

IN MEMORIAM

Professor Fred Newton Binka

17 November 2026

AFENET MOURNS THE PASSING OF PROF. FRED NEWTON BINKA

It is with profound sorrow and a deep sense of loss that we received the sad news of the passing of Professor Fred Newton Binka, an illustrious founding member of our Network, a visionary leader, an extraordinary scholar, and one of Africa's most distinguished public health champions.

Africa has lost a colossus of public health. AFENET has lost one of its founding pillars. The global public health community has lost a towering intellect whose life's work transformed scientific knowledge into interventions that saved lives, strengthened institutions, and inspired generations.

Professor Binka was more than an accomplished epidemiologist and public health scientist. He was an institution builder, a mentor, a visionary leader, and an unwavering advocate for Africa's capacity to address its own public health challenges.

His contributions to malaria research, epidemiology, public health research, and health systems strengthening earned him international recognition and helped shape public health practice far beyond the African continent. Through his pioneering leadership at the Navrongo Health Research Centre, his contributions to the establishment of the INDEPTH Network, as the first Vice-Chancellor of the University of Health and Allied Sciences, and his distinguished service in academia and global health, Professor Binka demonstrated what African scientific leadership could achieve.

For AFENET, Professor Binka's legacy is particularly profound and deeply personal.

He was among the visionary leaders who believed that Africa's field epidemiology training programs should not operate in isolation, but should come together as a united force to strengthen disease surveillance, outbreak preparedness and response, and public health systems across the continent.

Indeed, Professor Binka was the originator of the name African Field Epidemiology Network (AFENET)-a name that has grown to represent collaboration, scientific excellence, African ownership, and a shared commitment to a healthier Africa.

What began as a vision among a small group of committed public health leaders has become a continental institution connecting field epidemiology programs, building the capacity of thousands of public health professionals, and supporting countries to prevent, detect, and respond to public health threats.

He did not merely help give AFENET its name. He helped give it an identity, a purpose, and a future.

Today, the very existence and achievements of AFENET stand as an enduring testament to his and his colleagues' foresight, conviction, and belief in the power of African institutions and African expertise.

Professor Binka belonged to a rare generation of leaders who understood that the greatest contribution one can make is not simply what one accomplishes in a lifetime, but what one builds that will continue to serve humanity long after one is gone.

His legacy lives in the institutions he helped establish, the scientific contributions he made, the professionals he mentored, and the countless lives improved through the application of public health science.

As we mourn his passing, we are reminded that the true measure of a great leader is not only the heights they attain but the foundations they lay for generations yet to come.

On behalf of the AFENET Board of Directors, Management, staff, member programs, alumni, and the wider AFENET family, we extend our deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues, former students, and the entire African and global public health community.

We honour his extraordinary life with immense gratitude and profound respect.

We pledge to preserve and advance the vision he helped conceive: an Africa with strong public health institutions, a highly skilled field epidemiology workforce, and the capacity to protect the health of its people.

Professor Binka may have departed from our midst, but his vision lives on. His name is woven into the history of AFENET, and his legacy will remain inseparable from its future.

A giant has fallen, but the foundations he laid will stand for generations.

Farewell, Professor Fred Newton Binka.

Thank you for your vision. Thank you for your leadership. Thank you for believing in Africa.

May your soul rest in eternal peace.

Dr. Simon Nyovuura Antara
Executive Director
African Field Epidemiology Network