



FRIENDS OF KISORO

Psycho-Social Support Group (PSSG) in Refugee
Transit Camps Project
IASWG SPARC Grant Endorsement and Funding
Final Report

November 19, 2018

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1.0 PROGRAM & PROJECT OVERVIEW

Program Name:	Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp Psychosocial Support Program
Funded Project Name:	Psycho-Social Support Group (PSSG) for Refugee Transit Camps Project
Reporting Period:	November 19, 2017 to November 19, 2018
Name of Implementing Agency:	Friends of Kisoro
Major Partner Organizations	OPM (Uganda), UNHCR, CAFOMI, MTI
Geographic Coverage	Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp in Nyakabande, Uganda

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CAFOMI	Care For Migrants	OPM	Office of the Prime Minister / Uganda
FROKI	Friends of Kisoro	PSA	Psychological First Aid
MHPSS	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
MTI	Medical Teams International	WHO	World Health Organization

1.1 Program Description

Friends of Kisoro (FROKI) was founded in January 2017, as a community-based organization in Kisoro, Uganda. Friends of Kisoro is committed to social justice through healthcare and mental health access for oppressed and marginalized communities. Its board consists of Ugandan and ex-patriot community members dedicated to enhancing and maintaining individual and community wellness through initiatives that reach underserved communities in and around Kisoro, Uganda.

Friends of Kisoro established its first direct service program in August 2017, a Psychosocial Support Program for refugees in the UNHCR Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp in the town Nyakabande in Kisoro District, Uganda. The aim of the Psychosocial Support Program is to promote mental health and psychosocial wellbeing through [1] Direct Services: individual- and community-oriented clinical activities for refugees and [2] Inter-Agency Initiatives: professional development and awareness-raising initiatives for multi-sector, camp-based personnel. Direct Services for refugees include psychosocial assessments, basic counseling, family counseling, support groups, crisis support, shelter visits, and referrals. Inter-Agency Initiatives for multi-sector staff include awareness-raising, trainings and capacity building.

1.2 Funded Project Description

The *Psycho-Social Support Group (PSSG) in Refugee Transit Camps* intervention is a response to growing recognition of the need to promote psychosocial wellbeing for refugees during their forced flight, in accordance with UNHCR recommendations to integrate mental health and psychosocial approaches into its protection activities. The manualized PSSG intervention aims to mitigate psychosocial effects of persecution and forced displacement, and its session topics are informed by common needs and experiences of acutely displaced refugees as well as factors that promote long-term recovery from crisis, noted in the WHO model of Psychological First Aid (PFA).

The *PSSG Project* included the development and launching of a manualized group work intervention for refugees residing in the Nyakabande Transit Camp in southwestern Uganda, by the community-based organization Friends of Kisoro. This *Project* is a culturally-syntonic, community-oriented response to unaddressed psychosocial support needs of refugees during the early stage of their forced migration. The *Project's* primary activity was to produce a manualized, group intervention that is facilitated twice weekly with a men's group and with a women's group in the Nyakabande Transit Camp. The group intervention objectives are (1) to enhance refugee's

awareness of psychosocial well-being, (2) to strengthen current individual and community resilience by expanding distress management skills, and (3) to promote community-building in order to reduce isolation and re-build support systems. Group clients are adult refugees who fled to Uganda following experiences of war, violence, threats, and other human rights abuses.

2.0 FUNDED PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Proposed Project Activity	Proposed Activity Detail	Actual Activity Conducted
<p>Development of the <i>Psycho-Social Support Group in Camps Transit</i> and Evaluation Processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nancy Murakami (program manager) conducts a literature review to guide the development of the model and evaluation measures for acutely displaced refugees Ms. Murakami collaborates closely through email communication and weekly phone calls with Charity Musiimenta (staff social worker) to develop the session content and evaluation measures Ms. Murakami develops a user-friendly, English-language group manual for the model, with some content translated into Kinyarwanda - done through a translation and back-translation process Ms. Murakami develops process and outcome evaluation measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of the group intervention was an iterative process that took approximately 10 months. Modifications to the content, structure, and length were informed by (1) group sessions that Charity Musiimenta (staff social worker) facilitated in the camp, (2) unexpected contextual factors (e.g. an ebola outbreak, an influx of refugees), and (3) the training and pilot implementation of the intervention. Intervention development mentorship was received by Nancy Murakami from Dr. Carol Tosone at New York University Silver School of Social Work. Editing support was received from Betsy Mills. Weekly telephonic supervision with Ms. Musiimenta included discussion of group work and developing intervention. Scheduling conflicts and crises in the camp led to occasional supervision cancellation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The intervention has been manualized. Camp staff speak multiple languages but English is the shared working language, so the manual was produced in English only. Future users of the manual are encouraged to translate it into the preferred language of their setting. • We determined that verbal, group evaluation approaches would be most realistic given manpower, language/literacy, and material resource limitations. The recommended evaluation questions are in the manual.
<p>Training on Model and Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Murakami trains Nyakabande Transit Camp-based Ugandan social workers in the model, the group manual, and implementation strategies • Current implementation science strategies will guide the model's implementation plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trainings were conducted in two phases. Phase 1: In March 2018, Ms. Murakami trained 4 camp-based psychosocial workers from 3 organizations in group intervention theory and its application in a camp-based setting. The training was entitled <i>Group Work: A Social Work Approach with Refugees</i> [ATTACHMENT 2]. Phase 2: In August 2018, Ms. Murakami trained 7 camp-based psychosocial workers from 3 organizations in the PSSG intervention, use of the manual, and implementation strategies. This phase-2 training included both didactic and experiential components which are described in detail in the intervention manual. • Implementation science strategies were applied, resulting in only Friends of Kisoro staff facilitating the full pilot run of the intervention, a reduced number of completed groups during the pilot, and a

		<p>momentary pause in continuing the intervention due to Ms. Musiimenta's current 2-month leave from the camp.</p>
<p>Facilitation of Pilot Groups and Support for Implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Murakami and Ms. Musiimenta will co-facilitate initial sessions of the first cycle of the model with women and the first cycle of the model with men. Sessions will occur twice weekly. Ms. Musiimenta will complete the implementation of the first cycles and conduct 2 additional cycles of the model with women and 2 additional cycles of the model with men Ms. Murakami and Ms. Musiimenta will review the model after each cycle and make any indicated modifications based on facilitators' clinical feedback, evaluation data, and any contextual changes in the camp Ms. Murakami will provide implementation support to Ms. Musiimenta throughout this process via weekly supervision calls 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Murakami, Ms. Musiimenta, and 2 additional trained psychosocial workers co-facilitated sessions during the intervention training. Ms. Musiimenta then continued facilitation of the remaining sessions in the pilot implementation. Frequency of sessions varies by availability of the facilitator, other activities in the camp, and weather. Only one full cycle of the group was run for men and for women during the pilot period. This was due primarily to availability of the facilitator, other activities in the camp, weather, and the facilitator's personal leave. During weekly telephonic supervision, Ms. Murakami and Ms. Musiimenta discussed group sessions that had been facilitated and adjusted the intervention manual. Examples of adjustments include inclusion of physical stretching, selection of group evaluation questions, and re-ordering sessions.
<p>Final Evaluation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Musiimenta will compile all remaining evaluation data from clients, facilitators, and other staff Ms. Murakami will analyze all evaluation data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation processes were much less robust than planned. Reasons for this include decision to not conduct individual evaluation measures, reduced manpower from limited participation of partner organizations in facilitating the groups, and other

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Murakami, in collaboration with Ms. Musiimenta, will produce a final version of the group manual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> activities in the camp needing to be prioritized and leading to some sessions ending early. In October 2018, the first official version of the intervention manual became publicly available [ATTACHMENT 1]
Final Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ms. Murakami, in collaboration with Ms. Musiimenta, will produce a report on the project and recommendations for continuing the model in Nyakabande Transit Camp and sharing it beyond the camp 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This final report is being submitted to IASWG. Recommendations for its adaptation and adoption in other settings are included in the intervention manual.

3.0 ORGANIZATION CONSIDERATIONS SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT

3.1 Staff

There were several staffing changes during the *Project* period. FROKI had between two and four psychosocial workers at any given time. These included a U.S.-based pro-bono program manager (Ms. Murakami, LCSW), a camp-based program social worker (Charity Mussimenta), a camp-based psychosocial program assistant, and an American social work intern.

3.2 Training and Supervision for Staff & Multi-Sector Partner Agencies

Training and supervision are highly valued by FROKI. The Program Manager provides weekly, telephonic clinical and administrative supervision to the camp-based social worker. This supervision has clinical, administrative, and supportive components. Extensive pre-deployment training was provided to the camp-based social worker, and training is integrated into weekly supervision as gaps in knowledge and skill are identified. The program social worker provided training and supervision to the program assistant and social work intern. Additional extensive in-person training from the program manager was provided in March 2018 and August 2018. These trainings covered a range of topics and included lectures, role-plays, question-and-answer sessions, observations of clinical practice with clients followed by feedback provided to the worker, modeling of clinical practice with clients followed by discussions of practice.

A training structure for PSSG was developed in order to train camp-based psychosocial workers to implement PSSG, and this training was completed in Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp with 7 psychosocial workers in August 2018. See the PSSG manual for a detailed description of the PSSG didactic and experiential training structure [ATTACHMENT 1].

3.3 Psychosocial Themes that Support the Development of PSSG

Friends of Kisoro reviewed the completed psychosocial assessments of all its clients assessed from January 1, 2018 to March 31, 2018 to identify themes in 2 particular areas: presenting problems (the reason the client is seeking services from FROKI psychosocial workers) and support systems (whether a client has family in in the camp, and whether a client has emotional support in the camp). These areas were selected to better understand whether the identified needs of Nyakabande Transit Camp refugees are similar to needs identified in other displaced populations and to determine whether services that focus on enhancing support systems, such as the PSSG, are indeed needed in this setting. A selection of outcomes from this record review is below.

The most frequently reported primary stressor of clients was death of a family member. Additionally, more than half of the clients reported having no family members with them in the camp, and more than a quarter reported having only children with them in the camp. Almost half reported having nobody in the camp they could talk to when feeling distressed.

These data seem to confirm that many refugees in this transit camp setting have limited psychosocial support systems and that many are coping with stressors related to separation and loss. The objectives of PSSG are to address these identified needs.

4.0 PROJECT EVALUATION

Robust process and outcome evaluation methods were planned in order to examine the group intervention's implementation and effectiveness, respectively. However, due to human resource, material resource, linguistic, and literacy constraints, the evaluation methods were significantly modified. Evaluation of every session is strongly encouraged, but the evaluation plan will vary greatly by availability of resources. Below is the evaluation process developed for the PSSG intervention and implemented during the PSSG training and pilot implementation.

1. *End-of-Group Call-Out*: At the end of every session, ask the group, “Did anyone like/enjoy/benefit from/feel helped by today’s group?” If yes, ask what they liked/enjoyed/benefited from/were helped by. Then ask, “Did anyone not like something about today’s group?” If yes, ask what they did not like. Finally ask the clients, “how can we make this group better in the future?”
2. Facilitators are encouraged to document the evaluation feedback received after each session. At the end of the 3-session group, facilitators should review all feedback and determine whether any modifications will be made for the next group.

The manual encourages future facilitators to develop pre- and post-group questionnaires that are self- or facilitator- administered that inquire about PSSG objectives and the specific session objectives, logistical and environmental aspects of the group (e.g. location, time, notification, language), and other topics that are relevant for evaluation in your setting. In Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp, however, we were unable to conduct this method of evaluation.

Throughout this *Project*, there was ongoing evaluation of the PSSG intervention manual content, session processes, and facilitator roles. During weekly supervision, the PSSG training, and the PSSG pilot implementation, the team discussed the goodness-of-fit of group topics, clients’ engagement, facilitator experiences, and influential contextual factors, and then changes were made to the PSSG manual accordingly. For example, the intervention was originally a 6-session intervention, however, refugees began being transferred out of the camp more quickly, so a 3-session intervention was determined to be a better fit for the transit camp.

5.0 DISSEMINATION PLANS

The PSSG manualized intervention was developed with the intention to share it with other social workers, psychosocial workers, and organizations in the refugee mental health field. Upon completion of the first publicly available version of the manual in October 2018, Friends of Kisoro began sharing the manual with refugee mental health and humanitarian emergency workers. Ms. Murakami presented the PSSG Intervention at the North American Refugee Health Conference in Portland Oregon in June 2018 and at the International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies 34th Annual Meeting in Washington D.C. in November 2018, in workshops entitled *Narratives from the Field: Development and Implementation of a Manualized Psychosocial Support Group for Refugee Transit Camps* [ATTACHMENT 3]. The PSSG manual was provided to workshop participants and other conference attendees, including leaders in the refugee mental health field. Additionally, a torture treatment program in New York City has expressed interest in conducting the PSSG intervention with its asylum-seeker population. Friends of Kisoro is prepared to share the PSSG Intervention Manual with other

refugee camps in Uganda and other settings of refugee support. If resources are available, Friends of Kisoro can provide training and implementation support to roll out this group intervention in other settings.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

Ms. Murakami is currently pursuing the possibility of conducting a pilot research study of the PSSG Intervention at Nyakabande Refugee Transit Camp.

Signature:



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