other things, he proposed that developmental researchers study: "lived experiences" (a posteriori) rather than conceptualized attributes (a priori); the macro level manifestation of culture on behavior (e.g., implicit culture, individuals as agents of culture) rather than behavior at the individual level; interplay of multiculturalism on development rather than development in a homogenous system; nonlinear patterns in development; processes that permit the acquisition of skills relevant in a particular culture such as processes in sub-Saharan African educational curricula. His aspiration was for scholars to use his theory and concepts to study facets of development from an Africentric point of view, so as to "expand the visions, methods, knowledge of psychology beyond current (Western) moulds" (A. B. Nsamenang, 1992, p. 4).

A. B. Nsamenang inspired me to consider culturally-laden contributions to processes among under-researched populations, and to reflect on whether Western theories are applicable in an African context. Consequently, I have researched differences in forgiveness processes among emerging adults in Cameroon and the United States, as well as attitudes towards suicide among African immigrants in the United States.

The forgiveness study revealed that Cameroon participants were more likely to continue to engage in activities with an offender than United States participants (S. Nsamenang, Williamson, & Sandage, 2013). Despite the fact that Cameroonian participants reported greater subjective offense severity, they reported greater levels of empathy, greater benevolent forgiveness, and less forgiveness aversion than United States participants. Drawing from A. B. Nsamenang's work (2003), these differences are a reflection of how cultural communities have different worldviews (i.e., shared frame of reference), which implicates social representations and imposes a pattern of social thought. In particular, the results reflect differences between an interdependent Africentric worldview versus an individualistic worldview in the United States. It would be interesting to study the modes of cultural curricula that foster children's forgiveness processes.

To honour A. B. Nsamenang, I will diversify the application of his theory and support his advocacy of Africentric research by discussing obesity in Cameroon. Given the growing rates of obesity in Cameroon (Tchoubi et al., 2015), I will indicate how current best practice approaches for understanding and addressing obesity from a Eurocentric point of view do not fit in Cameroon. This highlights the importance of Africentric research in all areas of human development. The aim is to inspire



others to apply A. B. Nsamenang's concepts to a variety of aspects of human development.

Sociogenesis of Obesity in Cameroon

The increasing rates of obesity among Cameroonian children and adults is of public health concern, particularly because obesity increases the risk for non-communicable diseases (Choukem et al., 2017). An estimated 8% of children age 6 to 59 months and 12.5% of children age 3 to 13 years are overweight or obese (Tchoubi et al., 2015, Choukem et al., 2017). Among adults, rates of overweight are above 20% (Amugsi et al., 2017). The elevated rates of obesity among adults is of concern to children because the literature indicates that children of obese parents are at elevated risk for poor performance on tasks of social competence, fine motor skills, and problem solving (Yeung et al., 2017). Given that this association was studied in the West, it would be interesting to study the impact of adult obesity on children's development of social self-hood in Cameroon.

Inferring from A. B. Nsamenang's (1992, 2006) sociogenesis concept, obesity in Cameroon can be understood as a function of social/cultural factors and the changes in developmental tasks faced through movement from one social ontogenetic stage to another. A social factor in Cameroon is the tendency for some natives to value an above average body size/weight (Cohen et al., 2017). Cultural factors at play may include energy-dense cultural meals and the beliefs/practices for pregnant and postpartum mothers. As examples, physical activity during pregnancy is uncommon and at postpartum, it is common practice for women to receive numerous food related gifts. Changes in developmental tasks may include migration from rural to urban areas for work or school, which contributes to greater exposure to high energy-dense food and sedentary lifestyle (Cohen et al., 2017).

Context-Dependent Nature of the Hunger-Obesity Paradox

A. B. Nsamenang (1992) provided illustrations on how development through the life cycle is socially constructed and this is certainly the case for the role of hunger on body mass. A common phenomenon in Western cultures is the hunger-obesity paradox, whereby children/individuals in food-insecure homes are at elevated risk of being overweight or obese (Dietz, 1995). This is because individuals in food-insecure homes are more likely to avoid hunger by choosing cheaper and more energy-dense food rather than food that is more nutritious, but also more expensive. However, in Cameroon, individuals in food-insecure homes are at reduced risk for obesity, because they do not have the resources to access energy-dense food. Instead, they are at elevated risk for stunted growth (Jackson & Cumber, 2016). Individuals at heightened risk for obesity are those with higher socioeconomic status (Choukem et al., 2017; Engle-Stone, et al., 2018).

Mental Health and Obesity

Eurocentric research indicates that the relationship between obesity and mental health is complicated because there is

mixed information about mental health elevating risk for obesity (Goodman and Whitaker, 2002; Greeno & Wing, 1994; Schwartz, 2004), as well as obesity elevating risk for poor mental health (Russell-Mayhew et al., 2012). To develop a holistic understanding of obesity in Cameroon, an exploration of the presence of Africentric mental health issues and coping skills is warranted. One area of study is the impact of obesity-related issues on an individual's development through the socio-ontogenetic stages (e.g., social induction/internment and adulthood). As an example, how does obesity affect adjustment/coping of individuals in adulthood with obesity-related fertility challenges within the Cameroon context.

Proposed Best Practice Models

Obesity is affected by multiple factors and its management requires a multifaceted approach. The current best practice model in the Western context is for the management of obesity to involve a multidisciplinary team (Lau et al., 2007). Such a team may include the following disciplines: medical provider (e.g., physician and/or nurse practitioner), mental health provider (e.g., psychologist, social worker), nutrition health professional, and exercise health professional (e.g., exercise physiologist and kinesiologist).

Unfortunately, the work force in Cameroon has limited resources to assemble such a team. Additionally, in Cameroon, individuals are more likely to visit a health care setting for acute health issues rather than for chronic health issues. As such, an ecocultural approach would be better suited. A. B. Nsamenang has written widely about indigenous African educational thought and practice that occurs outside of formal settings and requires instruction, such as via shared routines and observational participatory learning (A. B. Nsamenang, 2003). Ways to use the role of modeling in fostering behavior change in Cameroon would be a potential area of research. A. B. Nsamenang (1992) advocated for the use of primary health care which encourages community participation in health intervention. A. B. Nsamenang was heavily involved in the training of lay counselors to support terminally ill persons and their families in Cameroon. A similar thing may be considered for addressing the emotional needs of obese individuals in Cameroon. Within the Cameroon context, lay counsellors may be better able to increase accessibility to health information on managing a chronic condition like obesity.

A holistic approach to obesity management is fostering the concept of health at every size (Bacon & Aphramor, 2011). Research indicates that obese individuals experience improved health indicators with changes in health behaviors despite minimal weight loss. Key areas for health behavior change are eating, physical activity, sleep, and stress management. An Africentric study of what holistic care involves would be important for Cameroonians. A. B. Nsamenang acknowledged the role of spirituality in development, and it is common for individuals to attribute personal experience to spiritual causes. As such, it would be sensible for a holistic approach to incorporate spiritual health.

In conclusion, A. B. Nsamenang advocated for culturally sensitive approaches in developmental research. A. B. Nsamenang's work promulgated the use of social

ontogeny, sociogenesis, and African life-journeys by scholars, practitioners, educators, and development agents for studying and understanding human development in Africa. This paper demonstrates the applicability of A. B. Nsamenang's sociogenesis theory to understanding the development and management of obesity in Cameroon. The implication of this paper is that scientists consider studying obesity and/or other concepts involved in human development not just from a Eurocentric lens, but by using an ecocultural theory that is relevant to the culture of interest such as the sociogenesis theory in sub-Saharan Africa. As such, the challenge for developmental scientists in sub-Saharan Africa is to work on developing Africentric perceptions about human development, and A. B. Nsamenang's concepts provide valuable insights.

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Minutes of the ISSBD Executive Committee Meeting in Athens, Greece

**August 29th 2019, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.,
Site: Florina Hall, Divani Caravel Hotel, Athens, Greece**

Present in the meeting from the Executive Committee:

Toni Antonucci
Karina Weichold
Nancy Galambos
Tina Malti
Sabine Walper
Antonella Marchetti
Given Hapunda
Livia Melandri
Josafá da Cunha
Peter Smith (committee head)
Manuela Maria Verissimo (guest)
Frosso Motti-Stefanidi (guest)

1. Opening by the President, Toni Antonucci

Toni Antonucci welcomed the EC.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the EC Meeting at Gold Coast, Australia, July 15th 2018

→ **Action:** the minutes of the ISSBD EC Meetings in Gold Coast, Australia were approved by all members of the Executive Committee.

For filing purposes, the final version of the minutes will be corrected with regard to minor typos.

3. Report of the President, Toni Antonucci

In her report, Toni Antonucci thanked the members of the EC, the colleagues from SAGE and the chairs of the various committees for their work and support during the past year. Then she mainly focused on new ideas and avenues for the society that she wanted to share and discuss with all members of the EC. Toni Antonucci aims at an update to the constitution and committees. Possible changes will also affect the contents of the webpage of the society. In

addition, the president discussed together with the EC whether the society should become more proactive to inform social policy and practice. By applying current findings of developmental science, an improvement in the status of humans around the planet, and of behavioral development at a fundamental level, could be achieved. After a very positive reaction, the entire EC discussed how this could be accomplished. Among others, strategies such as incorporation of these ideas on the website, the improvement of availability of scientific knowledge to the public, a free YouTube channel, or conference presentations on selected “hot” topics were discussed.

→ **Action:** A task-force was formed by the members of the EC including Tina Malti, Antonella Marchetti, Sabine Walper and Karina Weichold that will further develop these ideas together with the president.

Suggestions for further names to accompany the task-force (one senior and one junior name) should be sent to Toni Antonucci during the meetings.

In addition, Toni Antonucci discussed with the EC whether the leaders of the several committees, who are not elected members of the EC, should be invited to all EC meetings on a regular basis.

→ **Decision:** There was a strong agreement that all committee leaders will be invited to the EC meetings on a regular basis. A one-night accommodation will be reimbursed for them by the society.

Toni Antonucci thanked Frosso Motti-Stefanidi and her team for their excellent work in preparing the upcoming biennial meeting in Rhodes, Greece in 2020. She also thanked the EC members and others involved in preparing the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the society. As a last point, Toni Antonucci mentioned that she is happy to announce that the new initiative to promote young scholars’ activities at the Ivory Coast together with the Jacobs Foundation is progressing well.

4. Report of the Secretary General, Karina Weichold

Karina Weichold thanked the president, all members of the EC, and Livia Melandri and Kerry Barner from SAGE for their excellent cooperation. She reported on her work during the past year. First of all, the Secretary General summarized the discussions of the two EC meetings that took place

at Gold Coast, Australia. These minutes were circulated among the EC and SC, and published in the ISSBD Bulletin.

Together with the colleagues from SAGE, Karina Weichold prepared the online nominations for the various positions according to the election timetable. A list of results was ready for evaluation at the end of 2018. The candidates who received the most votes for a specific position were approached, asked about their willingness to run for the election in autumn 2019, and invited to provide their photo and a short bio.

ISSBD Elections 2019 – Selected and confirmed candidates

President (2022-2026): 2 candidates

Karina Weichold
Tina Malti

Secretary General (2020-2026): 2 candidates

Luc Goossens
Frosso Motti–Stefanidi

Membership Secretary (2020-2026): 2 candidates

Julie Bowker
Qi Wang

Treasurer (2020-2026): 2 candidates

Melanie Zimmer-Gembeck
Sabine Walper

Four ISSBD Executive Committee members (2020-2026): 7 candidates

(we elect 4 new EC members because Kail resigned in 2018)

Liqi Zhu
Marc Bornstein
Rita Zukauskienė
Kristine Ajrouch
Misaki Natsuaki
Manuela Verissimo
Silvia Koller

Early Career Scholar Representative (2020-2024)

Jing Yu
Cinzia di Dio
Xuan Li

An online election was prepared, which is ongoing currently and will close at the end of the year 2019.

Furthermore, the Secretary General reported that she was fielding many requests and questions that were raised from outside the society, for instance with regard to the organization of future ISSBD meetings. In line with this, she also assisted Manuela Verissimo and Josafá da Cunha in preparing their proposals for the EC meeting 2019. Finally, the Secretary General was involved as usual in the filing of all decisions and communications within the SC / EC, and in the preparation of the EC meeting in Athens, Greece on the occasion of the ECDP in August 2019.

Following the report of the Secretary General, it was discussed that a transfer of information from one to the next generation of officers of the steering committee and executive committee of the society has to be organized in a more structured way. Ideas about developing proper guidelines for this transfer were discussed. Until now, procedures depended heavily on the efforts and engagement of the

officers regarding how much information and what information they give to their successors.

5. Report of the ISSBD Membership Secretary and Membership Committee, Tina Malti

Tina Malti thanked the President and the EC. She reported that the ISSBD membership increased from 2017 to 2018 by 15%. Our membership has now exceeded one thousand again, for the first time since 2012. This may be the result of membership activities, such as renewal letters or email reminders, or activities of the regional coordinators. The increase in members was visible in particular in Italy, China, Canada, Mexico, India, Australia, USA, and Ghana. A drop in members was visible in Zimbabwe.

Tina Malti also reported on the activities of the membership committee that she is heading. Possibilities of regional workshops are discussed via email or face-to-face. Tina has been also active in organizing the ISSBD fellow status. Fellow status is awarded to ISSBD members who make a sustained outstanding contribution in the field of lifespan and human development and in areas of research and/or application. Nominations for the next call of ISSBD fellows will be due by December 31, 2019. In addition, Tina Malti congratulated the regional coordinators on their work to retain and grow memberships. She discussed with the EC whether one should appoint more regional and national coordinators in regions where the representation of ISSBD members is not too strong. Furthermore, follow-up strategies should take place after regional workshops to maintain ISSBD members. Finally, the EC should think about which member benefits should be increased or extended in the near future to keep members in the society for the long term.

6. Report of the ISSBD Treasurer, Nancy Galambos

Nancy Galambos reported that financially the society is in very good shape, with a higher grand total income in 2018 of more than 300,000 USD, and a total positive balance of about 3,000,000,000 USD. About 67% of the expenditures of the society in 2018 related to early career scholars, 20% went for officer and editor stipends, 7% for services, and 6% for other items. Consequently, the treasurer affirmed that the aim of the society to promote the activities of young scholars around the world has been accomplished again. There were two issues Nancy Galambos brought into the discussion:

1. One account of Meryl Lynch in London, UK closed, and the EC should think about where we should put this money as an investment in the near future. The question was, whether the money should be moved to an investment account or stocks. One suggestion was to move the money to the Vanguard Investment account. There was a discussion on that issue, but follow-up is needed before a clear decision can be made by the EC for this recommendation.



2. The treasurer introduced a draft document on the financial document retention and restriction policy. This draft was produced in cooperation with Rick Burdick, who is managing the finances of ISSBD in Ann Arbor, Michigan. An analogous document is used in other organizations, such as SRCDC. The financial document retention and restriction policy is necessary to be able to document all financial business of the society for a period of seven fiscal years, after which they will be destroyed. This policy also helps to reduce the huge quantity of documents in the treasurer's office.

→ **Action:** The EC approved anonymously the financial document retention and restriction policy draft. Business and financial records will be retained securely in the office of ISSBD's controller for a period of seven fiscal years, after which they will be destroyed. Business and financial records include vendor/grant contracts, purchase orders, vendor/grant payments, payments for contracted services, officer and editor stipends, reimbursement documentation, bank statements, income and expense summaries, allocations, reconciliations, and tax returns.

Karina Weichold mentioned in line with the discussion within the EC that we should think soon about better ways to file all documents of the entire EC Steering Committee and executive committees. Until now, there is not a clear structure, and filing processes depend heavily on the habits of current officers of ISSBD. No decisions were made at this point. But it is important to keep an eye on this issue in the future.

7. Publications

7.1. Report of the Publisher SAGE, Livia Melandri including IJBD Editor's report

Livia Melandri thanked the president and the EC for their wonderful cooperation. She detailed the current activities of her team at SAGE including the journal highlights from the past year. Melandri summarized that in particular the activities celebrating the 50th anniversary in 2019 resulted in extraordinary highlights. Among them, Marcel van Aken interviewed Franz Mönks, one of the founders of ISSBD, and Brett Laursen interviewed Bill Hartup. Josafá da Cunha created a timeline showing ISSBD development over the past 50 years, all of which is now live on the ISSBD website. In addition, Karina Weichold edited the ISSBD Bulletin with a spotlight on the 50th anniversary.

Livia Melandri stated that ISSBD continued to show strong financial returns and the membership increased in 2018 by 15%. The largest representation of members is from USA, China, India, Ghana, and Australia. Livia Melandri reported that several special sections have been published in the IJBD. There were 297 manuscript submissions to the IJBD in 2018, which is an increase by 9% from 2017. The acceptance rate is 17%, with 20 days' average time to first decision. Six issues consisting of around 600 total pages were published in 2018. Additionally, the ISSBD Bulletin has been published twice a year. The download activities increased and the impact factor of the IJBD improved up to 2.015 - the highest impact factor it has ever achieved,

placing the IJBD 34 out of 74 developmental psychology GSR category. All these developments were really positively appreciated by the president and the EC; as was the work of SAGE and, of course, primarily the dedication of the editor of the journal, Brett Laursen, was applauded!

7.2. Report of the Editor of the ISSBD Bulletin, Karina Weichold

Karina Weichold reported on the activities in her role as ISSBD Bulletin main editor during the past years. In the meantime, two Bulletins were published. One of them focused on the 50th anniversary of the society. Preparations for this special Bulletin were ongoing since summer 2019, when a committee was formed to prepare the various activities for this occasion (Toni Antonucci, Kerry Barner, Marcel van Aken, Josafá da Cunha, Wolfgang Schneider and Karina Weichold). The plans for the exceptional issues of the ISSBD Bulletin were developed during a meeting in London in September 2018 together with Kerry Barner. The Bulletin editors were thankful for the collaboration of Marcel van Aken and Brett Laursen who interviewed two founders of ISSBD. Their transcripts were included in the Bulletin. In addition, various locations of ISSBD meetings were documented and a photo collection was established. The heart of the Bulletin, however, was the presentation of 21 faces of ISSBD; randomly selected members were asked for their statements, ranging from PhD student to Professor emeritus, focusing on various aspects of human development, and coming from various parts of the world. The response to this Bulletin was extraordinarily positive.

Plans for the upcoming issue in November 2019 were communicated. Together with Ann Petersen a special section covering Bame Nsamenang's impact in studying human developmental research will be released soon.

7.3. Report of the Social Media Editor, Josafá da Cunha

Josafá da Cunha gave a short oral report on his activities as social media editor of ISSBD. He praised the wonderful cooperation of all members of the EC and SAGE and reported a large number of listserves to disseminate relevant information on ISSBD that has been established under his aegis.

8. ISSBD Biennial Meetings

8.1. ISSBD 2020, Rhodes, Greece, Frosso Motti-Stefanidi

Frosso Motti-Stefanidi as a guest of the EC meeting reported on the latest developments and progress in preparing the conference for 2020 in Rhodes, Greece. All preparations are in very good shape and the conference promises to be a great success. However, there was one negative development in the Greek governance that is affecting the preparations of this conference. A VAT tax change occurred in Greece after the contract with the professional conference organizer was signed. The government decided in-between to charge 24%

VAT on conference registration fees. As a result, 21% of the registration fees will be paid to the government. This loss has to be compensated to achieve a positive financial balance of the conference at the end. Suggestions for solutions were discussed. It was agreed that a raise in conference fees will not be an option.

In addition, Frosso Motti-Stefanidi reported that the conference website has been active for over a year. Advertisement strategies were implemented at other conferences, in the e-newsletter of ISSBD, and via information letters to other societies. Also the invited program is already in good shape, based on the list of confirmed keynote lectures. Motto-Stefanidi asked for more input for the program from the SC / EC. Marcel van Aken will organize pre-conference workshops for this event. Finally, Frosso Motti-Stefanidi asked for the willingness of the EC members (scientific board) to act as reviewers for abstracts, or to provide names of individuals who could assist the review process. The progress report was very positively evaluated, and the EC congratulated Frosso Motti-Stefanidi for her excellent preparations. Toni Antonucci will take the opportunity to travel to Rhodes after the conference for a site inspection.

8.2. ISSBD 2022, Lisbon, Portugal, Manuela Verissimo

Manuela Verissimo presented a full proposal on hosting the 2022 Biennial Meeting of ISSBD in Lisbon, Portugal. The conference will take place in a convention center near the center of the city. She also reported that her organization / university (ISPAD) will support the travel for young scientists. She also reported on a connection with official conference organizers who will help to organize this event. Plans for the scientific content of the conference were communicated.

The proposal was very positively evaluated by the EC members. In was discussed that the conference fees should be a bit lower than was planned in the proposal. Also, the university was commended for offering a lot of support for organizing the conference in Portugal.

8.3. ISSBD 2022, Curitiba, Brazil, Josafá da Cunha

Also, Josafá da Cunha presented a nice proposal for hosting the ISSBD conference in Brazil in 2022. Curitiba seemed for the EC members an attractive spot to hold the ISSBD conference, also considering the fact that South America was underrepresented among past conference venues. However, it was mentioned that the scientific program was not elaborated in contrast to the Lisbon proposal. Some members of the EC raised additional problems, such as safety issues or easy accessibility.

After the presentation of the two proposals, the president and the EC members discussed the quality of both applications. In the end they were positive for Lisbon.

→ **Decision:** The 2022 Biennial Meeting of ISSBD will take place in Lisbon, Portugal. The main organizer of this conference will be Manuela Verissimo.

However, the proposal from Brazil should be revised and elaborated for a full report. Josafá da Cunha should be encouraged to present this full proposal at the next EC meeting in 2020.

Both applicants were informed about the decision of the EC and all congratulated Manuela Verissimo for her excellent proposal. The president and the EC are looking forward to a great conference in 2022 under her lead.

9. Report of the Early Career Scholars Representative, Given Hapunda

For the annual report of the early career scholars' activity, Given Hapunda and Josafá da Cunha summarized their activities. First of all, the ECS held a couple of conference calls and they communicated on the website or via Facebook to the other young scholars of the society. The committee has organized a series of webinars for 2019 which are tailored to early career members as well as to the broader membership. For example, a grant writing session held in May 2019 attracted 26 members from 15 countries. The ECS planned new activities for the 2020 ISSBD meeting, which also concern the introduction of a new early career program.

The proposal to introduce the new early career program was introduced to the EC. In a nutshell, this new program focuses on community networking and collaboration between scholars at different levels of their scientific careers. The program plans to enable young scholars to work together with their tutors directly at the biennial meetings, focusing on a particular topic of research. It is planned to start with 20 participants in the first cohort with a kick-off at the pre-biennial meeting via online contact, facilitated by the mentors. During the meeting it is planned that young scholars and their mentors have face-to-face contact, and after the meeting they can discuss scientific issues online later on.

The EC accepted the proposal for the early career program and evaluated positively the activities of the young scholar representative and his group. However, there were some concerns raised, e.g., the groups seem to be too big to handle, the involvement of ISSBD members focuses just on young and senior scientists, middle-career scientists are neglected, and the proposal does not involve travel expenses to the biennial meetings.

→ **Decision:** The EC in principle supports the idea but raises some concerns. The timeline to establish this program before the 2020 conference in Rhodes, Greece seems to be a bit short. In addition, it was suggested to think about the selection process, the control of expenditures for the program, and standards to evaluate success.

A two-stage procedure was suggested: a) Before the end of November 2019, the ECS delivers a list of names, mentors, topics and commitment to travel to the ISSBD 2020 meeting. Then the EC will give a final decision on the new program via email. b) Or, as an alternative, the ECS are asked to elaborate on the proposal even further and send the revised version of the proposal before the next EC meeting in 2020. Then at this meeting, a final decision will be taken.

10. Committees

Apart from what has been reported earlier, the president and the EC in conjunction with the heads of the various committees discussed some points of relevance. Before



going through the single committees, it was recalled that the heads and the structure of the committees will be looked at, and possibly revised during the next months. In addition, there may be changes in the heads of the committees and more members for each committee as planned by the president. Issues that were discussed during the EC meeting in detail and that related to the various committees concerned the following committees: Developing Country Fellowship Awards and Preconference Workshops.

10.1. Developing Country Fellowship Awards, Peter Smith

Peter Smith reported during the EC meeting on the two fellows Cheie and Nyoni, who are finishing their first year of the fellowship. The progress reports were very positively evaluated by all committee members.

→ Decision: The funding for the second year of this cohort was anonymously decided.

In the discussion with Frosso Motti-Stefanidi it was agreed that she should schedule a poster workshop for this program at the ISSBD 2020 meeting. The president, together with Peter Smith informed the EC about the new program at the Ivory Coast, in conjunction with the Jacobs Foundation. The announcement of this new program goes out soon and the initiative is seen as a tool for capacity building in Ivory Coast. Stipends for young scholars will be given to the program participants and to the mentors. Also, travel funds to attend meetings are planned. The EC discussed whether we should be rigorous about the region where the applicants come from (i.e., select only applicants from the Ivory Coast?): The predominant opinion was that this should be not the case and that scientific quality should have highest priority in selecting the participants of this program.

10.2. Preconference Workshops, Marcel van Aken

Prior to the meeting, Marcel van Aken handed in a written report on the preconference workshops and ask the EC to

collect ideas for names and topics for preconference workshops at ISSBD 2020. A few ideas were collected such as ethics, culture/peers, prevention/intervention, transfer of knowledge into practice/policy, and social media. It was discussed whether the preconference workshops should be recorded and put on the website. Furthermore, there was an emphasis on the fact that topics should be interesting for all career levels, such as publishing issues. The ideas on possible topics were given to Marcel van Aken after the EC meeting.

11. Other Issues

Regarding other issues, the EC discussed together with Josafá da Cunha whether we should proceed with interviews of prior or current committee members. Josafá da Cunha thought about giving us an update every year and that one of the members of the EC should be interviewed or one of the ISSBD fellows. In general, these interviews could enrich the homepage of ISSBD. Josafá da Cunha agreed to have a look at the current homepage to think about issues that could be changed or renewed.

Another issue was the discussion on the ISSBD archive. Marcel van Aken gave a short report on the status of the archival process prior to the meeting. After the meeting, he sent a final report on the archiving process. Thanks for his efforts in filing and archiving the materials relating to our society!

A final other issue was a discussion on a planned preconference workshop for a national psychological conference in Brazil. Josafá da Cunha handed in a short proposal for that. Positive aspects have been highlighted, and in principle the decision would be positive. However, Josafá da Cunha was advised to revise the proposal. Thereby he should pay attention to the consistency of the proposal with the values and main strategies of ISSBD, and diversity with regard to the speakers (gender, race, etc.). A final decision is still pending, depending on the reaction of Josafá da Cunha to this request. In the meantime, this proposal was revised and approved by the SC/EC via email.

Karina Weichold, Secretary General of ISSBD

MAJOR CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

January 20 - January 21, 2020

International Conference on Psychiatry and Mental Health Care

Location: Amsterdam, Netherlands

Web: <https://waset.org/psychiatry-and-mental-health-care-conference-in-january-2020-in-amsterdam>

January 22 - January 23, 2020

New Adventures in Clinical Psychology: Personal, Professional, and Political Partnerships

Location: Solihull, United Kingdom

Web: <https://www.bps.org.uk/events/division-clinical-psychology-annual-conference-2020>

February 13 - February 14, 2020

International Conference on Experimental Brain Research and Neuropsychology

Location: Dubai, UAE

Web: <https://waset.org/experimental-brain-research-and-neuropsychology-conference-in-february-2020-in-dubai>

March 02 - March 03, 2020

International Conference on Psychiatry and Sexual Health

Location: Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Web: <https://waset.org/psychiatry-and-sexual-health-conference-in-march-2020-in-rio-de-janeiro>

March 19 - March 20, 2020

International Conference on Psychiatry and Cognitive Psychotherapy

Location: Istanbul, Turkey

Web: <https://waset.org/psychiatry-and-cognitive-psychotherapy-conference-in-march-2020-in-istanbul>

March 23 - March 24, 2020

International Conference on Cross-Cultural Neuropsychology and Cultural Diversity

Location: Tokyo, Japan

Web: <https://waset.org/cross-cultural-neuropsychology-and-cultural-diversity-conference-in-march-2020-in-tokyo>

April 16 - April 17, 2020

International Conference on Organizational Psychology and Organizational Development

Location: Cape Town, South Africa

Web: <https://waset.org/organizational-psychology-and-organizational-development-conference-in-april-2020-in-cape-town>

April 27 - April 28, 2020

International Conference on Research Methods in Experimental Psychology

Location: Jerusalem, Israel

Web: <https://waset.org/research-methods-in-experimental-psychology-conference-in-april-2020-in-jerusalem>