



Children entertaining guests at the world mental health day celebrations , Kyangwali settlement

# The APEAL Trumpet

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## UGANDA MENTAL HEALTH ACT LAUNCHED

The Uganda Mental Health Act 2019 was officially launched on the World Mental Health Day, 13th October 2021 at Golden Tulip Hotel, Kampala. It was launched by the Minister of Health Dr. Ruth Acheng who was represented by the Director, Mental Health Division Dr. Olara Charles. The legislation will provide guidance towards provision of mental health services to Ugandans, including refugees across the country.

It is in line with the latest international human rights standards and it highlights key values of protection and promotion, deinstitutionalization and integration of mental health care within community care. The new law also provides for mental health treatment at public health centers, provides for emergency, involuntary, voluntary and assisted admission, provides for protection and rights of patients and ensures safety of people with MH illnesses and those who come in contact with them. It further offers establishment of the Mental Health Advisory Board. Today, Uganda has a statute that forbids inhuman acts against Persons with mental illness and sets forth a governmental mechanism to aid mental health services delivery in Uganda.

Through APEAL partner TPO, the project has achieved its purpose to advocate for the development, harmonization and implementation of quality, protection and MHPSS services standards at local and national levels. As chair of the Uganda National Mental Health and Psychosocial support working Group, TPO has worked tirelessly with the other partners in close consultation and support from Ministry of health Division of mental health, to ensure amendments are made to the previously contested Bill by human rights groups and see that it's signed off by the Ministry of Health.



Participants pose for a photograph at the launch of the Uganda Mental Health Act 2019

With funding from the European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) APEAL Partners have been able to advocate

towards policy change in the provision of Mental Health (MH) services in Uganda which has come to pass.

### Commemorations at Kyangwali Refugee settlement:

Meanwhile, this year's MH Day was commemorated under the theme; "Mental health for all: Leaving No One Behind". It was observed on 20<sup>th</sup> October at Kyangwali Refugee settlement.

The theme emphasized that mental health is a necessity for all and it is something we cannot ignore. In the era of the COVID 19 pandemic, it is evident that we can no longer ignore mental health issues affecting diverse populations, nor can we ignore the fact that refugee populations are more vulnerable than others.

In his remarks the settlement commandant John Bosco Kyaligonza observed that, refugee and host populations have histories of forced displacement and current circumstances that often expose them to above average levels of trauma and stress. **"Let us devise more engaging ways like sports, Music, Dance and Drama activities for the Persons of Concern (POCs) to prevent**



*stress which in the end causes mental health challenges,”* he concluded. With TPO at the helm of the event, all consortium partners including CARE, WCH, HI, DFG, KRC, SCI and other actors rallied behind TPO to make the event a success.

## CARE TO COORDINATE UGANDAN C4C GROUP

CARE International in Uganda, the lead partner for the APEAL Consortium took on the coordination role for Charter for Change (C4C) Working group in Uganda. This comes in handy for CARE to enhance APEAL’s visibility and high level presence, show case its localization milestones and influence discussion on the implementation agenda of relevant refugee protection policies and frameworks for the protection of refugee women and girls’ socio-economic rights, promotion of a life free from violence and for women to have peace and security among other things.

C4C is an initiative led by both national and INGOs to localize the “Grand Bargain Agenda” through practically implementing changes in the way the humanitarian system operates, to enable more locally-led response. This occurred at the group’s annual reflection and planning meeting in Kampala on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Partners for Community Transformation (PICOT) is the new chair for the group, while African Women and Youth Action for Development is the new Co-Chair (AWAYD). C4C is comprised of over 50 CSOs, CBOs, NGOs and INGOs working in the humanitarian sector.



*Outgoing C4C Chair, Donna Eyokia (CEFORD) hands over files to incoming Co-Chair Angella Nyadoi (AYWAD) and Coordinator Jessica Abenakyo (CARE)*

## NAP III LOCALISATION

Part of our advocacy agenda as APEAL consortium is supporting enforcement of relevant refugee protection and GBV prevention policies, guidelines and frameworks among our priorities. The National Action Plan III (NAP III) on women peace and security which looks at UNSCR 1325 is among the frameworks that if popularized would improve access to protection services for refugee women and girls.

As such a team of 10 district leaders from Terego and Kikuube were facilitated with support from ECHO, to participate in the NAP III localization workshop in Arua district, from 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

With the knowledge acquired, Kikuube and Terego districts will form an inclusive taskforce of 9-13 members to continue with the process of developing their individual district Local Action Plans (LAP) on the same and translate the components of the NAP III into actions in alignment with the 4 pillars of the UNSCR 1325 i.e participation, prevention, protection as well as relief and recovery for women and girls.

*“We have to organize a one-day exercise to take other district members through what we have learned today, as one of the strategies to develop our LAP”* said the Probation Officer Kikuube district, Evah Mbabazi. She was sharing some of the next steps for her district after the workshop.

The workshop is one of the many steps to a long term relationship with the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development to ensure the NAP III is a living document guiding interventions.

## IMVEPI ECHO MISSION

European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (ECHO) had mission in Imvepi refugee settlement in West Nile from 22<sup>nd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Once again APEAL had an opportunity to host ECHO’s Country Director Bruno. While on mission, he visited the interventions by all consortium partners who have presence in the settlement. SCI, HI, TPO and WCH hosted ECHO at SCI’s CFS Centre at Point C in Zone 2, whereas CARE,

IRC, and CEPAD hosted ECHO at the Women’s shelter in zone 4. A peer to peer session with teenage mothers who are educating others about safety and how to avoid abuse was presented. ECHO also had an interaction with community leaders including RWCs and child protection committee members on their role in child protection. SCI was commended for picking up so fast with the COVID adaptation interventions there.



*TPO’s APEAL coordinator, Bruno from ECHO, Barbra and Racheal from SCI entering Point CFS.*



*Briefing with the ECHO team at OPM offices in IMVEPI, ahead of the mission field visit.*

## SUPPORT TO NEW ARRIVALS, NYAKABANDE

Kisoro District received an influx of asylum seekers fleeing conflict between militia groups and DRC armed forces in North Kivu’s Rutshuru Territory, in the Month of November 2021. According to UNHCR and OPM field teams, about 8,000 asylum seekers crossed at Bunagana and another 3,000 at Kibaya on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021, with many seen carrying handy items like mats, mattresses, cooking utensils and a few livestock in anticipation for longer stay in Uganda.



With the situation remaining volatile on the Congo side, the UPDF and Uganda Police have since been deployed to monitor border activities particularly entry of persons to Uganda given that Uganda's asylum space is closed following outbreak of COVID-19 in March 2020. Mixed reports/information from Ugandan media houses and locals have been slipping through in regard to the DRC conflict, with a number of humanitarian actors responding to immediate needs of new arrivals.

Through RINGO the APEAL Consortium carried out an assessment to confirm facts on ground to inform response strategies and ensured new arrivals received improved nutrition, more variety, more than one meal especially for children, water, clothing and PSS among others. PSS came in handy to address the anxiety and need to re unite with family members, the feeling that home will never be safe because the rebels will always be there and the need for resettlement as they feel unsafe being near the border.



Head count at Nyakabande transit center, 10th Nov, 2021



A case management meeting after the head count at Nyakabande



A CFS facilitator Engaging children in Story telling 13<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2021 in the shelter



Partners' joint monitoring at Nteko border post after the influx of 11,000 refugees in Kisoro district

## ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION ENHANCES ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR REFUGEES

Uganda Law Society (ULS)'s, Legal Aid Project continues to emphasize the role of alternative dispute resolution in resolving disputes in a sustainable manner. In Kyaka II refugee settlement, ULS uses the alternative dispute resolution approach to resolve civil disputes like land issues, defamation and family matters amongst refugees and the host community. With support from ECHO, ULS has conducted over 50 mediation and arbitration sessions with 10 cases successfully concluded.

As opposed to the court processes, arbitration and mediation ensures that the parties to the dispute can live amicably in the community, in spite of a past dispute but also fosters attainment of favorable resolutions for both parties. The biggest majority of cases mediated by ULS, rotate around child maintenance, family property and separation of couples. ULS has employed the same approach to support women and girls to have

their voices heard and to come up with solutions that encourage change in behaviors and reconciliation of the parties.



Mediation sessions taking place



## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN , 2021

The consortium joined the rest of the world in participating in the 16 Days of Activism campaign on violence against women. In reference to this year's theme: *Orange the World: Stop Violence against women and girls Now!* CARE together with consortium partners took part in a series of events as part of the campaign at both the settlement and national levels.

These include, Breakfast meeting with news editors, TV and Radio talks on GBV survivor access to justice and economic empowerment as a deterrent to GBV, sports events, boys and girls' parliament, couple seminars among others. The national launch took place on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in Oyam district while in Kyangwali settlement, the launch was held simultaneously in two zones, Kavule and Nyamiganda.



A PICTORIAL OF WHAT TRANSPIRED DURING THE 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM CAMPAIGN AT NATIONAL AND SETTLEMENT LEVELS



Minister of Gender Labor & social development Betty Amongi Akena and UN Women's Deputy Country Rep Adekimi Ndiel at the CARE stall during the national launch of 16 DOA



CARE's SRH Coordinator emphasizes a point at the Boys and Girls parliament



Football match against Domestic GBV at Kyangwali



CARE's GBV advisor, IRC's Legal Officer and SCI's Child Protection Specialist on national TV talking about access to GBV justice



A couple seminar at Kyangwali settlement



A child puts a hand print on the mural as a pledge to end violence against women and girls



A football match as one of the events of 16 DOA at Kyangwali Refugee settlement



All events organized at the settlement level were used as platforms for COVID 19 awareness and vaccination points



## BRIDGING THE KNOWLEDGE GAP ON MENSTRAUL HEALTH AMONG WOMEN AND GIRLS

The knowledge gap on Menstrual health among women and girls is one of the challenges to managing menstrual hygiene, health and menstrual cramps by many women, just like Yvette, 19 years of Kyaka 11 refugee settlement. She was always faced with situations of leakage, low self-esteem and anxiety whenever she had her menstruation period.



A beneficiary of mental hygiene management trainings by DFG

One day, Yvette joined a group of adolescent girls under the Menstrual Health Management (MHM) initiative by Days for Girls. She started attending meetings and trainings. She soon gained knowledge on managing menstrual hygiene, health and menstrual cramps. Today, Yvette's story is different.

**"I used to be plagued by menstrual cramps, I thought there was no way to ease them. The pains could not allow me to do anything all day."**

Out of anxiety and fear of leakages, she isolated herself, however this is no longer the case. Yvette is now able to make re-washable sanitary towels, proper hygiene and nutrition during menstrual periods which she has passed on to her sisters, she quotes **"I have trained two of my sisters on how to manage menstrual health and hygiene."** It is trainings as such that cause mindset change and behavior on some issues that affect refugee women and girls.

## STORY TELLING TO ENHANCE RESILIENCE



**Little Fellow** is an initiative used by WCH to impact children between 6-10 years with conflict resolution and peacebuilding skills. The initiative uses the story telling approach to impart the skills, which are essential for the healthy development of children through enhancing autonomy, critical thinking, anger control, acceptance of others, empathy and self-esteem.

The story-telling approach is applied to groups of 15-20 children with two sessions per week for over a period of two months. A total of 266 children (boys: 127, 139 girls) both refugee children as well as those from the host community have been reached through Little Fellow thematic sessions.

Derick (7) is one of the beneficiaries of the Little fellow initiative. From the time he joined little fellow sessions, his behavior has drastically changed.

**"I used to fight a lot with other children, feel angry most of the time. I never used to help others; I was very selfish with my things. Even my parents have never told me any stories before that are interesting to listen because of my bad characters. From the time I joined little fellow sessions, I loved listening to his stories and especially on advising Little Fellow on what he would do to come out of the problems."**

With support from ECHO War Child Holland is able to build and enhance resilience and problem solving skills amongst children which enables them to confidently propose manageable solutions to issues that affect them in the refugee settlement.

## COMMUNITY CONSULTATION MEETINGS

The consortium continues to promote community led advocacy where community leaders especially the Refugee Engagement Forum Members (REF) and Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs) are supported to identify issues affecting Persons of Concern (POC), advocate with duty bearers and bring feedback to communities on actions taken/responses from duty bearers.

In partnership with REF members of Imvepi, Kyangwali and Kyaka II, CARE organized community consultation meetings at the settlement level in alignment with APEAL project focus on Child Protection (CP), Gender Based Violence (GBV), Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services (MHPSS) and Disability & inclusion.

The major objective of the consultations was to assess delivery of GBV, CP, AGD Policy and MHPSS(MHA) National Children Policy (NCP) and the AGD policy services in the settlements. The issues of duplication of services, tribalism and segregation came out as major deterrents to equal service provision and support distribution from partners, while taking contraception services without husbands' consent, increase in defilement case with the closure of schools, lack of shelter and basics especially for unaccompanied minors came out as major protection concerns.

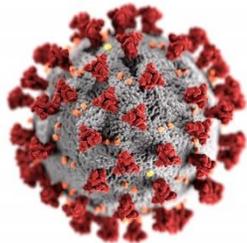
The consultations brought together 167 participants (90 males and 77 females) from all the targeted locations.



A men's community consultation meeting in Kyangwali refugee settlement



## COVID-19 UPDATE



As of 31 October 2021, there were 126,272 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Of these, 3,324 were refugees and 783 humanitarian workers. Deaths reported were 3,217 since March 2020, including 52 refugees and 3 humanitarian workers.

A total of 3,189,173 doses of COVID19 vaccines had been administered by 31 October, including 22,098 in the refugee settlements across the country.

Meanwhile, a new COVID 19 variant Omicron was confirmed in South Africa on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021. Humanitarian staff are encouraged to take advantage of the government vaccination programme across the country.

## HIGH LIGHTS FOR NEXT EDITION

- ❖ GBV National Conference
- ❖ Women and Men's Parliament
- ❖ REF National Meeting
- ❖ World Disability Day

This edition has been compiled by

Jessica Abenakyo Badebye

Telephone: 0772 697193

Email: [Jessica.abenakyo@care.org](mailto:Jessica.abenakyo@care.org)

Address:

CARE International in Uganda P. O. Box 7280, 5th Floor, Union House. Plot 78, Luthuli Avenue [www.careuganda.org](http://www.careuganda.org)

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