



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS OF UGANDA



Annual Report 2020



Empowering Individuals; Transforming Communities

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACORD	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
ADRA	Adventist Development and Relief Agency
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency virus Syndrome
CRANE	Children at Risk Action Network
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
EDJA	Edith and Janet
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IFSW	International Federation of Social work
IPC	Infection Prevention and Control
IUIU	Islamic University in Uganda
KCCA	Kampala City Council Authority
LWF	Lutheran World Federation
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support
MoH	Ministry of Health
NASWU	National Association of Social Workers of Uganda
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
PFA	Psychological First Aid
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
PSS	Psych-social support
REFLECT	Reflect Lived Experiences, Compliance and Thinking
REPPSI	Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
RHU	Reproductive Health Uganda
SOS	Societas Socialis
SRHR	Sexual Reproductive Health Alliance
UCRNN	Uganda Child Rights NGO Network
UCU	Uganda Christian University
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund,
UYDL	Uganda Youth Development Link
VAC	Violence against Children
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NASWU 2020 Annual report is a summary of key interventions and accomplishments of the professional body in line to her mandate of promoting and facilitating social work and social welfare in Uganda, the achievements are also in line with the strategic objectives of the association. Although the year experienced budgetary and plan implementation challenges because of COVID-19, the professional body social workers re-orientated services – to meet the needs of both existing clients and the millions of people whose lives had suddenly been thrown into turmoil by the virus.

The report summarizes the strategic objectives of NASWU, values, membership categorization and status as of 2020. To promote social work education and practice in 2020 included community engagements in Kampala, border districts and islands to empower community stakeholders to take lead in fight and response to COVID-19. It also highlights a number of virtual webinars engagements that were organized by the professional body to empower frontline social workers to effectively respond to COVID 19.

The report also summarizes the different coordination and empowerment efforts for early career professions through world social work day conference at Bugema University and Uganda Christian University where 762 students participated and guided in their areas of professional interest by experienced practitioners including NASWU president. The report touches the achievements in regard to supporting the ministry of health to offer psychosocial support over 5000 affected individuals, returnees from abroad and families as a result of COVID-19.

The report finally also looks at the advocacy efforts by NASWU through use of technology where over 300 university students were trained to promote resilience among individuals, families and communities, to effectively respond to COVID 19.

Acknowledgment

The professional body of social workers- NASWU extends her gratitude to the development partners and institutions that supported efforts towards promoting social work and social welfare in Uganda. We are particularly grateful to the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development-MGLSD for always standing with the association and guiding NASWU on policy and guidelines along the continuum of social protection. We also extend our gratitude to Child's i Foundation, USAID through CRS/4Children, Social work teaching institutions, Bantwana World Education, Ministry of Health, UNICEF, REPPSI, Child Rights NGO Network, Child Fund, UNESCO, ADRA- Uganda, SRHR Alliance for both the technical and financial support to ensure smooth implementation of key social work activities amid the Global Health catastrophe and challenge of our time. We are also deeply appreciative to the International Federation of Social Work- IFSW and the Global Social Workforce Alliance for the strategic guidance and sharing best practices, reports and latest publications, which have enabled NASWU to remain focused on the global social work agenda.

We appreciate the invaluable input and commitment of the secretariat team led by John Mary Ssekate NASWU Ag. National Coordinator, Mr. Geoffrey Ochwo, Ben Ssebuuma, Ssebukulu Sim-eo, Robinson Adriko, Juliet Muhumuza, and Doreen Kemigisha. Much appreciation to Mr. Andrew Luyombo for the continued technical support to the new secretariat team plus the leadership guidance from NASWU-NEC members in the year 2020.

Signed



Michael Byamukam Ntanda

On behalf of the National Association of social Workers of Uganda-NASWU

NASWU Vision

A community without social problems

NASWU Mission

Promote and facilitate social welfare and social development in Uganda

NASWU Core Values

- Human Rights
- Social Justice
- Professional Integrity
- Ethical Practice

NASWU Objectives

- To promote the welfare and development of individuals, groups, families, communities, organizations and the nation at large;
- To enhance the welfare and economic development of Social Workers;
- To ensure Social Workers in Uganda have required training and skills;
- To contribute to development of a law governing the Social Work profession;
- To ensure proper licensing of qualified Social Workers;
- To ensure Social Workers observe a professional code of conduct;
- To advance Social Work knowledge and practice through research, publication and knowledge sharing.
- To network with related professional bodies nationally and internationally to further the mission, aim and objectives of NASWU.

Membership categories

- Full membership - composed of persons holding a Degree or Diploma in Social Work from recognised institutions.
- Student membership - composed of students undergoing training in social work institutions.
- Associate membership - open to persons that do not qualify under provisions (a) and (b) above, but are actively involved with, contribute towards the Social Work profession and accept to promote the objectives of the Association.
- Organization Membership - open to organizations whose purpose includes social and economic welfare of individuals, groups, communities and nations and who subscribe to the objectives of NASWU.
- Become a member of National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) by filling a membership form at www.naswu.net

Membership status of NASWU-January 21, 2021

Registered members in our data base (both full members and associate members)	1,523	Of these 23 are associate members.
Social work students in our system and out of school youth/ recent graduates.	3,553	Whereas they continue to be actively engaged and supported by NASWU, majority have not paid their membership with the professional body.
NASWU members on our group WhatsApp (Group for student leaders and Senior practitioners)	197	Mostly heads of department of social work teaching institutions, heads of social work agencies/NGOS and student leaders.
Members following NASWU on Facebook.	2,603	Ever active
Institutional members.	32	Both teaching institutions and social work agencies.
Grand total	7,908	As of closure of 2020

Strategic objective

- i) Strategic objective 1: Setting standards of Social Work practice
- ii) Strategic objective 2: Promoting Social Work Education and Practice
- iii) Strategic objective 3: Professional Supervision for those in practice and pre service
- iv) Strategic objective 4: Promote collaboration and networking within and outside Uganda
- v) Strategic objective 5: Mobilise resources for on-going development of the Social Workers profession in Uganda
- vi) Strategic objective 6: Advocacy for the Social Workers profession and services in Uganda

In fulfilling NASWU strategic objectives and in line with the Uganda National Development Plan III, Chapter 7 which focuses on social development and in conformity with the Uganda National Child Policy 2020, Priority Action and Implementation Strategy, NASWU was able to implement a number of activities along the continuum of social care and production as highlighted below.

1.0 SETTING STANDARDS OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Despite physical limitation posed by COVID-19. NASWU continued to harness technology to promote standards for social education and practice in Uganda.

NASWU Shared the ethical code of conduct to 17 social work teaching institutions across the country both electronic and physically before the lockdown. To make this possible NASWU used events like the world social work day 2020 celebration at Uganda Christian University Mbale and at Bugema University to fulfill this professional mandate. A total of 500 books of ethical code of conduct was distributed. This was also shared to over 7908 social workers in our database.

NASWU also used our social media platforms like mails to share the social work Minimum Standards and Competence Framework 2019 that was approved by the National Council for higher education to 20 social work teaching institutions and 7908 social workers in our database.

NASWU shared the standardized case management tool to over 7908 social work members in our data base to guide social workers to effectively handle cases of child protection.

2.0 PROMOTING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE

National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU), with recommendation from her mother ministry – MGLSD, partnered with Child’s i Foundation to complement the government of Uganda and Ministry of Health effort to respond to COVID-19 under a two months project titled. “Strengthening Social Service Workforce to support Uganda Government and Ministry of Health (MoH) to holistically prevent and respond to COVID-19.”

This was informed by professional analysis and assessment of intervention gap of low community engagement in the national efforts to effectively respond to COVID-19 in selected districts of Tororo (boarder district) Kampala district (Makindye division) and Mpigi districts (fishing communities) and by empowering frontline social service workers through webinars, wide information sharing nationally and internationally.

This was done through community engagement and online zoom webinars to engage frontline social workers and practitioners and community stakeholders to effectively and sustainably respond and prevent COVID-9.

2.1 Background to NASWU community and online webinar engagements

Studies show that approximately 1 billion children worldwide have experienced physical, sexual and psychological violence in the past one year alone. This is supported by the 2018 violence against children report which indicates that 3 in 4 children experience some form of violence and 1 in 2 experience at least two kinds of violence; sexual, physical or emotional.

While the magnitude of violence against children can be discouraging, one of the solutions and reasons for great hope lies in strengthening the social service workforce. The social workforce is on frontline every day to prevent and respond to violence against children in its multiple forms. This was worsened by COVID-19 with majority of children at home yet the 2018 Uganda Violence Against Children report points at people close to children to be their abusers.

2.2 NASWU engagement with community stakeholders on COVID-19 and child production in Makindye

Recognizing that communities must eventually take lead in responding to COVID-19, own the response and sustaining it was a great motivation for NASWU intervention in the slums of Kampala city. This is a change strategy founded on social work principle of self-determination, that views a community as a catalyst of change, agent of change, target of change, and an indispensable resource that the community itself will consume.

Listening to community leaders and empowering them was the best way to respond to COVID-19, protecting vulnerable children and families during this global health catastrophe. With Uganda reaching 1,025 confirmed cases as of July 12, 2020. Our intervention in Makindye together with - Child’s i Foundation worked as a safety measure to protect the most vulnerable especially the children, elderly and families affected by COVID-19, dispelled myth and fear, disseminated appropriate information to Makindye community through supporting the national COVID-19 response by Uganda government and MoH.

This area was chosen because it is densely populated with poor housing facilities and planning. The area is known for drug abuse and prostitution commonly known as “Neeko.” The area is not only susceptible to spread of COVID-19, but also known for violence against children and high crime rate.

We found out that poverty and congestion were the major challenge to comply with COVID-19 guidelines. NASWU gave factual information and empowered local leaders.



Mr. Johmary Ssekate Capacity building officer-NASWU alongside Child's i Foundation team during Makindye community engagement on July 17, 2020.

2.3 NASWU engagement with community stakeholders in Mpigi district on child protection during COVID-19

Our engagement with Mpigi district focused on Buyiga island which is 49 kilometers from Mpigi district headquarters, in Kamengo sub-county. This area is known for early marriages, high HIV/AIDS cases and violence against children.

Buyiga is a hard-to-reach area / remote community that required factual information to better address challenges of COVID-19 and in particular collectively come up with solutions to prevent violence against children in this fishing community. This island had reported one case of COVID-19 according to district officials by August 28, 2020. The cases of child abuse had skyrocketed with 9 cases being reported to the district every week and over 108 cases of child abuse in the first three months of the lockdown.



Ms. Annet Nabuuma the Mpigi district Probation and Welfare officer giving a report on the state of child abuse during NASWU community engagement in Buyiga island on August 28, 2020.

2.4 NASWU engagement with community stakeholders on COVID-19 and child production in Tororo district

Tororo was and still is a hot spot for COVID-19 in Uganda. This is attributed to the fact that it is a boarder district with truck drivers continuing to mix with local community members as many transport raw materials.

The district was also under total lockdown for more months than any other district in Uganda. This meant that social amenities that support both family and children remained closed. This increased cases of both violence against children and gender-based violence that equally affected children. Our intervention was to engage with local leaders on the best ways to protect children, and ensure resilience of both families and communities amid COVID-19.

Below is the Tororo district violence situation report between April and July 2020 lockdown which motivated our intervention in the district as shared by ASP. Rose Aduo Margret during Tororo district and community stakeholders' engagement meeting.

Category	April	May	June	July	Total
Domestic violence	25	25	15	72	127
Child neglect	5	7	5	4	21
Physical violence	55	7	5	4	71
Defilement	6	-	14	20	40
Total number of cases					259



ASP. Rose Aduo Margret the Bukedi regional police commander giving a report on VAC and domestic violence during NASWU-Child's i Foundation stakeholders' engagement on August 14, 2020.

2.5 Achievements of NSAWU community engagements in the districts of Mpigi, Kampala and Tororo.

- Up to 300 community leaders, social service workers and district stakeholders were given special capacity on: facts about Covid-19 prevention and response, and protection of vulnerable families and children.
- 150 community bystanders were identified and formed village/community child protection committees to ensure continuous monitoring of violence against children and a sustainable mechanism for child protection in these key intervention districts.

- Clear referral pathways were identified and brought to attention of leaders to ensure easy reporting and support by other supporting agencies and government system as a multi-sectoral approach to protecting children during and after COVID-19. Key to this referral was the 166-child helpline, the police system, the district community development officers and the probation and welfare officers in addition to the community bystanders and the local council systems.
- Factual information on COVID-19- causes, spread, prevention was shared to over 300 community leaders. These community engagements also dispelled myth and fear among community members and stakeholders as a professional mechanism to reduce anxiety stigma and misinformation amidst adversity.
- Local knowledge and approaches to effectively address violence against children and address COVID-19 challenge was identified and integrated as an appropriate interventional measure at community and local government levels. Key of this knowledge and approaches include, creation of village child protection committees, neighbors watch to report violence against children, deepening cultural practice that make a child a community asset, ordinances among others.
- Effectively harmonized local government interventions on child protection and COVID19 response with that of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and MoH guidelines for effective and sustainable response to the pandemic and protection of children in Makindye, Tororo and Mpigi districts.
- Strengthened the good working relationship and partnership between Tororo, Mpigi and Makindye local governments, Child's i Foundation and NASWU and ministry of gender, labour and social development.

2.6 NASWU empowers frontline social workers to respond to COVID-19 through online webinars

The arrival of the COVID-19 was an eye opener for NASWU to re-orient services –to meet the needs of both existing clients and the millions of people whose lives had suddenly been thrown into confusion by the virus. NASWU in Partnership with Child's i Foundation leveraged technology to remotely engage frontline social workers and different stakeholders through coordinating different social work agencies and academia to share experiences and best practices to protect and promote resilience among children, families and communities in Uganda.

Our coordinated interventions and online experience sharing was a great reason to social workers to realise that working together as social work agencies result in high impact especially in responding to situations of adversity.

Our webinar discussions and engagements focused around three social protection thematic areas of (1) Social Work response to COVID-19 in Uganda, (2) addressing online sexual exploitation and gender-based violence during and after COVID-19 in Uganda and (3) prioritising protection of street children and children under alternative care during and after COVID-19. Key social work agencies and academic institutions were coordinated by NASWU to share their experience and achievements along the webinar themes to empower all social workers in Uganda.

These agencies included, EDJA, GBV Programme, UNESCO- Uganda, Dwelling Places Uganda, UYDL, Compassion International, ADRA-Uganda, KCCA, SOS Children Villages, CRAN Children Network, Makerere University, Child's i Foundation, REPPSI and NASWU the coordinating agency as summarised in the webinar posters and outcomes.

This webinar highlighted the unique role of social service Workforce, the success stories and challenges experienced by the social service workforce during COVID-19 in Uganda. This was organised on July 10, 2020 and was attended by 83 social work practitioners from both academia and social work agencies as seen below.



2.7 Shared success stories from different partner organisations

Makerere University Department of Social Work by July 2020 had developed a Community engagement strategy for sustainable response to COVID-19, guidance notes on addressing social stigma, working with vulnerable groups guidance note, a compendium of referral resources for COVID-19 and engaging early career professionals including students and recent graduates in developing impactful products to improve the visibility of social work as key measures to respond to COVID-19. Prof. Eddy Walakira reported that this important information was shared widely to all frontline social workers.

Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative (REPPSI) was on frontline advising and supporting people to take creative activities like indoor games, reading, drawings, leverage technology, songs, drama, engage in web-based fora to address stigma, fear, GBV, promoting strategies that promote love, care and protection. They were also giving clients a sense of security, mobilising and engaging professional social workers, counsellors, psychologists and lawyers through their councils, to support medical teams with psycho social support including health care workers based on the wheel and pyramid models.

Child's i Foundation was supporting vulnerable children, families and communities in Mpigi, Makindye and Tororo. Mr. Chris Muwanguzi the Chief Executive Officer-CIF reported that they had supported 858 children from 262 families to get basic essentials during COVID-19 in a period of three months such as food, medical care, and rent; supported 564 children from 165 families to receive support in the form of counselling and their parents received financial management training; supported 425 community volunteers to give health information and personal protective equipment to reach out to children and families in their communities; 3779 additional children were helped by their community networks to ensure their safety in the face of the pandemic. Furthermore, 15 of their trained community volunteers received bicycles, phones, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

materials to help them monitor and support more children and families in their communities.

Webinar 2

Addressing online sexual exploitation and gender-based violence during and after COVID-19.

The banner features a colorful background with curved stripes in shades of blue, green, yellow, and red. On the left, a red box contains the text 'Free Webinar'. Below this, the text reads: 'The Social Workforce's response to COVID-19 in Uganda', followed by the main title 'ADDRESSING ONLINE SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING AND AFTER COVID-19.' and 'Presented by National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU)'. On the right, a red box displays the date and time: 'Friday July 24, 2020 5PM - 6PM EAT'. Below the date are the logos for the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) and Child's i foundation. At the bottom, five circular portraits of speakers are shown, each with a nameplate below it: Charles Dra-Ecabo (National Project Coordinator, UNESCO Uganda), Tabitha Mpamira (Founder of EDJA (GBV Programme)), Cathy Namatovu (Board Member NASWU, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, UYDEL), Damon Wamala (Country Director, Dwelling Places Uganda), and Okiria Gerald (Moderator, Donor Services Associate, Compassion International).

2.8 Shared success stories from different partner organisations

UNESCO–Uganda. Mr. Charles Dra-echabo shared what social workers were doing/should continue doing to end online sexual violence including education and awareness on risks and prevention techniques, creating positive peer groups to counter negative information sharing, fighting cyber misinformation, offering psychosocial support to the affected individuals and families, advising younger people to minimize the use of the internet and cyber communication, creating alternative and more productive time use; online debates and constructive challenges, taking academic discourse, advocacy to ensure the right policies are in place and enforced.

EDJA, under GBV programme Ms. Tabitha Mpamira reported key interventions/success stories of her organisation EDJA, under GBV programme registered during COVID-19 including offering legal support to victims of GBV, supporting professional social workers to offer psychosocial support along the referral pathway, giving final support to mothers affected by GBV, advocacy using community systems including local radios and engaging the justice and legal systems in western Uganda. This motivated many frontline social workers.

Dwelling Places-Uganda. Mr. Damon Wamara during the webinar reported that Dwelling Places in partnership with KCCA, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network (UCRNN) had removed over 200 children from streets, isolated and tested them of COVID-19, offered psychosocial support to the affected families plus basic needs like shelter, food, to the affected children, and reintegrating children back to their communities especially in Karamoja region based on their organisational model of rescuing, rehabilitation, reconciliation and resettlement of children connected to street.

Uganda Youth Development Link-UYDL Supported the government of Uganda in distributing food and personal protective equipment to residents of Kampala, had supported up to 1000 youth both in and out of school with skills development in business, and offered them psychosocial support, and of these, 950 were offered cash grants to start businesses. Ms. Catharine Muwanguzi also reported that UYDL was engaging younger people virtually to address the issue of online sexual violence, psychosocial support and had had two e-conferences to engage her members and stakeholders on protecting children during COVID-19 pandemic.

Webinar 3

Prioritising the protection of street children and children under alternative care during and after COVID-19: A social work perspective.

This webinar highlighted the unique role of social service Workforce in safeguarding children connected with street during COVID-19 in Uganda. It was attended by over 72 social workers from local and international social work agencies, social work teaching institutions, and government officials at a time when children connected with streets and those under alternative care in Uganda are facing multiple challenges created by COVID-19.

Free Webinar

"Children on the Waiting List"
PRIORITIZING THE PROTECTION OF STREET CHILDREN AND CHILDREN IN ALTERNATIVE CARE DURING AND AFTER COVID-19: A SOCIAL WORK PERSPECTIVE

Presented by National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU)

Thursday August 20, 2020
5PM - 6PM EAT

NASWU **child's i foundation**

GEORGE WILLIAM KIBERU
 MANAGER SOCIAL AND BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE, NORTHERN KARAMOJA ADRA-UGANDA

MISS HARRIET MUDONDO
 DIRECTOR GENDER, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PRODUCTION, KCCA

MRS. LILLIAN SSENGOoba
 HEAD OF PROGRAMMES, SOS CHILDREN'S VILLAGES UGANDA

HELLEN NAYIGA MULIRA
 SAFE GUARDING MANAGER CRANE NETWORK

DR. LABAN MUSINGUZI
 MODERATOR MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

ADRA-Uganda was doing research in order to compile evidence to back up issues raised by street children to guide engagement with stakeholders like parents, local leaders and local government offices, parliamentarians from Karamoja region and ministry officials to respond to unique challenges of Karamoja children based on evidence. Mr. George William Kiberu the Programme Manager Action for Social Change ADRA-Uganda also reported that there was information sharing and empowering of younger social workers through NASWU to ensure effective protection of children during and after COVID-19.

KCCA - Department of Gender, Production and Community was providing essential services and prioritizing vulnerable children that include street connected children, refugee children and those under residential Care. Ms. Harriet Mudondo reported that with support from UNICEF, KCCA had quarantined 170 children and tested them for COVID-19, partnered with fulltime social workers to offer psychosocial support to effected children, put 109 to approved homes in Kampala metropolitan

area, placed 61 street children for vocational skills in accredited institutions, repatriated 38 street children back to Karamoja through Kobilin Youth Center supervised by the MGLSD.

SOS Children Home Was protecting children in their alternative care homes including frontline awareness creation through meetings, radio talk, social media, virtual calls, distribution of government updates and guidelines. SOS was also making referrals, making risk analysis and developed organisational COVID-19 mitigation plan, adhering to government standard operating procedures and working closely and with guidance from the ministry of gender to safely protect the children in homes.

Children at Risk Action Network -CRANE shared key intervention that were implemented by CRANE together with partners including rescuing and hosting children living in the streets at Nakivubo Blue Primary School, a total of 202 children were registered at the school, 34 of these children escaped from the site, assessing 168 children, and 16 Social workers and 16 uncles were briefed on CRANE's code of conduct and they all signed CRANE's Child Protection Policy.

2.9 NASWU utilizes 2020 World Social Work week to coordinate and empower early career social work professionals in 17 universities

This celebration and engagement with early career social work professionals was highly based on International Federation of Social work (IFSW) Africa Region Munyonyo resolution number seven (7) of Strengthening Practice oriented training and resolution two of building a multispectral collaboration and partnership that create opportunities for youth to increase their participation in their profession.

NASWU used this day to mobilize her partners including social worker teaching institutions, social work agencies and government departments to reach out and advocate for the socially and economically vulnerable and excluded individuals, groups and communities and tackle negative cultural attitudes and practices that affect freedom of association and human relationships

The other objectives were to use the celebration as a platform to advocate for inclusive social, political and economic rights of the most vulnerable individuals and communities, highlight the role of social workers in Uganda in promoting human relationships through creative writing, poetry and songs, advocacy for policy improvement inclusive co-existence and sustainable development in Uganda, mobilize and listen to younger professionals and social work educators and integrate their ideas in the five (5) year strategic plan of the professional body.

2.10 Coordination and financing of 2020 world social work student conferences

A highly technical and dedicated team of social work educators were identified and approved by the national executive committee headed by NASWU president Mr. Byamukama Michiel Ntanda to coordinate 2020 social work conference activities namely; Mrs. Nalwanga Angella (UCU), Dr. Naleeba Peter (UCU-Mukono), Mrs. Easter Nsubuga and Mr. Tibenda Kenneth (Bugema University), Mr. Ssebukulu Simeo, (Kyambogo University), Mr. Ssebuuma Ben (Nkumba University), Mr. Nkurabanka Privat Sun (University of Kisubi), Dr Matovu (Metropolitan International University), and Dr. Muhangi Denis (Makerere University).

Others were; Mr. Namigugu Ayubu (IUIU), Moses Aliangat, and Mr. Akampurira Timothy (UCU-Mbale

campus), and Mr. Julius Gizamba (Africa Renewal University). This committee also incorporated all social work students' leaders in different Universities. This committee was coordinated by NASWU secretariat led by the conference coordinator Mr. Johnmary Ssekate who also doubles as the Capacity Building Officer of the Professional body.

The conferences were supported by Adventist Development and Relief Agency-(ADRA), and Sexual Reproductive Health Alliance-(SRHR) Prime Radio.

2.11 Key activities implemented during the world Social Work day in Uganda

The following activities were implemented during the celebration of world social work day.

- Professional engagement with heads of departments of social work teaching institutions. This shaped the agenda for the celebrations and engagement with youth.
- Social work students participated in an essay challenge with a view of naturing a culture of creative writing that allows university social work students bring out critical social work issues in their communities based on key sub-themes (1)“the role of social workers in combating HIV/AIDS stigma and discrimination”, (2)“the role of social workers combating stigma and discrimination among people with disabilities”, (3)“the role of social workers in ending sexual violence among children” and (4) “the role of social work in ending gender- based violence in communities’. Over 100 students from ten university participated.
- Students interchange ideas /dialogue on the theme. This was done in both Eastern Regional conference at UCU Mbale on March 16, 2020 and at Bugema University March 17,2020 before the official lockdown was declared on March 18,2020. It was done to give student leaders from participating universities a platform to cross exchange ideas on the relevance of the theme in their communities. This also gave the professional body an opportunity to listen to the voices of the youth with a view to streamline them in NASWU implementation activities as per the Munyonyo resolution and in relation to NASWU’S strategic objective number three (3) of ensuring appropriate social work training and education in Uganda.
- Social students engaged in community outreaches to support people living with HIV/AIDS, children under alternative care, people living with disability, street children and supporting the elderly. They made field reports which was shared during the celebration and with NASWU. Key among the teaching institutions that did community outreach include Africa Renewal University that supported Dwelling places Uganda, IUIU supporting street children in Mbale, University of Kisubi, Nkumba University, Uganda Christian University and Bugema University all supported children and the people living with disability in their nearby communities.
- Students had interface with experienced practitioners who guided students along sub-themes, shared best practices and challenges ahead of them. Among key practitioners who guided students was, Regional HIV/AIDS liaison officer Mbale, medical social worker Mbale regional hospital, Mr. Gerald Okiria from Compassion International-Uganda alongside different social work educators.
- Educators’ lunch on engagements. This was guided by the national theme, “pro-

moting the importance of human relationships.” In this engagement, social work educators discussed how to support NASWU activities in their respective universities and put an emphasis on community outreaches, research, and publications to remain relevant over 100 social work educators from 17 universities participated.



Mr. Michael Byamukama Ntanda NASWU President addressing Social work students during the main conference at Bugema university on March 18, 2020.

2.12 Outcome of the Celebration

Students had a great time of interaction and learning from experienced social work practitioners, guiding them in their line of interest like child protection, gender and community development using the social work principle of self-determination.

- Up to 100 students from different social work institutions participated in the essay challenge and best ten (10) students were awarded social work books titled “Social work practice in Uganda” Indigenous and innovative approaches by Dr.Jenestic Twikirize and another copy titled “many ways of saying thank you” by Michelle Eil
- The celebration brought together up to 800 social work students both for eastern regional conference and the main conference at Bugema University and up to 100 social work educators and practitioners. This created unity among social workers and resonated well with the theme of promoting human relationships.
- Up to 500 vulnerable children, 50 people living with disability and 20 old people were supported by social work students both physically and psychosocially in Mbale town, Wakiso and Kampala.
- The celebration gave NASWU an opportunity to listen, especially to the younger social workers, their ideas and aspiration were presented to the NEC of the Association for integration in the planning and interventions.
- The celebrations created a platform for increased visibility of the profession as all the activities were aired and broadcasted out on major radio and TV stations namely, CBS, Kaboozi Kubiri, Prime Radio, NTV, UBC, BBS, among others.
- It created a great opportunity for professional partnership with Key social work agencies like ADRA Uganda, SRHR Alliance Uganda, Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU) and Prime radio and strengthened our working relationship with Key social work teaching institutions that organised the celebration Bugema University and Uganda Christian University Mbale.
- The celebrations brought closer the association leadership to social workers as both the national executive committee led by the professional president and the management organ led by the national coordinator who were well represented and created time to interact with both students

and social work educators.

- The celebration prepared all social workers to respond to COVID-19. The president used this celebrations to appeal to all social workers in Uganda to take lead in the prevention and response to COVID-19 and save lives especially for the most vulnerable as per the values and principles of social work despite the fact that Uganda had not closed down.



Mr. George William Kiberu Programme manager, Social and Behavioral Change ADRA-Uganda addresses Social work students at UCU Mbale campus on March 16, 2020.

2.13 Summary of different universities that participated in the world social work day conferences

No.	Name of social work Institution	Venue	Number of participants
1	UCU College Mbale	UCU Mbale	132
2	IUIU Mbale	UCU Mbale	31
3	Kuumi University	UCU Mbale	31
4	Bugema University Mbale	UCU Mbale	02
5	Africa Renewal University	Bugema University	19
6	Bugema University	Bugema University	125
7	Nkumba University	Bugema University	33
8	University of Kisubi	Bugema University	19
9	Makerere University	Bugema University	37
10	Kyambaogo University	Bugema University	96
11	Uganda Christian University Mukono	Bugema University	54
12	Metropolitan International University	Bugema University	87
13	Kampala International University	Bugema University	21
14	Ndejje University	Bugema University	64
15	All Saints University	Bugema University	01
16	Victoria university	Bugema University	01
17	Kampala University	Bugema University	30
	Total	Bugema University	762

3.0 PROMOTE COLLABORATION AND NETWORKING WITHIN AND OUTSIDE UGANDA

3.1 NASWU collaborated with Ministry Health to offer Psychosocial Support in Quarantine Centers in response to COVID-19

Although the response to COVID -19 had largely been framed as a medical issue; a military, and a legal issue to enforce compliance; after a while, Uganda government realized that it is an equally social behavioral, socio-economic and a psychosocial issue.

Social work professionals contributed effectively in shaping the narrative around COVID-19. The success against COVID 19 will continue to largely depend on how the ordinary person perceives and experiences the problem of COVID 19 and how they are involved in prevention and response process. It will also take a combined effort from both medical efficacy and experts in community dynamics and behavioral modification – the Social work professionals to effectively address this global health catastrophe and challenge of our time.

Social workers stood in the gap to address social stigma and other mental health issues affecting patients, survivors, communities as a sustainable strategy in response to COVID-19 in Uganda. Through a request from the Ministry of health, NASWU identified and sent up to 10 professional social workers most of them with a strong background in trauma management, counselling and psychosocial wellbeing to support MoH, effectively response to COVID-19.

These social workers come from some of our partner social work teaching institutions namely; Makerere University, Uganda Christian University, Bugema University, Insamizi Institute for Social Development, Kyambogo University. This effort was coordinated by NASWU Capacity Building Officer Mr. Johnmary Ssekate with a strong technical guidance from NASWU executive team led by MR. Michael Byamukama Ntanda.

The selected social workers were further trained on preventative and treatment services to self and the clients to prepare the handle COVID-19 penitents and affected families. This professional intervention from the training to actual intervention ran for about seven months and supported up 1600 affected individuals of all age categories.

Below is a summary of success stories of social work heroes that stood to save lives of Ugandans amidst COVID-19 scare



Dr. Kenneth Kalani Okware

Psychiatrist and Senior Medical Officer-
MoH (Mental Health Division)

okwarekk@gmail.com

We recruited PSS workers in liaison with some mental health and psychosocial support organizations and association including National Association of Social Workers in Uganda (NASWU). At the beginning of the epidemic, NASWU provided 10 social workers to help with the provision of psychosocial support to those affected by COVID.

The 10 social workers were part of a team of 40 psychosocial workers that provided MHPSS services to persons in quarantine and Isolation centres in Wakiso and Kampala.

Before deployment, all the PSS workers received one day reorientation training on Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and Psychological First Aid (PFA).

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The PSS workers were then divided in teams of 2-5 and deployed to work in the different quarantine/Isolation sites. The teams provided an account of the outcomes of their activities by way of daily and weekly reports. These are shared with the MHPSS sub-pillar leadership

Weekly meetings were held to discuss the major challenges and solutions encountered during the week. We also held weekly presentations of the unique situations faced during the week and drew lessons that improved our services.

We created a whatsapp group for the ease of daily communication with the team members.

Overall, the MHPSS services was received with much appreciation particularly amongst those affected by COVID. The team from NASWU showed exceptional professionalism and dedication during their deployment. They continually followed up on their clients until they improved. As a supervisor,

I did not register any concerns related to the performance of the team from NASWU. I dedication to work was impeccable and as such, I would recommend them any day. I thank NASWU leadership for choosing this team and for supporting MoH during the COVID crisis.



Mrs. Margaret Kalette Sebuliba
Counselor, Makerere University
kalette.margaret@cgc.mak.ac.ug

An interesting milestone in my life was my experience as a Psychosocial provider to COVID-19 to repatriated Ugandans.

I want to thank NASWU and MoH; Mental Health Department for the opportunity to serve my country in the face of a global health crisis. In May 2020, MoH, with recommendation from NASWU gave me a training on preventative and treatment services to self and the clients to prepare me handle COVID-19 patients and affected families.

From the month of July to November, I was assigned Douglas Villa quarantine Centre which had two sections with 4,341, total number of clients. I managed to interact with 806 clients of age bracket 20 to 57 years. In a professional approach to dispel fear, myth and anxiety among my clients, I kept my clients with news on the virus and strategies for mitigating the spread of the virus. I also shared success stories of those who have recovered.

As a result of this intervention, new opportunities has emerged. I was picked on by MINET Uganda to give psychosocial services to the corporate community; such as DFCU Bank, ABSA Bank and conducted zoom conferences about COVID-19.



Mrs. Easter Nsubuga

Head of Department, Social Work
Bugema University
nsubugaesther@gmail.com

One of the amazing clients who had lost hope, in his country's economy, opened up as we shared several experiences and he ended up starting a unique business in Kagadi and he is economically steady now.

It is with great pleasure that I am sharing my experience as a member in the psycho social support team, an intervention of MoH through the professional body of social workers during the lock down in 2020. I would like to begin by thanking God for the opportunity He availed me through NASWU to serve on the team. It was a risky but rewarding undertaking.

I was part of the Entebbe team, and we were responsible for a number of quarantine centers like. Fisheries, Lands, Mowi Cribbs, Migingo Suites, Central Inn, Santa Maria, Askay, lake heights, Speke Resort, K Hotel, Protea Hotel, Best West Hotel, among others.

I had an opportunity to interact with a number of clients with different challenges and experiences like

Nursing losses such as jobs, loved ones (death), relationships, businesses, money, hurting due to the unpleasant experiences encountered in the places where they had gone for greener pastures, health complications-physical and mental challenges, others just needed someone to talk to while in quarantine and they greatly appreciated the presence of the psychosocial team, while good number of the clients needed preparation for quarantine as they didn't know what was expected of them while in the quarantine centers, the duration and also exit information, and some were pregnant and ignorant about the dos and don'ts during pregnancy.

This noble task required social work skills such as:

- Listening skills – active listening was used and this kept the clients sharing their stories because they knew that I was listening, and listening actively and also observing the nonverbal.
- Asking questions: this helped in yielding more information thus getting to know the client more.
- Empathy: empathy enabled me to understand how the clients were feeling.
- Reflecting the client's feelings: helped the clients feel understood, it conveyed empathy and assurance that the clients weren't being judged.
- Clarifying: this enabled me to get a better explanation for that which hadn't been well understood or well said.
- Conflict management skills: helped the ones in conflict to come to terms and bear with each other while in quarantine.

It wasn't an all easy task, there were challenges encountered such as the clients who were rude and uncooperative, others were not ready to talk yet they were challenged, some were too demanding and ungrateful. Despite that, I am happy that through my intervention; hope was restored, information was given, advocacy was made, some clients were linked for support especially the depressed ones, others were referred to medics who they visited after quarantine, some started on their journey of healing, change of attitude was achieved, skills were learnt to mention but a few.



Mr. Simeo Ssebukulu
Public Relations Officer, NASWU
bukulusimeo@gmail.com

As one of the Psychosocial Workers at the COVID-19 Frontline, I am delighted for the great opportunity that was given to me by NASWU and MoH to served my country at the time when the world was grappling with one of the fastest yet deadliest diseases of this century.

I headed a team of Six (Two Social Workers, Two Counselors, One Psychologist and One driver) to offer Psychosocial support to returnees in 22 quarantine Centers located in Entebbe between 1st July to 30th September 2020.

A total of 5,600 clients received mental health assessment, sensitization on COVID-19 transmission and prevention, assessment of possible coping mechanisms (amidst mobility restrictions), counseling, welfare assessment and intervention, referral, link to available services and overall Psychosocial support.

The quarantine guidelines were strict yet rigid and so clients would lose their independence to SOPs. Our services were crucial to enhance conformity and resilience. I handled 2,700 both male and female clients between 14 to 72 years of age in all the 22 centers. Due to the demand, every day, Monday to Sunday was a working day, Public holidays inclusive.

Skills such as active listening, asking questions, clarifying were applied to understand the issues of every client before making intervention. To most, I disseminated correct information on COVID-19 to address their worries before they risked anxiety and depression. As a result, my social capital broadened to include UN staff, expatriates, Business people, Academics, International students, Lawyers, Doctors, Ambassadors and Pilots from the clientele.

One of the clients who was treated for depression was resettled with the family. Some clients lost their loved ones during the mandatory 14-day quarantine period yet the guidelines couldn't permit them discharge for burial. For these, bereavement theories were applied to minimize pain.



Angella Nalwanga
Social worker
angelinalwanga@gmail.com

COVID-19 put the whole world at a standstill with lots of uncertainties. It was such an unprecedented time compared to none where the world froze for quite a long period and many people got stuck wherever they were. Many of our friends and relatives could not travel back home to Uganda. Having been away from home, a number of people had lots of unimaginable experiences most of which were psycho-social, financial and health related.

As a social worker, I was deployed at Kabira country club and Arch apartments to offer psychosocial support to returnees that were quarantined there. Kabira country club and Arch apartments are high-end facilities for the haves. Many would think, these are people not lacking and so needed no help. Many people think that having material things is having it all.

In such an unprecedented time, not even money or material assets would give assurance for a good life. High profiled clients always looked to me for hope of a new day. As the average Ugandans longed for posho and beans from government, loss of appetite was the order of the day in the quarantine centers even with lots of food available. Loneliness filled their apartments; it was not easy to confine children in one place.

A knock at the door was received with mixed feelings more so if one was expecting their COVID 19 results. "I hope its good news" a number of clients said, others would assure me "I will just disappear if my results are positive". Some returnees had lost their jobs and yet the families were waiting for them with many expectations.

Clients who went through bereavement in isolation centers had the toughest moments. I supported 220 affected people majority of them 70% being men aged between 25-45 and 15 children. I thank National Association of Social Workers of Uganda for the opportunity given to me serve humanity.

3.2 NASWU collaborated with Makerere University together with other 10 Social Work Agencies in REFLECT study

REFLECT is an acronym for Refugee Lived Experiences, Compliance and Thinking. It is the Project name for research on “Knowledge, adherence and the lived experiences of refugees in COVID-19: A comparative assessment of urban and rural refugee settings in Uganda”. The study has a multinational focus covering refugees from South Sudan, Somalia, Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda and Burundi. One of the study objectives is to undertake a comparative assessment of COVID-19 impact in Uganda’s nationally diverse refugee communities. Study sites were Kisenyi in Kampala, Kyaka II Refugee Settlement in Kyegegwa, South-Western Uganda + several (11) Adjumani Refugee Settlements in West Nile.

The REFLECT Study was funded by Elrha/R2HC (Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises) and coordinated by Makerere University. The study team comprises a multispectral partnership with Co-Investigators from different institutions in academia, policy and programming or practice. Led by Makerere University, the Co-Investigators are from Gulu University, ACORD, LWF, NASWU and the Ministry of Health.

Background: The 21st century has presented us with complex challenges, including forced migration and infectious disease. With forced migration comes the issue of heightened vulnerability for those in affected areas.

Uganda’s open-door policy on refugees has been internationally recognized as “the world’s most compassionate” refugee policy. In spite of this however, refugee communities continue to be disadvantaged on many fronts with poor socio-economic and health outcomes. The onslaught of COVID-19 devastated global economies, the dignity and wellbeing of many people. While we can safely assume that refugee communities are not an exception, refugee communities remain relatively closed in, with very little known about their experiences and outcomes in regards to COVID-19. This is particularly important because the complex context in refugee settlements makes it nearly impossible to comply with known COVID-19 prevention guidelines such as social distancing or frequent handwashing with soap (crowded household and WASH challenges respectively). The REFLECT study is therefore timely and contributes to filling a key gap in knowledge, policy and programming around COVID-19 and refugee communities.

Research Strategy: Methodologically this was a mixed-methods and assessment of COVID-19 in refugee communities. assessment was on knowledge and attitudes; explore local perception of risk or exposure; describe implementation; determine feasibility, adherence or compliance in light Uganda’s national response to COVID19; identify existing systems and determine their efficacy.

Study Outcomes: Actionable recommendations for improving humanitarian outcomes. Study findings will contribute to optimal multidisciplinary and multispectral approaches for behavioral change. Study findings will inform public health measures for present and future responses. Lead to deeper understanding of COVID-related socio-behavioral aspects in refugee settings better plan and effectively manage and/or support behavioral change campaigns in epidemic outbreaks in refugee settings which remain largely unknown.

It will also enable recognition and engagement of previously excluded resource persons at the grassroots - which will harness better compliance, monitoring and support for the current COVID-19 response and other health adversities. Using research findings, we shall develop models and frameworks useful for further research, policy and practice of social work. And contribute to the existing [and relatively small/minority literature] body of evidence on socio behavior and epidemic outbreaks.

Project Team 1. Dr Gloria Seruwagi - PI, Makerere University 2. Prof. Stephen Lawoko - Gulu University 3. Dr Denis Muhangi – Makerere University 4. Dr Eric Awich Ochen – Makerere University 5. Dr Betty Okot – Makerere University 6. Andrew Masaba – Lutheran World Federation (LWF) 7. Dunstan Ddamulira – Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) 8. John Mary Ssekate – National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) 9. Brian Luswata – Ministry of Health, Uganda 10. Joshua Kayiwa – Ministry of Health Uganda, Catherine Nakidde Lubowa – Project Coordinator.



Orientation of research guides at Women-center in Kyaka 11 refugee settlement September 7, 2020 (L) Doctor Gloria Sseruwagi project team leader with NASWU representative John Mary (R) is Dr. Erick Luganda during the training.

3.3 NASWU Coordinated university youth to promote positive coping mechanism among children, families and communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic

Background to the Project

Covid-19 has come with unusual stressors brought about by isolation, fear, death, close of schools, anger, rejection and powerlessness, loss of income leading to aggressive behavior and mental breakdown affecting mental wellbeing and potential of children, families and communities.

National association of social workers of Uganda-NASWU with support from Coordinating Comprehensive Care for Children (4Children) implemented a one month national youth led advocacy intervention using information communication technology to promote positive coping mechanisms, resilience of children, families and communities amid new and changing restrictions around social interactions and gatherings between July 17, 2020 - August 21, 2020.

The project drivers were social work students and out of school youth who used social media channels to provide important outlets, positively influence their networks, friends and family to promote resilience and unite families amid the evolving COVID-19 situation and were guided to post and share accurate and positive information to assist families and communities cope with effects of COVID-19.

The project empowered 100 social work students and recent graduates from 20 social work teaching institutions representing five regions of Uganda. It demonstrated the role of professional social workers in situations of adversity. It was also because social workers have foundational knowledge

and skills to use strengths-based approaches to strengthen coping mechanisms, and the fact that youth are on online with capability to use social media to engage with others, they have large networks and are respected in community due to their training.

The project outcome was based on the number of online discussions along major social media platforms, number of online share. As summarised below;

Week	Theme	Facebook		WhatsApp		Instagram		Twitter	
		Likes	Shares	Likes	Shares	Likes	Shares	Likes	Shares
Week 1 (27-31st July)	Resilience amid covid-19	15,046	224	143	40	236	21	217	15
Week 2 (3-9th August)	Protection of children against violence amid Covid-19 pandemic	20,211	325	174	48	292	22	280	25
Week 3 (10-15th August)	Safety measures in preventing the spread of covid-19	20,370	351	185	26	365	19	302	21
Week 4 (17-21st August)	Increasing community vigilance on measures to curb COVID-19	10,887	98	48	6	168	4	272	14
Total output		66,514	998	550	120	1,061	66	1,071	75

Implementation process

Identify Social Workers to Participate 2. Orient Social Workers on Goals, Guidelines & Social Media Posts each Week 3. Post and Content approved on Social Media 4. Online discussion, Shares.

Why the implementation

- Promote and bring attention to positive coping strategies
- Target young, educated Ugandans who can positively influence their networks of friends and family

Daily posts during this advocacy month

These posts run through four major sub themes all with a view of promoting resilience among individuals, families and communities as summarized here under.

Week 1 from 27-31st July **Resilience amid covid-19**

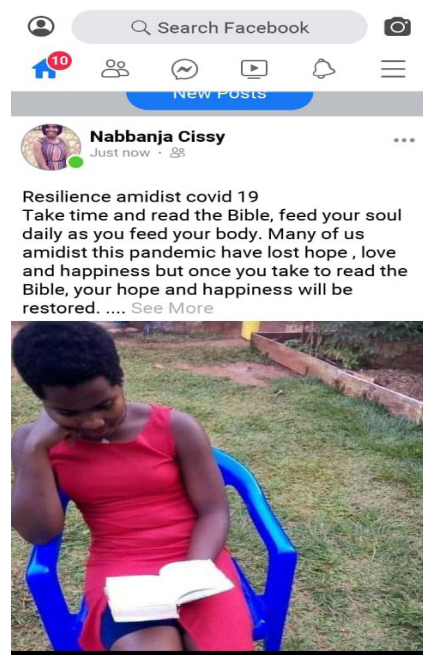
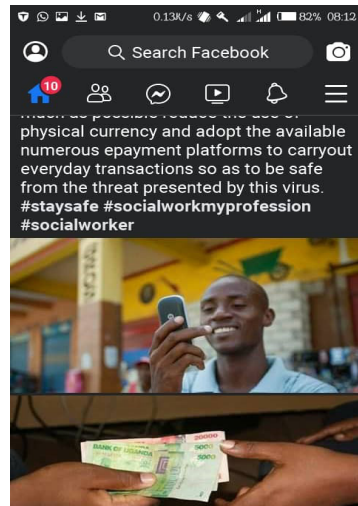
Week 2 from 3-9th August **Protection of children against violence amid Covid-19 pandemic**

Week 3 from 10-15th August **Safety measures in preventing the spread of covid-19**

Week 4 from 17-21st August **increasing community vigilance on measures to curb COVID-19**

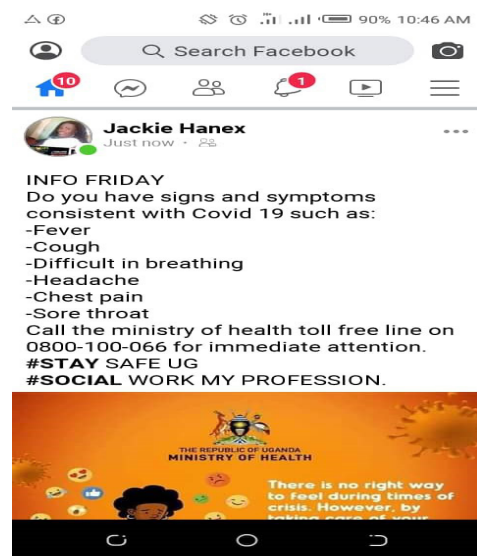
Examples of the daily posts shared by different participants during the four weeks of campaign.

Kene Angel @KeneAngel1 · 7m
 # Resilience amidst the pandemic.
 Creating new initiative games with little children has helped them keep their vibrant minds on course..... School is missed but that doesn't stop us to play.
 #Social work an exceptional Profession
 I nominate Alice Nsubuga for this challenge.....



Info Fridays

These were special days of the week for students to share a common post from both the ministry of health and ministry of gender labour and social development. These posts received a lot of response through our advocacy campaign. Below is how info Friday posts looked.



Evaluation/lessons learnt

- We learnt that younger professionals have greater potential when supported to spark positive online exchanges that bring attention to positive coping methods within our families, communities and their networks for the wellbeing of vulnerable children.
- We observed that Facebook and Instagram are the most common usable social media platforms by younger people in Uganda and can be explored as a major strategy to protect children and communities against violence even in remote settings.
- The creativity of younger stars, the fun of connecting with fellow youth in different communities their desire to actively participate and create a difference in their communities is such a great strength all social work agencies should explore to create a sustainable change in communities and lives of vulnerable children.
- We learnt that community/youth led interventions in the fight against COVID-19 and its effects are more reliable and sustainable as many of these younger stars continue to post such messages to foster resilience, positive coping mechanisms and positive online exchanges within their networks to continue supporting vulnerable children and families.
- We learnt that organizations need to mainstream younger people in their programming to create a significant and sustainable protection of children and families from stressors of COVID-19 including violence against children.

3.4 NASWU Started on partnership engagements with MGLSD to strengthen social workforce in Uganda

NASWU through the select committee of key professionals, started on formalizing Working strategy to strengthened social workforce in Uganda leading to the social work services council. NASWU select team has so far agreed on the name for regulating social service workers in Uganda and harmonized on strategy to be taken in strengthening social work force in Uganda. NASWU is in her final stages of having a formal working MOU with MGLSD, stapes/pathway to attaining the social service workforce council.

The viable strategy is where Government/MGLSD leads the agenda in partnership with NASWU with support from development partners like UNICEF. This approach will give the process a wider acceptance among government protocols and make it easier for NASWU to use government structures across the country to mobilize all the social workforce and use these structures to even reach those in private practice.

Establishing a council for social services workforce is included in the national child protection policy as pillar for child protection in Uganda, and resonates well with national development plan objective four that calls for advancing human capital development.

This engagement is as a result of healthy working relationship between NASWU and MGLSD an example of IFSW Africa Regional Conference 2019 that was Co-hosted between NASWU and the Ministry, the national Social Work learning event 2019 and Ministry of gender recommending NASWU to implement key community engagement activities on border districts and fishing communities together with Child's I Foundation aiming at protecting children during and after COVID-19 among other engagements.

In this arrangement NASWU will lead the crafting of the articles for the bill and technical guidance while MGLSD will lead in the fronting the agenda and fronting the bill.

3.5 NASWU Select Technical committee

Mr. Michael Byamukama Ntanda-NASWU president and Country Director REPPSI, Prof. Eddy Walakira Head Department of Social Work and Social Administration Makerere University, Mr. Charles Dra-ecabo-National Project Coordinator, Uganda Project Office, Kampala UNESCO, Dr. Janestic Twikirize -Senior lecturer Department SW Makerere University, Mr. Okiria Gerald Okiria Gerald Board Member, NASWU, Ms Fatia Kiyange, Deputy Executive Director-Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) Andrew Luyombo- NASWU, Ssekate Johnamry-NASWU.



Mr. Fred Ngabirano Commissioner for Youth and Children Affairs (left) in an engagement meeting with NASWU select committee on the strategy to strengthen social workforce in Uganda. November 9, 2020.

3.6 Raising the profile of the social work profession, and strengthening coordination and capacity

CRS/4Children was officially closed. But the project left NASWU with strengthened systems, capacity and visibility as summarized below;

Memberships to the professional body increased from 600 to 7,876, Institutional membership increased from 5 to 30 by 2020 and this is highly attributed to the immense support given to NASWU by CRS/4Children project.

NASWU was supported to conduct Holistic Organizational Capacity Assessment conducted in 2017 and all priority actions completed resulting in improved policies & governance structures. NASWU together with the Ministry of Gender labour and Social Development -MGLSD was able to organize the first National Social Work Symposium at Speke resort Munyonyo September 10, 2018 to guide Social Service Workforce strengthening in Uganda, Co-hosted the third International Federation Social Work Regional Conference contributing to social work global agenda And as a result NASWU was invited to join the Global Social Service Work Service Alliance.

Under the guidance of the National Council for Higher Education, NASWU and Makerere university were part of the Social Work Steering Committee to design the Minimum Standards and Competency

Framework 2019. This established teaching qualifications for Social Work Training, Standardized course load with core courses agreed on the required knowledge base for Social Work Programs, Agree on field work and research requirements, Set standard benchmarks for graduation.



NASWU President Mr. Michael Byamukama Ntanda (left) alongside Makerere University Social Work Department team receive a memento from Ms. Michelle Ell the Programme Manager 4Children USS project during the project closer function on September 29, 2020.

4.0 NASWU SUPPORTS SOCIAL WORKERS THROUGH ONLINE MENTORSHIP TO RESPOND TO COVID-19 IN WEST NILE

West Nile remained the most vulnerable regions of Uganda due to her border connection with two countries South Sudan, and Democratic Republic of Congo-DRC. With porous borders due to the social and economic connectivity of the Uganda, Congo and South Sudan, the risk for Covid-19 was eminent.

Mentoring and guiding social workers with best practices from other parts of the world, and promoting their resilience amidst adversity was our professional responsibility. NASWU supported the social work coordination office in the West Nile to ensure effective prevention and response to COVI-19 pandemic based on social work values and principles.

From 24th March to 30th June a total of 60 patients from diverse backgrounds ranging from nationals and East African citizens who were either truck drivers, civil servants, business men and women, peasant farmers, pupils and students, Boda Boda riders, journalists, pastors, health care worker or house wives were supported by the social work team lead by Denis Adia NASWU coordinator West Nile.

NASWU provided data for the different social workers. I was coordinating in West Nile to enable my team to provide information about COVID-19 and how the youth can become resilient using the different online platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Lastly, NASWU also donated to me a Samsung A2 Core smart phone which enabled us to provide virtual psychosocial support to the patients that were still in the hospital and following up those who had been discharged.



Denis Adia

“I had to train 18 frontline health care workers in Nebbi district, 40 in Nyapea hospital and 10 in Padea border post in Zombo district, 48 in Moyo district and 32 in Obong district. The simulation exercises and training were supported by AVIS, ENABEL. When the covid-19 cases began to soar those, who had been trained in the different districts were asked to support their patients from within the district” Narrets Adia.

5.0 ADVOCACY FOR THE SOCIAL WORKERS PROFESSION AND SERVICES IN UGANDA

5.1 AN OPEN LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF UGANDA, HIS EXCELLENCY YOWERI KAGUTA MUSEVENI IN RESPONSE TO THE RECENT NEGATIVE REMARKS ABOUT SOCIAL WORK PROGRAMS AT UGANDAN TRAINING INSTITUTIONS

01st January 2020

Your Excellency,

Together we can develop this country without blaming each other. We are approximately 185,000 social work professionals in Uganda (excluding paraprofessional) working in different sectors and 22 Associate members (organizations, universities and line ministries) that subscribe to National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU). We are ready to dialogue with you Your Excellency on this for the good of our country.

As social work professionals, we are not happy that Your Excellency our fountain of honour has been quoted belittling the social work program as useless, the most recent incident being while you were officiating at the Kyambogo University graduation and often used it as an example of courses that need to be scrapped from the university curriculum as graduates of this “useless” and irrelevant course are the reason the country is failing to fix unemployment.

Referring to our profession as useless and irrelevant instead of appreciating its contribution in transforming this country is a betrayal. Social workers feel betrayed and undermined by the negative comments from the political leadership of this country. Another example is while appearing on NTV’s political talk-show – on the spot – to discuss the unemployment situation in Uganda, Ms. Rose Namayanja said “some useless courses need to be scrapped at the University. Courses such as social work are partly responsible for the unemployment problem that Uganda is grappling with.” Ms. Namayanja is not the first top government official to openly attack the social work profession with statements that not only undermine the profession but also link it to the unemployment problem.

Your Excellence, social workers like any other professionals play a pivotal role in mentoring and skilling the youth at both micro and macro levels. For example, the government cannot fully handle the youth challenge without involving social workers and in the same way, cannot manage the refugee crisis flocking into the country without involving social workers. The country cannot solve the land question with only a legal approach, we need skilled professional social workers in the equation.

Your Excellence, it is not because of social workers that no jobs are created in the economy? For example, what are veterinary doctors doing? Are they all employed? Students who study agriculture? Are they all employed? Where are the telecom engineers employed? What about students who have done oil studies? What about students who study law, education and Human Medicine? All of them are not fully employed.

The problem is much more than one category of training. Your Excellency, unemployment is bigger than any profession. I’m aware under your excellent leadership the government is already doing tremendous work in skilling the youth, but more is needed to deliberately establish and invest in complementary technical/hands on skills training for graduates to facilitate innovations that would transform this country and professional social workers are critical partners in making this initiative a reality.

Your Excellency, I think all people who work in the helping professions are heroic because we offer ourselves daily to help others. But I believe that social workers are particularly heroic because we’re on the

front line tackling all the social problems that exist in our nation. We, work with the most vulnerable, the terminally ill, children who are battered and abandoned by parents and caretakers, the homeless, the mentally ill, soldiers returning from missions, the drug and alcohol addicts, victims of domestic violence and families who need to learn to communicate with each other more effectively.

We inspire, we cheerlead, and we advocate for millions of people every day, and, in the process, many people who would otherwise suffer lives of quiet desperation and hopelessness have hope and the motivation to succeed. We counsel people who want to end their lives because of despair. We give hope to people facing a long struggle with terminal illness. We work with our political leaders to make our communities more liveable and to offer opportunity where it didn't exist before.

We are neither liberal nor conservative but believe that what we do from the heart is paid back in the wonderful feeling that our lives have been dedicated to helping others. This is what we cherish rather than being referred to as useless profession and causing unemployment.

Your Excellency, Social Services delivery in Uganda remains a huge challenge with a highly dependent population. According to the 2010 Orphan and Vulnerable Children (OVC) Situation Analysis report, nearly 50% (8.1 million out of 17.5 million) children below the age of 18 are vulnerable, with 1.3 million children considered critically vulnerable. 7.5 million Children experience child poverty and are deprived of essential basic services. Eight million youths aged 15 to 30 years are considered vulnerable.

Your Excellency, as a pan African and a patriot, these statistics not only represent Uganda but are mirrored in many of the African countries. If African countries are to address these issues, the social services workforce has to be strengthened in all the countries. Collectively they are the change agents, in concert with the populations they serve, for improving the welfare of a myriad of disadvantaged and marginalized populations. Strengthening the workforce is core in strengthening the social service system.

Your Excellency, for example, Uganda needs a strong social work department in all sectors. Your Excellency, for example, as a country, we need Professional Social Workers in preparing UPDF officers on foreign peace missions and those retiring from the army including veterans. Social work is of no lesser significance to development and Uganda like any other progressing economies need professional social workers. Uganda problems cannot only be solved by science. His Excellency, in initial stages of HIV epidemic, if we had remained stuck in science not understanding that the war against HIV had a social aspect, Uganda would not have achieved all the world well known and documented milestones.

Professional social workers played a critical role and will continue to do the same in the war against HIV. His Excellence, NRM Leaders who liberated Uganda were well taken care of by professional social workers when they were exiled and became refugees especially in different parts of the world including Europe, and it was because of these great unique skilled professionals who handled them well that they were able to come back and liberate this country. Mr President, by calling social work, social sciences and other humanities courses useless and insisting that they should be scrapped off from the university programmes, you are indirectly telling your government that social services sectors/Ministries should be scrapped off. Your Excellence, can the government operate without these sectors?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) outline strategies for countries to end poverty and improve the lives of children and families by addressing health, education, justice, migration and protection from

violence. By committing to achieving the SDGs by 2030, UN member states affirm the fundamental rights of children to be protected from all forms of violence, abuse or exploitation. These goals including Uganda vision 2040 and East Africa Community vision 2050 will remain a dream without a strong and locally-based social work service workforce.

Evidence shows that developed economies value social work and Uganda needs professional Social workers. We can also pick lessons from our own sister country South Africa which in initial stages of development did not value the social work profession. My recommendation is that we commission a committee of a selected technical experts to gather empirical evidence to guide rather than downplaying the importance of the social work profession and yet it is a critical profession for any progressing economy.

The Social Work profession is a globally respected profession with a representation at the UN through International Federation of Social. Social work is a practice based profession and an academic discipline which promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance wellbeing. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledge, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges.

Your Excellency among other things, professional social workers are equipped to utilize theories of human behaviour and social systems. Social workers intervene at the points where people interact with their environments. Social work in various forms addresses the multiple, complex transactions between people and aims at enabling all people to develop to their full potential, enrich lives and prevent a dysfunction society.

Social work is globally being applied in a variety of settings and numerous agencies with people across the world benefiting from its services. Social work professional services include: psychiatry, medical, marriage and family counselling, social research, rehabilitation and correction centres service, public, workplace and child welfare. Social work does not only address needs and problems at the personal or family level but also at the national and international level.

Your excellency, the concurrent processes of industrialization and urbanization taking place do pose great challenges to our country. The major consequences of these processes for Uganda, which are almost similar to those that occurred in the developed world over the past centuries, include ruralurban drift, disintegration of the role of the family, unplanned parenthood, individualism, increased crime and delinquency, conflicts, physical and mental disability, slums, unemployment, inadequate social services and sexual immorality. Social work is needed to minimize the strains and stresses associated with these social problems and to provide programmes of social improvement which will prevent individual maladjustments and social disruptions. Social workers in Uganda have been key in formulation of national social policies, national strategies and programmes (under MoGLSD) which, if properly conceived and implemented, will enhance sustainable economic and social development.

Your excellency, we may not be able to afford the luxury and the expense of slowing down the pace of industrialization (or urbanization) or its consequent changes in material living. It is imperative that through thoughtful and purposeful planning, we should give due consideration to the social and human consequences of changes so that we can make practical and effective use of the increasing knowledge of human behaviour and of developing experience in the field of human relations. We need to deliberately invest in Social Services workforce for quality services rather than continuously blaming unemployment

on wrong profession that would guide the country on solving the challenge. Other professionals are also experiencing the same challenge – need to do a comparison study and you will be shocked. This is not only a Uganda challenge, but a global unavoidable transformational challenge to all leaders. Social change occurs when new situations emerge alongside or over old ones. These situations bring with them certain conditions which may be defined by concerned people as “socially problematic” or as “social problems.”

A social problem thus exists when a significant number of people or a number of influential people feel that a particular condition is harmful and that something has to be done to rectify it. The skills of social workers are employed to alleviate adverse social conditions in public, private, civil society organizations and non-governmental organizations. The fact that social workers operate in so many and diverse settings is itself indicative of the significance of social work in national development. Social workers provide a wide variety of social services to meet social needs or mitigate social problems. The most important contribution of social work profession is the consideration it gives to the human and socio-economic sides of development. This is essential in order to avoid high material and economic standards without consequent matches in human and social standards.

Lastly, I would request you Your Excellency to support Social Work Profession to establish a council through Act of parliament to regulate social work profession in Uganda. We need to know that Unregulated, unmonitored and unskilled social doctor is extremely dangerous to service users. That’s why we are doing well at policy formulation level and poorly at implementation level. Regulating social work practice and skilling the social work force at service delivery level will save this country from many social problems including unemployment and deadly corruption the country is struggling with.

A national council will monitor and enforce the code of conduct of the social workforce including the professional values. At training level, social work education is provided in the context of postsecondary institutions and regulated under the University and Other Tertiary Institutions Act (2001). Recently National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) launched the minimum standards for training and educating social workers in Uganda. When enforced it will ensure high quality of social workers produced at tertiary level.

A well trained professional social worker is a job creator not a job seeker. Social workers are problem solvers, game changers, innovators, organizers, advocates, influencers, implementers, leaders and champions. They engage on a micro level while operating in a macro context. Social workers are trained to thrive in almost any setting. On the other hand, at practice level, social work remains unregulated with no legislation to support its establishment and modus operandi.

This status quo has limited the utilization of the professional social work capacity in the country in innovating lasting solutions to emerging social concerns in society. Nevertheless, the social development sector has a number of laws and policies, which are directly linked to social work practice notably the Social protection policy (2015) and its attendant Implementation Plan. *“We need to regulate Social Work Practice in Uganda to ensure quality of services offered to the population,”*

Your Excellency, it is high time the social work profession is respected and recognized by our government like any other profession in Uganda. We look forward to working jointly with the Government of Uganda for a better future.

For God and My Country



Yours sincerely,

Byamukama Michael Ntanda

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5.2 NASWU Corona virus statement/guide

25th March 2020

Fellow Social Work professionals, as we come to the end of the International month of Social Work, I congratulate you upon offering yourselves daily to help others. As the globe and Uganda in particular continue to fight the COVID–19 pandemic, I encourage all Social Workers to keep the commitment. COVID – 19 is real and it will take all of us working with other professionals, families, communities and the International community to defeat.

Social Work professionals appreciate the Government of Uganda’s effort and the coordination response led by Minister for Health Hon. Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng which has so far been timely and good. As COVID-19 continues to impact more individuals and communities, Social Workers are on the frontline of awareness, preventive and treatment services to ensure the health and well-being of the people they serve. In our country Uganda today, the confirmed cases continue to rise.

While being conscious of their services, Social Workers have been inspired to provide necessary information, encourage communities and to be proactive, keep a safe distance, call the provided numbers for help and intervene to fight isolation. I still encourage Social Workers to continue disseminating appropriate and factual information to dispel myths, panic, shock and fears, reach out to agencies to assist with preparedness, ensure inclusive planning efforts and advocate to government and other development partners, to increase on support offered to affected persons and their families and above all, promote adherence of the people to the Ministry of Health’s issued protective, responsive and preventive guidelines.

As a country, we need to focus on both medical and social behavioural change to defeat the pandemic. This justifies our intervention as Social Workers being social behavioural change Doctors and Experts. COVID-19 equally affects people from different communities with different cultures, norms, values and behaviour. Social Workers continue to engage with communities, encourage them to be empathetic to all those who are affected, and offer equal support to all regardless the ethnicity, nationality or any other form of discrimination. Our communities need to know that individuals who are affected by COVID-19 are victims of circumstances and they deserve our Compassion and every possible support, for recovery, and rebuilding their lives.

Attitude and behavioural change is critical in fighting this new virus. In order to curb the stigmatisation of the COVID-19 victims, I encourage Social Workers to continue engaging families and communities, guide communities not to refer to people with the disease as “COVID-19 cases”, “victims”, “COVID-19 families, but rather refer to them as “people affected by COVID-19”, people on treatment for COVID-19”, “people who are recovering from COVID19.” It is important to separate a person’s identity from a condition defined by a disease to reduce stigma because after recovering from COVID-19, people’s lives will

go on. Social Workers therefore continue to create an enabling environment for our communities to work together to not only confront COVID 19, but fight stigma, build resilience of the affected as well to help them cope and thrive after.

As we do this, let's remember the most vulnerable categories, especially the children, the differently able, and the elderly. Support parents to help children find positive ways of expressing their feelings such as fear and sadness within the safety of their homes. Every child has their own way of expressing emotions. Encourage parents and care takers to engage children in creative activities of self-expression such as play and art that facilitate this process. Children feel relieved when provided with a safe and supportive space to express and communicate their feelings, during uncertain times such as these.

I would like to applaud the President's directive to close schools and institutions of higher learning during this unpredictable period of time. As professional Social Workers, we believe that this provides safety, and is in the best interest of Ugandan families. Whereas this was a necessary first step, we still need mitigation measures to keep families safe in their homes. In case of infection, as we isolate, there is a need to avoid separating children and their caregivers as much as possible. If a child needs to be separated from their primary caregiver, ensure that appropriate alternative care is provided and that a Social Worker or approved caregiver, will regularly follow up on the child. Further, ensure that during periods of separation, regular contact with parents and caregivers is maintained, such as twice-daily scheduled phone or video calls or other age-appropriate communication (e.g., social media depending on the age of the child).

The older population too should be given extra attention to restore their hope. Older adults, especially in isolation and those with cognitive decline/dementia, may become more anxious, angry, frustrated, stressed, agitated, and withdrawn, during the outbreak/while in quarantine. Please provide every possible practical and emotional support through informal networks (families), professional social workers, counsellors and health professionals. In the past, Social Workers played a key role in addressing the social impact of the Ebola and HIV pandemics. Similar responses and outreach services are needed for COVID-19. As trained community mobilizers and trusted community members, they helped to build awareness and combat myths about Ebola in an intense environment of fear and stigma.

Similar to Ebola, any disease outbreak or pandemic brings with it not only physical suffering for those infected, but also feelings of panic, shock, loss, unemployment, disruptions in cash flow, grief, shame, suspicion, and anger to both victims and survivors. Increased challenges and stressors are common during such an emergency such as food insecurity, loss of family income, interruptions in schooling and access to health care—make matters worse. Social protection is failing vulnerable groups. Government must use this momentum created by COVID-19 pandemic to make rapid progress towards collectively financed, comprehensive, and permanent social protection system. Social workers equipped and ready to support this moving forward.

As Uganda through the Ministry of Health commits the support of their trained health professionals in treating the increasing number of patients, it must also recognize the importance of Social Service Workers and the many roles they play—from raising community awareness to providing social support to patients, survivors and their families—in the midst of this epidemic. Social Workers through their association and networks are already supporting communities that are affected or fearful of the COVID 19 Virus to fight fear and resist panic. We are advocating for community involvement in planning, safety protocols as well as supporting people with anxiety and in social isolation to remain calm. I call upon Social

Workers to continue providing these services to our people in need.

At community level, I encourage Social Workers to: 1) Ensure the most vulnerable are included in planning and response. 2) Support communities to organize and ensure that essentials such as food and clean water are available. 3) Position themselves, step-up and ask “How can we make sure our community members have what they need and are prepared for the consequences of the virus?” 4) Organize communication strategies to overcome social isolation. 5) Promote human relations and provide psychosocial care support to the infected and affected. This will include online/phone systems to provide companionship and care. This is especially essential for people and groups at risk as you combat the virus. People who feel overwhelmed, scared and anxious with the current situation should seek counselling and psychosocial support. Social Workers are available across the country to freely give this service.

In these times when the Social support structure is shuttered because of its infection risk, the mental health of the people living in the country might be shaken. NASWU urges the government to control the price of items used to offer protection against the virus. Unscrupulous people within the community have resorted to hiding these essential items and charging already stressed people higher prices. I encourage Social workers to report such people to authority for action. The anticipated financial strain is equally a risk to a whole lot of mayhem which may jeopardise the corona virus fight efforts. Remember, in this effort, the main actors are the people. NASWU therefore urges government to respond to the Cost of living needs to ensure a smooth adherence to the behavioural measures issued.

Whereas the decision by H.E the President to close all schools including tertiary institutions was necessary and timely, this brought an unanticipated financial burden on household heads in taking care of the holiday makers under their roofs. Economic insecurity brings with it a whole host of negative effects including theft, robbery, low self-esteem and impaired cognitive functioning. Not knowing when one’s next pay-check or money for their meal is coming from, intensifies these effects. Financial stress may not only ratchet up political insecurities but also amplify domestic violence, divorce, loneliness and suicide. Worrying about debts triggers stress, which reduces a person’s resilience against not only political orders but mental health problems as well. When all this happens, individuals get chaotic.

They are mad at creditors who continually send them bills, mad at their bosses for not paying them more, mad at their spouses for not making more money, mad at their children for demanding all the time and mad at themselves for getting into this fix. In short, they are mad at life. This situation is catastrophic and thus increases the government’s burden in response to its effects. It is important for government to consider providing emergency food, water and electricity at no cost for three months or offer tax exemptions on such goods to increase people’s purchase power especially the child headed households and the elderly.

It is also important to put in place clear standard operating procedures (SOPs) to guide the public transport and open market places as a mitigation measure against any eventualities that would shock our economy. During this period, I would implore Bank of Uganda to guide banks on loan interests and if possible halt loans payments for 2 two months to enable people have what to put on the table for their already stressed families. I would also implore government to think about waving off PAYE for employees earning below a certain level to enable them put food on the table for their children. On the other hand, Social Workers are at the pivot of such problems and always ready to offer professional services.

Extra government funding for Social Workers and other professionals responding to the COVID-19 virus

needs to be released immediately to support and protect the workforce and communities. I would like to implore government to establish a call centre or add a section at child helpline centre to provide online counselling to the people in need. NASWU is ready to provide professional Social Workers to support this initiative. Here, we need to look beyond the medical approach and bring on board behavioural experts like Professional Social Workers to provide quality services.

Lastly, I encourage all Social Workers that as they support our Government, communities and families, they should adhere to Government through the Ministry of Health's guidelines and WHO safety standard Operating procedures (SOP); Social Work professional ethics and Code of conduct. I also encourage all Ugandans to be cooperative, not to despair, trust God, support each other, adhere to the government guidelines and together we shall defeat the virus. This is also the time to learn, reflect and correct what we have not done right, as we resiliently go through the trying times, and hope to bounce back and continue to build our country. With a positive attitude, together we must defeat this virus.

For God and my Country



Byamukama Michael Ntanda

President, National Association of Social Workers in Uganda (NASWU)

5.3 National and International learning events and webinars attended by NASWU

In 2020, NASWU actively participated in many learning events and webinars and shared widely this information to social work fraternity in Uganda. NASWU was part of the organizing committee for the national learning event on child wellbeing. NASWU also presented in this virtual conference organize by the MGLSD, on a unique topic.

“Harnessing ICT to promote positive coping mechanism among children, families and communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. A reflection of what has worked in a national youth-led advocacy intervention coordinated by NASWU with support from CRS/4Children”

NASWU also actively participated in the national conference on Alternative Care Reforms in Uganda organized by Child I foundation in December 2020 and presented on strengthening social work force in Uganda for effective child protection in Uganda.

5.4 Global Social Workforce Alliance

NASWU attended and shared with her members the following international webinars.

Strengthening Supervision for the Social Service Workforce (October 27, 2020).

Protecting the Social Service Workforce: Best practices including mental health (September 2, 2020).

Social Service Workforce Safety and Wellbeing during the COVID-19 Response (May 14, 2020)

School Closure and Reopening during COVID-19 on September 3, 2020 organized by Alliance for child protection.



Empowering Individuals; Transforming Communities

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