

## USAID'S HEALTH EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (HEARD) PROJECT



# The Journey of Life: A psychosocial support intervention for conflict-affected populations

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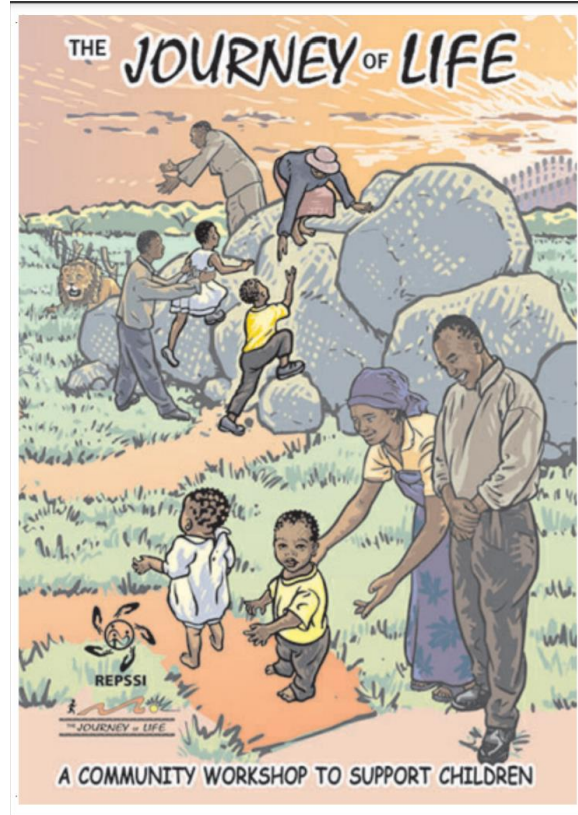
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SEVENTH GLOBAL  
SYMPOSIUM ON  
HEALTH SERVICES RESEARCH  
MARRAKECH, MOROCCO  
SEPTIMO SIMPOSIO  
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# Importance of Caregiver and Child Wellbeing



- Adult and child refugees often experience high levels of psychosocial distress
- Mental and physical healthcare services in refugee settings are limited
- Psychological stress of caregivers disproportionately affects children
- Social environments play a major role in the wellbeing of children and adolescents

Caregivers and community members have the ability to mitigate the challenges faced by children in the face of displacement and adversity



# Intervention Description

Journey of Life engages caregivers to improve their own mental health, caregiving knowledge, and skills to support children.

Program developer: REPSSI, adapted by WUSTL and TPO Uganda

Number of sessions: 12

Number of participants per group: 10

# Implementation Strategy

- Journey of Life training for social workers
- Community mobilization activities
- Weekly field staff meetings
- Biweekly team meetings
- Feedback sessions with staff and translators
- Field note audit and feedback
- Direct observations





# Evaluation plan



Hybrid effectiveness-implementation quasi-experimental waitlist control design

Quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the following:

- Effect
- Feasibility
- Acceptability
- Implementation

# Study Design

- **Inclusion Criteria**
  - Kiryandongo settlement residents (male and female)
  - 18 years or older with caregiving responsibilities for at least one person under age 18 during baseline data collection
- **Data Collection**
  - 27 data collectors from Kiryandongo were recruited from across ethnic groups, received 2-weeks of training
  - TPO Uganda staff worked with village health teams (VHTs) to advertise the program
  - All participants provided written consent
  - Data collected in Juba Arabic, Dinka, Nuer, and Acholi languages
- **Measures of Interest**
  - Primary: Mental Distress (Kessler-6)
  - Secondary: Social Support (Medical Outcomes Study), functioning (WHODAS), Warmth and Affection subscale (PARQ), Undifferentiated Rejection (PARQ), attitudes toward Violence Against Children (VAC subscale of the Child Protection Index)

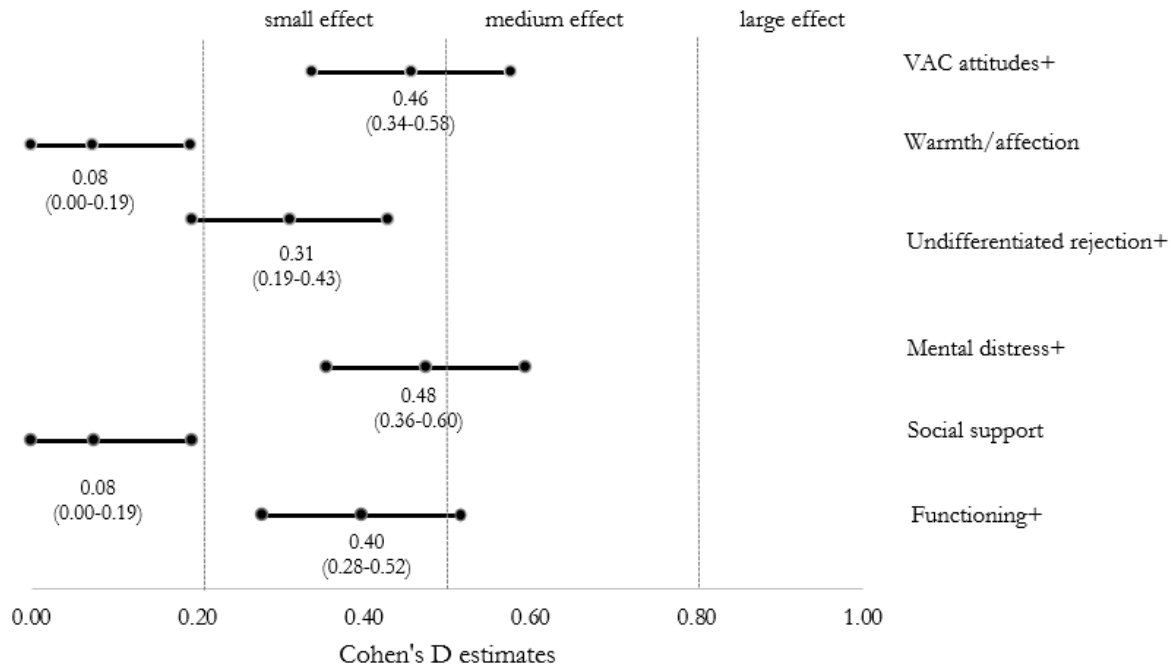
# Descriptive Statistics (N=1137)

Variable	%	n
Age		
18-25 years old	8.90%	101
26-35 years old	35.86%	407
36-45 years old	38.33%	435
55 or older	16.92%	192
Income source		
Farming	37.74%	428
Business or salaried employment	5.56%	63
Cash from INGOs	49.47%	561
Remittances or no income	7.23%	82
School attainment		
Never attended school	48.19%	546
Less than primary	31.16%	353
Primary or higher	20.65%	234
Number of children in care		
None	3.96%	45
1-2 children	16.71%	190
3-6 children	55.15%	627
More than 6 children	24.19%	275

Variable	%	n
Years in Uganda		
Three or less years	5.39%	60
Four to ten years	85.62%	953
More than 10 years	8.98%	100
Intervention Group		
Intervention	52.34%	593
Waitlist Control	47.66%	540
Gender		
Male	7.54%	85
Female	92.46%	1042
Experience of food insecurity (past 3-mo)		
No	17.37%	197
Yes	82.63%	937
Originating from South Sudan		
No	3.96%	45
Yes	96.04%	1092
Married or cohabitating		
No	30.17%	343
Yes	69.83%	794

# Programmatic Outcomes: Effectiveness

Forest plot of intervention effects, adjusted, baseline subtracted by endline scores





# Findings: Implementation



## FEASIBILITY

- Recruitment: 1,323 participants
- Retention: 76% of participants attended at least 10/12 sessions
- COVID-19 related challenges
- Extended delivery of intervention

## ACCEPTABILITY

- Participant satisfaction
- Determinants (barriers and facilitators)

# Community Action

**Through the intervention, community developed strategies to promote child protection.**

Examples of action plan ideas include:

- Savings groups
- Community gardening
- Pooling resources to hire a tutor for their children
- Managing community disputes
- Speaking to others about how to support and talk to children

# Next Steps

*Encouraging uptake*

## Publications

- Baseline
- Effectiveness
- Implementation science
- Field report

## Dissemination workshops

- Field-level intersectoral workshops
- Organizational workshops
- National meetings

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