



JULY 2020 . ISSUE 4

CFAS *News*

CENTRE FOR AGEING STUDIES (CFAS), UNIVERSITY OF GHANA



In this issue...

| | |
|--|----|
| Newsletter Highlights & Dates | 3 |
| CFAS Presentations in 2019 | 4 |
| Progress Report on Conference Proposal | 6 |
| International Day of the Elderly | 8 |
| Outreach programme | 9 |
| Inauguration of CFAS Management Committee | 13 |
| Send-off Service for Rev. Dr. Ayete-Nyampong | 14 |
| Geriatric and Memory Clinic | 14 |
| Articles | 15 |
| CFAS Life Corner | 22 |
| Dance and Fitness | 23 |
| International Day of Older Persons | 24 |
| CFAS Fun Corner | 26 |
| From the Editorial Team | 28 |



Hello!

Greetings and a warm welcome to the fourth issue of the CFAS newsletter. This includes information highlighting issues on ageing, encompassing various dimensions. The CFAS newsletter is a medium for the ageing community and the general public to share information. We hope that you enjoy reading each issue of our newsletter. This publication is for you! If you have any letters, articles, opinions and news items, you may send them personally to the Editor, cfas@ug.edu.gh

Newsletter Highlights & Dates

Highlights from 2019:

- Dance and Fitness Programme
- Community Outreach Training Programme
- Global Partnership Networking
- Colloquium
- International Conference
- Research



Highlights From 2020:

- Dance and Fitness Programme
- Outreach Training Programme
- Annual International Day of Elderly Persons
- Colloquium
- Centre for Ageing Studies' contribution towards COVID-19 based food delivery
- Fourth Annual International Ageing Research Conference
- Research

Upcoming Events for the first half of 2021:

- CFAS Fundraising programme
- Colloquia
- Dance and Fitness programme
- Geriatric and Memory Clinic updates
- Outreach programme: online course workshops
- Research



We are looking forward to working towards an even more successful and impactful new year. If you are interested in supporting or partaking in any of our activities, kindly send an email to cfas@ug.edu.gh

CFAS PRESENTATION(S) IN 2019

The Centre for Ageing Studies organised a series of colloquia/public lecture(s) during which the following presentations were made:

On April 12, 2019 Prof. Monika Wolinsky from the Department of Social Work, Jönköping University, Sweden, made a presentation on the theme “**Ageing in the European context: Sexuality, romance and continuous parenting**”. She discussed issues related to notions of sexuality, romance and continual parenting among Swedish older persons indicating that notwithstanding the ageing factor, these are issues that are of great concern to this category of people.

On October 30, 2019, Prof. Sheryl Zimmerman and Prof. Philip D. Sloane, editors of the Journal of American Medical Directors Association (The Journal of Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Medicine) presented on the title “**Enhancing research on elderly care**”. They argued that such research activities may start from changing care practices; informing policy. Research must be informed by previous research on the given theme. In addition, there was a highlight on the types of research; different types of homes’ orientation and settings; diverse types of reviews – systematic review; implementation studies; single site studies; multiple site studies, etc. They observed that most eldercare is undertaken in homes, not institutions. Further, whereas multiple site studies yield more impact, single site studies do not yield much impact. However, in the case of single site studies, the sample size must be larger.

On December 5, 2019, Dr Delali Adjoa Dovie made a presentation on the topic “**Multi-dimensions to the Process of Retirement Planning**”. During the presentation she highlighted the fact that retirement planning is a holistic process that encompasses the following components: retirement aspirations dimension; family (size) planning dimension; pre-retirement education dimension (from family, friends and work colleagues, financial planners, electronic media, Print media, radio, television, people’s experiences, churches/mosques, consultants, banks, insurance companies, pension service providers, employers, etc); mobilisation of retirement resources dimension; mobilisation strategies dimension (e.g., diversification of income sources, diversification of retirement plans, monitoring of investments, review of investment decisions, evaluation of options, engagement in susu and the channelling of the proceeds into investments in other portfolios (e.g., T-bills; Mfund; Arkfund; mobile money pension schemes; mutual and provident funds etc)); challenges (namely poor conditions of service, lack of planning information, lack of the willingness to plan or ‘the more time syndrome’, mismanagement

of pension funds) including outcomes of retirement planning.

By and large, retirement planning depicts a holistic process which combines both financial and quasi-financial resources (e.g., healthcare; housing; social relationships; paid work beyond pensions/leisure). Retirement planning is a multi-faceted phenomenon with a myriad of dimensions such as goal setting; family (size) planning; pre-retirement education; retirement resource mobilisation and strategies involved as mentioned early on. It therefore is a powerful predictor of wealth accumulation for life in old age. Planning for retirement is a strong predictor of the confidence to retire among planners.



The Keynote Speaker: H.E Kwesi Quartey (middle) in a photo with Professor C. Charles Mate-Kole (left), Director, CFAS, UG; Dr. Akosua Agyemang (2nd Left), Lecturer, Department of Social Work and CFAS, UG; Dr. Akye Essuman (4th left), Senior Lecturer, CFAS, UG, and Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, Clerk of the General Assembly, Presbyterian Church of Ghana.

Conference

The Centre for Ageing Studies (CFAS), University of Ghana, Legon, organised its 3rd Annual Research Conference on the 3rd and 4th October, 2019. The two day conference was held at the Great Hall, University of Ghana, Legon, on the theme ‘**Ageing in the African Context: Emerging Issues and Empowering Options**’. The Centre is committed to actively raising awareness and support for quality of life of the elderly in Ghana. The conference aimed at understanding and sharing issues surrounding ageing and how best to advocate the agenda for quality of life for the elderly.

The conference hosted His Excellency Kwesi Quartey, Deputy Chairperson of the African Union, Addis Ababa, as the keynote speaker. He noted the need to reconsider the retirement age in Ghana by extending it upwards from 60 years. He further made this suggestion when he delivered his keynote address. He stated that most people at the age of 60 are still active and productive therefore should be given the opportunity to continue working for some years. He emphasised on the need to pay attention to the needs of the elderly, thus implementing the National Ageing Policy in Ghana.

The Director for the Centre, Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole stated in his address the need to change negative attitudes towards older adults. The conference hosted presenters from several institutions and African countries including Nigeria.

Sponsors of the conference included the Ghana National Accreditation Board, Samuel Amo Tobin Foundation, Obibini Blackman Company Limited, SSNIT, and MTN.



A section of participants at the conference (Great Hall, Main Hall)



A section of participants at the conference (Great Hall Basement)

Progress Report on Conference Proposal Research Presentation



On October 3rd, 2019 at the Centre's third annual conference, a team of fourth year students namely Josephine E. Kpodo, Ethel A. Addo and Theophilus O. Tetteh of the University of Ghana, Department of Biomedical Engineering, presented a research proposal on the topic "**Designing a Medical Device to Locate the Veins of Dark-skinned Patients**". The content of the presentation aroused the urge to support such an innovative project. In the course of the presentation, the team of innovative students revealed that the total estimated cost of the project was GH¢ 2,000.00. It was on the basis of this that Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, the former clerk of the Presbyterian Church pledged to support the students with about half the cost of the project.

However, in honour of the above pledge, Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong on November 24, 2019 at 2.00pm at a mini handing over ceremony, gave out funds to the tune of GH¢ 2,000.00 (i.e., the full amount) to Dr. Elsie Effah Kaufmann, the lead supervisor of the innovative team. Also present at the ceremony was the Director of CFAS and the Dean of the School of Engineering Sciences (Prof. Boateng Onwona-Agyeman). This has been depicted in the group photograph below.

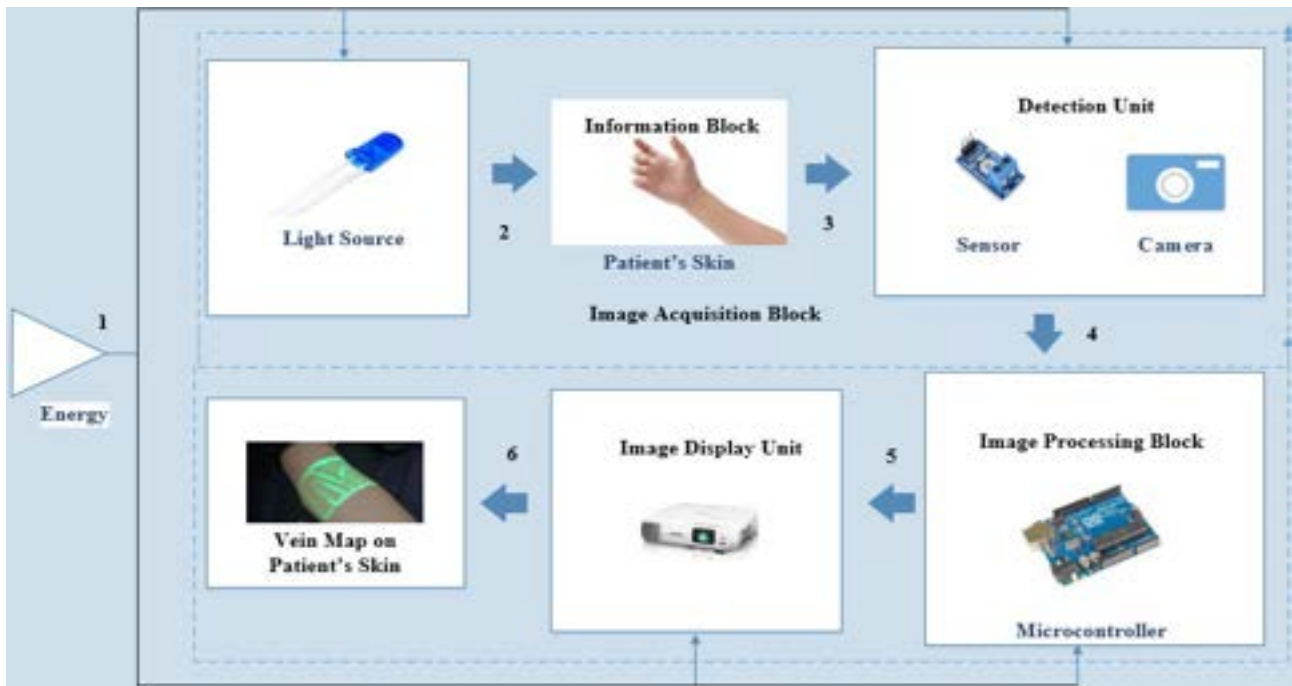
Below are the innovative team and Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong.



Theophilus O. Tetteh, Josephine E. Kpodo, Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong & Ethel A. Addo

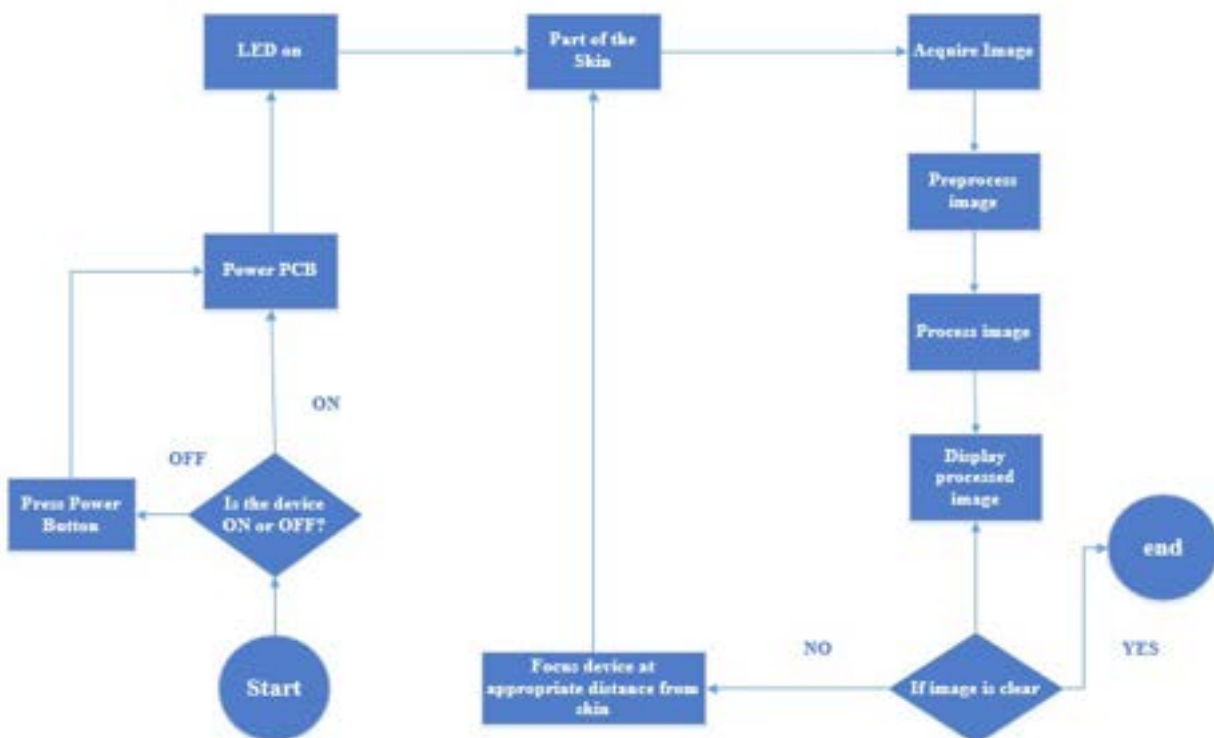
The progress made on the project (**Designing a Medical Device to Locate the Veins of Dark-skinned Patients**) as of December 24th, 2019 has been outlined as follows:

Following the engineering design process, the team came up with the objectives of the project and performed a functional analysis to break down the functions and sub-functions of the device. The system architecture was developed to help define the structure of the device and identify the components that will be needed.



System architecture of the device

Below is the operational flow process of the device which illustrates how the device is expected to work.



Operational flow process of the device

From the system architecture, the team has developed specifications for each subunit. Using these specifications, various concepts have been generated. The best concept has been chosen and from this the team will proceed to acquire the components needed to build the prototype of the device.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE ELDERLY



Centre for Ageing Studies, University of Ghana, celebrated International Day of Older Persons on Tuesday 1st October 2019 at the Great Hall, University of Ghana, Legon. The theme for this year was **“The Future We Want: What Older Persons are Saying”**. The programme brought together academics, stakeholders, NGO’s and more than 400 elderly members of the Ghanaian society to discuss the way forward and how we can promote a healthy and inclusive society for all ages. The participants were taken through lectures on wellness and they were given the opportunity to ask questions and talked about their lived experiences. Other activities entailed dance exercises which were accompanied by entertaining music from a brass band. Food and drinks were also shared.

The Centre received support from Samuel Amo Tobin Foundation, Obibini Blackman Company Limited, Walk with Pearls and MTN to make the celebration a success.



The elderly persons being taken through a series of health screening procedures

OUTREACH PROGRAMME



Group photography of participants, Presenters and CFAS staff

This programme took place on May 1-3, 2019 interspersed with a series of presentations on a variety of themes.

Theme 1 was on “Ageing, health and stress”. It posited that ageing is the process that converts young adults into older adults whose deteriorating physical fitness leads to progressively increasing episodes of illness and death. Age related changes are excretory and endocrine in nature. Stress may depict the fight or flight response. The sources of stress comprise health conditions, unemployment, intellectual and spiritual issues, sleeplessness and overworking. Stress can however be reduced through attitude change, being realistic, getting organised and taking charge of situations, taking breaks, taking good care of oneself, engage in recreational jobs and regular exercise(s).

Theme 2 talked about “Ageing and spirituality”. Spirituality can be described as the belief, hopes or ideas that give purpose to life. The psychological benefits of religion or spirituality include a sense of meaning and purpose in life, the tendency not to develop depression or anxiety, lowest rates of depression, recovery from depression with guidelines, disappearance of disability perception. The African concept of spirituality and ageing is denoted as follows: Older people are a repository of wisdom, they are closer to the ancestors and are also predisposed to witchcraft accusation. From the perspective of ageing, the Church promotes personal spirituality including a good person care system.

Theme 3 addressed the theme “**Occupational Hierarchies and Adjustment in Old Age**”. It dwelt on the fact that in old age, men and women live longer in contemporary times and that marriage is not just about sex but the social contact and interaction as well. Further, individuals age differently, even two people of the same chronological age.

Older people may need assistance in areas such as mobility, transportation, medication, personal care, nutrition among others. In accordance with these, the way forward entails getting help with driving, discussing financial issues, legal issues including considering care in their own homes.

Theme 4 was related to “**Retirement: Beyond the Money**”. This presentation articulated the keys to better transformation to include self-evaluation, setting goals and a host of others. Investing towards retirement may require checks and balances regarding lifestyle, unnecessary travels, utility bills, avoidance of impulsive buying as well as getting a second job. However, the major challenges to retirement encompass accommodation, finance, health, leisure, disrespect and loneliness.

Theme 5 dwelt on “**Emotional Well-being and Ageing**”. It outlined the possible ways of caring for older people as constituted by providing respite care to caregivers, good health habits, expression of emotions, learning to talk to self that no condition is permanent, use of religious faith as strength, use of humour to relax and reduce tension.

Theme 6 was on “**Dementia/neuropsychology**”. This presentation revealed that dementia is an example of abnormal ageing. Dementia can be caused by progressive Parkinson’s disease. Thus, sound logical reasoning is required. Further, uprooting older people from their usual environments to another is detrimental to them. In addition, it was observed that dancing is a stress reducer whilst engagement in religious practices enhance brain activation without which there could be a decline.

Theme 7 was on “**Fitness and Ageing**”. The components encompassed aerobics; muscular fitness; flexibility and body composition. The steps to fitness entail outlining personal fitness goals; pre-participation checklist as well as start of movement. In exercising, one needs to undertake the following: drink extra water; minimise sedentary activities and pursue enjoyable activities such as dancing, cycling,

walking, building activities into the older person’s daily routines and take the stairs.

Theme 8 was on “**Sexuality and Ageing**”. Sex is important, and older men and women can also enjoy sex. The factors that affect ageing and sexuality are physically based on changes; diseases including medical procedures. As a result, sexual activities decline among older people, yet it still goes on. However, it appears men talk about it a lot more. Some possible physical causes of erectile dysfunction for men comprise liver problem(s), alcohol intake and STIs/STDs. Those for women may include failure of lubrication, vaginal infection as well as vaginal irritation. The remedies for such concerns are as follows: therapy, education, anxiety reduction, structural or behavioural exercises, specific non-medical treatments for females and premature ejaculation for men.



Prayer by Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong



Presentation by Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole



Dr. Akosua Agyemeng presenting



Musical interlude: Singing by a participant



Dr. Akye Essuman presenting



Presenters reacting to questions and comments from participants



Presentation of certificates to participants

Inauguration of CFAS' Management Committee



Members of the Management Committee

On December 12, 2019, the Management Committee of CFAS was inaugurated at a short ceremony. The ceremony was chaired and presided over by the Provost of the College of Humanities, Prof. Samuel Agyei-Mensah. Also, present was Prof. Nana Aba Appiah Amfo, Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Academic and Student Affairs.

The Committee is constituted by Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole, Director, CFAS; Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, Gerontologist; Dr. Araba Sefa-Dedeh, Clinical Psychologist; Dr. Akye Essuman, Geriatrician, Senior Lecturer, Community Health and Dr. Akosua Agyemang, Lecturer, Social Work/Gerontologist, College of Humanities.

Noteworthy is that Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong is the chairman of the Committee whilst Prof. Abena Oduro is the Committee's Vice-Chancellor's representative.

Other officials present at the ceremony were Dr. Elsie Effah Kaufmann, Senior Lecturer, Biomedical Engineering; Dr. Collins Badu Agyemang, Lecturer, Psychology Department and Dr. Delali Adjoa Dovie, Intergroup Faculty, CFAS.

Members missing are Professor Abena Oduro (VC Representative); Professor Augustin Fosu, Professor Matilda Steiner-Asiedu.



Officials present at the inauguration ceremony

Send-off Service for Rev. Dr. Ayete-Nyampong



Presentation of citation to Rev. Dr. S. Ayete-Nyampong by the CFAS Team

On November 24, 2019, a team of workers from CFAS attended the send-off service for Rev. Dr. Samuel Ayete-Nyampong, the immediate past clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, held at the Frafraha Victory Congregation of the Presbyterian Church: Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole, Director, CFAS, Miss Ama Esirifi Aidoo, Research Assistant, CFAS, Miss Benedicta Asamoah, National Service Personnel, CFAS, Dr. Akosua Agyemang, Lecturer, Social Work/ Gerontologist, Dr. Delali Adjoa Dovie, Intergroup Faculty, CFAS -and Dr. Ernestina Denkyi, Research Fellow, CSPA.

ELDERS-IN-FOCUS: THE GERIATRIC & MEMORY CLINIC

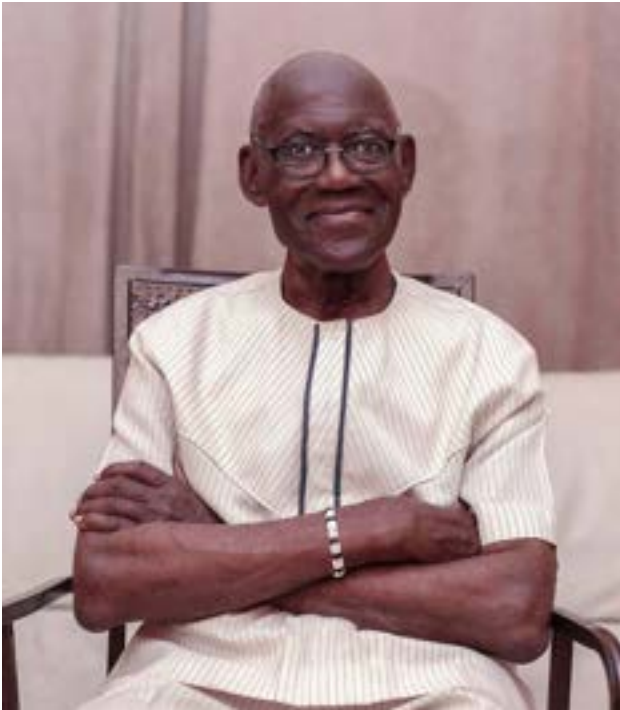
The Centre for Ageing Studies (CFAS) of the University of Ghana, as part of its aim to provide healthy ageing, collaborates with the Polyclinic/Family Medicine Centre (Korle-Bu Teaching Hospital) to provide clinical service to older adults. The service forms part of the Geriatric Fellowship Programme of the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons with assistance from the Department of Family Medicine, University of Michigan, USA. The programme admits specialist family physicians and internists for further training to become geriatricians. The geriatric clinic commenced in August 2016 and is held once a week on Wednesdays at the Korle-Bu Polyclinic.

The clinic is currently staffed by a team of four (4) family physicians, a general nurse, and research assistants from CFAS. Family medicine residents in training periodically rotate through the clinic providing additional workforce. The team is led by Dr. Akye Essuman, a Senior Lecturer (Department of Community Health) and associate faculty of CFAS. Services provided by the team include comprehensive geriatric assessment, outpatient acute care, in-patient care and home-based care. Other services to come on board are memory rehabilitation, physical and occupational therapy, and social work. Team members actively participate in organizing the annual medical screening programme by CFAS for older adults in October.

Basic equipment for clinical care have been provided by the Centre and a mobile van for home visits has been donated by the Church of Pentecost, Province of Edinburgh, Canada.

CFAS aims at developing the clinic into a model geriatric and memory resource centre to promote healthy ageing through the provision of clinical, educational, psychosocial and research expertise in geriatrics and gerontology.

Over-to-You: My 91 Year-Old Friend



Mr. Joe Lartey

With so much excitement and love in my heart, I would like to introduce you to my dear friend. Most importantly, also to one important life lesson I have gleaned from this amazing life experience called friendship. This year (2018), I turned thirty on March 31. Meanwhile, on the 6th of June my great old friend celebrated his 91st birthday. Doing the maths? Yes. We are 61 years apart yet our friendship has lasted for seven years and still counting. This dear friend of mine is in the person of Mr. Joe Lartey; a retired ace commentator and broadcaster of the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation (GBC). He is affectionately called Over-To-You, which to me, is a whole brand on its own.

The other time I wrote about him on Facebook, I warned my readers; and I won't hesitate to do same here. I mean my 91-year old friend has a Facebook account and we are connected on that platform; but certainly, what I want to share with you is not the kind of friend as determined by Mark Elliot Zuckerberg and his great team based in Menlo Park, California, USA.

I am sure you are about to wonder, or are already wondering: How a thirty-year old considers a man who qualifies to be his grandfather his closest friend? Well, relax and smile as I am right now. Because that alone should be enough as an indication of the very interesting and insightful reading pleasure you are bound to enjoy.

How We Met

"Are you interested in improving your public speaking skills?" That was the question I saw crawling at the bottom of a television screen which drove me, to then Alisa Hotel (now Swiss Spirit Hotel), to join the Accra Toastmasters, a public speaking training club which Mr. Lartey co-founded in Ghana. (I remain grateful to Mr. Akwasi Sarfo Kantanka, who then hosted Change Managers on TV3, for advertizing Toastmasters on his show; and of course, also for his warm reception and initial encouragements that made me love Toastmasters so much). By early 2011, the leadership of the Club had changed and so was the venue for our meetings.

Hence, it was at the UDS Guest House near the Ako Adjei Interchange, that I had that memorable opportunity to officially do my very first prepared speech (what we call in Toastmaster circles as the "ice-breaker"). The objective of that kind of speech is for the speaker to introduce himself to his audience in the structure of standard speech making: Introduction, body and conclusion. I simply titled my speech "Ke Nako...It's my time" which was heavily influenced by the official tagline for the 2010 FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa. **Ke Nako** is a Setho phrase which simply and literary means: "it's time". Surely, it was my time! The opportunity had come my way to let Accra's Toastmasters' members get to know me beyond my name and merely seeing my face at our meetings. And that I did to the best of my ability. At the end of the speech, the applause followed. Perhaps, suggesting their appreciation for my delivery. It felt good.

But much more to the applause was what was to happen at the very end of the evening's meeting. "Young man, what is your name again?" I heard from behind me. As I turned around, there was this grey-headed man politely smiling. He was 84 at the time. "I am Evans Adu-Gyamfi", I responded. Most likely my response was the flashpoint or the genesis of this our unusual friendship.

The interaction ensued back and forth...and the request: "Would you be my friend?" I want to me very honest here. I cannot recall exactly what my reaction was at that point. For two reasons: First, I look back today and I realised I was overwhelmed by the request; sort of cowed. Secondly, I had no idea what that meant. "Me! ...this 'old' man...my friend?" It felt totally surprising. But surprised or not, I answered... and it was YES! Guess what? When the meeting was all over, I had the privilege of being driven in the

same vehicle with Mr. Lartey to the Lartebiokoshie Estates, where he still lives. And that was how I first met with Over-to-You Joe Lartey.

The One Lesson

Since Mr. Lartey and I started this 'grandfather-grandson' friendship, we have had numerous discussions. Sometimes, we do so every weekend for months. Most importantly, together, we have undertaken many projects. Paramount among which is when we mounted the maiden public symposium at Sefwi-Wiawso, my paternal home town on Republic Day, July 1, 2011. An event we managed to organise from Accra. It turned out a resounding success. That was a true experience for me, and I guess for him too. Again, between July and December 2016, I volunteered to serve as the Organising Secretary and Mr. Joe Lartey was the Convenor of the Forum of Ghanaian Elders. Our work with the Forum engineered the press conference held in November, 2016 at the Ghana International Press Centre on the theme "The Magic of the Spoken Word". This was to contribute to the efforts of other civil society groups in the run-up to Ghana's 2016 Presidential and Parliamentary elections.

The list may be endless and certainly, the limitations of space will not permit me to pour my heart out as I initially wanted to. But that's fine. I can understand. Thankfully, my next book is about the friendship I share with this living legend. So, I decided that in this write-up, I would focus on just one lesson about what that true friendship as I have experienced with the Old Fella, Mr. Joe Lartey. Just one point... and here we go:

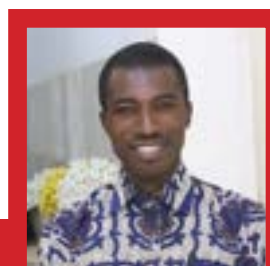
Friendship is Two Histories. "Any true friendship is the harmless collision of two histories" defined Dale Quist. And that's so true. When Mr. Lartey and I met, I had no clue what calibre of personality he was. I did not know he was a celebrity in Ghana. No, I had no clue. I was only a young man who had come to Accra from Sefwi-Wiawso for his tertiary education. At the time, I did not know many suburbs of the city. Perhaps, the only personal background history I could talk about was how I grew up in a farming community in Sefwi, and later my three-year stay on the campus of Prempeh College, Kumasi. Beyond that, could I boast of anything else? Not that I remember immediately.

But here he was a man who joined the British Navy at age sixteen to be at World War II. By 1961, he had already started his broadcasting career and was on a quick rise to stardom. Kindly permit me to pause and present you with a short biography of the man I am presenting to you; just in case you were born long after the 1970s as I was. Mr. Joe Lartey, as a ceremonial and sports commentator with GBC, covered the first visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Ghana (1961); the commissioning of the Tema Harbour (1962); the World Featherweight title fight between

Sugar Ramos and Floyd Robertson (1962). Then he had the rare privilege to interview one of the world's boxing legends, the late Mohammed Ali when he first visited Ghana (1964). He also covered the first All African games, Brazaville (1965); the first O.A.U conference hosted by Ghana (1965); the Munich Olympics (1972); the Moscow Olympics (1980); five Africa Nations Cup Championships etc. etc. And the list goes on without end.

Here is the point. Not considering the rich history and wide exposure he had enjoyed in life, Mr. Lartey found a place in his heart, for our two histories to merge to make our friendship more meaningful. I was only about living out my life's potential, while he was getting close to writing his memoirs (I'm glad it shall soon be released). On the other hand, I had little or no history; at best I could be described at the time as someone with a promising history yet to be lived out. But you see, where there is the spirit of true friendship, the history of the two individuals involved collide smoothly. It does not really matter how tall or short one or the other individual stands in the social class system. It borders on mutual respect for each other's past history and future prospects. Period!

My dear reader, do you have a friend? A true friend? I have shared a bit about my great old friend with you here. Why not consciously build one that will last for a reasonable period, if you don't? And if you do, please do everything possible within your means to nurture and let it be enjoyable and mutually beneficial. On that friendly note, kindly, permit me to call you 'my friend'. I choose to call you 'friend' not because you know me in person, but for the simple fact that I need you to try sharing friendship with just one more elderly person you know or about to meet. I should be grateful to know about how that goes. Over to you!



The Writer

Evans A. Adu-Gyamfi is the Founder of **Great-Age Global**, a social enterprise that seeks "to address the needs of the elderly in society by harnessing the potential of youth power". He is a member of the Ghana Association of Writers.

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Assistive Technology Usage among Older Citizens

The level of inclusion and better treatment meted out to older citizens is an indicator of how developed and civilised a nation is. Assistive technology also known as technical aids are devices or software which can be used by older people to address their impairments or make their life worthy, easy and efficient.

Assistive technology can be grouped into the general purpose devices, used by people with or without impairments; electric brush, electric curtain remote, and washing machines which are available in ordinary retail outlets as well as the specifically-designed products made by specialists targeted at addressing impairments in the older people. These devices come in the form of low-technological devices, such as the walking sticks to the high-technological device applications like computers, smart phones, smart homes and robots.

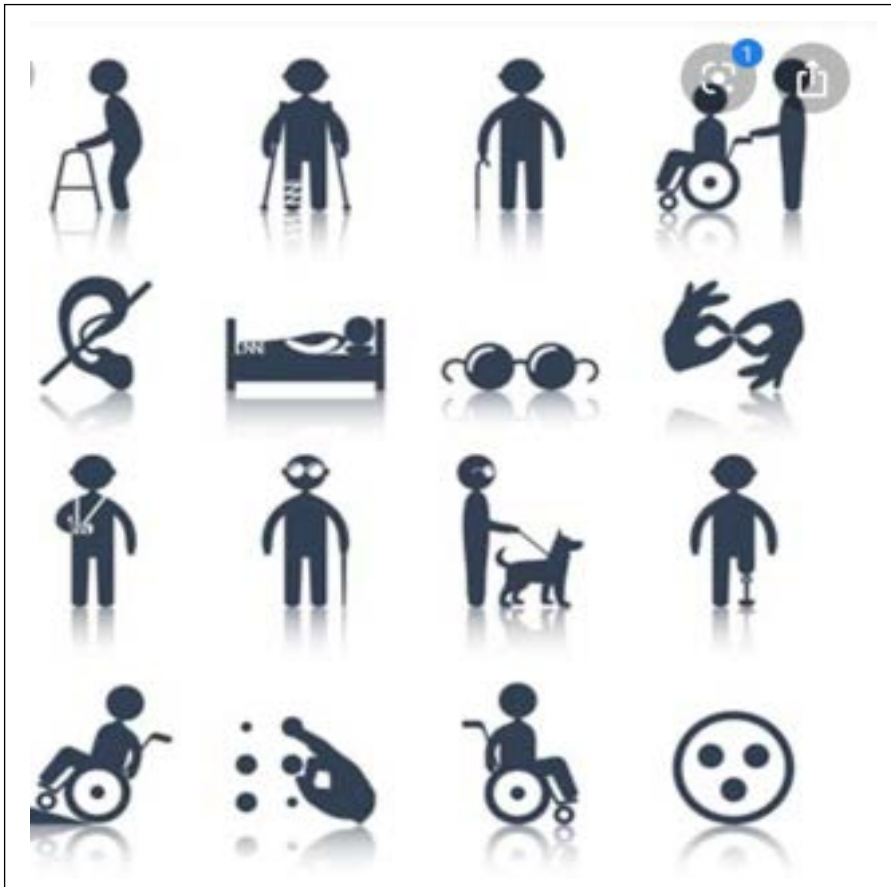
In the older people, functional limitations rather than physical disabilities tend to be the main focus. Whilst it is true that majority of older people are in good health and remain capable

of caring for themselves, there are still a sizeable minority that have health problems, which affect their functional abilities and require assistance in carrying out their activities of daily living.

The emergence of the concept of assistive technology intermediary can be of help. An assistive technology intermediary is a health and social service professional who, helps his or her clients to access assistive technologies, whilst not being a specialist.

There has been an increase in the patronage of assistive technologies locally and globally. However, there are still many unmet needs. This can be attributed to lack or weak policies regulating the usage and acquisition of assistive devices worldwide, the social perception of ageing with disability, lack of finance, and a lack of awareness.

It is for this reason that a conducive policy environment is key, sensitisation about older adults' plight and need provision are also imperative.



The Writer

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How Japan is Harnessing 'Internet of Things' (IoT) Technology to Support its Ageing Population

Japan, one of the world's leading harnessers of technology, has ingeniously found a way to merge technology, culture, and healthcare into a convenient App.

With its recognition and appraisal of its increasing ageing population as well as the rise in diabetic numbers, Japan has come out with a novel solution to monitor and manage Type 2 diabetes, especially amongst the elderly, generally improving the lives of its citizens.

The Diabetes Research Centre at the National Centre for Global Health and Medicine in Tokyo has realised the inability of its greying populace to effectively manage their health. And with the increasing costs in diabetic kidney disease treatment (like haemodialysis), the department needed a way to reach out to citizens to raise the level of accountability of lifestyle patterns that affect their health.

Incorporating psychology with IoT devices, researchers came up with an app called **Schichifukujin** (translation: The Seven Deities of Good Luck) based on the Japanese folklore of the same name, both appealing to the community and effective in helping them manage their lifestyle.

These seven gods are responsible for seven aspects of the programme which correspond with their roles. Thus, the god of wisdom and longevity oversees data recording; the god of fortune and war oversees physical activity; the god of commerce and prosperity oversees diet; the god of wealth, crops and foods oversees the step counts; the guardian of children oversees body weight; the god of the elderly and longevity oversees blood pressure; the goddess of wisdom and patron of artists oversees the patient's total performance. Self-reported eating habits and sitting times are also recorded. Using "fitbits" which are smart watches that have inbuilt pedometers, blood pressure monitors and body composition monitors, the app syncs this information and enables one to input the rest of the data into one's smartphone. Not only is the data collated into one's smartphone, but it can easily

be sent to an individual's physician through the cloud service available. That way, one's doctor can also easily monitor your health and track whether there is a progress or regression in your treatment/management.

This app is generally used and is easier, of course, for the digital generation. But its simplicity enables the older generation to eventually adjust and comfortably use it. Making use of visual feedback, the animated gods can be interacted with for and will definitely express their displeasure when updates are missed. Prompts are sent to hold interest in achieving goals. Being able to visualise one's progress will help increase intrinsic motivation, as seeing improvement through the positive lifestyle changes in itself is a reward to the patient. The goal is to attain successful ageing through the combined efforts of technology, psychology, medicine and culture.

This is not the only amazing use of technology for the elderly. Other great innovations are being worked on to help ensure successful ageing. For example, smart tags that can be inserted into shoes and bags could help track dementia patients when they lose track of themselves and wander off. Sensors that can be incorporated in one's clothing could potentially monitor biometric details and be sent to one's mobile phone.

These and many great ideas are being developed upon round the clock to ensure that the years ahead will be fruitful rather than diseased. It is a great thing that Japan has acknowledged their ageing demographics and appreciated the need to ensure that the process of ageing will not leave the nation at a loss or in want.

You can read the full article here: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/japan/2018/12/04/how-japan-is-harnessing-iot-technology-to-support-its-aging-population/#7bf944913589>

Long-Term Care for Older Adults in Africa: *Whither Now?*

J Am Med Dir Assoc. 2018 Sep;19(9):728-730. doi: 10.1016/j.jamda.2018.07.012.

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Synopsis of the editorial

Africa's older people population is growing faster than can be found in the developed regions. Decreasing childhood mortality, improved health care, and decreasing total fertility rate are the contributing factors to this. It also makes it imperative for countries to consider planning for long-term care needs of their aged populations. The extent of the problem is depicted by the fact that 49 million older persons live in sub-Saharan Africa, due to improvements in survival and treatment of acute and chronic diseases, life expectancy has increased in sub-Saharan Africa. Interestingly, this number is expected to triple by 2050. There is the prevalence of chronic medical conditions, namely hypertension arthritis, cataract, and diabetes, including substantial prevalence of geriatric-specific conditions comprising falls and mobility issues, urinary incontinence, and cognitive decline. However, facilities for long-term care such as 'aged-friendly' health centres, adult day care homes, recreational resources, and rehabilitation centres may be in their nascent stages of development. Initiatives towards older adults' social care in some African countries encompass Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mauritius, Tanzania, and Uganda. Family-based encompass family-based; community-based care; enactment of ageing policies and/or national legislations relevant to older persons. It is therefore imperative for governments to design innovative policies and public services as African populations become increasingly aged. African and Ghanaians and other Africans need to find solutions to address these challenges. The main elements of innovative remedies should entail family involvement, person-centred care, caregiver training, integration with health care services, access to equity, conducive workforce conditions as well as sustainability. In furtherance to this, family-based care model should be strengthened by harnessing the merits of Africa's social fabric and address its challenges.

50 & Counting Club

Background

The 50 and Counting Club was founded by Dr. Mabel Oti-Boadi, a Clinical Psychologist and a Lecturer at the Department of Psychology, University of Ghana, Legon on 6th February, 2018 at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Adenta. The club is supported by Mr. Foster Okyere Acheampong and a 5-member committee. The club was established in response to the global trends in ageing and the neglect associated with the elderly. The club organises workshops and seminars on issues associated with the aged to improve their lives. The founder, an associate of the Centre for Ageing Studies, University of Ghana was inspired by the goals of the Centre in doing advocacy for the aged as well as research into issues affecting the older persons.

On the 15th of September 2018, the 50 & Counting Club was inaugurated at the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Adenta. The club was inaugurated by the founding Director of the Centre for Ageing Studies (CFAS), University of Ghana, Legon, Prof. C. Charles Mate-Kole.



Founder of 50 & Counting Club: Dr. Mabel Oti-Boadi



Inauguration of 50 & Counting Club

Since its inception, the Club has organised several programmes for older persons including health screening exercises, financial management, health programmes, games, out-door programmes, cooking and technology programmes. The Club with support from other philanthropists has procured some health screening tools for the church. They include; Blood Pressure Monitor, Glucometre, and the BMI machine.

The Club is funded by resources from the founder and other philanthropists interested in issues related to the aged. Below are some pictures of the activities of the club



A cross section of Club members

GALLERY



A group of members playing mind game



Some Club members exercising



Club members playing games



The Club's maiden cooking contest and cooking galore



Photograph of Club members and founder

Aged Homes - Are We Ready For Them?

Honey Anim-Ayeko, honey.anim@yahoo.com

On one of my usual ‘tro-tro’ (commercial bus) journeys to work, the driver had the radio tuned to one of the local radio stations. In the course of the journey, an advertisement for an aged care facility (aged homes) came through. Immediately after the advert, one older woman sitting in the front row burst out saying “what is this country turning into? Sending your parents away to live in a house for the aged”. One young man seated close to her tried to explain to her that aged homes are not a strange thing and that it is a common practice in the western world. This sparked a hot debate in the tro-tro with almost everyone on the bus including the driver sharing their opinions on it.

Throughout the day, I kept pondering over this issue and decided to acquaint myself with this subject by reading more. Further reading revealed that an aged-care facility according to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, “is a special-purpose facility which provides accommodation and other types of support, including assistance with day-to-day living, intensive forms of care, and assistance towards independent living, to frail and aged residents”. Although not too popular in our region, aged care facilities are quite common in western countries.

Curiosity further led me to interview two groups of people; young people and older people in order to ascertain their opinions on aged homes- What they think about aged

homes and as to whether aged homes would be patronised by them.

These were the responses from younger people;

“They are great, especially if the aged do not have a family that will take care of them”

“There is no way I’m going to send them to an aged home. I’d rather let them stay at home and hire a nurse for them.”

“I have heard scary things about aged homes so I will not take my parents there in the future.”

“If I am busy and there is no other option, I’d surely take them there and visit them from time to time and bring them home on weekends sometimes.”

“On first thought this idea seems like a bad one in the African setting but considering some factors such as time-constraint and boredom on their part, I think taking my parents to an aged home is not too bad an idea.”

These were the responses from the elderly;

“If there is the option of me being catered for at home close to my family by a nurse, I would

prefer that option as opposed to an aged home.”

“I do not mind being sent to an aged home if there is no one around to take care of me.”

“For me, aged homes are a no-no because I am going to be left in the care of strangers and I do not like the idea of that.”

“We are learning too many bad things from the whites; this is not a good thing”

“I really do not want to think about the possibility of my children taking me to an aged home.”

From the survey, I noticed that most people are against the idea of patronising aged care facilities. Nonetheless, in this present age where there is a breakdown of the extended family system in this country, there is usually no one to attend to the elderly. Aged homes can thus be viewed as a timely intervention that can provide care and companionship to the elderly. The Ghanaian society, however, needs extensive education on this subject in order to allay their fears.



Dance & Fitness

The Centre for Ageing Studies, in collaboration with the Dance Department and Sports Directorate, University of Ghana, Legon, held a 12-week Dance and Fitness programme for the Elderly (50+ years). The program commenced on 16th January 2020 to 3rd April 2020. This was mostly held on the Thursdays and Fridays of every week at the Mawere Opoku Dance Hall of the Dance Department. A total number of 49 older persons, constituted by 39 females and 9 males participated. The programme was abruptly interrupted due to the COVID-19 pandemic but online sessions were organised and videos were posted on social media to engage the older persons even during the lock down period. The next session will begin in February, 2021. Below are some Dance and Fitness pictures.



Older persons having their vitals taken



A cross-section of participants at the Dance and Fitness session engaged in a fitness activity



Another dimension of the Dance and Fitness activities

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF OLDER PERSONS

The Centre celebrated International Day of Older Persons on Thursday, 1st October 2020. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Centre released a press statement to various media houses and engaged in interviews on Joy News - the Pulse show and Atinka TV on the theme: **"Pandemics: Do They Change How We Address Age and Ageing?"**. The aim was to give more exposition on the document released in relation to concerns of older persons.

The statement highlighted some directives from the United Nations and gave some recommendations to the general public, the youth and older persons including the COVID-19 protocols that must be adhered to for the sake of the elderly. The Centre also added its voice to other stakeholders to strongly appeal to the Government and Parliament to pay urgent attention to the Aged Persons' Bill and pass it into law. This and many more were contained in the press release. The day was indeed earmarked to celebrate the older persons.

CONFERENCE

The 2020 Virtual Conference, which was the 4th Annual International Conference organised by the Centre for Ageing Studies was held on December 11th, 2020. It was on the theme: **"Focus on the Elderly, Challenges of the Covid-19 Pandemic"**. Nine (9) presentations on various pertinent issues were made at this annual conference. The presentations concentrated on the following topics: Technology Needs, Challenges and Ageing; Gerontological Counselling; Health, Wellness and Ageing; Ageing Policy; Sociocultural Dimensions of Ageing; Psychosocial Dimensions of Ageing; Economic Perspective of Ageing; Spirituality, Religiosity and Ageing; including Emerging Issues.

The Virtual Conference was attended by approximately ninety (90) participants, constituted by fifty (50) females and forty (40) males. The programme started at 9:00am and ended at 1:30pm. The welcome address for the conference was delivered by Professor C. Charles Mate-Kole, The Centre's Director, whilst the keynote speaker was Mr. Lucas Chigabatia, Chief Information Technology Officer (CITO) of the University of Ghana.

As the first ever Virtual Conference held by the Centre due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it showed that the joint efforts of the Centre's conference planning committee and the Director were laudable. We look forward to more invigorating virtual conferences in the coming years.

RESEARCH

Currently, the Centre is engaged in a research project entitled: **"Understanding the Existential Trajectories of Successful Ageing among the Elderly in Ghana"**. This entails research actions that encompass the following:

1. Ethical approval has been secured from the Ethics Committee for the Humanities, University of Ghana;
2. It is a mixed methods research;
3. Study sample will be drawn from both rural and urban settings within Ghana;
4. Volunteer research assistants are on standby for data collection.

COLLOQUIUM

The Centre for Ageing Studies held a virtual colloquium series on 27th November 2020 on the theme: **"Forgiveness: Benefits and Alleged Harms"**. The programme hosted Dr. Judith Osae-Larbi, a Health Psychologist and Research Fellow at the West African Genetic Medicine Centre (WAGMC), University of Ghana as the speaker. The programme saw about 25 participants. The speaker brought to bear the definition of forgiveness, theoretical and empirical findings of the benefits of forgiveness, alleged harms, its implications for research, practice, education and finally concluded with a questions and answers session. Participants showed particular interest by contributing greatly in the question and answers session.

Below is the abstract for the paper presented:

ABSTRACT

Studies have found that the act of forgiveness can reap huge benefits not only for personal health and wellbeing, but also, for public health and social relationships. However, it is alleged that at certain times, particularly in abusive relationships and other situations of continuous offenses, forgiveness can be harmful, thereby emboldening perpetrators. This presentation will highlight the benefits of forgiveness, clarifying what it is and what it is not - other ways of coping with offenses that may include elements of, yet distinct from the act of complete forgiveness. Implications for forgiveness research in Ghana and for personalised and population-wide forgiveness education and training are highlighted, with focus on the REACH forgiveness model as an evidence-based self-help training model for engendering forgiveness.

CENTRE FOR AGEING STUDIES' CONTRIBUTION OLDER ADULT BASED FOOD DELIVERY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The Centre for Ageing Studies in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, management of the YMCA and YWCA and all other stakeholders participated in the distribution of donations provided by the government of Ghana in the form of packs of foods to the elderly during the COVID-19 pandemic in April, 2020.

In all, a total of 1,470 food packages were received by CFAS for onward distribution to older people through elder oriented organisations. The distributed items have been disaggregated as follows: **Naro Aged Care** 120 packages; **Tobinco Foundation** 150 packages; **MaMere** 50 packages; **Mission 50Plus** (Osu = 50; Larteh = 150; Akropong 150); **50 Plus and Counting SDA** 100 packages; **Arklifestyle** 100 packages; **James Town Elders** 100 packages; and **Association of Ghana Elders (AGE)** for 8 organisations = 500 packages.

It is worth reiterating the fact that the recipient aged centred organisations further handed out these received food packs to individual older persons. The following are the related photographs:

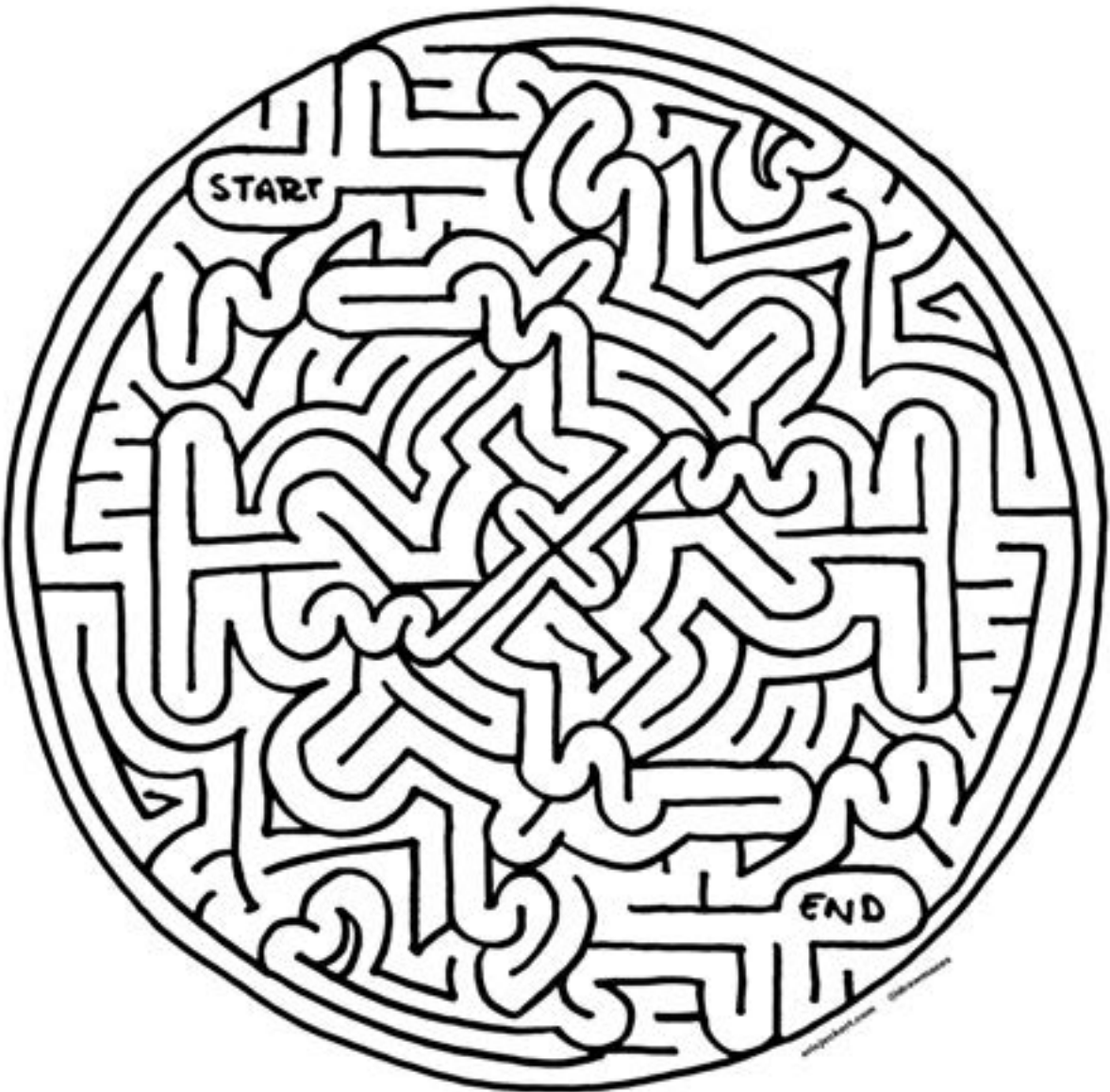


A food pack being handed to an older woman



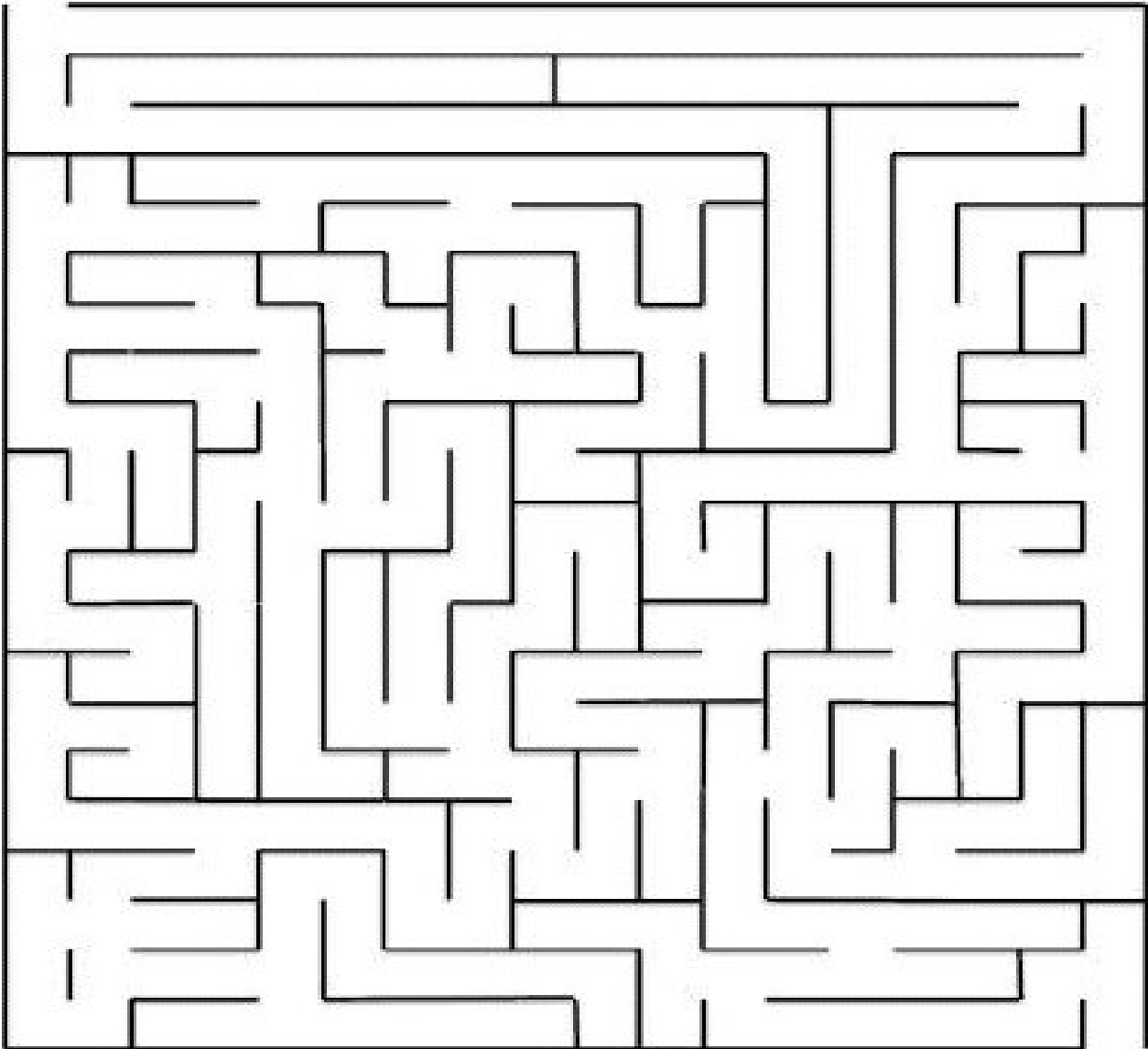
A section of the elderly with received food packs

The Brainy Maze: Can you find your way through this maze?
Note: There are more than two possible routes. Try to see if you can find them all!



Here's a bonus maze!

START



FINISH

FROM THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Dear Readers,

We are pleased to keep you informed on the activities of the Centre for Ageing Studies. Our newsletters aim to address concerns of the rapidly growing ageing population, including health, retirement issues and stereotypes, and to stimulate collaborative programmes and research in this area.

Do subscribe to the CFAS newsletter to receive updates on our activities, articles and projects. You may also log on to the Centre's website, cfas@ug.edu.gh for the newsletter.

The next issue will introduce the projects and various outreach activities the Centre is involved in, as well as the committees and stakeholders behind them.

We welcome articles (ageing studies related), tit-bits, questions and suggestions for our next issue!

Do send in your comments, questions, and contributions, and see them featured in the next issue!

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Dr. Delali Adjoa Dovie (Associate Editor)

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