



The Gulu Sheffield Mental Health Partnership 2012-2021

This leaflet outlines the work of the Gulu-Sheffield Mental Health Partnership (GSMHP) and how you can get involved.

Why Uganda?

Uganda is a low - income country with an estimated population of 43 million. It is a country with one of the highest death rates from malaria in Africa and its mental health resources compete for funding with other preventable diseases, which are life threatening. Uganda spends 0.7% of the health budget on mental health services compared to 10% in the UK, and there are currently 40 psychiatrists in Uganda, mainly based in the capital, Kampala. Northern Uganda is a region recovering from the devastating impact of the war from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) over many years. GSMHP focuses its work in Gulu, which is the main city in Northern Uganda, although has some connections in Kampala.

What is the Partnership?

GSMHP is a consortium of organisations in Uganda and the UK who are aiming to improve the support available to people with mental health problems. It embodies a two -way learning process involving state provided services and voluntary organisations.

In Uganda this involves the Gulu Regional Referral Hospital (GRRH) and, in particular the Mental Health Ward, the Gulu District Health Office, Mental Health Uganda, Gulu Branch (MHUGB), Heartsounds Gulu (HG) - both of which are service user & carer organisations, and Gulu University

In the UK, GSMHP is partnered with:

- The Sheffield Health and Social Care (SHSC) NHS Foundation Trust which hosts the Partnership
- The Sheffield Health International Partnerships (SHIP), a Registered Charity, allows for both funding applications and fundraising and Gift Aid to increase the donations which are the primary source of funding for the work in Gulu.
- Sheffield University School of Health and Related Research who provide Monitoring and Evaluation.

What does the Partnership do and what has it achieved?

The Partnership has a Patient Safety focus and works with the GRRH providing training and supporting staff in their plans to change the service offered to patients. It also works with MHUGB and HG to support people in the community. The achievements so far include:

- From August 2021 to February 2022, with a £45k grant from the Tropical Health Education Trust (THET), the Partnership will deliver **Suicide Prevention** training to 180 health centre staff and Community Leaders in the Districts of Omorro and Gulu
- Between May-October 2021 a £10k grant from THET provided **Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Covid**, training to 190 hospital and health centre staff.
- From 1 July 2019 to 31 December 2020 **Suicide Prevention** training to 225 health staff 136 community leaders and 18 journalists provided to staff in Health Centre's in Gulu all achieved throughout the restrictions of the pandemic
- RESPECT courses (the ethical management of violence and aggression) began in November 2013 to the Mental Health Unit staff. Its impact was evaluated by Sheffield University & SHSC & two papers academic papers published as a result. An award from THET (2015-17) enabled a **team of RESPECT Instructors** to be trained and the whole of GRRH staff attended a four- day course. Significant changes in attitude toward violence and aggression have been achieved. One of the Gulu Respect Trainers spent 12 weeks in the UK in 2018 enhancing his skills in this area.
- **Hosted 28 Ugandan colleagues** (2012-20) in Sheffield through the Commonwealth Fellowship Programme which is funded through the British Council and managed by the Association of Commonwealth Universities.
- **The provision of a Community Centre in Guna, Abwoch.** This is a remote rural community that does not have its own community building. Mental health need is high in this village but has a very strong sense of community. The building was handed over to the community in November 2018. The

building will provide a training venue and also a possible source of income generation. The building was entirely resourced by donations from SHSC, their families and friends.

- Co-development of a **Rapid Tranquillisation Protocol** with a locally owned audit.
- A completely **renovated attendant's kitchen** has been provided to enable attendants/carers to provide and cook food for the loved ones, as the hospital is not able to provide this.
- The delivery of an **Acute Illness Management** course to staff on the mental health ward in GRRH and the provision of basic physical health monitoring equipment
- The creation of a **Medical Library and Resource Centre** at GRRH, supported by Book Aid International and Sheffield Hallam University
- Enabling the installation of taps in the carer's cooking area, two rain harvesters in the mental health unit to collect rain in the rainy season, and a **bore hole** was repaired within the hospital which now serves the mental health unit and other inpatient areas in the hospital
- Developing a dedicated space in the mental health unit to create a **Children's ward**. This is in recognition of the need to provide differently for children and adults who were previously together and represent a significant improvement in patient safety.
- Working in conjunction with the Butabika/ East London Link, supporting MHU (GB) to take part in **Brain Gain 2**, a programme to develop peer support work in Koro, for frequently readmitted patients.
- Supporting the development of a **Drugs Bank**, to address shortages in medication in the community. This is a Ugandan solution to this problem that has worked well in other parts of Uganda.
- Supporting the creation and maintenance of an **Occupational Therapy space** on the Mental Health Ward at GRRH of which Yoga has become an important element of the work.
- **Mental Health Awareness training** has been provided to the local service user group, Mental Health Uganda. A Train the Trainers course was provided MHU members in November 2013, which has enabled them to deliver these courses in the wider Gulu area.
- Financially supported a **Pass a Goat scheme** run by MHUGB. This scheme is now self-sustaining and has enabled many families to benefit from an improved livelihood and increased sense of self esteem
- Epilepsy Awareness training in Bobi Village and GRRH supported by the Sheffield Teaching Hospital
- We **regularly communicate** with the Ministry of Health in Uganda and the Uganda UK Health Alliance to ensure the Partnership works with Ugandan priorities.

Funding

NHS funding is not used to support this work. Partnership travel to Gulu is funded in two ways:

- Grant income
- Income from the Association of Commonwealth Universities/ British Council for hosting the Commonwealth Fellowship visits to Sheffield.

Our current work involves a 45k Suicide Awareness and Prevention Program in Gulu and Omoro for 7 months (August 2021 to February 2022)

If you wish to be involved

There is a range of ways that you can get involved, and we would love to hear from you:

- **Volunteering** to get involved in the many 'behind the scenes' activities that are vital to support the work and represents the main part of the partnership work in Sheffield
- Taking part in or lead on **Fundraising** activities.
- **Support our Ugandan partners**, clinically or socially when they visit Sheffield. This is especially important to help our partners get the most from their time in the UK and enables two way learning
- **Donating money** to SHIP on either a one off basis or regularly thorough a Standing Order. If this is combined with a Gift Aid form this will increase the value of your kind donation
- **Volunteer in Uganda** if the partnership activity requires the skills you have.

More details on any aspect of this work above are available on request

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