



Greetings from SIHI Uganda! We are delighted to share our 2023 achievements. This newsletter highlights progress with the Gender and Social Innovation Project and the Uganda Social Innovation Fellowship Program.

GENDER AND SOCIAL INNOVATION PROJECT

The Social Innovation in Health Initiative (SIHI) in Uganda implemented a gender and social Innovation project in 2022-2023, with funding from TDR, the special program for research and training in tropical diseases. The project aimed to understand and explore the gendered aspects and dimensions of social innovations in health at community level.

We worked with a total of seven social innovation health projects in Uganda, including (a) Action for Women Awakening in a Rural Environment (AWARE) Uganda; (b) Amani Family Center; (c) Bwindi Mothers Waiting Hostel; (d) Kyaninga Child Development Centre; (e) Opit Kic Widows Group; (f) Innovation for Development; and (g) Change Development Initiatives (CDI). Notably, six of these social innovation health projects were situated in rural areas across Uganda, while one operated within the urban poor slum areas of Kampala City.

We utilized a mixed methods approach involving

both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection and analysis. We conducted 28 key informant interviews with the staff of the social innovation health projects, 30 in-depth interviews with the beneficiaries, and a cross-sectional survey with 500 beneficiaries of the social innovation health projects.



Dr. Christine Nalwadda (in the centre) interviewing beneficiaries of Change Development Initiatives

Insights from the gender and social Innovation project:

- **Gender-based discrimination remains a crucial challenge in the achievement of equitable health.** We identified the predominance of gender-based discrimination against women, and a high prevalence of sexual and physical violence directed at women. Furthermore, disabled and refugee populations have poor health indicators compared to their non-disabled and host counterparts.

Factors that exacerbate exposure and experience of disease include gendered societal structures and norms. Specific factors that contribute to the vulnerability and exposure to illness, and poor response to illness relate to the highly patriarchal structure of society, further exacerbated by the low autonomy of women especially in health care decision making.

- **Other identified challenges** include harmful beliefs about diseases, as well as poverty which leads to the de prioritization of health care needs.

- **Social innovations in health purposefully respond to gender and its intersecting inequities.** The social innovation health projects recognize the several inequities faced by vulnerable populations, particularly women. Social innovation projects incorporate principles of gender empowerment, advocacy for human rights, and holistic approaches to health care.



Beneficiaries of “Parenting for Respectability Program”, implemented by Change Development Initiatives in Luwero District

UGANDA SOCIAL INNOVATION IN HEALTH FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

SIHI Uganda offers a social innovation in health fellowship program for health innovators. It is a modular six-months distance learning program featuring 3 face-to-face workshops and continuous online support to the fellows. This fellowship program commenced in September 2023 and is scheduled to end in March 2024. The fellowship aims to equip participants with innovation, effective project management, research, environmental assessment, communication and fundraising skills. Three face-to-face workshops were held at Makerere University Resilient African Network (RAN) in Kololo, Kampala, each lasting for 4 days. After each workshop, fellows leverage their learning to design, and implement strategies aimed at enhancing their social contribution, health contributions, and business competitiveness. A total of 24 social innovation fellows from 12 health projects participated in the fellowship.

First Training Workshop:

The first training workshop was from 2nd-5th of October 2023, focusing on Entrepreneurship and Effective Project Management.

The Entrepreneurship module was facilitated by Prof. Peter Turyakira and Dr. Kasimu Sendawula from Makerere University College of Business and Management Sciences. During the Entrepreneurship module, fellows explored key facets of entrepreneurship, and financing options for health projects. They developed effective marketing strategies, and a tailored business canvas model for their specific social innovation projects.



Ms. Christine, a fellow, presenting a business canvas model for their community health insurance project.



Prof. Peter Turyakira facilitating a session on Entrepreneurship

Dr. Bruce Kisitu from Uganda Management Institute facilitated the Effective Project Management module. Fellows acquired valuable knowledge and skills, applying the Logic Framework Approach to enhance project and environmental causal logic. They also improved their skills in developing key outputs, and linking them to resource requirements.

Fellows developed logical frameworks and monitoring and evaluation plans tailored to their social innovation projects.



Fellows engaging in group sessions to develop a problem tree and logical framework during the effective project management module.

The workshop participants received a visit from Mr. Tomas Lundstrom, a representative from the Swedish Embassy in Uganda. In his address, he highlighted the longstanding partnership between the Swedish Embassy and Makerere University, expressing commitment to supporting Uganda's development through diverse avenues, including funding opportunities. The Swedish Embassy is supporting the Uganda social innovation health program.



Mr. Tomas Lundstrom from the Swedish Embassy in Uganda, shares remarks during the first training workshop

Second Training Workshop:

The second training workshop covered two modules: Social Innovation in Health, and Research approaches and tools for Social Innovation. During the Social Innovation in Health module, fellows presented their social innovation projects including background, problem being addressed and why it was important, main results, and future plans.

The presentations were fine-tuned through the feedback given in the questions and answers sessions.



Mr. Stephen Sewava and Mr. Stephen Jjuuko from Change Development Initiatives presenting their social innovation project.

The Research Approaches and Tools for Social Innovation module was led by Dr. Roy William Mayega, Dr. Julius Ssentongo, Dr. John Ssenkusu, and Mr. Agnes Nyabigambo, all from Makerere University School of Public Health. Throughout this module, participants engaged with the innovation process, exploring research needs at various stages. The module emphasized crucial aspects, such as identifying and defining research problems, setting

objectives within the context of social innovation, and comprehending both quantitative and qualitative research methods. Participants also gained insights into research methods for impact evaluation, explored different types of research studies, and enhanced their capacity in writing research proposals.



Ms. Agnes Nyabigambo from Makerere University School of Public Health guides participants during proposal writing sessions.

Insights from the training workshops showed improvements in participants' knowledge:

- Effective project management knowledge increased from an average pre-test score of 70% to 80% at post-test, with 61% of participants scoring more than 80%.
- Entrepreneurship knowledge increased from an average pre-test score of 37% to 64% at post-test.
- Understanding of research approaches and tools for social innovation improved from 52% at the pre-test to 67% at the post-test.

SMALL GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM

SIHI Uganda ran an internal funding call extended to social innovation projects within the SIHI Uganda network. This was phased, with the first phase running from 18th October to 17th November 2023 while the second phase of the call ran from November 1st to 4th December 2023.

We sought to support existing community-based health innovation projects with seed funding, to strengthen their implementation capacity. All existing social innovation projects previously identified through open calls from 2015 – 2023 in Uganda, were eligible to apply. At the end of the submission deadlines, a total of 16 applications were received. Top applications will be announced shortly.



Mr. Joseph Akoli from Diversity Innovation Initiatives, accompanied by his sign language interpreter at the training workshop

UPCOMING EVENTS

ANNOUNCING THE WINNERS OF THE SMALL GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM - **FEBRUARY 2024**

NATIONAL SOCIAL INNOVATION IN HEALTH DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP - **APRIL 2024**

OPEN CALL FOR SOCIAL INNOVATIONS IN UGANDA - **APRIL 2024**

REGIONAL SOCIAL INNOVATION IN HEALTH INITIATIVE DISSEMINATION WORKSHOP - **MAY 2024**