



ANNUAL REPORT OF YOU BELONG (U) July 2023 - June 2024

Introduction

The various programs of You Belong are presented. All programs support the needs of people recovering from mental illness. As well, attention is given to early intervention programs in various schools to ensure children's needs for emotional wellbeing and self-respect are enhanced.

You Belong (U), ensures that all its policies and programs are consistent with the mental health and education policies of the Government of Uganda. And good communication with Government Ministries, and District Officers is maintained.

You Belong (U) maintains a close working relationship with Butabika National Mental Referral Hospital, and the Chief Executive of You Belong (U) has assisted the hospital in the development of its safeguarding policy and procedures.

Post COVID-19, the mental health needs of children who experienced levels of social isolation during the COVID-19 years, is very much on our agenda, as seen in the POWERFUL MINDS program, in Jinja.

Our main work has been the Wellcome funded research grant, called SCAPE U. The research is very important in assisting us to discern the effectiveness of persons in longer term recovery from psychosis being active agents of voluntary care, peer supporters, of those persons in the beginning stages of recovery from psychosis. The development of peer support models in mental health care is directly in line with Government Health policy. The PowerfulMinds program is funded by the Jinja Educational Trust (JET).

YouBelong Uganda Personnel

The You Belong (U) team comprises of 4 Social workers, 4 Mental health nurses, 1 Occupational therapist. The Technical Director in the team is a Public health Psychiatrist, who is also a Senior Consultant Psychiatrist and Deputy Director at Butabika Mental Health Referral Hospital, and the CEO is an experienced Social worker with a background in developing mental health policies and services. An Office assistant, and an Epidemiologist in public health and nursing is the SCAPE U Project Coordinator. 2 Psychiatric Clinical Officers work as Research assistants in the



The YouBelong Uganda team pose for group Photo at the YBU office

SCAPE U project. Personnel also include two drivers, and a housekeeper. The YouBelong (U) team is a highly effective multidisciplinary team, working to strengthen the health system in Uganda.

Strengthening care in collaboration with people with lived experience of psychosis in Uganda (SCAPE-U) Project

You Belong (U) has been undertaking a Wellcome Trust funded 3-year cluster randomized controlled trial (cRCT) to evaluate the feasibility and acceptability of SCAPE-U; a novel intervention aimed at improving the quality of services and outcomes for people with psychosis through engagement with people with lived experience of psychosis in Uganda. The project activities commenced on 1st April 2023 with the preparation phase that lasted 6 months followed by the implementation of the contextualization and pilot phases. During this year we conducted activities for both study phases, this report summarizes activities carried out from July 2023 to June 2024 of the SCAPE-U project in accordance with the grant agreement.

Project Update / Status

The contextualization phase was designed to refine the SCAPE-U intervention prior to the pilot and feasibility phase and as such, involved only one cluster with 13 primary health facilities. In this phase, 13 Service users with their corresponding family carers, 20 primary care providers, 27 VHTs, and 9 people with lived experience of psychosis (SCAPE-U facilitators) were recruited as study participants. In August 2023, enrolment of study participants for the contextualization phase closed however, follow-up of the service users continued to April 2024 with 8 of 13 service users completing all study follow up activities. From November 2023, SCAPE-U transitioned to the external pilot and feasibility phase covering 6 clusters, 3 in each arm (control and intervention). In this phase, we plan to recruit 60 service user (30 in each arm) and have them followed up and ensure receipt of the planned study activities by the end of the study period (March 2025).



A YBU team member participates in the VHT Supervision meeting with the PHW at the Health Facility

Project activities conducted included:

1. *Protocol renewal and approval of protocol amendments:* We received the study protocol renewal and approval of amendments from the Makerere University School of Public Health Research and Ethics Committee for year 2 and year 3 of the study, the National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST) approval was already in place.
2. *Site preparation and selection, randomization and allocation to treatment:* Six clusters, with a total of 32 health facilities, were selected in Kampala and Wakiso districts to participate in the External Pilot and Feasibility phase. The clusters were randomized in a ratio of 1:1 to either receive the SCAPE-U intervention or enhanced care as usual, as stated in the protocol.
3. *Orientation of members of the District Health Teams (DHTs) in Wakiso and Kampala:* These meetings were held to orient the district teams about the study including challenges encountered during the contextualisation phase and we further requested for administrative approval to

proceed with the pilot and feasibility phase. Administrative approval was received from both districts.

4. *Selection and training of People with lived experience of psychosis (PWLP) in Photovoice:* At the initiation of the pilot phase, 7 additional PWLP were identified and trained in Photovoice. This training methodology equipped them with skills to co-facilitate PHW and VHT trainings and to conduct home visits to newly identified psychosis patients and their family members inspiring hope using stories from their lived experiences.



A YBU Supervisor meets with a SCAPE U Facilitator during for supervision at the Health Centre

5. *Enrolment of participants:* We have been able to enroll 18 study participants on the study; 8 in the intervention arm and 10 in the control arm and these are receiving services as per the protocol.

6. *Community sensitization of different stakeholders:* YouBelong Uganda with support from the Ministry of Health designed mental health IEC materials to guide community sensitization. These materials targeted primary health workers, VHTs and other community stakeholders out of the health sector. Various stakeholders within the community have been engaged and IEC materials distributed to the Anglican church leaders, traditional healers and additional village health team (VHTs) members to support the originally trained VHTs. We plan to engage catholic church leaders and the Muslim leaders next year for a wider coverage.



The MoH Representative hands over a copy of IEC Materials to the Traditional Healer leader in Kampala

7. *Quarterly supervisions for primary health workers and Village health teams:* Following training of health workers and VHTs in identification and management of psychosis patients, we have conducted quarterly static supervisions to strengthen their capacity in mental health service delivery. This activity has been jointly conducted with district officials for administrative supervision and to ensure sustainability.
8. *Ensuring wellbeing of SCAPE-U facilitators:* SCAPE-U facilitators are persons with lived experiences of psychosis that share their experiences to newly enrolled service users and their care takers to inspire hope and facilitate recovery. Ensuring their wellness is key in implementation of the study. During this year, we supported their wellness through weekly support calls and quarterly supervision meetings.
9. *Data collection:* During this year we collected both quantitative and qualitative data as per the approved data collection tools for all our study participants. This data is securely located in an electronic database with restricted access.
10. *Data Safety and Monitoring Board (DSMB) meeting:* We held the 3rd DSMB meeting on 19th June 2024. At the end of the meeting the voting members approved continuation of the study with suggested modifications. All suggested modifications are currently implemented.

The SCAPE U research program is already showing some interesting trends, including the positive impact that people in longer term recovery from psychosis can, as peer supporters, have a positive impact in the lives of people in early stages of recovery from psychosis. As well, they can be of significant benefit in their involvement in the mental health training of primary health workers. The research process hopes to produce further evidence of this trend.

The PowerfulMinds programme

PowerfulMinds is an innovation by YouBelong Uganda designed to improve children's safety and mental wellbeing in school communities. PowerfulMinds is currently implemented in four primary schools in two districts in Uganda (Jinja and Buikwe district) with support from Jinja Educational Trust. The core principle of the PowerfulMinds intervention is that a school should be framed as a community of care and support in which children, teachers and parents become active agents of creating a more integrated community that enhances safety and well-being of all, particularly children. This approach focuses on cultivating strong relationships that facilitate openness, care and support among children, between children, teachers, and parents/guardians in the school community.



YBU team member guiding a schoolteacher on how to use the PowerfulMinds teachers' guide



YBU team members interacting with schoolgirls during a group discussion

To achieve this the PowerfulMinds approach integrates mental health care, mental health awareness and capacity building of children, teachers, parents to produce a close connection between all in their various roles, to enhance emotional wellbeing of children in the school/education setting. Key to the PowerfulMinds approach also is the PowerfulMinds teachers' guide and other Information Education Communication material developed and tailored for use in an educational setting, a step by step helping process developed for teachers to use while supporting children and adolescents, and safeguarding policies and

procedures to prevent and address issues of any form of abuse. The PowerfulMinds intervention is designed to be delivered primary schools by teachers trained and supervised by YBU mental health workers. The mental health workers will train teachers on delivery of activities to build social and emotional capabilities of children and activities to create awareness among children, teachers and parents re risky behaviors that expose children to emotional stress and mental health challenges in the school environment and safeguarding policies and procedures to prevent and address forms of abuse.

Women for Women Group

The You Belong (U) Women for Women Group is a group of social workers and community mental health nurses. Its activities aim to respond to and advocate for the mental health needs of young women vulnerable to gender inequalities including those living with severe mental illness, girls of school-going age and women in business. Activities also draw a critical gender lens on all the projects in the organization to ensure that they are gender responsive.



YBU Women for Women members

Work with the HER community

You Belong (U) WFW lectured on financial wellness during a breakfast meeting organized by HER and Prudential Insurance Company. Discussions with the women showed an increased need for growth and development in business and career. They highlighted several economic and social structural barriers, including, power inequalities in decision-making over family resources which hinder effective participation in the economy. The WFW representative shared tips with women on how to take care of their mental wellbeing in their endeavors to break the barriers. Other key speakers were; Abidha Din -Financial lifestyle Protector at Prudential, Racheal Musiima- Head of HNI Business Unit at Prudential, Lynda Nabayinda Were-Customer Experience professional.



The YBU Women for Women Leader speaks to one of the participants at the HER event

You Belong (U) Mental Health Program at Radio Maria

In January 2024, the Director of Radio Maria Uganda granted an opportunity to YBU to conduct radio talk show monthly about mental health and well-being to the listeners of Radio Maria. Radio Maria is a Catholic radio station that broadcasts from Kampala Uganda. It offers religious and human promotion programs especially for marginalised people and has listeners from around the world. Since January-2024, the YBU team have presented the following topics: mental health and well-being, mental illness and common mental disorders in our communities, mental health treatment, stigma and mental illness, economic empowerment and mental wellbeing. These radio talk shows were presented by YBU team members mainly Mental health nurses, Social workers, Psychiatric clinical officers, and Occupational therapist with guidance and support of the YBU CEO and Technical Director.



A YBU Team member during one of the live radio sessions in Radio Maria studios

Humility Program

YouBelong Uganda is collaborating with the Catholic Archdiocese of Kampala for the treatment of priests experiencing alcohol abuse and other addictions and related problems, under the program named the Humility Program, the program was approved by Archbishop Paul Ssemogerere, Archbishop of



The YBU CEO speaks to the Priests during their training in Lubaga

Kampala, Uganda. The program goal is to set up, implement and monitor a recovery program for priests affected by alcohol use disorders and other addictive behaviours in the Catholic Archdiocese of Kampala. The program entails 4 packages that includes training of senior priests about alcohol and substance use problems, pre discharge assessment and post discharge planning, post discharge care, and

conducting and supervision of the AA/recovery support groups.

The key factor in this program is the “humility” on the part of the priest, the priest must freely admit that he has an alcohol problem, and he needs to rely on the help and support of others, including professional support, while at the same time placing his sense of openness and abandonment into the unconditional love of God and His freely given Grace.

In October 2024, the YBU team conducted a training to the senior priests for four days about alcohol and substance use problems and 5 senior priests selected by the Archbishop of Kampala under Kampala Archdiocese attended the training. The training covered the following areas: Introduction to the Humility Program, understanding alcohol/substance use problems, understanding stigma related to alcohol/substance use problems, understanding recovery and relapse, essential care of practice, psychosocial interventions, and support groups (Alcoholic Anonymous group).



Some of the trained Priests pose for a Photo with Dr. Mutamba, Monsignor David and the In-charge Alcohol and Drug Unit, during their visit at Butabika Hospital

Youth Consultation Group (YCG) meetings

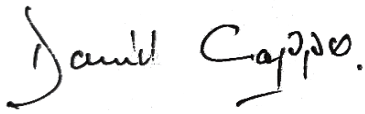


YCG Members participate in a group discussion with YBU team during their last meeting

You Belong (U) recognizes the importance of learning from the lived experience of people in recovery from mental health conditions and co-production of policy and programs, with young people in recovery. The engagements with consultation groups are crucial to the co-production of YBU responses to the development of a balanced system of mental health care, between acute inpatient care and community-based care for people with severe mental health conditions, in Uganda. These groups inform the designing, development, implementation, and evaluation of YouBelong Uganda programs.

During the year 2023-2024, YouBelong (U) conducted 3 YCG meetings for the adolescents/youth aged 17-19 years, and 3 meetings for the carers of the adolescents/youth under YCG.

On behalf of the Uganda women and men who make up the YouBelong Uganda team,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Saul Gappo". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'S' and a distinct 'G'.

**Chief Executive
YouBelong Uganda**