

NAME: OLAYINKA AINA KOSO-THOMAS
NATIONALITY: Sierra Leonean
PROFESSION: Public Health Consultant



KEY ACTIVITIES/ACHIEVEMENTS

- Over 40 years experience in family planning, general medical practice, birth control and public health.
- Over 25 years experience in the organisation of seminars and workshops covering contraception, pelvic inflammatory diseases, Female Genital Mutilation etc
- Over 30 years experience as an expert in the development of strategies for the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation of women, especially those in the low-income and disadvantaged groups in the rural and urban areas.
- Over 30 years experience in the training of doctors, midwives and traditional birth attendants in the areas of reproductive and adolescent health of women and children.
- Several years experience in the conduction and execution of public health related field studies and surveys.
- Executive and Life Member of the Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone.
- National President of the Inter African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and children in Africa.
- Executive Member/Founder member and National President of Sierra Leone Association on Women's Welfare (SLAWW) from 1984 to date.
- Vice-President of the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices
- Member Marie Stopes Society of Sierra Leone.

PUBLICATIONS: Several publications covering cultural practices affecting the reproductive rights and health of adolescents and women, the health hazards of female genital mutilation, abortion, nutritional taboos, teenage marriage and pregnancy.

A book titled "female Circumcision. A Strategy for Eradication"
Published by Zed Books UK 1987. Reprinted 1992.

UNIVERSITIES ATTENDED/DEGREES AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS:

1963 LRCP, MRSC (EDIN), Leeds Medical School, UK
1981 MPH in Maternal and Child Health/Family Planning, University of California, Berkeley.
1984 Fellow of the West African College of Physicians (FWACP).

EXPERIENCE RECORD:

- 1963 – 1964:** Internship at Connaught Government Hospital, Freetown, Sierra Leone under Surgeon and Physician Specialists. Duties involved diagnosing and treating various medical and surgical conditions including tropical diseases and assisting in theatre during surgical operations.
- 1964 – 1965:** Special Assistant in Chemical and Morbid Pathology to Dr. Ben Williams at Mercy Hospital, champagne/Urbana, Illinois, USA.
- 1965 – 1966:** Senior Surgical house Officer in Obstetrics and Gynaecology at Burton General Hospital UK with Mr. T.M. Lawton assisting in Caesarean Sections, performing Tubal Legations and minor gynaecological procedures and running the Family Planning clinic.
- 1966 – 1968:** Medical Officer on rotation between the Connaught Hospital, Children's Hospital and Princess Christian Maternity Hospital Freetown, Sierra Leone. Duties involved treating emergence cases at the outpatient department, performing minor surgical operations as well as assisting in major cases and reducing and setting bone fractures. Medical ward rounds were undertaken in addition to managing and treating the seriously ill patients under the supervision of the Consulting Physician.
- At the Children's Hospital, managed and treated many malnourished children, children with infectious diseases and other preventable illnesses. Set up special sessions to teach mothers how to use locally produced foods for the benefit of their children.
- Under the supervision of Consultant Specialists at the Maternity Hospital, performed Caesarean Sections, managed women in labour and carried out minor Obstetric procedures. Duties on the Gynaecological wards involved performing minor surgery unsupervised and some major cases under supervision.
- 1968 – 1970:** Medical Officer in charge of the Schools Clinic where I examined and conducted screening tests on children aged 5 – 10 for deafness, blindness, malnutrition, skin diseases, weight loss, anaemia, growth retardation and instituted appropriate treatment.
- 1970–1975:** Assistant Medical Officer, Fourah Bay College, University of Sierra Leone. Practice involved treating students with a wide range of general medical complaints and giving advice on contraception and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases. Provided advice and counselling to female students who had undergone genital mutilation as well as treatment for their special complaints.

1975 – 1980: General Private Practitioner. Involved in the treatment of a variety of health problems, including minor obstetric and gynaecological cases and family planning cases.

1980 – 1982: Post graduate studies at the University of California, Berkeley, USA, including research studies into FGM; invited presentations on African Traditional Practices affecting women's health to scholarly groups in the Berkeley/San Francisco communities.

1968 – 1994: Part-time Medical Adviser and Clinic consultant with Planned Parenthood Association of Sierra Leone (PPASL).

Position held concurrently with other full time engagements. Organized and set up the various clinics and was actively involved in the administration of the Association. Clinic duties involved, giving advice on contraception, inserting intrauterine devices, treating pelvic infections and counselling clients on the use of oral contraceptives. Managed and solved referred problem cases that could not be dealt with in other family planning clinics.

1982 – 1996: Consultant on Gynaecological problems related to FGM; Adviser to several local clinics on women's health issues. Practice involves treating all cadres of the population, especially adolescents and women with problems associated with female genital mutilation (FGM), such as infertility, recurrent pelvic inflammatory diseases and chronic urinary infection. Counselling parents, guardians and adolescents on: the health hazards of genital mutilation, early sexual intercourse, abortion, and sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS.

1996- 1998: Consultant to WHO/AFRO on a project to develop "A Plan of Action for the Elimination of FGM in Africa". This plan is now being used in all the African countries where FGM is endemic.

Organized sensitisation seminar/workshops on FGM, Human rights of women and the girl-child.

1998- Date Organized seminars and workshops, educating health workers, circumcisers (Sowies), chieftom leaders, Rural and Urban women on the adverse health consequences both in the long and sensitising and raising awareness of the population to the damaging effect of the practice of FGM. Set up, implemented and co-ordinated special projects under the sponsorship of International Organisations which trained circumcisers in alternative skills to enable them to earn a living outside female circumcision.

One of the most successful of these was the project entitled:

"Alternative Employment Opportunity (AEO) for Sowies (Circumcisers) funded by DANIDA, a Danish NGO".

This project allowed Sowies who wanted to stop the practice of circumcision to develop another occupation to earn a living apart from circumcision.

Other Interests and Activities

1984-86 President of Zonta Club of Freetown
2004-2006 Governor of District 18 Zonta International
Zonta International is an NGO whose aim is to Advance the Status of Women and the Girl-child worldwide.

Other Professional Affiliations

Member of the Sierra Leone Medical and Dental Practitioners' Union
Member of the Sierra Leone Medical Women's Association

LANGUAGES	Speaking	Reading	Writing
English	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Yoruba	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Krio	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent

Postal Address: 12 Regent Road 1
Hill Station, Freetown
Sierra Leone.

Tel No: 00-232-30 207 441
00-232-78 647 787

Email Address ykosot@yahoo.com

London Contact Address: 51 Broxbourne Road
Orpington BR6 0BB
London, United Kingdom
Tel No 00-44-1689 834 114

Expert Consultations

7. WHO/AFRO Consultant on the practice of FGM. (Helped to develop the WHO/AFRO 20-years plan of FGM eradication in Africa, which is now being successfully, implemented).

Awards

- “THE PRINCE OF ASTURIAS AWARD” for International Cooperation by the Spanish Government in 1998 with other activists like The Hon Mrs Emma Bonino, Mrs Marcia Mandela and others, as a result of my active involvement in the sensitisation and eradication of FGM, and despite the Bundo Society's threats on my life and that of my family.
- SIERRA LEONE WOMAN ACHIEVER OF THE YEAR AWARD - 2008