

Quarter Three 2025

Newsletter



IMPACT SNAPSHOT

506

teletherapy sessions conducted.

621

people reached through community mental health outreaches.

233

peer support sessions held in Kanungu, reaching 1953 community members.

Count down

**MHU
@25**

28 -11-2026

Welcome Note



Dear friends and partners,

Our Quarter 3 has been a season of renewed momentum and collaboration. Through our projects, CADiR, the Youth Mental Health Project, and Stories of Change, we have continued to expand access to mental health services, empower young people, and promote inclusion for persons with psychosocial disabilities across Uganda.

The quarter saw meaningful progress: stronger peer networks, impactful school-based awareness, and new partnerships advancing economic empowerment and mental well-being. Each milestone is a reminder that collective action can turn conversations into change.

As we count down to 25 years of supporting resilient communities, our focus remains steadfast, ensuring every person has the support, dignity, and opportunity to live mentally healthy lives.

Warm regards,

Derrick Kizza Mbuga
Executive Director

our Programmes

COLLECTIVE ACTION FOR DISABILITY RIGHTS (CADIR) PROJECT

Mental Health Uganda (MHU), in partnership with the Norwegian Association of Disabled (NAD) and a consortium of disability organizations including NUDIPU, SHAU, and Inclusion Uganda, is implementing the five-year CADiR Programme (2025–2029). The project seeks to ensure that the rights of persons with disabilities are fulfilled across Uganda through improved access to health, education, livelihoods, and social inclusion. MHU's focus areas include Health and Rehabilitation as well as Human Rights and Organizational Development, with implementation in Gulu, Lira, Soroti, Wakiso, Kampala, Mbarara, and Kanungu districts.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Promoting Mental Health and Human Rights:

MHU actively participated in the national dialogue to decriminalize suicide in Uganda, a landmark effort aimed at advancing the rights and dignity of persons with psychosocial disabilities.

Expanding Teletherapy Services:

A total of **506** teletherapy sessions were conducted, reaching **220** individuals (82 female, 138 male) with psychosocial support for conditions such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation.

Community Health Outreach:

- In Lira, MHU reached **450** people during a two-day health camp held at Akia Primary School, offering integrated services including mental health care, TB/HIV screening, and malaria treatment.
- In Mukono, during the Kabaka's Health Camp held in partnership with the Kabaka Foundation, over **10,000** attendees were reached and **24** individuals screened for mental health conditions.
- During World Patients Day in Kampala, **43** people received counselling, psychological first aid, and referrals.



Community members receive integrated health and mental health services during the two-day outreach in Lira District.

Capacity Building and Partner Engagements:

MHU trained **24** participants from partner organizations on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) and took part in a national Reasonable Accommodation workshop to strengthen inclusion practices. Project launch meetings were held in all six implementing districts and at national level, engaging government leaders, development partners, and OPDs.

Strengthening Peer Support:

In Kanungu, peer support groups were equipped with Personal Protective Equipment and reporting tools to enhance their role in community-based psychosocial rehabilitation.



Over 10,000 people attended the Kabaka's Health Camp in Mukono, where MHU provided free mental



MHU Staff distributes Personal protective equipment to the Kanungu peer support team



CADiR partners attend a Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) training facilitated by MHU.



Over 80,000 people reached through radio, TV, and social media campaigns promoting mental health and the toll-free helpline.

Challenges

Service interruptions and limited language coverage affected teletherapy sessions in some regions, prompting plans to expand language options at the call center.

Lessons Learned

- Peer-led mental health support increases accessibility of psychological services in rural communities.
- Social media and mass media remain powerful tools for promoting the toll-free helpline and driving behavior change.
- Partner collaborations significantly enhance outreach impact and service integration.

Way Forward

In the next quarter, MHU will:

- Continue teletherapy campaigns and toll-free line promotion (0800 21 21 21).
- Conduct community mental health outreaches and supportive supervision for peers in Kanungu.
- Map and update referral pathways.
- Train staff in child safeguarding and policy advocacy.
- Hold the General Assembly and project review sessions.

YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT

Mental Health Uganda (MHU), in partnership with SOS Children's Village Uganda and with support from Operation Days Work (ODW), is implementing a three-year initiative (2023–2025) focused on transforming adolescent mental health in eight secondary schools across Gulu and Wakiso districts. The project empowers student-led Mental Health Champions, Mentor Champions, and focal teachers to create safe spaces, raise awareness, and strengthen peer-to-peer support systems. Through school-based activities and community engagement, the project continues to break the silence around mental health and promote help-seeking behaviors among young people. Students and parents are encouraged to access further support through our helpline

Key Achievements

- A joint quarterly monitoring visit revealed steady progress in integrating mental health support within schools. Mental Health Clubs have expanded membership, strengthened internal referral pathways, and built staff capacity to identify and respond to student needs.



A Mental Health Club member shares insights during the quarterly monitoring at St Charles Lwanga International School.

- Mentor Champions promoted youth mental health awareness during International Youth Day in Masindi District, reaching students from three secondary schools through interactive sessions on mental health causes, signs, and available referral pathways.
- A youth-led radio talk show on Rupiny FM in Gulu City engaged stakeholders and parents on the impact of technology on youth mental well-being, reinforcing the importance of family and community support.
- At Mt of Olives College, a Music, Dance, and Drama (MDD) event under the theme "Home as a Safe Place for Healing, Care, and Support" reached over **400** parents and **600** students, sparking dialogue on the role of supportive-

home environments in nurturing children's mental health.

- Youth-led School Campaigns: Six campaigns in Gulu and Wakiso reached over 8,000 students with messages on mental wellness, stigma reduction, and peer support.
- Community Outreach: In Lukodi Sub-county, Gulu, 600 community members received mental health information, and 91 people were screened, with 74 diagnosed and referred for treatment.
- National Dialogue: Student champions and a focal teacher shared best practices during an X Space discussion on school mental health.
- Parliament Engagement: Four champions joined a high-level panel at the Mental Health Awareness Camp in Parliament under the theme "Breaking Barriers – accessible mental health services for all."
- Men's Mental Health Initiative: A mentor champion formed "The Ecclectics" WhatsApp group, creating a safe space for 30 young men to share and support each other.
- Day of the African Child: Champions participated in celebrations at SOS Kakiri, highlighting children's rights and school mental health issues.



MHU project staff lead an awareness session at Midland High School, Kawempe.

Challenges

- Limited flexibility in the toll-free helpline operating hours affected timely support for students seeking help after school hours.
- Some Mental Health Club members still require further training to enhance their confidence and skills in peer support.
- High demand for one-on-one counselling during awareness sessions exceeded the available time and staff capacity.
- Mentor Champions, particularly female ones, faced ethical challenges when supporting male clients who occasionally displayed emotional or romantic advances, highlighting the need for clearer mentorship boundaries and ethical guidance.

Lessons Learned

- Establishing active Mental Health Clubs ensures sustainability of mental health promotion efforts within schools.
- The Mentor Champion model strengthens psychosocial support systems and enhances student resilience during academic pressure periods.
- Extending awareness activities to non-project schools broadens reach and supports inclusive mental health promotion.
- Youth-led approaches increase engagement and ownership among peers and parents.
- Aligning mental health activities with regular school events, such as MDD competitions, maximises participation without disrupting academic schedules.

Way Forward

- Conduct structured training sessions for Mental Health Club members to improve their skills in peer support and referral.
- Commemorate World Mental Health Day 2025 through school and community activities.
- Organise a youth mental health bootcamp to enhance leadership, advocacy, and life skills among Mental Health Champions.

Impact Snapshot


1,067

Students (700 female, 367 male) reached through school-based awareness in project schools.

Students (2,164 female, 818 male) reached during the Youth Day celebration in non-project


2,982
321

Students and community members (199 female, 122 male) received Psychological First Aid (PFA)

Community members engaged through radio talk shows and outreach activities.

**5,200****34**

Referrals made to the MHU toll-free helpline 0800 21 21 21 and other mental health services.

STORIES OF CHANGE

Stories of Change (SOC) is a 24-month initiative (January 2025 – December 2026) that is being implemented in Soroti and Butambala. SOC builds on a successful pilot that tested a Project-Based Grant Facility in Lira district. The project targets 1,400 people with mental disabilities (70% women) in Lira, Soroti, and Butambala Districts, along with caregivers, families, and local duty bearers. Its goal is to foster financial inclusion, skills development, and advocacy for greater representation in government and disability structures. It expands the grant model to new districts while strengthening Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) systems, introducing craft psychology interventions, promoting cross-district learning and stakeholder engagement to reduce stigma and support recovery.

Key Achievements

- **31** out of **126** applications funded across Soroti and Serere District Associations.
- UGX **19,195,000** disbursed to **21** groups for economic empowerment.
- UGX **8,845,000** disbursed to **10** individuals for livelihood improvement.
- UGX **5,479,000** disbursed to **10** individuals under Craft Psychology initiatives, supporting creativity and mental well-being.
- 150 members trained in financial literacy across Soroti and Serere, strengthening their ability to manage funds and sustain income-generating activities.

Challenges

- Limited funding constrained the project's ability to support all 126 applicants, despite strong demand and demonstrated need for economic empowerment opportunities.

Way forward

The project will prioritise private sector engagement to diversify funding sources and expand opportunities for members seeking livelihood and craft support. This approach will strengthen sustainability and broaden the impact of the grant facility model in the coming quarters.



MHU staff member facilitates a financial literacy session for grant beneficiaries

PARTNERSHIPS

We have initiated strategic discussions aimed at strengthening private sector engagement. This quarter, MHU met with the Department of Business Development and Quality Assurance, the Commissioner of Business Development at the Ministry of Trade and Cooperatives, and Ecobank to explore inclusive economic opportunities for long-term programming. Emphasis has been placed on popularizing the toll-free helpline and enhancing livelihood programmes for our members.



The Executive Director and our Head of Fundraising and Partnership Development during a strategic meeting at the Ministry of Trade and Cooperatives



Partnership engagement meeting with Ecobank exploring opportunities for collaboration and sustainable support.

The Commissioner reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to supporting MHU in identifying key private sector actors, including the Private Sector Foundation, to foster collaboration and resource mobilization. This partnership represents a significant step toward creating long-term financial inclusion opportunities for individuals with mental health conditions who continue to face barriers in accessing mainstream financial support.

GET IN TOUCH WITH US

✉ Email: info@mhu.ug
☎ Telephone: 0392178953

Facebook: Mental Health Uganda
Twitter(X): MentalHealth_Ug

Instagram: [mental_health_uganda](https://www.instagram.com/mental_health_uganda)
LinkedIn: [mentalhealthuganda](https://www.linkedin.com/company/mentalhealthuganda)
Tiktok: [mentalhealthuganda](https://www.tiktok.com/@mentalhealthuganda)

OUR PARTNERS

