

Western University

Scholarship@Western

Community, Equity, Gender

Western Heads East

11-15-2017

A Novel Approach to Mental Health Recovery: Family Empowerment Program in Rural Kenya

G. Mhapankar

C. Nakeyar

M. Muniu

S. Mohammed

S. Rodger

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/wheceg>

Authors

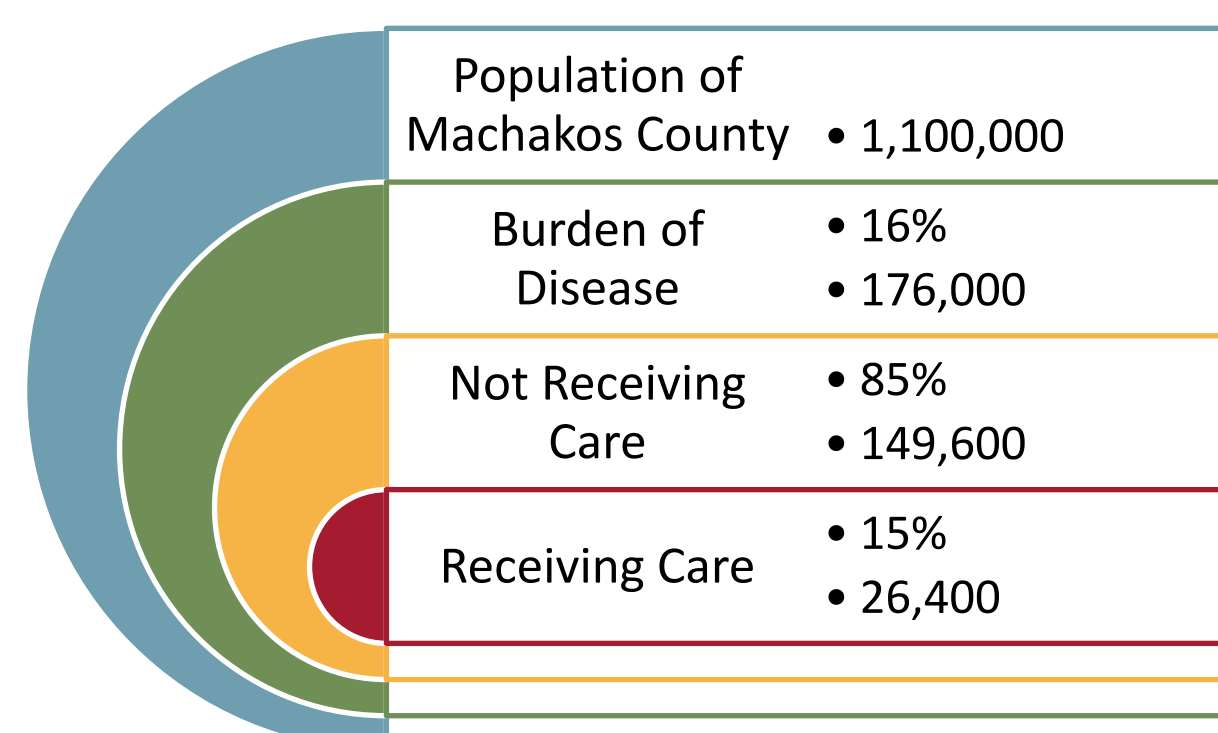
G. Mhapankar, C. Nakeyar, M. Muniu, S. Mohammed, S. Rodger, V. Mutiso, and A. MacDougall

Key Question

How can we facilitate the reintegration of patients with mental illness in a way that promotes recovery through community follow-up?

Background & Objectives

- Level 5 hospitals provide specialized care and consultation.
- Only one for all of Machakos county.
- Stigma, limited resources, and distance to care affect the health of patients.



Objective: Introduce a Family Education and Support Program to:

1. **Provide** education about mental illness.
2. **Share** resources for mental healthcare and follow-up.
3. **Create** a space where caregivers can share skills and strategies on how they can be most helpful to their family member's recovery and reintegration process.



Challenges & Opportunities

Challenges

- Political turmoil and security concerns in Kenya causing delay in project implementation.
- Nursing strike stalls patient care and hampers support received from nurses.
- Home visit by nurses is the primary route of community follow-up after mental illness. However, there are only 2 full time psychiatric nurses at the Machakos hospital.

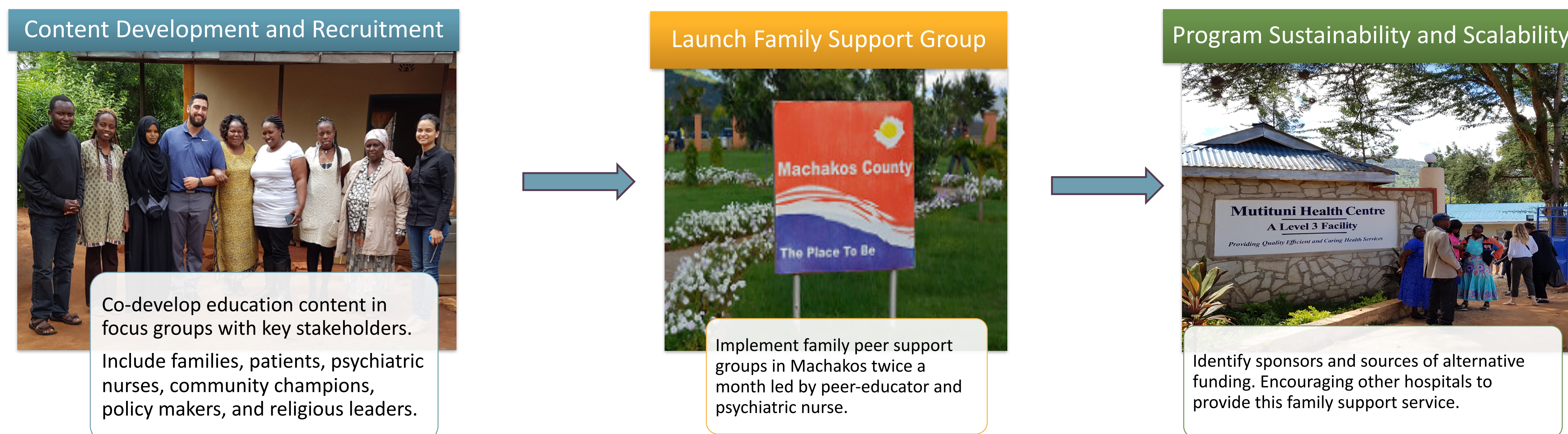
Opportunities

- More time to create detailed implementation plan, receive training, and incorporate focus groups.
- The public acutely aware of overburdening of nurses. They may desire low cost interventions to circumvent the expensive and overworked healthcare system.
- Opportunity to harness a compassionate, highly available resource in families.

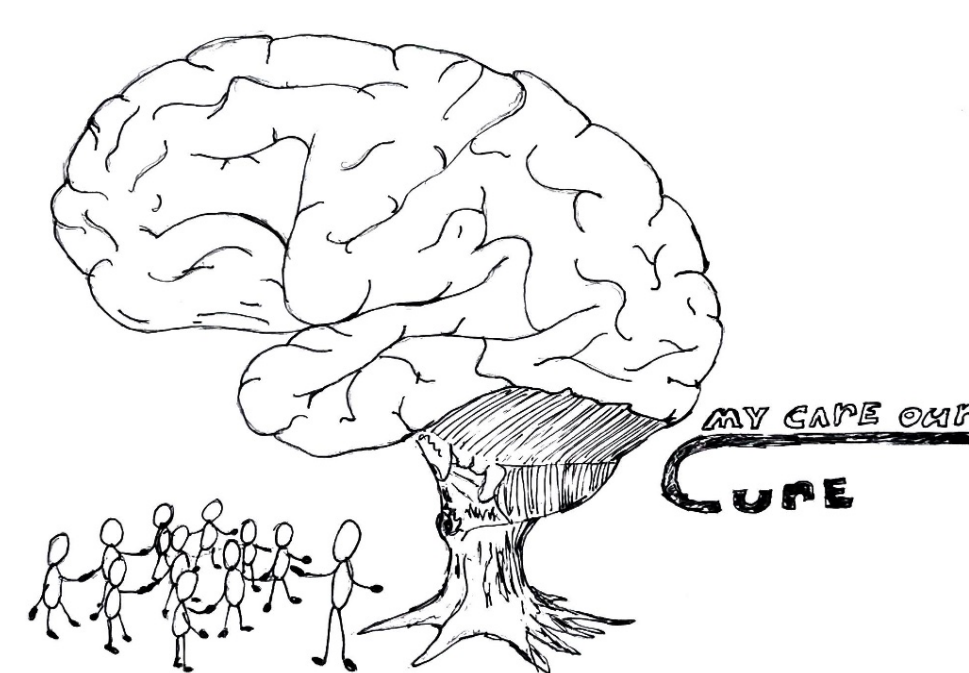
Method

Approach: The Global MINDS Social Innovation Framework

Iterative process of **Sensemaking, Creating, Testing, Evaluating, and Disseminating**

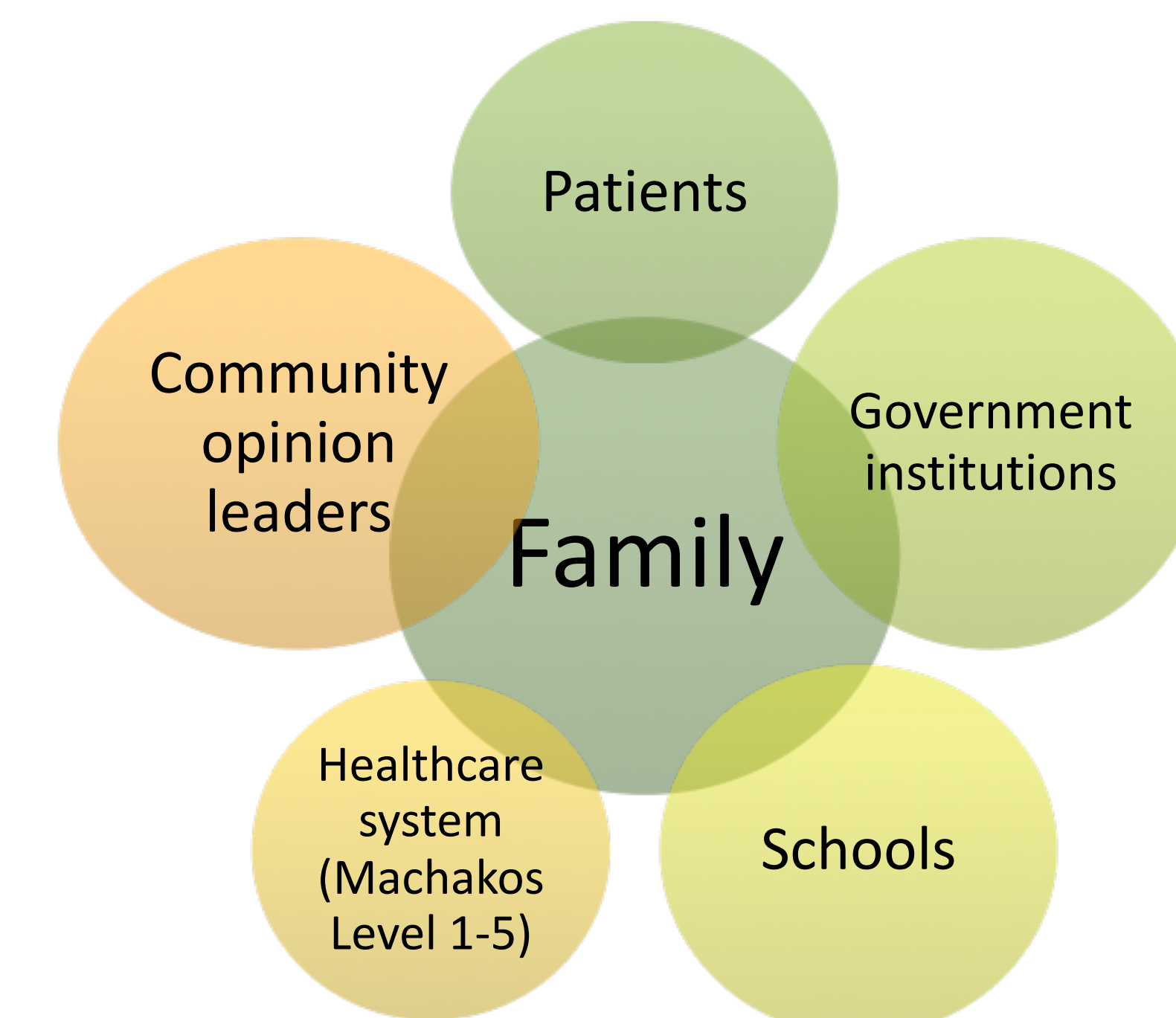


Impact and Innovation



Promoting Recovery And Reintegration Through Strengthening Families

- Harness family members' potential by reorienting families as a resource instead of a barrier.
- Creating a peer education circle of support by disrupting the cycle of isolation.
- Creating family advocates for sustained community education and repositioning them as an integral part of the patient recovery and reintegration process.
- Building and sustaining new relationships where patients are partners, and communities can play an active role in their local health and care services.



Lessons Learned

- Stigma and lack of community and family awareness continue to contribute to social isolation of persons with mental illness in Kenya.
- There is a severe human resource shortage to tackle mental illness in Kenya. Alternative forms of caregivers and community support is required for reintegration and recovery from mental illness.
- Participatory process of co-designing the content of the education sessions ensures an integrated bottom-up approach that also builds on existing educational programming, and leverages current community networks, gathering places, and cultures of knowledge dissemination.
- Applied research requires continuous program modification. Adaptability and creativity propel projects forward.

References & Acknowledgements

1. Ana-Claire Meyer and David Ndeti (2016). Providing Sustainable Mental Health Care in Kenya: A Demonstration Project.
2. Gerlach J and Budde-Lund S (2004). Working in a politically-neutral advocacy organisation for mental illness.

We would like to thank The Global MINDS Fellowship Program for funding this project. Our community partner, Machakos Level 5 Hospital and Ms. Margaret, Head Nurse, Psychiatry Ward for ongoing consultation, project planning and implementation support. Dr. Chris Mackie, Dr. Oana Branzei, Dr. Marlene Janzen Le Ber, Dr. Nadine Wathen, and Professor David Ndeti for providing mentorship and direction. Raksha Sule, Ruth Ruhara and Kaitlin Saxton for project management, guidance and support. Tom Rodger for providing project photos. Rishad Nakeyar for creating project logo.