

**Fondation d'Harcourt**

**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2023**





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## Message from Managing Director

### Dear Partners and Friends,

Year after year, we are moved by the passion and gratitude evoked by the remarkable work of our partners and many stakeholders. Their unwavering dedication produces inspiring outcomes, renewing our enthusiasm and confidence in the transformative impact of ongoing collaborative efforts and a shared vision of what can be achieved together. Our 2023 Annual Report celebrates these enduring partnerships and highlights how we strive to support and contribute to meaningful change.

A major highlight in 2023 was the evolution of our collaboration with Mission Bambini, resulting in the development and empowerment of OMADA, a neuropsychiatric residential community for adolescents. Through an innovative and interdisciplinary approach, this initiative successfully secured long-term support from the public sector, confirming the power of our strategy, which includes flexible funding and long-term collaboration to deliver sustainable and scalable solutions.

Another 2023 milestone, our compelling [documentary on mental health](#), paid tribute to the remarkable individuals we have encountered through our projects. Thanks to Art Director Alessandro Soetje and his production team, the film shows how prevention, care and recovery are key to unlocking one's full potential.

Over the past year, as a foundation, we reinforced our commitment to listening, strengthening relationships, and learning alongside our partners and communities. In our role, we endeavored to support their efforts and amplify our collective impact. Throughout our journey, a multitude of stakeholders actively contributed to our partners' projects, underscoring how meaningful change can only be achieved within a cohesive ecosystem.

We were particularly delighted to involve all of our African partners in the Sparks Meet-up Event in Kenya, a fantastic occasion for networking and knowledge sharing. The event facilitated connections among our partners and with organizations backed by various funders. We were also happy to continue our support of the Mental Health Innovation Network, the leading knowledge management and dissemination platform, which brings together stakeholders in the global mental health space to share tools, resources and experience. We look forward to further strengthening this type of collaboration in the future.

The past year marked a transformative period for us as we undertook a significant initiative to refine our strategy. Taking the swift evolution of the global mental health landscape into account as well as our own learned experience, we refocused our approach to ensure the relevance and efficacy of our work and maximize our impact. The strategy is set to be launched in 2024.

We are profoundly grateful for the dedication and tireless endeavors of our partners and stakeholders, and for the steadfast support of our Board, which has allowed us to envision a brighter future filled with hope and opportunity for renewed growth.

**Gaia Montauti d'Harcourt**  
**Managing Director**

# Who We Are

Fondation d'Harcourt is a private non-profit Swiss foundation established upon the initiative of the d'Harcourt family. We promote national and international projects and partnerships in the fields of mental health and psychosocial support. Our actions stem from the belief that primary needs are not only material. Addressing persons' intangible needs is also essential to their well-being and dignity.

## Mission

Our mission is to improve the lives of people living with a mental health condition and provide support to their families. Our holistic approach helps them unlock their full potential, function in society, and give something back to their communities. Given that certain social conditions increase the risk of mental illness, we also work towards prevention by providing psychosocial support to those who are most vulnerable.



# Why mental health matters

## 1 IN 8

PEOPLE LIVE WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION



EVERY YEAR, CLOSE TO  
**3 MILLION PEOPLE**  
DIE DUE TO SUBSTANCE ABUSE

SUICIDE ACCOUNTS FOR  
**1 IN 100**  
DEATHS GLOBALLY

In low-income countries, more than

## 75%

OF PEOPLE WITH DISORDERS DO NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT



Approximately

## 50%

OF MENTAL HEALTH DISORDERS START BY THE AGE OF 14



## 5 TO 1

benefit-to-cost ratio for scaling up treatment for depression and anxiety

People with severe mental health conditions  
**DIE ON AVERAGE  
10 TO 20 YEARS EARLIER**  
than the general population

# Approach

At Fondation d’Harcourt, we believe our mission can be achieved in partnership with organizations that provide direct services through the following axis of intervention:



**Promoting the psychosocial wellbeing of vulnerable groups**

- By raising understanding about mental health issues
- By establishing and strengthening self-help and peer groups
- By facilitating education and vocational training
- By promoting psychosocial rehabilitation through interventions that facilitate social inclusion



**Ensuring access to mental health care**

- By supporting mental health facilities and community-based services
- By training primary mental health care staff, specialists, and non-specialist providers
- Through community outreach programs
- Through better referral systems



**Empowering people living with a mental health condition and their families**

- By raising awareness and understanding about mental health issues
- Through targeted/specific psycho-social interventions for vulnerable groups across the lifespan
- Through individual support by qualified psychologists and social workers
- By promoting psycho-social and sensitization activities for individuals, families, and communities



**13**  
**PARTNERS**



**59**  
**STAKEHOLDERS**



**7**  
**COUNTRIES**

FdH recognises the value and need for collaboration with other stakeholders in the mental health and philanthropic ecosystem and partners with the following networks:

**MENTAL HEALTH INNOVATION NETWORK**  
[www.mhinnovation.net](http://www.mhinnovation.net)

**GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH ACTION NETWORK**  
[www.gmhan.org](http://www.gmhan.org)

**SWISS FOUNDATION**  
[www.swissfoundations.ch](http://www.swissfoundations.ch)

**GIVING WOMEN**  
[www.givingwomen.ch](http://www.givingwomen.ch)





2023 Impact

522,438

PEOPLE SENSITIZED  
ON MENTAL HEALTH



26,907

ADOLESCENTS SUPPORTED AND  
EDUCATED ON MENTAL HEALTH

176,828

PEOPLE GIVEN ACCESS TO  
MENTAL HEALTH CARE

652

HEALTH WORKERS, MENTAL  
HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AND  
NON-SPECIALISTS RECEIVED MENTAL  
HEALTH TRAINING AND COACHING



797

VOLUNTEERS  
INVOLVED AND  
TRAINED

325

PEOPLE RECEIVED  
SOCIAL AND  
FINANCIAL SUPPORT



615

CAREGIVERS  
SUPPORTED



# Youth First Kenya Project

## CHALLENGE

In Kilifi, a predominantly rural coastal area in Kenya, **people with mental conditions and other disabilities face stigma and myths**, creating barriers to fitting in at school and in their communities and leading to numerous rights violations. Moreover, poverty and food insecurity limit educational opportunities, causing many young people to leave school to help support their families. Early pregnancies and drug abuse have a profound effect on the mental health of adolescents, which frequently remains untreated due to the lack of adequate, accessible, and affordable mental health care services.

## RESPONSE

Our partner, CBM Ireland, works alongside people with disabilities in the world’s poorest places to transform lives and build inclusive communities where everyone can enjoy their human rights and achieve their full potential.

The Youth First Kenya Project (YFK) project is part of a mental health-focused Community Based Inclusive Development (CBID) programme with the overall aim of increasing access to rights and participation of people with disabilities, particularly mental health and psychosocial disabilities, on personal, community, and societal levels in Kenya.

An evidence-based program targeting 13-15-year-old students, YFK’s objective is to promote resilience and social-emotional learning. In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **Social contact activities** with mental health champions with lived experience who shared their personal stories about their mental health journeys; emphasized the need for inclusion of persons with psychosocial and other disabilities in community life; and offered basic counselling to community members in distress.
- **Mental health literacy and resilience curriculum** to build students’ social and emotional skills, helping them overcome challenges, thrive in adversity, and reach their life goals.
- **Youth First Curriculum training** for teachers to increase their engagement, improve their wellbeing, and help students identify character strengths, solve problems, set goals, manage their emotions, and improve school performance.
- **Approval of the YFK school curriculum by the KICD (Kenyan Institute of Curriculum Development)** integrating inner well-being, growth mindset, and social-emotional development for young people.

## PARTNER



## PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

CBM GLOBAL  
DISABILITY  
INCLUSION  
KENYA

BASIC NEEDS  
BASIC RIGHTS  
KENYA

WORLDBEING

MINISTRY  
OF EDUCATION  
AND MINISTRY  
OF HEALTH  
OF KENYA

KENYA  
INSTITUTE OF  
CURRICULUM  
DEVELOPMENT

LIGHTHOUSE  
KENYA

## PROJECT IMPACT

3,411  
STUDENTS BENEFITED  
FROM THE YFK PROGRAM

854

COMMUNITY MEMBERS SENSITIZED  
ON MENTAL HEALTH AND DISABILITY  
THROUGH SOCIAL CONTACT SESSIONS



20  
PEOPLE BENEFITED FROM  
COUNSELLING SESSIONS

116  
HEAD TEACHERS TRAINED  
ON YFK CURRICULUM

SPOTLIGHT

# IBRAHIM’S TRANSFORMATION: FROM SELF-DISCOVERY TO POSITIVE CHANGE

Ibrahim is a 14-year-old, grade 7 pupil at Gandani Primary School in Kaloleni Sub County, Kilifi County. He is immensely grateful for the transformative impact the YFK Project has had on his life, particularly in empowering him to deal with challenges like lack of food at home.

After participating in sessions on character strengths, Ibrahim found the confidence to have a constructive conversation with his mother. Together, they brainstormed ideas to improve their financial situation and decided to open a vegetable kiosk to generate income for their family. Ibrahim’s mother took her son’s advice to heart and now they no longer go to bed hungry.

Finding a solution to address the food insecurity at home has improved Ibrahim’s school attendance. Previously, he would skip classes when he missed meals at home, lacking the energy to walk the long distance to school on an empty stomach. The success of the vegetable business has brought hope to his family and Ibrahim feels proud and optimistic about achieving his dream of becoming an accountant.

Ibrahim has also helped restore relationships among his peers, who often resolved their conflicts through fighting. By talking to each party separately, he has taught them to forgive each other and renew their friendships.

Ibrahim says his friends in the village keep wondering why he has changed. He responds that understanding yourself is key because it helps guide you and gives you a sense of belonging. He is happy to share everything he’s learned with his friends at school, so that they can understand themselves better too.



## TESTIMONIALS

**“My son used to be very agitated and never opened up. However, after participating in the program he began speaking with me more regularly, helping me and asking questions.”**

Parent of a student enrolled in the YFK program

**“Working closely with the Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) as master trainers is key for ensuring sustainability, as teacher training and supervision are part of their mandate.”**

Basic Needs Basic Rights



# Take Care of Me

## CHALLENGE



In Italy, **one out of every four people lives in poverty, struggling with inadequate access to clothing, education, and healthcare**. This already dire situation was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly affecting children from poor families and neighborhoods. The pandemic intensified social isolation and exposure to negative online stimuli, leading to a rise in cases of depression, self-harm, and eating disorders among children and adolescents.

Parents, caregivers, educators, and social workers often lack the knowledge and skills necessary to support children in navigating these new challenges. The increased stress and mental health issues among youth highlight a critical need for comprehensive support systems and resources to equip these adults with tools to effectively assist the younger generation in coping with and overcoming these difficulties.

## RESPONSE

- Our partner, Fondazione Rava, is dedicated to improving the lives of vulnerable children and their families in Italy and worldwide.
- This project aims to activate an integrated system of interventions for minors in a state of social marginalization, distress, and fragility as well as their families.
- In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:
- **Individual/family psychological support** delivered by four psychologists.
  - **Training for educators and operators**, equipping them with the skills to recognize and address mental health issues.
  - **Awareness raising for parents** focused on school-family relationships and tools to identify signs of distress in their children.
  - **Mental health prevention sessions in schools** to educate and support students and promote early intervention.
  - **Art therapy workshops and an art exhibition titled “Love,”** showcasing the artistic expressions of minors and highlighting the therapeutic benefits of art.
  - **Financial support** to alleviate economic burdens and improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable families.

## PARTNER



## PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

CENTRO TEMPO PER L’INFANZIA

ISTITUTO COMPRENSIVO CIRESOLA

## PROJECT IMPACT

8

TRAININGS FOR EDUCATORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS

210

INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT SESSIONS



5

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS IN 2 CLASSES

25 MINORS (6-12 YEARS OLD) PARTICIPATED IN THE ART THERAPY WORKSHOPS



6 FAMILIES RECEIVED FINANCIAL SUPPORT



100 PEOPLE SENSITIZED ON MENTAL HEALTH THROUGH THE ART THERAPY EXPOSITION

SPOTLIGHT

BETWEEN TWO WORLDS:  
AN ADOLESCENT’S PATH  
TO SELF-DISCOVERY

Preadolescence is the intermediate phase between the subjective experience of reaching a much-awaited age and the reality of dealing with a transforming body and interacting with others who are different from oneself. During this transitional period, preadolescents often experience profound unease due to the lack of a clear definition of their identity.

To escape this unsettling condition, many children start behaving as if they are already adolescents, even before reaching puberty. This behaviour can concern parents and complicate family interactions as the focus shifts from ‘being’ to ‘becoming.’

Yasira is a thirteen-year-old girl born in Italy to an Egyptian family. She lives in Milan with her mother, a twenty-year-old sister, and an eight-year-old brother. Her father passed away when she was nine years old.

From her first encounter with the psychologist, Yasira showed signs of evading identity tension. A beautiful girl with a melancholic and dreamy air, she was solitary and had few friends. Whenever she became close with someone, she would distance herself, generating internal confusion.

This phase appeared to be an attempt to assert her independence from her mother, who upholds traditional values that conflict with Yasira’s choices, like rejecting the veil or going out with friends.

In therapy sessions, a psychologist worked with Yasira to address the uncertainties and ambivalences concerning the subjectivization process, helping her establish an identity that respects her cultural background while also allowing her to integrate with her peers. Together, they took steps to make Yashira feel like a protagonist in her own growth, while staying in harmony with her mother’s wishes.



TESTIMONIALS

**“After joining a new school and beginning to process her traumatic experiences, Yasira consistently attends weekly sessions. She shows improved ability in analyzing her experiences and more confidence in seeking help during crises. Her sensitivity and self-awareness are aiding her positive progress in her personal journey.”**

Psychologist

**“Emotion, perception, memory, thought, and language. These elements were expressed through painting and charcoal, enabling children to achieve greater self-awareness by freely expressing their subjectivity.”**

Art therapist



# Supporting parents in perinatal mental health

CHALLENGE

The period of perinatal mental health presents diverse challenges, yet even today, there is a widespread lack of awareness about perinatal mental health conditions. This situation often results in underdiagnosis, delayed treatment, and insufficient support for those affected. **Many mothers may feel ashamed or reluctant to seek help due to societal stigma surrounding mental health.** Partners and family members can also experience mental health challenges during the perinatal period, but their needs may go unnoticed, making it difficult for them to access tailored support services.

Support sessions provide parents with a much needed break and an opportunity to nurture confidence in their parenting abilities, attend to their mental and physical well-being, and openly discuss their concerns about parenthood. During the prenatal period, these sessions enable parents to delve into their needs as a couple and as a family, effectively serving as support for their shared journey.

In the postnatal period, the aim is to bolster parenting skills, nurture the parent-child relationship, and promote the healthy development of the baby. Through these efforts, our partners strive to ensure that families receive the comprehensive support they need during this crucial phase of life.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt, this collaborative project provided:

RESPONSE

Our partner, the Fondation Recherche Périnatalité, along with CAP Cocooning, offer crucial support to mothers and couples during this delicate period. This support is provided by a pair of professionals, which may comprise a midwife and an expert in psychiatry, child psychiatry, psychology, a speech therapist, or a specialist in psychomotor skills.

- **CAP Cocooning sessions**, which offer a free, easy-to-access walk-in location weekly to quickly respond to concerns around parenthood, early child development, and parent-baby interactions.
- **Hotline**: once a month, a telephone hotline is offered from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. <https://www.caperinatal.net>
- An **evaluation** of attendance and satisfaction with these services is carried out among participants.

PARTNER



PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

CAP COCOONING

PROJECT IMPACT

37  
WELCOMING  
SESSIONS HELD



1  
MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM  
(CHILD PSYCHIATRIST, PSYCHOLOGIST,  
MIDWIFE, SPEECH THERAPIST, PSYCHOMOTOR  
THERAPIST, OSTEOPATH)

57  
SINGLE PARENTS-  
CHILDREN SUPPORTED

FAMILIES RECEIVED  
WEEKLY SUPPORT  
VIA HOTLINE



## SPOTLIGHT

# SUPPORTING CORINNE: EXTENDING CARE FOR POSTPARTUM DEPRESSION

Corinne arrived with her 12-month-old baby peacefully sleeping in the stroller, yet tears streamed down her face. It was evident that she was struggling emotionally. Despite the difficulty, she managed to leave her house and attend the welcoming session, a brave step in itself.

During the session, Corinne opened up about her challenges. She tearfully expressed that her baby's constant crying had become overwhelming. She felt lost and alone in her struggles, longing for a safe space to gather herself and find solace.

Acknowledging Corinne's emotional distress, we ensured a nurturing environment for her during the session. Following the meeting, she expressed a desire to stay longer and seek additional support. Recognizing the severity of her postpartum depression, we proposed ongoing assistance.

We deeply appreciated the courage it took for Corinne to attend the session, recognizing the challenges she faced. We understood that for mothers like her, coping with depression and anxiety could make socializing overwhelming. In response, we have extended our support beyond physical gatherings, offering virtual sessions and personalized assistance to better meet their needs.



## TESTIMONIALS

**"It really helped me navigate very difficult times when becoming a mother, and I am forever grateful to have had that space."**

A mom

**"I felt listened to and well-advised, and it was very comforting to feel that we are not alone and to be able to exchange with other moms."**

A mom



# Improving the wellbeing of children and adolescents

## CHALLENGE



According to WHO, globally, **1 in 7 adolescents aged 10-19 experience a mental disorder**. Suicide is the fourth leading cause of death among 15-19 year-olds.

In Romania, about 22,000 children and adolescents are living with a mental illness diagnosis, and many others face various developmental, emotional or cognitive disorders. It is estimated that a much higher number of people with psycho-emotional needs remain undiagnosed and, consequently, do not receive any mental health treatment or care (source: Unicef Romania).

## RESPONSE

Our partner, Fundatia Inocenti, a non-profit organization that helps children reach their full potential, has been operating in Romania for more than 30 years. It aims to promote mental health in high schools and facilitate a holistic approach to strengthening resilience and improving treatment for children and adolescents hospitalized in clinics.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **Mental health literacy sessions** covering topics such as generalized anxiety, social anxiety, depression, specific phobias, anger and frustration management, and body image issues.
- **Psychosocial support** for hospitalized children and, when necessary, one-on-one conversations with patients and/or their caregivers.
- **Community events and campaigns** to raise awareness on mental health, including the dissemination of informational handouts for adolescents and therapeutic stories for children.
- **Art exhibition #IMakeaDifference** on the theme of Introspection, which encouraged adolescents to express their emotions on canvas and share their inner world with others.
- **Anger management workshops** for parents, helping them develop a more flexible perspective on anger, increase awareness of triggers, and learn regulation techniques.

## PARTNER



## PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

**PEDIATRIC PSYCHIATRY AND ADDICTION CLINICS**  
in Cluj-Napoca

**FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES**  
Babeş-Bolyai University,  
Cluj-Napoca

**ROMULUS LADEA**  
Visual Arts  
High School

**CLUJ COUNTY SCHOOL INSPECTORATE**  
and partner schools

**BOSTON CHILDREN’S HOSPITAL**  
in the United States  
of America

## PROJECT IMPACT



**317**  
HOSPITALIZED CHILDREN  
AND TEENAGERS RECEIVED  
PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

**54**  
PARENTS AND LEGAL  
GUARDIANS SUPPORTED

**45**  
VOLUNTEERS  
INVOLVED

**72**  
MENTAL HEALTH  
LITERACY SESSIONS

**445 STUDENTS IN  
3 HIGH SCHOOLS  
RECEIVED PSYCHOEDUCATION**



**20**  
TEACHERS AND SCHOOL  
COUNSELORS ENGAGED



**1**  
ART  
EXHIBIT



**45**  
ARTWORKS BY  
ADOLESCENTS

**191,997**  
COMMUNITY MEMBERS REACHED THROUGH  
MENTAL HEALTH INFORMATION HANDOUTS

**305,599**  
PEOPLE REACHED THROUGH  
ONLINE CAMPAIGN

SPOTLIGHT

# EVALUATING THE IMPACT OF THE MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY PROGRAM

A study conducted by Fundația Inocenți, under the coordination of Lect. Univ. Dr. Lavinia Cheie from the Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj-Napoca, aimed to assess the impact of a mental health literacy program on mental health literacy, stigma, and emotion regulation among high school students. A total of 168 students from three public high schools participated, divided into an active group and a control group. The active group participated in seven program sessions, while the control group remained on a waiting list. To evaluate the outcomes, measurements were taken before and after the program through a set of evidence-based questionnaires under the supervision of a Babeș-Bolyai University specialist. The results showed positive effects on symptom profile recognition, awareness about seeking help, and the strategic use of adaptive cognitive emotion regulation. The study provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of the program, providing a foundation for future sessions and highlighting the need to address specific mental health-related stigma.



## TESTIMONIALS

“I have realized that a lot of my problems could be solved by talking to others, by bonding with others on the same subject, and that I wasn’t alone.”

Workshop participant

“We created a safe environment in which adolescents discussed changes, emotions, and challenges specific to their age. In particular, it helped develop resilience through awareness of available internal and external resources and provided psychoeducational resources for teens that include information on the most commonly addressed mental health topics.”

Workshop leader



# Healthy Minds, Good Lives – Wic Ma Yot Kwo Mabber

CHALLENGE

Agago District, situated in a remote area of northern Uganda, has endured two decades of conflict with the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). **This prolonged period of violence has inflicted severe mental health challenges on its communities, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety**, along with widespread HIV.

Access to mental health care is limited in Lapono and Adilang, two of the most affected counties from the conflict. Situated along the wildlife corridor, these areas are heavily impacted by cattle raiding and rustling, exacerbating poverty. People with mental health conditions must undertake long journeys to access the nearest mental health facilities. In 2023, the most common mental health conditions identified by BNUU, a local organization, were depression, PTSD and epilepsy.

RESPONSE

Our partner, Network for Africa, works with BNUU to support survivors of conflict or genocide and their families in rebuilding their lives. By partnering with local leaders and NGOs, they offer tailored mental health support and livelihood opportunities to break the cycle of trauma and poverty.

The objective of this project is to improve mental health services for vulnerable people in Agago District by strengthening community mental health care. Through training, awareness raising, and advocacy, the project also aims to reduce stigma and empower people with mental health conditions so they can take ownership of their lives.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **Mental health clinics** where psychiatric nurses, supported by BNUU counselors, assess and diagnose individuals and develop treatment plans accordingly. Health talks are also conducted.
- **Individual and group counselling** to help people with mental health conditions gain self-acceptance, build resilience and emotional openness, and empower them to overcome their mental health challenges and develop positive coping mechanisms.
- **Home visits** to help strengthen the family care system, reduce stigma and discrimination, and manage clients’ drug adherence and side effects.
- **Mental health training, supervision, and team building** aimed at enhancing the capacity of BNUU staff.
- **Training for self help groups and village savings and loan associations** to provide people with lived experience and their caregivers social support, group counselling, and opportunities for economic empowerment

PARTNER



PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

BNUU

LOCAL NGO

DR. AMBROSOLI  
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

GULU REGIONAL  
REFERRAL UNIT

BUTABIKA NATIONAL  
REFERRAL MENTAL  
HOSPITAL

PROJECT IMPACT

2,460  
PEOPLE SENSITIZED ON MENTAL  
HEALTH ISSUES

886  
PEOPLE DIAGNOSED  
WITH A MENTAL DISORDER  
AND/OR EPILEPSY

579  
PEOPLE RECEIVED  
INDIVIDUAL  
COUNSELLING



75  
WOMEN ATTENDED  
GROUP COUNSELLING



541  
CAREGIVERS RECEIVED  
COUNSELLING



3,240  
PEOPLE ATTENDED  
MENTAL HEALTH CLINICS

672  
PEOPLE RECEIVED  
HOME VISITS

228  
PEOPLE WITH MENTAL HEALTH  
CONDITIONS AND CAREGIVERS  
SAVED REGULARLY IN THEIR VSLAs

76  
PEOPLE RECOVERED FROM A  
MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION



SPOTLIGHT

# ONE MOTHER’S JOURNEY OF EMPOWERMENT

Maria, a 40-year-old resident of Adilang sub-county in Agago district, is a mother of six. She became a client of BNUU in January 2023 after attending a community awareness session in her area. Previously, Maria struggled with low energy, erratic sleep patterns, and a lack of appetite, all while worrying about supporting her children with limited resources. Farming, her primary source of income, was severely impacted by a prolonged dry spell, making life even more challenging.

Counseling empowered Maria to cope with negative thoughts, feelings, and behaviors that contributed to her depression. Additionally, medication helped alleviate symptoms like erratic sleep, allowing her to regain energy. Since then, she has joined a self-help group, engaged in economic activities, and started saving and borrowing within the group.

Maria now sleeps well, can better meet her family’s daily needs, and inspires others in her community to seek support for mental health issues.



## TESTIMONIALS

“I thanked BNUU counsellors for the home visit; it has provided us with better opportunities and empowered our families on their shared care roles and responsibilities.”

A client

“I am so happy that I have recovered and now I am engaging in farming. I also joined two VSLA groups and currently I have saved 245,000 shillings.”

A client



# Psychological Support for medical staff, patients and relatives of people affected by Covid-19

CHALLENGE

The global pandemic introduced a new reality that has left many struggling with its emotional toll and the uncertainty of what lies ahead. The widespread experience of **grief, loss, heightened anxiety, and persistent feelings of helplessness has become a significant concern**. The disruption of normal life and social isolation have compounded mental health challenges for many. This situation underscores the urgent need for accessible mental health support and effective coping mechanisms to help individuals manage these difficult emotions and build resilience.

RESPONSE

Our partner, Soleterre, advocates for the universal right to health, encompassing psycho-physical and social wellbeing. It focuses on providing mental health support and psychological relief to those vulnerable to social and economic challenges, including victims of natural disasters, illness and social risks.

The main goal of this project is to provide psychological support in favor of health workers, patients and their hospitalized family members at the Policlinico San Matteo and to secure a national response to the psychological distress aggravated by Covid-19 for the most vulnerable people.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **Training for psychologists** on the roots of emergency psychology, the phases of an emergency, and effective communication and techniques to use in emergency situations.
- **Training course for Special Care Unit** health workers and volunteers.
- **Psychological support** at the hospital and nationwide.
- **Socio-economic support** for the most vulnerable.
- **Emergency fatigue study.**

PARTNER



PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

IRCSS  
POLICLINICO  
SAN MATTEO

ORDER OF  
PSYCHOLOGISTS  
OF LOMBARDY

LA  
SAPIENZA  
UNIVERSITY  
in Rome

UNIVERSITY  
OF PAVIA  
(Department of Nervous  
System Sciences and  
Behaviour)

CATTOLICA  
UNIVERSITY  
in Milan

NATIONAL  
COUNCIL OF  
THE ORDER OF  
PSYCHOLOGISTS

LOCAL PARTNERS

Comunità della Salute (BG), Arca Project Foundation, La Cordata Social Cooperative, La Pulce Battaglie Association, Pieghe Association, Centro MEME, Oltrefrontiere, Idee di Salute, Solco Cooperative

PROJECT IMPACT

22

PSYCHOLOGISTS  
TRAINED IN EMERGENCY  
PSYCHOLOGY

45

PSYCHOLOGISTS AND  
PSYCHOTHERAPISTS PLUS 2  
PSYCHIATRISTS ENGAGED

12

PSYCHOLOGISTS AND  
PSYCHOTHERAPISTS MENTORED BY  
A CLINICAL SUPERVISOR (HOSPITAL)



13  
VOLUNTEERS  
INVOLVED



97  
PEOPLE RECEIVED SOCIAL  
AND/OR FINANCIAL SUPPORT

314

INPATIENTS RECEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL  
SUPPORT FOR NON-COVID RELATED  
MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS

973

PEOPLE RECEIVED PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT THROUGH  
2,908  
INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP INTERVENTIONS

SPOTLIGHT

# BUILDING COMPETENCES: SOLTETERRE’S TRAINING IN EMERGENCY RESPONSE

From January to May 2023, Soleterre conducted a comprehensive Emergency Psychology training course to prepare its psychologists, social workers, administrative personnel, and volunteers for work in emergency contexts.

Integrating both theoretical and practical components, the 9-session course equipped participants with essential skills and knowledge in topics such as the historic development of emergency psychology; the phases of an emergency; effective communication in emergency situations; and techniques to use with people affected by emergency traumas.

The theoretical sessions began with an overview of the history of emergencies followed by an exploration of the role of emergency psychologists, focusing on their unique responsibilities, necessary skills and competencies. Participants also learned to differentiate between emergencies, incidents and catastrophes, studying the phases of emergencies and best practices through various case studies.

Another key topic was the examination of victims, with a detailed analysis of victimology across six levels and potential interventions for different contexts. Effective communication in emergencies was also covered, emphasizing the importance of clear messaging and avoiding communication errors.

The sessions began with training on communicating bad news, focusing on delivering such news responsibly and managing personal anxiety and fears while adhering to ethical and legal standards. The historical context of emergency psychology, particularly its development to address war neuroses, was also discussed, introducing theoretical foundations and techniques.

Participants then engaged in simulations of group defusing and debriefing sessions, gaining hands-on experience in managing fictional emergencies. The course concluded with training on techniques for managing arousal, anxiety and panic attacks, including methods like EMDR and deep breathing, emphasizing the selection of appropriate techniques for different situations.



## TESTIMONIALS

**“As soon as you start working in the emergency department you notice that your colleagues are stressed, and at the beginning you don’t understand why. After a year in the job, I am too. But it is precisely from the strength of being a group that there can be a solution to deal with difficulties.”**

Nurse, First Aid Department

**“The opportunity offered by Soleterre to carry out free therapeutic support for adolescents is incredibly valuable, especially for those who didn’t have the means to bear the cost of private psychotherapy or lacked immediate access to public services due to the endless waiting lists.”**

Psychologist at Soleterre



CARE!

(Comprehensive solutions for increased Access to mental health care Rooted in communities and Enhancing public services)

CHALLENGE

Mental health in Rwanda has been deeply impacted by the 1994 genocide, with approximately one million people killed. Studies show that 99% of survivors witnessed violence, 57% witnessed killings, and 31% of women suffered rape or sexual assault. These extreme experiences have led to severe mental disorders including depressive disorders, post-traumatic stress disorder, and substance misuse. Stigma surrounding mental health perpetuates these problems and undermines families’ well-being by contributing to misunderstanding, conflicts, and incidents of violent behaviour.

The psychological effects extend beyond the older generations to younger ones, who did not experience the tragedy directly. Today, despite the fact that numerous steps have been taken to improve mental health care, challenges remain.

RESPONSE

Our partner, AVSI Foundation, works for a world where individuals are the main protagonists in their own lives. The foundation implements collaborative projects in various sectors around the world and has been operating in Rwanda since the aftermath of the 1994 genocide, responding to humanitarian and development needs. This project aims to enhance the resilience of people with mental health conditions and their families through a community-based approach and recovery model principles.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **A community sensitization** campaign to raise awareness and overcome the stigma of mental health conditions, which prevent those with MNS disorders from being an integral part of society.
- **Awareness raising and stigma reduction activities in schools.**
- **Continuous training and supervision for healthcare providers.**
- **Access to treatment** through self-help groups for service users, enabling them to share their experience and receive psychoeducation.
- **Foster recovery and socio-economic rehabilitation** through occupational therapy.
- **Manual for community volunteers** developed in collaboration with the Resilience Association to help community volunteers identify and provide support to people with mental health conditions.

PARTNER



PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

NEUROPSYCHIATRIC HOSPITAL CARAES NDERA in Kigali

LOCAL MINISTERIES  
Ministry of Health, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Local Administration

UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA  
College of Medicine and Health Science / Mental Health Department

RESILIENCE ONLUS ASSOCIATION

RWANDA BIOMEDICAL CENTER

PROJECT IMPACT



1,297  
PEOPLE MET IN 71 DISCUSSION GROUP SESSIONS

6,900  
PEOPLE RECEIVED PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

566  
COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS TRAINED AND INVOLVED

2 TRAINING SESSIONS AND ONGOING SUPERVISION FOR 48 HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS



2,404  
PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN 130 PSYCHO-EDUCATIONAL GROUP SESSIONS

1,664  
PEOPLE TOOK PART IN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY GROUPS

282  
TEEN MOTHERS SCEEEN POSITIVE FOR DERESSION USING PHQ9

18,202  
PEOPLE ATTENDED COMMUNITY AWARENESS SESSIONS

22,689  
PUPILS REACHED BY AWARENESS-RAISING AND STIGMA-REDUCTION ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS

SPOTLIGHT

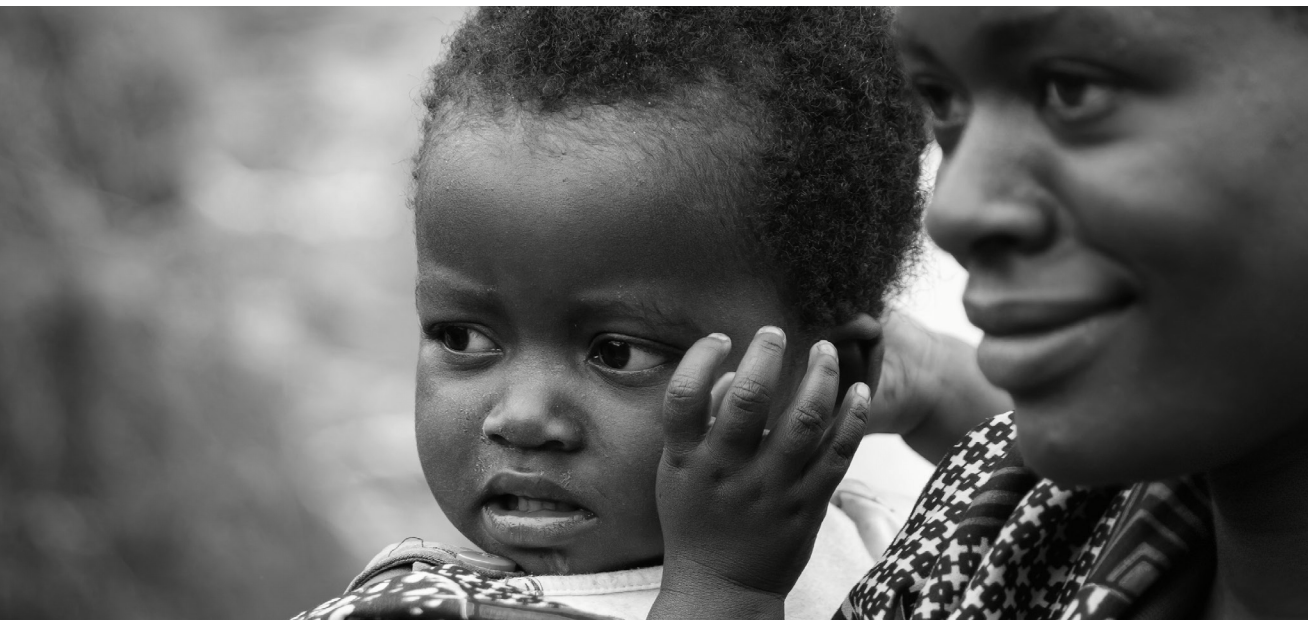
STITCHING A NEW FUTURE:  
PAULINE’S STORY OF RECOVERY

Pauline, a 26-year-old woman from the district of Gicumbi, lives with her large family and relies on agriculture despite limited availability of land in the district. During her adolescence, she struggled with acceptance in her community which led her to seek work elsewhere. After facing mistreatment at her job, Pauline returned home, suffering from insomnia, aggression, and hallucinations. She would often disappear for days without notifying anyone of her whereabouts.

Stigmatized by neighbors, Pauline’s parents turned to traditional healing and prayer to help their daughter, but Pauline’s condition didn’t improve. Then, during a village assembly, her mother learned about mental health symptoms from a community volunteer trained by AVSI, who advised taking Pauline to a health center.

Pauline was transferred to Byumba District Hospital’s mental health unit and then to Munyinya Health Center, where she received treatment and psychosocial support, improving her condition significantly. Thanks to the CARE project, she received education on mental health and took part in rehabilitation activities. She also learned how to sew and knit, enabling her to sell items and contribute to her family’s needs.

Today, Pauline actively participates in psychosocial education sessions, advising others on the importance of regular medication. Her story is appreciated by other patients and community members and she remains hopeful for a full recovery and determined to continue improving her family’s economic situation.



TESTIMONIALS

“As a community mental health volunteer, I recognized Pauline’ symptoms of psychosis thanks to AVSI’s mental health training. I stood by her side and together we developed an action plan for her care pathway and recovery, and I never stopped encouraging and supporting her.”

Community Volunteer

“Today, Pauline is actively rejoining our community activities. Inspired by her journey, I’m dedicated to promoting mental health awareness and combating social stigma in our village to ensure no one is left behind and felt alone.”

Community Volunteer



# Mental Health Trauma Rehabilitation for Ugandan Victims of War Crimes

CHALLENGE

The Northern region of Uganda has a complex history of violent conflicts and war, marked by the abduction of young people, severe human rights violations, and forced displacement of almost the entire population into camps. **Prolonged violence has had multigenerational impacts on social cohesion, economic structures, cultural practices, and mental health.** The widespread unaddressed trauma remains a driver of emerging conflict.

RESPONSE

Our partner, Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), started working in northern Uganda in 2009. The goal of this project is to provide a breadth of services aimed at healing survivors of torture and their communities, which includes community engagement, direct mental health services for survivors, and capacity building in mental health service delivery.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **Community and stakeholder engagement** to increase knowledge among affected populations about the effects of torture and trauma and engage local governments and CSOs, building their awareness and strengthening the referral network.
- **Group therapy for adults** through three months of intensive trauma counselling, including

a two-session intake assessment; ten weeks of group counselling with interdisciplinary, cultural competency, and trauma-informed approaches that support long-term healing; and an individual check-in mid-cycle. Follow-up assessments at 3 and 6 months were conducted and a client satisfaction survey was administered.

- **Group therapy for young people (children born in captivity) and their caregivers.** A 14-week group and family counselling program to provide a supportive environment where both young people and their caregivers can overcome challenges such as trauma, stigma, a pervasive lack of identity and belonging, verbal abuse from caregivers, lack of attachment and/or fear of caregivers, financial hardship, and interrupted education due to teen pregnancy. Follow-up assessments at 3 and 6 months were conducted and a client satisfaction survey was administered.
- **Individual Therapy** for those who have specific needs, helping to increase their understanding of trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms, and stress while gaining coping, grounding and self-care skills. Follow-up assessments at 3 and 6 months were conducted and a client satisfaction survey was administered.
- **Capacity building for CVT staff and other organizations** to improve skills for conducting group and individual therapy and in identifying and referring clients for medical care; plus staff care/ team building activities to address burnout.
- **Transitional justice** to facilitate positive peace by empowering a more diverse range of survivors to participate in justice, healing, and reconciliation, as well as strengthening CSO collaboration and promoting mental health principles in human rights work.

PARTNER



PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

LOCAL AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

CSOs

PROJECT IMPACT

661 PEOPLE ATTENDED 19 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS



92 PSYCHOSOCIAL COUNSELLORS RECEIVED TRAINING AND SUPERVISION FOR A TOTAL OF 527 HOURS

361

PEOPLE SCREENED FOR CVT SERVICES

101

PEOPLE COMPLETED THE GROUP CYCLE AND IMPROVED IN AT LEAST ONE OF THE FIVE AREAS EVALUATED (PHYSICAL COMPLAINTS, ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, TRAUMA, BEHAVIORAL FUNCTIONALITY)



CLIENT SATISFACTION

304

PEOPLE PROVIDED FEEDBACK



211

BEING VERY SATISFIED



SPOTLIGHT

REDISCOVERING JOY  
THROUGH GROUP THERAPY

Lola is a 58-year-old woman and mother of seven children from the Acholi Sub-Region. She and her brother were both abducted by the LRA, and her brother was brutally beaten. During her first contact with CVT, Lola appeared despondent and burst into tears when asked about her goal for therapy.

Lola often felt sad, lonely, and worried, and experienced a racing heart, difficulty sleeping, nightmares, irritability, and physical pain. Her goal was to be happy again and live in the present moment.

Lola attended all the group sessions and participated actively. The sessions helped her appreciate her internal resources, such as her faith in God and her hard work. She also acknowledged that despite losing her brother, she had other supportive people in her life, which made her happy and reduced her sadness and loneliness. She also described great benefits from the exercises she learned in the group, which helped her manage distressing feelings like irritability and anger, and made her feel physically healthier. After the session on trauma exposure work, where she narrated witnessing her brother’s brutal torture, she reported fewer flashbacks, heart racing episodes, and nightmares, and was able to sleep restfully.

By the end of the group therapy sessions, Lola showed significant changes in her mood, becoming joyful and interacting more with other members. She also improved her self-care, wearing clean dresses and maintaining good personal hygiene. Her attitude changed from feeling stuck in self-pity and passivity to confidence, allowing her to engage in productive activities to enhance her income and well-being.



TESTIMONIALS

“Knowing about the cause of a problem is the beginning of healing.”

Group therapy participant

“Before counselling, I used to cry a lot when people insulted me about my past and this would make me very angry, but counselling helped me to learn to move away and take a break in order to manage my anger.”

Group therapy participant



# OMADA - Therapeutic Community for Child and Adolescent Neuropsychiatry

CHALLENGE



Globally, **one in seven adolescents aged 10 to 19 suffers from psychological disorders**, including depression, anxiety, and behavioral disorders. In Italy, the prevalence of mental health problems among minors was 18-20%, or approximately 2 million individuals, before the pandemic.

Following COVID-19, issues such as isolation, dependency on the web and social media, bullying and cyberbullying exacerbated these problems, leading to an increase in self-harming behaviors. Consequently, the need for structures and services that support adolescents in their therapeutic and recovery paths became even more urgent.

RESPONSE

Our partner, Mission Bambini, works worldwide to support children who are poor, sick, and uneducated, or have suffered physical or psychological violence, giving them hope and the opportunity for a better life.

Implemented by AGB, a local partner of Mission Bambini, this project developed a residential therapeutic community for adolescent neuropsychiatric care, where girls affected by severe forms of mood and personality disorders can follow a rehabilitation pathway that improves their quality of life.

Throughout the course of the project, which concluded in 2023 with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **Therapeutic intervention:** Development and implementation of evidence-based programs tailored to the specific needs of each adolescent. This includes therapeutic, rehabilitative, and educational activities such as individual and group psychotherapy, psychological support, psychoeducational groups focusing on affection and sexuality, school and vocational support, and group activities aimed at promoting socialization, including music, arts, sports, pet therapy, group equine therapy, cooking, sewing, cineforum, and gardening.
- **Family engagement:** Regular meetings with families and caregivers, whether in groups or individually, were organized.
- **Multi-disciplinary staff training and supervision** emphasized empathy and personal resource enhancement and included risk assessment, crisis management, and trauma. A specific training focused on CANS, a scientific and validated tool to assess adolescents’ needs and strengths, was also conducted.
- **Advocacy and networking** to strengthen connections and share experiences with 16 other therapeutic communities in Lombardy, with the aim of showcasing their work, analyzing accreditation requirements based on real needs, and reevaluating the remuneration of residential healthcare services.
- **Enhanced environmental quality at Omada** gave new life to spaces that promote serenity and safety, ensuring they are suitable for various therapeutic activities.

PARTNER



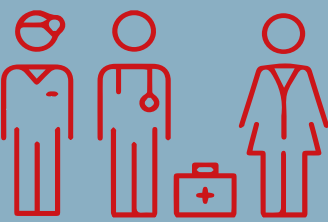
PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

|                                      |                               |                            |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| ASSOCIAZIONE GRUPPO DI BETANIA ONLUS | IL MELOGRANO                  | TERRE NUOVE                |
| CONSULTORIO "IL CAMINETTO"           | ASST FATEBENEFRAELLI/SACCO    |                            |
| COOPERATIVA STUDIA E LAVORA          | SERVIZI SOCIALI E SANITARI    | UNITI PER CRESCERE INSIEME |
| ISTITUTO G. GALILEI - R. LUXEMBERG   | SPORT AND CULTURAL STRUCTURES |                            |

PROJECT IMPACT

**62 GIRLS**  
AGED 12-19 LIVING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION SUPPORTED

**62**  
FAMILIES ENGAGED



**1**  
**MULTI-DISCIPLINARY TEAM TRAINED AND SUPERVISED**  
(NEUROPSYCHIATRIST, PSYCHOLOGIST, PSYCHOTHERAPISTS, EDUCATORS, SOCIAL WORKERS, NURSES, PSYCHIATRIC REHABILITATION TECHNICIAN)

SPOTLIGHT

# OMADA: A COLLABORATIVE AND IMPACTFUL JOURNEY

The Omada Therapeutic Community project successfully achieved its primary goal of stabilizing the clinical condition of adolescents and enhancing their overall functioning. Significant reductions in hospital admissions and medication burdens underscored the effectiveness of the therapeutic support and healing environment provided by the community. Moreover, the intervention had a systemic impact, influencing local and regional practices and policies on youths’ mental health and therapeutic community management.

A valuable learning experience, the successful collaboration offered key lessons for future initiatives. For example, the multidisciplinary approach proved essential, demonstrating that successful rehabilitation requires integrated care that addresses clinical, social, educational, and family aspects. Family engagement emerged as another crucial factor, highlighting the importance of continuous psychological support and psychoeducation for families and caregivers. This approach strengthened family relationships and support networks, facilitating adolescents’ rehabilitation and reintegration into the community.

Ongoing training and supervision of the multidisciplinary team ensured the implementation of the latest best practices in child neuropsychiatry and psychology. The project also emphasized the importance of flexibility and adaptability, particularly in responding to external circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Collaboration with various organizations enriched the project, providing additional resources and a broader support network. Constant monitoring and evaluation helped collect data to improve strategies and align practices with care objectives, while financial support and recognition from foundations and partners enabled the expansion and innovation of activities. Dialogue with local services and authorities also enhanced the accreditation and improvement of residential structures.

This impactful partnership concluded in 2023, but Omada continues to fulfill its mission thanks to the sustainability plan implemented, which has laid a foundation for ongoing progress in adolescent mental health care in the community and beyond.



## TESTIMONIALS

**“FdH’s approach to supporting Omada’s project exemplifies their role as a social investor. This strategic and flexible investment encompassed not only financial aspects but also social, ethical, and environmental considerations. By prioritizing sustainability, FdH sought to enhance the mental health sector while guiding Omada in making informed decisions to foster its development and impact.”**

AGB and Mission Bambini

**“It all started a long time ago. At school, my teacher brought some yarn and a crochet hook and taught us the basics. I was fascinated and mastered it perfectly after two days. Then I stopped for a while. When I joined Omada, I immediately bonded with a psychologist over our shared hobby. I started crocheting again, and it helped me a lot. I usually spent my afternoons knitting while watching movies, which kept my mind occupied. That’s what knitting did for me: it freed me, it made me stop thinking. I don’t know if it’s the same for everyone, but I treasure everything I make! I always do what I do with passion!”**

14-year-old resident at Omada



# Improving mental health care in the Great Lakes Region

CHALLENGE

The Great Lakes region has been characterized by ongoing armed conflicts, political instability and poverty, leading to high levels of trauma, depression, anxiety and other mental health disorders. With a significant number of people affected by mental health conditions, **there is a pressing need to increase access to mental health services in the region.** The availability of skilled healthcare providers competent in delivering mental health services is limited, contributing to inadequate care. This includes under-diagnosis, inappropriate treatment, and high rates of relapse. Therefore, it is crucial to improve the competence of healthcare providers to ensure they can offer quality mental health services to the population.

RESPONSE

Our partner, Fracarita Belgium, has supported local mental health care initiatives for over 50 years, focusing primarily on the Great Lakes Region. Their efforts emphasize quality improvement through capacity-building initiatives that contribute to better, more accessible and qualitative services for people with a mental health condition.

The ultimate goal is to improve the Quality of Life (QoL) of mental health patients by offering the highest possible

quality of care. This is achieved by equipping psychiatric nurses with knowledge, expertise and experience through training, supervision and mentorship (coaching).

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **A coaching program** to develop and improve the competence of psychiatric nurses and provide guidance on effective interventions and strategies to ensure that people receive high quality mental health care.
- **Regional networking, seminar and training** to foster learning and knowledge exchange and to share experience among health facilities in diverse regions.
- **Mental health care quality tools** for data collection and analysis and monitoring and evaluation to assess nurses’ individual competences and QoL services improvement.
- **Sensitizations** to raise awareness on mental health issues at the community level via radio and campaigns.
- **Mental Health Strategy Summit**, a two-day event to strategize the future of collaboration between Fracarita and partner hospitals, establish goals, and pinpoint areas of focus.
- **Establishment of a Mental Health Steering Group**, a multidisciplinary group of experts to guide and provide strategic vision to the organization.

PARTNER



PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

**NDERA  
NEURO-PSYCHIATRIC  
TEACHING HOSPITAL**  
+ branches in Rwanda

**CENTRE  
NEURO-PSYCHIATRIQUE  
DE KAMENGE**  
+ Antennes in Burundi

**KASAKA MENTAL  
HEALTH CENTRE**  
+ branch in Tanzania

**CENTRE  
PSYCHIATRIQUE SOINS  
SANTÉ MENTALE**  
Buvaku + branch in DRC

**CENTRE HOSPITALIER  
NEUROPSYCHIATRIQUE**  
de Goma in DRC

PROJECT IMPACT



5

HOSPITALS/HEALTH CENTERS  
IN THE GREAT LAKE REGION

167,004

PATIENTS WITH MENTAL HEALTH  
CONDITIONS SUPPORTED

29

COACHES AND ASSISTANT  
COACHES TRAINED  
AND SUPERVISED

346

PSYCHIATRIC NURSES  
TRAINED AND SUPERVISED  
BY COACHES

SPOTLIGHT

# PRIORITIZING CARE: FRACARITA’S PATH TO HOLISTIC MENTAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS

The Mental Health Strategy Summit was a pivotal event, setting goals and objectives for the next decade. A key finding from the summit was the high rate of relapse among individuals returning to their communities after hospital treatment, which underscores the urgent need for sustainable, community-driven mental health solutions aligned with our mission.

To address this challenge, Fracarita is committed to actively involving local communities and prioritizing inclusivity, community empowerment, and comprehensive support systems. This holistic approach aims to provide individuals with robust support throughout their recovery journey within their community.

Fracarita’s dedication to holistic and inclusive care encompasses a variety of therapeutic modalities, including psychotherapy, exercise therapy and ergotherapy. By integrating these approaches, the aim is not only to address mental health concerns but also destigmatize them within the hospital setting. This empowers individuals to play an active role in their mental health journey, fostering a culturally sensitive healthcare environment that promotes overall wellbeing and resilience.

Through collaborative efforts and ongoing community engagement, Fracarita endeavors to create a healthcare setting that prioritizes the needs of individuals and communities alike. Reflecting on the impact of the summit, Br Charles Nkubili said: “This summit is not the end, it is the beginning. It’s the start of a concerted effort to change the narrative on mental health in our regions. We have laid the foundations for a future where mental wellbeing is not a privilege but a right for all.”



## TESTIMONIALS

**“The way I work has changed a lot since I became a coach. There is not only regular monitoring of individual nursing practice, but through intervision, my entire team receives support. For example, we have created standardization of activities across different services, and the innovation and implementation of new programs happen more easily.”**

Coach Emmanuel Ntakiyisumba — NPH Caraes N’Dera — Rwanda

**“The coaching system has improved my problem analysis using the SWOT model. This allows us to work based on objectives whenever we have a problem to solve. Additionally, through coaching, we have learned to place the patient at the center of their care, with their own participation, enabling our team to make person-centered interventions where the patient is a partner.”**

Coach Jean Marie Vianney Basabose - CHNP - Goma RD Congo

**“The coaching system is currently integrated into the regular work of the hospital. Coaches and assistant coaches are currently accompanying the new nurses who have different problems in knowledge, skill and attitude. This coaching system is already decentralized even in the branches. We are lobbying so that this system is also recognized by the government.”**

Director of Nursing Brother Pierre Claver, DN at Ndera Hospital



# E-mental health intervention for depression (Step-by-Step)

CHALLENGE



Lebanon faces a particularly challenging situation in the mental health sphere, with a high demand for services and limited resources. Prior to the Syrian civil war, a national survey indicated that **one in six individuals had a mental disorder**—with 27% of these cases being severe—**yet only one in nine received treatment**. The Syrian refugee crisis, along with recent events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, the Beirut explosion, and the financial crisis, worsened the situation, increasing the need for innovative solutions like e-mental health.

Accessibility and affordability of mental health care are very limited in Lebanon where there are 0.95 psychiatrists and 7.32 psychologists per 100,000 people, and the majority of mental health care professionals work in private practice.

RESPONSE

Our partner, the Department of Mental Health, Brain Health and Substance at the World Health Organization, aims to improve the mental health and functioning of people who have limited access to evidence-based care globally.

The project’s objective is to address the high burden of disease associated with depression symptoms through Step-by-Step, a potentially cost-effective and scalable evidence-based intervention in Lebanon.

SbS is a 5-week, self-help digital intervention delivered through a smartphone application or website, with minimal remote motivation and guidance (around 15 minutes per week) provided by trained non-specialists called “e-helpers.”

The first phases of the project included the development, piloting and testing of Step-by-Step in two randomized controlled trials, which showed that SbS was both efficacious and cost-effective in reducing symptoms of depression and improving functioning.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d’Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **A country-wide service using a behavioural activation approach** along with psychoeducation, stress management techniques, positive self-talk, social support, and relapse prevention.
- **A comprehensive scale-up plan** using implementation methods such as RE-AIM (an evaluation framework to assess the reach, effectiveness, adoption, implementation and maintenance of the intervention).
- **Development of a long-term sustainable delivery model for Step-by-Step** that can be replicated and implemented in other countries worldwide. A guided self-help manual has been drafted, and a Step-by-Step implementation guide has been released.
- **Reporting and results dissemination**



Implementation organizations:

**NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME**  
Ministry of Public Health, Lebanon

**EMBRACE**

Research organizations:

**VU UNIVERSITY AMSTERDAM**  
the Netherlands

**ST JOSEPH’S UNIVERSITY**  
Beirut, Lebanon (local Ethics Review Board)

**FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BERLIN**

PROJECT IMPACT

**1,062**

PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS REACHED

**6 FULL-TIME AND 2 PART-TIME E-HELPERS HIRED**

**20**

OUTREACH ACTIVITIES CONDUCTED

**88%**



**SATISFACTION LEVEL OF USERS (QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW)**

**233**



**USERS (22% COMPLETED THE INTERVENTION)**



**30**

**POSTS PROMOTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES**



**2**

**MASS MEDIA CAMPAIGNS CONDUCTED**

IMPACT ON BENEFICIARIES BY THE END OF THE PROGRAM:

**35.8%**

OF INDIVIDUAL RESPONDED TO TREATMENT, REPORTING A REDUCTION IN SYMPTOMS BY MORE THAN 50%



**18.2%**

SHOWED COMPLETE REMISSION, NO LONGER EXHIBITING SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION



SPOTLIGHT

# STEP-BY-STEP: A REPLICABLE MODEL FOR GLOBAL MENTAL HEALTH INTERVENTIONS

At the World Health Assembly in May 2024, the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health received the 2023 award from the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on the Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases in recognition of the nationwide scale-up of the Step-by-Step (SbS) programme. Step-by-Step was also presented at six different conferences in 2023, both locally and internationally.

Based on the positive results and experiences in Lebanon, WHO has made the Step-by-Step intervention available for use in other countries. Currently, it is working to publish both the SbS content and a manual detailing the guided self-help model, which has been used successfully with other WHO self-help content in diverse group contexts, including healthcare workers in Spain.

WHO has received requests to support adaptation and implementation of Step-by-Step in other settings. Notably, WHO HQ is supporting the Ministry of Health in Thailand to adapt and pilot SbS as a national, free-to-access service. It has also been tested in a randomized control trial with Chinese university students and adapted for WhatsApp in a pilot by an NGO in India.

These use cases highlight the benefits of developing and testing open-access, evidence-based psychological interventions, which can be further improved and implemented worldwide, maximising the return on the initial investment.



TESTIMONIALS

“I liked how I was able to choose a story in Step-by-Step. I liked how it made me understand that I am not alone in my struggles, a lot of people might be going through what I am, through the same struggles and experiences. What I also liked were the audio exercises provided by the doctor character like the grounding and breathing exercises, they were very well guided. I really felt throughout the sessions and exercises like I was sitting face-to-face with a therapist, even though it is an online self-help intervention.”

SbS participant

“Before Step-by-Step, I was a silhouette of a body lying on a chair all day, drinking coffee and smoking nicotine while pushing everyone out, even clients inside my shop. The small activities in Step-by-Step were the key in helping me get out of the situation I was in, even in small things like doing my dishes...My life after Step-by-Step has completely changed, I am more active and sociable, and I am achieving more in my life. I started the program with no desire in life, now I say that I deserve life.”

SbS participant

“I have my regular comfort zone that I’m usually used to, which is my bubble. Any overwhelming feeling or stressful situation kind of resembles an inflatable ball that surrounds that bubble, keeping me from breathing, relaxing, and looking at things in a calm and regulated manner. I felt that the kind words activity was the loophole, the little cap on that ball that gives me control and helps me deflate it at my own pace, little by little. It helps ground and bring me back to reality where my mind hasn’t taken over. ”

“Kind to Yourself” participant



# Empowering people with mental health illness

## CHALLENGE

People living with mental health conditions often face significant stigma and isolation, hindering their ability to integrate fully into society. Often, this persistent **stigma and isolation is due to the community's and society's general lack of awareness and knowledge about mental health**, which creates barriers to their inclusion as active citizens.

Families of individuals with mental health conditions are deeply affected by this situation. They often struggle to understand their loved one's experiences and challenges, leading to feelings of frustration, helplessness, and emotional strain. Additionally, families may find it difficult to navigate the complex landscape of mental health services and support systems. This can result in delayed or inadequate care for their loved ones, further compounding the difficulties they face.

## RESPONSE

Our partner, Fondazione di Liegro, has been working in the field of mental health since 2006, collaborating with public and private institutions in the implementation of projects, activities and research aimed at promoting psychosocial wellbeing, the prevention of mental health conditions, and the dissemination of mental health awareness.

This project aims to raise awareness among citizens to foster a new perspective on mental health conditions by creating a support network of community volunteers. It also seeks to promote social inclusion and facilitate recovery to overcome the isolation and stigma affecting individuals with mental health conditions and their families.

In 2023, with the support of Fondation d'Harcourt and other stakeholders, this collaborative project provided:

- **Integrated art therapy workshops for individuals on a therapeutic rehabilitative path** including theater, photography, music, and creative writing to promote social inclusion and highlight the resources and potential of people with mental health conditions.
- **Self-help groups for families of individuals living with mental health conditions**, providing a safe place to share experiences, connect, increase awareness of their loved ones' challenges, and exchange information on tools and services.
- **Orientation and Social Support (SOSS)** to provide information on access to mental health care and rehabilitation and to offer social support for users, family members and operators.
- **Annual course on mental health** to promote knowledge, information and awareness on mental health conditions for users, family members, operators and volunteer citizens.
- **Collaboration with Mental Health Departments**, including the provision of volunteers trained by the Foundation and their involvement in the rehabilitation path of people with mental health conditions.

## PARTNER



## PROJECT STAKEHOLDERS

**LOCAL HEALTH AUTHORITIES**  
in Rome (ASL)

**UNIVERSITY OF FINE ARTS**  
Rome (Accademia delle Belle Arti di Roma)

**ADDICTION OBSERVATORY**  
(Osservatorio sulle Dipendenze)

**ITALIAN SOCIETY OF PSYCHOSOCIAL REHABILITATION**  
(SIRP)

**MUNICIPALITY OF ROME METROPOLITAN CITY**

## PROJECT IMPACT

105

PEOPLE ATTENDED THE ANNUAL COURSE ON MENTAL HEALTH



5

EXPERT TALKS TO SENSITIZE PEOPLE ON MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

12

WORKSHOP CONDUCTORS PARTICIPATED



70

VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED

11

TRAINEES INVOLVED

20

FAMILIES ENGAGED IN SELF-HELP GROUPS

161

PEOPLE LIVING WITH A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION ATTENDED ART THERAPY WORKSHOPS



300

PEOPLE SUPPORTED THROUGH SOSS

SPOTLIGHT

# EMBRACING A THEORY OF CHANGE FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Defining the 2023-2025 strategy with Mapping Change involved the entire operational team and members of the Foundation’s scientific committee. The process began with individual interviews to assess the Foundation’s strengths and weaknesses internally, while also identifying threats from the local area and cultural context.

This comprehensive assessment facilitated the transition from transversal modes of intervention to the reformulation of the Foundation’s vision, mission and main lines of action. Stakeholders were identified, their needs mapped, and corresponding activities planned. This analysis allowed the Foundation to establish priorities, define yearly objectives, and set desired outcomes, resulting in a revised and strengthened monitoring system for activities.

The process, while beneficial, was not without challenges. Honest and sometimes uncomfortable discussions were necessary to identify internal weaknesses and external threats, and a culture of trust was required to foster a deep understanding of impact pathways and effective communication with stakeholders.

By the end of the process, two key areas of leverage were identified: institutional communication, and fundraising activities with all potential donors. Implementing these strategies involved creating a new website, developing a fundraising plan, and training staff to build capacity, requiring significant time and resource investment.

Although it will take time, the strategic planning process has set a clear and focused path for the Foundation, demonstrating the team’s commitment to achieving long-term impact.



## TESTIMONIALS

**“When I joined the photography workshop at the Di Liegro Foundation, I was closed off and couldn’t socialize. I started photographing flowers, which I enjoyed. Some of my photos were exhibited at Officine Fotografiche, and my companions came to support me. It was heartwarming to see such affection for each other’s work. The group’s unity often helped me overcome my fears and weaknesses.”**

Photography workshop participant

**“After the first panic attacks, my son withdrew into himself and didn’t want to leave the house. I called the SOSS for advice on how to help him, and they suggested he attend the daily mental health facility in our neighborhood, where they organize engaging activities. He managed to start a therapeutic path, accept his therapy, and create new relationships.”**

Parent

# Fostering Connections in Global Mental Health

## SPARKS MEET-UP EVENT, KENYA

18-20 september 2023

More than 30 community-based mental health organizations, funders, and philanthropists came together at the Sparks Meet-up in Nairobi to share their work, exchange experiences, discuss challenges and successes, and inspire new ideas in the global mental health space.

Initiated by Ember, a mental health flagship program by the SHM Foundation, the collaborative event co-hosted with Fondation d'Harcourt and the Segal Family Foundation fostered a dynamic learning environment where participants contributed to collective knowledge in the field and participated in insightful discussions on wellbeing, impact, and sustainability.

To kick off the event, the Kenyan Ministry of Health provided an overview of the mental health scenario in Kenya, which was followed by a series of short film screenings celebrating the power of community-based initiatives to drive local change.

The first panel showcased how organizations have integrated wellbeing into their work, the challenges they continue to face, and the responsibility of funders to support the wellbeing needs of those who provide mental health care. Peter Obonyo, Associate Psychotherapist from the Center for Victims of Torture (CVT), our partner in Uganda, highlighted the impacts of staff trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout. He underscored the importance of supervision in staff care and how workload management, organizational policies, and team building contribute to staff wellness.

Led by Ember, panelists in the second panel discussed the significance of impact for their organizations, balancing generalized impact measurements with local context and voicing desired changes in how impact is currently measured in mental health. Fondation d'Harcourt shared its experience, highlighting how impact can be achieved across diverse parameters, including personal, organizational, social, and systemic levels.

For the final panel focused on sustainability in community-based mental health projects, our partner AVSI Rwanda shared how partnerships between parents, community leaders, local authorities, schools, health centers, and volunteers can engender innovative approaches and create the conditions for more sustainable intervention.

Enhancing the organizational capacity of grassroots organizations and fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation were also highlighted at the event. Our partner CBM emphasized the need for efforts to be responsive to local needs, draw upon local capacities, tap into social capital and diverse networks, and be accountable to local communities.

The event concluded with a brainstorming session that highlighted the will and need to continue these types of events, an exciting drive through Nairobi National Park, and a yoga class led by Queentah Wambulwa from Girls for Girls Africa Mental Health Foundation, ensuring the mental and emotional wellbeing of all participants at the event.



## TESTIMONIALS

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**“Great opportunity to connect, share and learn!”**

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**“It was interactive and all the participants were friendly, which gave me the chance to create supportive connections.”**

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**“A mentally refreshing experience with time for self-care and wellbeing.”**

Fondation d’Harcourt is a private non-profit Swiss foundation in accordance with art. 80 and the Swiss Civil Code with headquarters in Geneva. It is supervised by the Swiss Federal Supervisory Authority for Foundations.

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURES/FINANCIAL DATA**

Fondation d’Harcourt makes substantial grants every year from its endowment funds and donations. A total of 12 long-term partnerships are currently active with multi-year contracts. All operational costs are covered by the foundation’s endowment.

**BOARD MEMBERS**

President: Fabio Montauti d’Harcourt  
Vice-President: Yves Chevrier  
Members: Claude Fayolle, Luca Tenchio, Thea Montauti d’Harcourt

**TEAM**

Managing Director: Gaia Montauti d’Harcourt  
Partnership Officer: Sara Pedersini

**PHILANTHROPY ADVISOR**

Urszula Swierczynska, Philanthropoid

**FINANCIAL AUDIT**

Brunner et Associates SA - Société Fiduciaire

**ANNUAL REPORT 2023**

This Annual Report was prepared by Gaia Montauti d’Harcourt and Sara Pedersini  
Graphic design and Layout: Blossom  
Editor: Adrienne Baumann, Blossom

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**HOW TO SUPPORT US**

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BIC: UBSWCHZH80A



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