

Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)

Strengthening Mental Health and Psychosocial Well-Being for Children, Youth, and Women in Machakos



Mental health is becoming more important than ever, and if not well managed, it can have severe damages, especially to vulnerable groups, including children, youth, and women. People living in Machakos County often face a number of challenges, including economic hardships, unemployment, social stigma, and family pressures, which contribute to high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Such challenges can limit an individual's daily functioning and affect areas such as educational achievement, economic resilience, and community participation. Addressing mental health and psychological needs has been shown to improve individuals' lives and improve outcomes across education, employment, and health (Wiedermann et al., 2023).

Having seen how mental health issues affect individuals, our organization is committed to integrating mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) into all our programs. We recognize that holistic support, comprising emotional, social, and practical needs, is important for individuals and communities to thrive.

Strengthening the Evidence

In most low- and middle-income countries, Kenya being one of them, there is an urgent need for MHPSS interventions among youth and women. A World Health Organization report has shown that depression is the third leading cause of illness and disability among adolescents, and suicide is the third leading cause of death in those aged 15-19 years (World Health Organization, 2024). In Kenya, the rate of unemployment remains very high, estimated to be at 16.8%, and financial pressures force many young people to leave school early, increasing their vulnerability to mental health issues.

We have evaluated and monitored the situation in Machakos County, and the findings show that most people are struggling to make ends meet. Most of the participant's report that they are on the verge of losing hope due to various challenges they face. To make things worse, stigma, family conflict, and lack of access to essential services are among the

Advocacy

The organization is actively advocating for the integration of mental health and psychosocial support into community development and youth empowerment programs. We aim to achieve these goals through working with local leaders, schools, health clinics, and faith-based organizations to raise awareness about mental health, reduce stigma, and promote help-seeking behaviors. Our advocacy efforts include:

- Community forums and parent meetings
- Radio and social media campaigns
- Collaboration with county health and education officials
- Sharing program results and success stories with partners

References

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