

# Forum 2023 Report

## Forum on Child and Adolescent Global Health and Capacity Building: *Ten Years of Creating Realistic Hope (Suubi) and Real Impact*

June 19-27, 2023

Kampala and Masaka, Uganda



SECURING OUR  
CHILDREN'S  
FUTURE TODAY



## Acknowledgements

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## Executive Summary

The International Center for Child Health and Development (ICHAD) held its second annual Forum on Child and Adolescent Global Health Research and Capacity Building, on June 19-27, 2023 in Kampala and Masaka, Uganda. With the theme *Ten Years of Creating Realistic Hope (Suubi) and Real Impact*, this year's Forum brought together an energetic and diverse group of community-engaged global health research trainees, guests, and honored speakers through discussions, presentations, training and workshops facilitated by regional and global experts, as well as through field visits to policymakers, partners, and research data collection sites.

Over 35 trainees and alumni from ICHAD's four NIH-funded research training programs—ACHIEVE, CHILD-GRF, LEAD, and RRT—participated, as well as program directors, co-investigators, featured faculty presenters, implementing partners, guests, and other stakeholders from across Uganda, the United States, Kenya, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Azerbaijan. ICHAD also welcomed the Ugandan Minister of Health and her representatives, as well as representatives from Makerere University, and District-level government. Over 200 community representatives including school teachers/head teachers, parents, community health workers (CHWs) from several ICHAD studies, religious leaders, NGO representatives, researchers, and potential collaborators were in attendance as well.

The [objectives of the Forum](#) were to:

- Bring together trainees from across our four NIH-funded training programs (ACHIEVE, CHILD-GRF, LEAD, and RRT) to learn together and enhance their skills in global health research
- Foster bi-directional exchange among researchers from the Global North and the Global South interested in child and adolescent behavioral health, HIV, and other areas of global health to inform sustainable and scalable programs and policies in low-resource settings
- Accelerate scientific progress in this area through written scholarly products
- Engage in meetings with policymakers to fortify existing and build new connections to ensure our results inform the policies that impact families.

Forum highlights include:

- Celebrating ICHAD's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as a research center
- Keynote speech from Hon. Jane Ruth Aceng, Uganda Minister of Health
- Visit to Parliament of the Republic of Uganda to meet policymakers in the areas of child health and wellbeing
- Discussion panels featuring community research study participants
- Final presentations by Cohort 2 of CHILD-GRF trainees nearing the end of their three year-appointments in the program
- Mock review session for CHILD-GRF Cohort 3 trainees to provide peer feedback on their pilot research proposals
- Site visits to schools, health clinics, and community sites where ICHAD's intervention research is conducted

Our dedicated staff worked tirelessly to deliver a memorable and transformative event that brought emerging and established experts together to catalyze innovative approaches to improving the lives of children, adolescents, and their caregivers in a range of global settings.

In partnership,

Fred Ssewamala

## Ten Years of Creating Realistic Hope (Suubi) and Real Impact

### Keynote Address from the Honorable Jane Ruth Aceng



*Uganda Minister of Health, the Honorable Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng*

Uganda Minister of Health, the Honorable Dr. Jane Ruth Aceng, opened the Forum with congratulations to ICHAD for their ten years as a high impact and development research center with primary focus on youth and families [Uganda]. She noted the impressive progress and academic distinctions made by ICHAD, as well as the real-life impact on global health in Uganda.

The honorable minister noted the many challenges faced by child and adolescents in Uganda and across Sub-Saharan Africa including poverty, sanitation, nutrition, shelter, and education, which in addition to recent communicable diseases such as COVID-19, further exacerbate health and mental health challenges. Dr.

Aceng shared data on the multiple intersecting challenges, including poverty, HIV, the COVID-19 pandemic, and interpersonal violence, faced by children and adolescents in Uganda, and reflected on how these challenges interfere with their healthy development and overall well-being. However, she exclaimed that Uganda is a very strong country with a record of leading the region in several key areas including health, education and health policy.

Dr. Aceng cited a 2017 Lancet Report noting the fact that only 35% of scientific publications addressing research interventions in low and middle-income countries include authors from low and middle-income settings, and noted the need for additional infrastructure to support scholars from the African continent to obtain extramural funding. She commended ICHAD's capacity building work to address these issues through their NIH-funded training programs. Dr. Aceng called upon the trainees and Forum participants to use their time at the Forum to "discuss bridging the gap between research, implementation and policy; how to overcome implementation challenges; leverage data science to contribute to sustainable solutions, and support the creation of robust collaborations among scientists, NGOs, field and program implementers, and policy makers not only between the Global North and South, but also within the Global South."

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**"It is therefore critical to train the next generation of researchers who are well-versed working in multidisciplinary teams and communicating across disciplines to optimize health outcomes for populations."**

**—Uganda Minister of Health,  
The Honorable Jane Ruth Aceng**

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The Ministry of Health enthusiastically kicked off the Forum to building the knowledge and capacity of Ugandan, African, and global researchers who will move this work forward. In closing, she shared words of gratitude and calls for collaboration to move forward this vital work to improve the lives and outcomes for young people and families across the globe.

## ICHAD Conference Sessions

### Panel: Engaging Policy Makers in Dissemination and Implementation Science

AfriChild Center Executive Director Mr. Timothy Opobo moderated a panel of research faculty and policymakers that shared their approaches, successes, and lessons learned in disseminating research and forming policy. This panel consisted of:

- **Dr. Muthoni Mathai**, University of Nairobi, ACHIEVE PI and Mentor
- **Dr. Gertrude Nakigozi**, Rakai Health Science Program
- **Dr. Jessica Nsungway**, Uganda Ministry of Health
- **Mr. Mondo Kyateka**, Commissioner for Youth and Children, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

Mr. Opobo led the panelists through a series of questions regarding their experiences with research implementation and policy implementation. The discussion included how academics are uniquely positioned to disseminate results and how to work with partners through early connection even before research commences and regular updates through the process. Other key points included addressing the gap between the implementation of findings through policy after research is conducted, which often stems from a lack of connection to policymakers during the process. From the policymakers' perspective, panelists touched on the timing of the release of information, key data, cost, and other important factors in the implementation of the research into policy. The recurring theme was the need for continued advancements in implementation science, particularly in Uganda.

## Visits to Policymakers and Partners in Kampala

### Visit to Uganda's Parliament

With supportive coordination from the AfriChild Center and the Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Children, Forum participants visited the Uganda Parliament building in Kampala on the second day. Participants met face to face with several Members of Parliament who form national policies around children's health and wellbeing. This unique experience allowed participants to tour the halls and chambers of Parliament and to meet participate with policy makers who discussed their roles in supporting children's health in Uganda. Participants were also able to pose questions and discuss policy development in Uganda. The conversation opened greater dialogue for participants on working in similar challenging situations in other low resources settings, and brought the policy makers perspective front and center to the participants.



*Trainees, staff, and guests engage in dialogue with members of Parliament following a tour of the Parliamentary chambers*



## Visit to Makerere College of Health Sciences



*Noeline Nakasujja, Mary McKay, Charles Ssentongo, Damalie Nakanjako, and Fred Ssewamala at Makerere University College of Health Science*

ICHAD and the Makerere College of Health Sciences maintain a long-held partnership to support research interests and activities to enhance the lives of children and adolescents in Uganda as well as programs to train the next cadre of global health research scientists. To highlight this impactful partnership between Dr. Fred Ssewamala and Dr. Noeline Nakasujja, the Forum participants traveled to the Makerere University College of Health Sciences' Davie's Lecture Theatre on the third day of the Forum. The participants were welcomed to Makerere by Dr. Nakasujja as well as Dr. Damalie Nakanjako, Principal for the College of Health Sciences, and a representative of the Vice Chancellor's office, Dr. Charles Ssentongo, Academic Registrar.

The opening remarks highlighted Makerere's long-standing reputation as one of the highest regarded universities in Eastern Africa and the collaboration between Washington University in St. Louis and Makerere University. After the opening of the session, a video presentation by Laura Benoist, Director of the McDonnell International Scholars Academy at Washington University in St. Louis, highlighted the opportunities for bi-directional learning between students at Washington University and Makerere University. McDonnell International Scholar and ICHAD training program trainee, Ms. Flavia Namuwonge (RRT cohort 5), spoke about her experience as an International Scholar in the program. During the final session of the day, Dr. Noeline led three past and current ICHAD training program trainees, Dr. Ronald Olum (ACHIEVE cohort 1), Dr. Anita Arinda (CHILD-GRF cohort 1), and Dr. Racheal Nalunkuma (ACHIEVE cohort 2) through a series of questions to delve into their experiences at Makerere and their connections to the ICHAD training programs. This rich discussion shared common themes of gratitude towards Makerere for helping to prepare them to engage in programs such as ACHIEVE and CHILD-GRF, and their plans to leverage this additional training towards their future goals. Forum participants departed Makerere following lunch on the grounds of the College of Health Sciences.

## Research Training Sessions

### Trainee Panel: Showcase of Research Training Alumni

This panel consisted of four current and recent alumni research trainees representing ICHAD's research training programs: ACHIEVE, CHILD-GRF, LEAD, and RRT. ICHAD Co-Director Dr. Proscovia Nabunya, Associate Professor at Washington University in St. Louis, moderated this panel of esteemed alumni and trainees.

Panelists included:

- **Dr. Raymond Atwebembere:** CHILD-GR Fellow, Cohort 2
- **Dr. Ronald Olum:** ACHIEVE Alumni, Cohort 1
- **Dr. Massy Mutumba:** LEAD Alumni, Cohort 1
- **Ms. Josephine Nabayinda:** RRT Alumni, Cohort 4

Dr. Proscovia Nabunya led the panelists through a variety of discussion topics regarding their motivation for and experience with participating in ICHAD's research training programs. The panelists provided the audience with an in-depth understanding of how the programs have supported their career goals and supported them with skill and resources to advance their research. Panelists also shared how their experience with mentorship through the respective training programs has enhanced their careers as independent researchers.

## CHILD-GRF Cohort 2 Final Presentations



*Cohort 2 CHILD-GRF Fellow, Dr. Yvonne Karamagi, receives her certificate of completion from Program Directors Dr. Mary McKay and Dr. Fred Ssewamala*

Fellows from the second cohort of CHILD-GRF (2020-2023) delivered final presentations of their work on their pilot research projects during the Forum in Masaka. They shared the background on their areas of research, specific aims of their projects, the progress made, and the next steps towards project completion. They shared how participation in the CHILD-GRF program advanced their research skills, professional development, as well as personal accomplishments. Lastly, a question and answer session enabled the audience to share feedback. This exercise allowed the fellows to gain insightful feedback to move forward in their projects and grow in their expertise of defending their work for funding and publication in the future. Trainee presenters included:

**Yvonne Karamagi, MBChB, MPH**

**Mentor:** Dickens Akena, MBChB, MMed

**Title:** *A Qualitative Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on the Mental Health of Adolescents Living with HIV (15-19 yrs.) at MildMay Uganda Hospital*

**Richard Mpango, PhD, MSc**

**Mentor:** Eugene Kinyanda, MBChB, MMed, PhD

**Title:** *Adaptation of the New Forest Parenting Program (NFPP) for HIV infected children in Uganda*

**Raymond Atwebembere, MBChB**

**Mentor:** James Mugisha, PhD

**Title:** *Prevalence and Factors Associated with Suicide Behavior amongst ALWHIV in Low Social Economic Settings in Masaka, Central Uganda*

## Training Sessions

### Emerging Research on Refugee Health

**Presenter:** Dr. Nhial Tutlam, *Assistant Professor, Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis*



*Dr. Nhial Tutlam begins the training sessions at the Forum with his presentation on refugee mental health*

Dr. Nhial Tutlam, ICHAD LEAD Global Training Program and ACHIEVE Training Program Alumnus, and ICHAD Associate Director of Research, and tenure-track Assistant Professor at the Brown School of Washington University in St. Louis, was uniquely positioned to kick off the first training presentation. Dr. Tutlam's session focused on his passionate work in with refugee health research. He provided a background and context for the area of his research focus – refugees escaping conflict and settling in northern Uganda. Dr. Tutlam laid out the significance of his research to study the youth in this population, and the work to form vital partnerships to conduct this intervention research in

Bidibidi Refugee Camp. Dr. Tutlam encouraged trainees to think long-term as he shared his experience and paths to this work, and presented his next steps in conducting his work for lasting impact.

### **Good Clinical Practices and Responsible Conduct of Research**

**Presenter: Dr. Tom Lutalo, Assistant Director of Research, Chair of Research Ethics Committee, Uganda Virus Research Institute**

Dr. Tom Lutalo shared his expertise and experience in the field. Dr. Lutalo presented on the importance of research ethics and the role of good clinical practices (GCP) to protect the dignity, rights, and welfare of research participants. His talk provided trainees a historical look at the need for ethics review by citing numerous cases of ethical violations in research. Dr. Lutalo guided participants to think critically about ethical issues which are not always considered, and led the participants through key elements of GCP in research. Dr. Lutalo concluded the presentation focusing on the critical consequences of ethical violations on patient lives, legal repercussions, and professional growth.

### **Special Interest Session: Research Budget Justification**

**Presenter: Mr. Mordecai Tayebwa, Head of Grants, Makerere University**

Mr. Mordecai Tayebwa returned to the 2023 Forum to give a comprehensive presentation on research budget development and narrative budget justification that began with a comical look at each individual's role/persona in budget preparation represented as an animal. From there, trainees were led through understanding the function of budgets in research, and areas where additional information should be sought, as well as the budgeting process. He also provided guidance on direct and indirect costs as budget line items, as well as the best practice of referring to the notice of funding announcement or speaking directly with the funders for budgetary clarity and confirmation. The presentation was concluded with information on writing an effective budget justification as an essential piece to any grant application.



*Mordecai Tayebwa examines the importance of a strong budget and budget justification for research grants during his session*





**Dr. Rachel Brathwaite breaks down the complexities of predictive modeling and lasso regression during her special interest sessions**

### **Special Interest Session: Introduction to Predictive Modeling**

**Presenter: Dr. Rachel Brathwaite, Research Assistant Professor, Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis**

Dr. Rachel Brathwaite's presentation was offered twice as special interest sessions during the Forum to allow trainees to attend either in Kampala or Masaka, and provided an introduction to prediction modeling and LASSO regression. Starting off with the practical application and uses of predictive modeling, Dr. Brathwaite was delved into the steps needed to develop a prediction model. She then moved her presentation to LASSO (Least Absolute Shrinkage and Selection Operator) regression and defining this complex process including cross-validation, overfitting, model estimation, and comparing LASSO and ordinary least square regression. Dr. Brathwaite's detailed examples of the model in use with helpful tips in implementation in various datasets were highly regarded by the participants. From there, Dr. Brathwaite discussed the model evaluation and model validation of the LASSO model as the final steps of predictive modeling.

### **Special Interest Session: Cost-Effectiveness**

**Presenters: Dr. Yesim Tozan, Assistant Professor of Global Health, New York University**

Dr. Yesim Tozan provided a robust workshop on cost-effectiveness research to support global health research. During this session, trainees explored cost-effectiveness analysis in priority settings among competing health intervention programs and policies, and critiqued published cost effectiveness analysis of intervention policies using while using widely acceded evaluation guidelines. She led the trainees through reviewing economic frameworks to guide their own work or reading other publications using these economic frameworks, and through discussions regarding cost and ethics. Dr. Tozan shared with the participants her vast experiences, which included working with cost effectiveness to impact policy, and also discussed the challenges in defining cost in low resource settings and the need for unique design.



**Mr. Ryan Lindsay shares evidence-based approaches to preventing suicide to the Forum participants at the Brovad Hotel**

### **Suicide Prevention: From Ideation to Action: 20 years of Practice Insights**

**Presenters: Ryan Lindsay, Associate Professor of Practice, Chair of Mental Health Concentration, Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis**

Mr. Ryan Lindsay's presentation focused his career's work with individuals who live with chronic suicidality and their journeys to build a life worth living. Mr. Lindsay provided the trainees with the staggering rates and trends of suicidality in the US, and then focused on key theories useful for clinical intervention and management. These theories included ideation to action theories such as Interpersonal Theory of Violence, Integrated Motivational Volitional Model, and Three Step Theory. Mr. Lindsay also shared the importance of promoting the therapeutic benefits of safety planning through safety planning intervention. With his vast professional

experience in this area, Mr. Lindsay shared with the trainees a large sampling of proven theories and models. Mr. Lindsay closed the session offering his key insights for addressing suicide prevention based his extensive expertise from over 20 years in the field.

## Using Social Media as an Academic

**Presenter:** Dr. Ijeoma Opara, *Assistant Professor of Public Health; Assistant Clinical Professor, Yale School of Public Health, Yale University*

Dr. Ijeoma Opara shared her strategic insights and her experiences in leveraging social media accounts to promote herself professionally during her training presentation at the Forum. She shared intentional tips on the power of Twitter in academia, the importance of creating your own narrative, growing one's following with key tweets, as well as creating a social media brand for each researcher's lab. Dr. Opara's insightful and tangible tips guided trainees through moving their personal accounts into a professional space, and understanding the power of analytics during this journey. Dr. Opara gave concrete, unique examples to the trainees on dissemination of her research and promotion of her professional impact in their field, and left the participants praising the session and seeking additional insight during the Q&A to leverage their own accounts into promoting their research careers.

## Special Interest Session: Methodological Commitments for Impact: Constructivist Grounded Theory Tools, Tips, and Techniques

**Presenter:** Dr. Saltanat Childress, *Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, the University of Texas at Arlington*

Through her special interest session, Dr. Saltanat Childress provided participants an introduction to, as well as the characteristics and philosophical basis of, Grounded Theory (GT). Dr. Childress layered her presentation with questions to spur critical thinking among participants regarding the research question process to help them identify the correct methodological approach for their particular research questions. She moved into the background of Grounded Theory, and then offered specific examples of various theories. Dr. Childress provided the trainees key components of Grounded Theory, and concluded the session with an in-depth review of theoretical sampling and coding within this framework. This session provided an exhaustive look at GT for trainees seeking to find the appropriate methodology for their work.



*Dr. Saltanat Childress discusses Grounded Theory as methodological approach at her special interest session at the Hotel Brovad*

## Special Interest Session: Writing a Career Development (K) Award

**Presenter:** Dr. Nhial Tutlam, *Assistant Professor, Brown School, Washington University in St. Louis*

Dr. Nhial Tutlam's special interest session presentation on writing a career development award through NIH was well received and resonated deeply with trainees seeking similar research trajectories. Dr. Tutlam carefully framed his session based on his experience writing a K01, including strategies for writing a successful career grant, the NIH review criteria, essential budget aspects, and the required sections of a K award for NIH. He also provided additional information on the K43 career award for trainees from an LMIC, as it is similar to a K01 in many ways. Dr. Tutlam's first-hand and recent experience with the application and review cycles, as well as where to begin the process, was highly relevant to the participants during the session. His recount of the review criteria used by NIH and the scoring led to many questions by the participants who had not yet engaged with this review process. By providing the concrete steps Dr. Tutlam used during his application process, he gave the participants a foundation upon which to build their own applications in the future.

## Site Visits in Masaka

In order to provide a real-world, practical component for trainees' understanding of conducting global health research studies, the Forum included visits to many of ICHAD's research sites around the greater

Masaka region. Trainees, staff, faculty, and guests had the option to visit a fishing village's health center or a local school for a full day site visit, and then everyone joined in visiting additional schools and an HIV hotspot center for the final day of the Forum. The experiences allowed everyone to get a more comprehensive understanding of the issues facing the diverse populations in that area, and also to see how the work of ICHAD's studies are making a difference in the lives of the participants.

The four primary schools visited by the Forum participants were all affiliated with ICHAD's Suubi4Stronger Families intervention study. These schools included: Bugonzi Primary School in Kalungu District; Kyotera Primary School in Kyotera District; Butende Primary School in Masaka District; Kimaanya Primary School in Masaka District

The clinics and healthcare settings visited as part of the Forum were all affiliated with ICHAD's clinic-based studies which include M-Suubi, MOST, Suubi+Adherence R2. The healthcare facilities included: Kasensero Health Center III in Kyotera District; Villa Maria Hospital in Kalungu District; and Rakai Health Sciences Program in Kyotera District.

Trainees and guests were also able to engage with vulnerable populations, including a local women's group where many members engaged in commercial sex work and participated in ICHAD's Kyaterekera study. Forum participants were honored to be welcomed into a closed setting where the ICHAD team conducts outreach and intervention as part of their work in HIV hotspots.

## Conference and Training Sessions in Masaka, Uganda

### Opening Remarks

**Presenter: Dr. Anita Kabarambi, Director of Research for ICHAD Uganda, and ACHIEVE Trainee**

Dr. Anita Kabarambi welcomed Forum participations to Masaka and emphasized that achieving dreams requires dedicated effort and perseverance despite challenges. She mentioned that pursuing one's dreams can be tough and one might feel like giving up, but having a supportive community can make the journey more manageable and thrilling. She highlighted ICHAD's journey from a dream to a successful 10-year milestone, attributing its achievements to the collective support and contributions of attendees and partners.

### Welcoming Remarks from the Director ICHAD

**Speaker: Dr. Fred Ssewamala, Founding Director, ICHAD**

Dr. Ssewamala welcomed members from all over the globe mentioning guests from the USA, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, and Azerbaijan and thanked them for honoring the invitation to be present at the Forum. In his speech, he conveyed that ICHAD values accountability by actively engaging with communities. *"We see ourselves not only as researchers but also as individuals committed to real impact. We don't just collect data and leave; instead, we return to share how the data was used, the findings, and any identified gap,"* he said. This commitment to engagement and transparency is why over 270 people attended the forum from all over the globe.

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*We see ourselves not only as researchers but also as individuals committed to real impact. We don't just collect data and leave; instead, we return to share how the data was used, the findings, and any identified gap."*

*– Dr. Fred Ssewamala, Founding Director, ICHAD*

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He expressed gratitude towards various individuals and groups involved in ICHAD's work. This included recognition for the ICHAD team's efforts in coordinating work in Uganda, the trainees who come to learn, the head teachers, and the contact teachers who act as champions for ICHAD in the schools where the Center collaborates. Dr. Ssewamala also extended appreciation to the District Education Officers (DEO), church leaders who permit their schools to be part of the projects, as well as local government figures like the LCV (Local Council V) and CAO (Chief Administrative Officer) for their support. Given the collaboration with the late Bishop Kaggwa of Masaka who opened the door to ICHAD's initial projects, Dr. Ssewamala mentioned that ICHAD, along with several other stakeholders, have come up with an Educational Fund that is targeted towards young people who don't have enough resources to be able to afford school. This effort is in commemoration of the Late Bishop Kaggwa who loved education and was one of the first community leaders to work with ICHAD.

## Welcoming Remarks

**Speaker: Mary McKay, Vice Provost for Interdisciplinary Initiatives, Washington University in St. Louis**



*Dr. Mary McKay welcomes participants to the field-based portion of the Forum at the Hotel Brovad in Masaka,*

Dr. Mary McKay, an instrumental and longtime supporter and collaborator of ICHAD, welcomed participants to the Forum and to Masaka. She emphasized that creating a positive impact on the entire community requires managing conflicts and diverse viewpoints related to childcare, family support, and education. Despite the challenges, she highlighted the importance of this effort. She credited the collaborators present at the forum, stating that their involvement is essential for achieving this goal. She also acknowledged the

indispensable contributions of all attendees and study participants in making this work achievable.

## Panel on Experience with ICHAD Interventions:

Phionah Namatovu, ICHAD Director of Data, Communication and Dissemination, moderated this panel. She opened by presenting on several interventions that ICHAD has implemented over time, including Multiple Family Groups (MFG), Family Economic Empowerment, and Income Generating Activities (IGA). The panelists were invited to discuss their experiences collaborating with ICHAD on various interventions.

The panelists included, from left:

- Rev. Fr. Ssemwanga – A Suubi4Her guardian representing caregivers
- Judith Naluyima – A Headteacher from Matala Secondary School
- Cissy Nagawa Bukka – A Parent Peer from Butende Primary School
- Mawanda Ernest – A SMART-Africa study participant



*Panelists share their experiences participating in ICHAD studies*



- **Najjuuko Latifah – A Suubi4Her study participant**

Panelists shared different experiences engaging in the interventions. A few experiences shared included: “The one most important thing that I learned participating in the “Amaka Amasanyufu” study is that family is not only made up of parents but also children and these children need to be involved at every level of decision-making in a home.” – **Rev Fr. Ssemwanga**

“Initially, at the start of the sessions, families hesitated to openly communicate and struggled to share their experiences. There was a lack of respect and strained relationships among family members. However, after the completion of all sixteen sessions, a noticeable positive transformation was realized within these families. These sessions significantly enhanced the overall happiness among family members. The pillars of the sessions i.e., Respectful communication, Responsibilities, Rules, Relationships, Social support and stress were of great importance in improving family functioning.” – **Nagawa Cissy Bukka**

“Our parents used to be very tough and unapproachable but after attending the sessions this changed completely. They learned how to listen and communicate with us which made it easy for us to air out our demands.” – **Mawanda Earnest**

### **Keynote Address**

**Speaker: Bishop Serverus Jjumba, Bishop of Masaka Catholic Diocese**



***Bishop Serverus Jjumba addresses the Forum***

Bishop Serverus Jjumba extended a warm welcome to all attendees of the conference. He expressed gratitude to Dr. Ssewamala and shared that the partnership between Masaka Diocese and ICHAD began in 2004 when it was known as SEED, collaborating with Fr. Kato Bakulu. He also acknowledged the collaboration with various partners, including Reach The Youth Uganda, Mildmay Uganda, schools, and health clinics. He highlighted ICHAD's significant achievements in more than 100

schools over the past two decades, covering primary, secondary, and vocational training institutions within the Masaka region. He emphasized the evident positive outcomes of their work. Additionally, he noted that study participants have greatly benefited from ICHAD's support, including payment of school fees, school lunches, scholastic materials, uniforms, textbooks, writing tools, exercise books, and peer mentorship. He pledged more support with ICHAD for the benefit of the diocese and the nation at large.

### **Stake Holders' Panel: Dissemination and Scaling up ICHAD's Intervention**

**Panelists, from right:**

- **Juliet Mayanja Najjumba, Assistant CAO Masaka District**
- **Sylvia Grace Nakanwagi, DEO, Masaka District**
- **Rev. Fr. Kato Joseph**
- **John Ssentume, Head Teacher, Kyotera Primary School**

Moderated by Dr. Abel Atwebembere, panelists were invited to share about the impact of ICHAD work in the community, how the different offices can supplement ICHAD work, and how stake holders can participate in dissemination of findings. Mr. John Ssentume shared that ICHAD programs greatly impacted schools in the region and he noted some ways in which they were impacted and these included; enhanced pupil retention, greater parental engagement, improved student behavior, peer learning, and expanded insights gained through participation in ICHAD conferences.



***Dr. Abel Atwebembere moderated the stakeholder panel***

“The impact in the community is overwhelming, especially the capacity building, the support in terms of lunch given to pupils, scholastic materials, counseling, and testing,” assistant CAO, Ms. Juliet Mayanja Najjumba shared.

The discussion among panelists and the audience touch on a variety of topics including how the research team might experience some resistance mostly when a contact person working with the team is transferred to another school, as well as how results from the intervention are shared within the community.

## **Panel: The Story of ICHAD**

### **Panelists**

- **Father Joseph Kato Bakulu, parish priest at Bisanje**
- **Ms. Grace Kigozi, Rakai Health Sciences Program (RHSP)**
- **Dr. Abel Mwebembezi, Director, Reach the Youth Uganda**
- **Mr. Davis Ssenabulya, Programs Coordinator, Villa Maria Hospital**



***Dr. Ssewamala moderates an engaging discussion about ICHAD's evolution as a community based intervention research center***

As the panel moderator, Dr. Fred Ssewamala extended a warm welcome and introduced his colleagues and special guests. He also greeted the attending trainees and explained their purpose in Uganda – to gain insights from their experiences.

Dr. Ssewamala shared with the attendees that the current celebration marks ten years of achievements since the Center's official adoption of the name "ICHAD." He highlighted that his personal research journey had commenced as far back as

2004. Stressing the significance of safeguarding of human subjects, he emphasized to the trainees the necessity of promoting strong relationships with the communities where researchers operate. He took on the role of panel moderator, leading discussions that included long time partners of ICHAD.

In trying to understand what research means, panelists were faced with a task to share accomplishments over the years, as well as potential pitfalls in community-based research. Mrs. Grace Kigozi shared that the community dislikes it when researchers conduct studies but do not share their findings; yet, the community welcomes it when you bring back feedback from your research findings. Dr. Fred cautioned trainees that researchers must conduct their work ethically and urged researchers to always follow their protocols while conducting research. The panel wrapped up with Q and A between the panelists and the audience.

### Experiences with the ICHAD interventions

#### Panelists:

- Mr. Mayega Emmanuel, *Study participant Suubi+Adherence, has been engaged with ICHAD for 8 years under Kabira Health Center IV*
- Mr. Gonzaga Ssendiibwa, *Grade 5 teacher, Kyakkonda Primary School*
- Ms. Cissy Nakalanda, *Participant of the Obuvumu study as the women secretary*
- Ms. Ruth Nakimbugwe – *Facilitator across ICHAD studies, currently working with the MSuubi study*
- Ms. Diana Kyobutungi, *Contact person and Community Collaborative Member from the Kyaterekera study who has worked with ICHAD for five years now*



*ICHAD study participants discuss how engagement in the studies impacted their lives, families, and communities*

Moderated by Josephine Nabayinda, ICHAD Research Associate and PhD student at Washington University in St. Louis, this panel highlighted the individuals who have participated in ICHAD study interventions. Each panelist described how they experienced the interventions, and the impacts their participation had on their lives, families, and communities. Some observations shared include:

“As a Young and Adolescent Peer Supporter (YAPS), I had to deal with stigma myself. When you live with HIV, stigma is a big reason why one may cease using drugs. As a result, it is my responsibility to assist my agetmates with sticking to their antiretroviral treatment.” – **Study participant**

“Being an educator on the M-Suubi project conducted by ICHAD was a great learning experience. I had to inform my supervisors about the ICHAD concept on stigma-related issues so that the program could be added to the school workplan. I educated my colleagues about maintaining confidentiality with HIV-positive students to enhance adherence and reduce stigma.” – **Study educator**

“I needed to go back to my school and revise the messages that were displayed throughout the school. As an example, the message "AIDS kills" was changed to "AIDS and other diseases can cause death.”



## – Study educator

Audience members appreciated learning about the immediate and long-term impacts ICHAD's intervention research has had on individuals within the participating communities.

### Key Messages: Long-term sustainability of ICHAD's research and interventions:

- Dr. Ssewamala explained that following a particular research study, researchers should create evidence and subsequently communicate the findings to the community and the government.
- The M-Suubi educator added his perspective, mentioning that prior to involving the likes of Dr. Ssewamala and others in discussions about sustainability, it's important to begin with ourselves and consider the topics we commonly discuss.
- Collaborators with whom ICHAD works have gone on to incorporate the many programs they have learned from ICHAD, and so the community does not require ICHAD to be present for these programs to continue and be put in place.

### Closing Remarks

**Speaker: Hon. Florence Namayanja, Mayor of Masaka City**

Mayor Namayanja thanked Dr. Ssewamala and ICHAD for choosing the greater Masaka region, including the city of Masaka, to implement their research. She closed the Forum sessions in Masaka with encouragement for continued collaboration for the benefit of children and families in the region.



*Masaka Mayor Florence Namayanja closes the Forum sessions in Masaka with words of gratitude and encouragement to*

### Entertainment and Sightseeing

Between training sessions and discussion panels, Forum participants relaxed and enjoyed entertainment that highlighted the best of Ugandan music and dance. In addition, some took the opportunity to sightsee and explore the region.



*Dancing to live Ugandan music at the Sheraton Kampala*



*Watching a demo at the equator*



*Visiting a resort on the island of Kalangala*



For the full Forum program and more photos, visit:  
<https://sites.wustl.edu/childgrf/2023forum/>

