



PCAU Leads Infection Prevention and Control Trainings for Hospice and Palliative Care Organizations



PCAU country director Mark Mwesiga welcomes attendees to the training session

In September 2020, PCAU held a training on infection prevention control (IPC) and mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) for palliative care workers across Uganda. Attendees included doctors, clinical officers, nurses and social workers. While the government increased their response to COVID-19 with support for health care workers, hospices and palliative care organizations were often left behind. PCAU, working together with the Ministry of Health (MOH), addressed this gap by developing a training specifically for hospice and palliative care organizations in Uganda. With funding support from their US partner, Center for

Hospice Care, they produced a guiding document specifically targeted at hospice and palliative care organizations, "Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Teams at Hospices and Palliative Care Organizations During COVID-19 Pandemic."

The training workshop helped disseminate this information with the specific objective to equip these organizations with updated IPC knowledge and skills. Trainers discussed approaches for mental health and psychosocial support – another very important service, particularly during the pandemic. Psychosocial support for patients with COVID-19 and their families was emphasized as well as the importance of care for the mental health and well-being of health workers.

The two-day training included participants from across Uganda and was jointly facilitated by PCAU and the MOH. New PCAU staff member Lisa Irumba represented PCAU along with Joyce Zalwango, capacity building officer. Each participating organization created a plan for training and implementation of quality improvement plans for their facility. A simple pre- and post-test on IPC and MHPSS topics showed a significant increase in knowledge among nearly all participants.



In his opening remarks at the training, the Commissioner-Department of Community Health, MOH, Mr. Upenyho George Dugum, acknowledged the important work of hospice and palliative care organizations and noted that palliative care workers have continued to visit patients in need during the pandemic. He highlighted the need for them to lead and "show others the way."

PCAU Staff Spotlight: Lisa Irumba



Lisa Christine Irumba is the advocacy and research officer at PCAU. She is responsible for coordinating PCAU's advocacy and awareness activities and works with the team at PCAU to establish their research agenda. She ensures that PCAU is the hub for hospice and palliative care related information in Uganda. She is responsible for regular dissemination of information to stakeholders to improve palliative care services in the country.

Before accepting her current position, Lisa consulted for PCAU for a year. She is a palliative care clinician with 10 years of experience in teaching, coordinating and advocacy skills.

Lisa believes in equity and social justice for all, especially in health care. Her wish is that all patients in need of palliative care are able to receive it. In her role at PCAU, Lisa is able to meet with many of the palliative care practitioners around the country. She always enjoys hearing about their work and how they are serving their communities. These discussions enable her to creatively think of innovative ways to better serve people.

COVID-19 Update: Semi-Candidates Reported Back to School: March 1, 2021



Last month, Uganda's Ministry of Education and Sports made the long-awaited announcement regarding the opening of schools to complete the 2020 academic year. Schools must open in accordance with the established COVID-19 standard operating procedures that minimize classroom crowding and meet other safety measures for both students and teachers that will mitigate the spread of the pandemic.

Children in the semi-candidate classes (primary six, senior three and senior five) and those in vocational institutions returned to school on March 1st. Eight of the Road to Hope (RTH) children are in this group and have been able to return to school so far – six in primary six classes and two in vocational institutions:

- Tonny hails from Lira district (northern Uganda) and goes to Mantle Day and Boarding School. He has always expressed interest in studying and was glad to return to school this month. Before COVID-19 forced the countrywide lockdown last year, he had been thrilled with his advancement to primary six and noted his determination to work hard and continue to perform well.
- Sanyu, from Jinja district (eastern Uganda), attends school at St. Abigail Nursery and Primary School. She is happy about returning to school and she enjoys shade drawing and reading.
- Paul and Allan are from Buikwe and Jinja district respectively (eastern Uganda) and both go to VIC View Primary School. Paul was eager to get back to school to connect with his friends so that they can study together. He likes science and social studies. Allan loves mathematics and returning to school will enable him play soccer and volleyball.
- Sharon and Abeli are both from Hoima district (western Uganda) and go to God is Able Nursery and Primary School. Sharon has expressed interest in becoming a nurse and wants to be able to treat her mother. Abeli is grateful for the RTH sponsorship and is committed to working hard in math as he wants to become a bank manager.
- Aggrey and Ronald have both returned to St. Joseph Technical Institute, Kisubi. Ronald is studying a course in water management and plumbing and Aggrey is studying electrical installation.

ROAD TO HOPE

Are you interested in supporting the Road to Hope program or sponsoring a child on the program? There are currently 23 unsponsored children on the program. Please contact Denis Kidde at kidded@cfhcare.org if you would like to learn more about sponsoring a child.

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