



CHILD HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRE (CHDC), MAKERERE UNIVERSITY

# Families, Parenting and Child Health Programme: Building Systems and Strengthening the evidence to improve child wellbeing.



# Message

## from the Programme Manager

Dear Readers



**A**s we begin a New Year, the Families, Parenting and Child Health Programme at the Child Health and Development Centre (CHDC) reflects with pride on a productive first quarter marked by leadership growth, strengthened staff collaboration, and continued commitment to improving the wellbeing of children and families in Uganda through intervention delivery and policy engagement.

We are delighted to congratulate Dr. Godfrey Siu, Programme Leader for Parenting, Families and Child Health, on his appointment as the new Director of CHDC. His leadership, dedication to research, teaching, and long-standing contribution to advancing research on violence prevention and family strengthening positioning the Centre for even greater impact in the years ahead.

This quarter also brought exciting opportunities for capacity building and collaborative research. The European Union earmarked funding to fully support 15 PhD scholarships under a new international collaborative research programme that brings together seven universities across Africa and Europe,

including Makerere University. This investment strengthens regional research excellence and will contribute to generating evidence-based solutions to pressing health and development challenges.

In addition, programme staff dedicated time to knowledge generation and documentation by convening writing workshops to finalize key project reports. These included the end-of-project report on “Disability-Inclusive Parenting in Uganda: Adapting and Piloting a Hybrid Model of the Parenting for Respectability (PfR) Programme in Wakiso District.”

The team completed the end-of-project report for the Scaled Implementation of PfR, funded by ELMA, Wellspring and Echidna, capturing lessons learned, program achievements, and pathways for sustainable scale-up of culturally grounded parenting interventions.

Interestingly, the programme team leveraged the first quarter to finalise and submit three grant proposals, positioning the team for results that will advance parenting interventions across the country.

We were also honoured to receive Her Royal Majesty Toto Akaliait Juliet Among Emolot, Queen of Iteso and founder of the Akaliat Development Foundation (AKADEF), whose visit underscored the importance of collaboration in addressing challenges affecting parenting and the girl child. Accompanied by Ms Rebecca Apio, Senior Assistant Secretary of Amuria District and a member of the AKADEF Board, the Queen engaged the team in a discussion on potential partnerships to strengthen family and child-focused interventions within her Kingdom.

The programme under CHDC remains committed to advancing research, strengthening families, and translating evidence into practice and policy. We thank our partners, staff, and communities for their continued collaboration and dedication to improving child health and development outcomes.

**Carolyn Byekwaso Namutebi**

# Dr Godfrey Siu appointed New Director Makerere University CHDC



*Dr Herbert Muyinda handing over CHDC report to Dr Godfrey Siu new Director CHDC (C), as Mrs Pricilla Rukundo, Dr Aggrey Dhabangi, Dean School of Medicine Prof Annetee Nakimuli (L) Ms Josephine Nalweyiso, Dr Arthur Mpimbaza, Dr Anthony Batte and Dr Harriet Babikako Mupere looks on.*

**O**n 8<sup>th</sup> January, Dr. Godfrey Siu, Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader for Families, Parenting, and Child Health, assumed office as the Director of the Child Health and Development Centre (CHDC), replacing Dr. Herbert Muyinda.

Dr Siu, who joined Makerere University in 2003, described his appointment as a sign of trust from the University, the College of Health Sciences, and School of Medicine Leadership.

He commended colleagues who participated in the appointment process, and paid tribute to three former Directors of CHDC, Dr Jessica Jitta, Prof Anne Katahoire and Dr Herbert Muyinda, noting that they were not only heads of department but exceptional leaders of the centre.

*"I would like to thank the outgoing Director, the University leadership, the College, and particularly the School of Medicine leadership under Prof. Annetee Nakimuli. My interactions with you over the past few years have been very uplifting. You encourage everyone, and I have never felt insecure under your leadership. These are some of the factors that gave me confidence to*

*accept this responsibility," Dr Siu said.*

He highlighted CHDC's uniqueness, noting that it offers the CHS what no other unit at the University does. He observed that while multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity are widely discussed, few institutions fully understand or harness their value.

Dr Siu pledged to continue advancing the Centre's vision and mission, which strongly align with Makerere University's goal of taking the University to the community and promoting research-led and research-intensive work.



*Dr Godfrey Siu speaking during the handover ceremony at CHDC on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2026.*

During the handover ceremony, outgoing Director Dr Herbert Muyinda, who served for eight years, outlined key milestones. He noted that one major achievement was safeguarding the Centre's identity at a time when its mandate was unclear, particularly during efforts to recruit additional staff in biostatistics, public health, and Obstetrics and Gynaecology.

This challenge prompted engagement with University leadership, resulting in clarification of CHDC's status and the development of a policy document defining the position of research centres within the College and other institutions.

Dr Muyinda also highlighted CHDC's strong community engagement, citing long-term research in five districts in northern Uganda since 2011, which has contributed to HIV and AIDS interventions. Other initiatives include malaria interventions led by Dr Arthur Mpimbaza in Busoga, Lango, Eastern, and Northern Uganda, and the Parenting for Respectability project, which has influenced policy on child protection and responsible parenting.



*Dr Herbert Muyinda the outgoing Director of CHDC presenting a report during the handover ceremony as Prof. Annette Nakimuli and the new Director of CHDC Dr Godfrey Siu looks on.*

Dr Muyinda further noted CHDC's contribution to the rollout of the HPV vaccine in Uganda through work led by Prof Anne Katahoire and Dr Banura who retired.

Another milestone was the restructuring of research activities into six research programmes: Health Systems Research for Malaria Control and Elimination; Non-Communicable Diseases; Child Development and Wellbeing; Families, Parenting and Child Health; Capacity Building; and Disability and Health Technologies. This approach has enabled the Centre to attract over 20 new research grants, produce numerous publications, and train Masters and PhD students.

In terms of infrastructure, Dr Muyinda said the Centre contributed to tarmacking its parking space and acquired assets from USAID, including a Toyota Land Cruiser, office furniture, computers, and other equipment.

Dr Mpimbaza described Dr Muyinda's tenure as calm and stable, attributing the Centre's harmony to his leadership style, which resolved challenges amicably.



*Dr Siu, Dr Muyinda, Prof Nakimuli and Ms Josephine Nalweyiso cutting a cake during the handover of office*

Dr Muyinda also outlined challenges, including understaffing, which limits the Centre's ability to

attract and manage more grants, forcing reliance on costly external expertise. He also raised concerns about the asbestos roof, describing it as a health hazard that requires urgent attention.

Calling for unity, Dr Siu urged staff and partners to build on the momentum of the handover. *"Let us work together to champion healthier children, mothers, and communities. Our progress depends on teamwork and collective support,"* he said.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Dean School of Medicine Prof. Nakimuli acknowledged CHDC's strong performance in research and mentorship, noting its multidisciplinary nature as a model of what a university department should be. She commended Dr Muyinda for mentoring future leaders and thanked Dr Siu for accepting the responsibility.

Prof. Nakimuli urged staff and students to support the new Director, assuring continued backing from the School and College.



*Prof Annette Nakimuli watering a tree seedling after planting. This was after the handover ceremony as Dr Harriet Babikako Mupere and Mrs Pricilla Rukundo looks on.*

Ms Josephine Nalweyiso, Human Resource Officer at the College of Health Sciences, praised Dr Muyinda's cooperation and responsiveness, noting that CHDC consistently handled human resource matters efficiently.

# Makerere University to supervise seven PhDs

The European Union earmarked Euros 4,658,684 (Shs19.8 billion) to fully fund 15 PhD scholarships under a new international collaborative research programme that brings together seven universities across Africa and Europe, including Makerere University.

The Graduate school, Arts Faculty of Aarhus University, Denmark and Makerere University embarked on the collaborative project HEALENAE: Health and Environment in Africa and Europe run by a consortium of universities: Aarhus University (Denmark), Makerere University, University of Oslo (Norway), University of Cape Town (South Africa), KU Leuven (Belgium), University of Edinburgh (UK) and University of Nairobi (Kenya)

The project, will support doctoral research examining the complex links between environmental change, climate crises and health outcomes, with a strong focus on Africa Europe comparative perspectives.

Under this collaborative research programme, senior lecturers Dr. Godfrey Siu and Dr. Herbert Muyinda from CHDC will participate in supervising PhD students. In addition, Prof. Stella Neema from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, together with Prof. Lotte Meinert of Aarhus University, will jointly supervise the students alongside other PhD supervisors from collaborating universities.

On Tuesday, January 27, Prof. Julius Kikooma, Director of the Directorate of Graduate Training at Makerere University, Dr Siu, Dr Muyinda, and Prof. Neema alongside Prof. Lotte paid a courtesy visit to the University's Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe.

Prof. Nawangwe welcomed the funding and commended the EU for its support, noting that the generous contribution reflects



(L-R) Prof. Stella Neema, Dr Herbert Muyinda, Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Prof. Lotte Meinert, Prof. Julius Kikooma, and Dr. Godfrey Siu take a photo moment at Makerere University.

the confidence the EU has in Makerere University. He added that the University is working hard to address the loophole previously raised by the EU regarding the implementation of EU-funded grants. The Vice Chancellor congratulated the team and pledged the University's full support to ensure the project's successful implementation.

Speaking in an interview, Prof. Lotte said the program is particularly suited for candidates with strong grounding in anthropology, sociology and related social sciences.

Eligible candidates must have an internationally recognised Master's degree in anthropology or related social sciences and humanities disciplines.

Lotte added that the positions are fully funded for three years, with generous support for fieldwork, coursework, conferences, writing retreats and research training.

According to Dr Siu, the HEALENAE model where fifteen joint PhDs are funded under one programme is the first of its kind in Uganda.

Addressing concerns about differing academic expectations across universities, Dr Siu said these are anticipated and manageable.

"While there are some differences, PhD training globally follows a similar structure. For instance, Makerere requires all PhD students to complete mandatory cross-cutting courses, including philosophy of methods, advanced research methods, and scholarly writing and communication skills," he said.

**Under this collaborative research programme, senior lecturers Dr. Godfrey Siu and Dr. Herbert Muyinda from CHDC will participate in supervising PhD students.**



# CHDC Attends REAL Father Annual Learning Convening

CHDC participated in a two-day REAL Fathers annual learning convening held from February 4–5 at Hotel Africana in Kampala.

The convening, themed “Nurturing Responsible Fatherhood in Uganda: Lessons, Impact, and Opportunities for Scale-Up,” several participants.

The meeting brought together representatives from key line ministries, cultural and religious institutions, civil society organisations, local governments, and international partners to assess progress in promoting responsible fatherhood and reducing family violence across Uganda.

During the discussions, PfR was

highlighted as a complementary approach to the REAL Fathers Programme, with stakeholders calling for greater integration and mutual learning between the two models to enhance impact.

Speaking on behalf of the Permanent Secretary, Commissioner for Youth and Children, Fred Ngabirano, noted that Uganda already has three nationally recognised evidence-based parenting models that actively engage fathers which provides opportunities for Scale-Up. These include PfR, the REAL Fathers Programme, and Positive Parenting by Bantwana Initiative Uganda.



Commissioner for Youth and Children Fred Ngabirano speaking during first national learning convening of the Responsible, Engaged and Loving (REAL) Fathers.

## CHDC Staff Finalise End-of-Project Reports on PfR Programme, DIP

CHDC staff convened on 13<sup>th</sup> February to finalise end-of-project reports for two major initiatives: Scaling Up the PfR Programme and Disability-Inclusive Parenting in Uganda: Adapting and Piloting a Hybrid Model of the Parenting for Respectability Programme in Wakiso District.

The Scaling-Up project, implemented between 2023 and 2025 with funding from ELMA Foundation, Echidna Giving, and Wellspring Philanthropies, expanded the reach of the Parenting for Respectability programme across five districts Amuru, Busia, Nakasongola, Tororo, and Wakiso.

CHDC implemented the programme in partnership with the Centre for Transformative Parenting (CTP), with oversight from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD).

The initiative surpassed its initial target of reaching 30,000 caregivers through parenting training and public awareness campaigns. By the end of the project, about 143,601 caregivers had been reached. Nearly 129,000

caregivers received parenting messages through radio and billboards, while 14,601 parents participated in structured in-person group sessions.

An Early Childhood Development (ECD) evaluation conducted in Tororo district among 590 parents of children aged 0–6 years showed significant improvements in child development outcomes across all domains among participants in the intervention group.

The project also strengthened national parenting programming through collaboration with the Parenting Agenda Consortium, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and UNICEF. A total of 165 civil society organisations were engaged, and 130 frontline practitioners graduated from a certificate course titled The Science of Designing Evidence Based Parenting



CHDC staff convening to finalise End-of-Project Reports on Parenting for Respectability Programme, DIP

Interventions, the first programme of its kind in Uganda.

CHDC’s advocacy has further raised the profile of PfR globally. In 2024, the World Health Organization cited the programme in its handbook on designing parenting programmes as a best-practice intervention for promoting positive parenting. At the Bogotá Convening on Prevention of Violence Against Children, the Government of Uganda also recognised PfR as a leading model for scalable parenting interventions and endorsed it as a priority intervention for the period 2025–2030.



*Dr Godfrey Siu presenting during a meeting to finalise End-of-Project Reports on Parenting for Respectability Programme, DIP*

During the same meeting, CHDC staff also finalised the report on the Disability-Inclusive Parenting project implemented in Wakiso district. The project piloted

a hybrid delivery model of the PfR programme using facilitator-assisted SMS, WhatsApp group sessions, and in-person engagement among parents and caregivers

with disabilities and those raising children with disabilities.

Participants reported improved parenting confidence, better understanding of inclusive caregiving practices, and greater use of adaptive communication strategies when interacting with their children. The findings demonstrate that digital and hybrid parenting support models can reduce participation barriers and expand access to evidence based parenting programmes, offering practical lessons for scaling inclusive parenting support in Uganda and similar low resource settings.

## Strengthening CHDC's Online Presence for Greater Impact

On 25<sup>th</sup> February 2026, staff at the CHDC convened for an internal engagement focused on enhancing the digital presence.

The session was led by the IT Lead, Mr Paul Opira, who guided the team through key updates and strategic directions for improving CHDC's website and overall online visibility.

In today's fast-paced digital world, an institution's online presence is no longer optional it is a strategic necessity. Advances in digitalization, including artificial intelligence (AI), cloud services, and social media platforms, have transformed how organizations operate, communicate, and build trust with their audiences.

Recognizing this shift, CHDC is taking deliberate steps to strengthen its digital footprint and remain relevant in an increasingly



*CHDC convened for an internal engagement focused on enhancing the digital presence.*

connected world.

A strong online presence serves multiple purposes. It amplifies institutional credibility and visibility, enhances transparency, and builds trust among stakeholders.

During the meeting, emphasis was placed on leveraging CHDC's core digital platforms. The website will

continue to serve as the central hub for research publications, partnerships, events, and institutional information. LinkedIn will be utilized for professional branding and academic networking, while Twitter (X) will support real-time updates and research conversations. Facebook will enhance community engagement and outreach, and YouTube will host

training sessions, documentaries, and webinars.

To ensure effective implementation, CHDC plans to develop a comprehensive digital communication strategy. This will include assigning a dedicated content creation and management team, establishing a monthly content calendar to ensure consistent storytelling, and monitoring analytics to track engagement and performance. These efforts are expected to increase visibility, strengthen partnerships, and boost donor confidence.



CHDC convened for an internal engagement focused on enhancing the digital presence.

## Queen of Iteso Visits CHDC, Commends Team's Work in Child and Family Health

On March 5, CHDC was honoured to welcome Her Royal Majesty Toto Akaliit Juliet Among Emolot. The surprise visit underscored the importance of collaborative approaches to programme implementation.

Her Royal Highness, who is also the founder of the Akaliit Development Foundation (AKADEF), visited to discuss matters related to the foundation and to explore opportunities for collaboration, particularly in the areas of parenting and the girl child key challenges currently affecting her Kingdom.

The Queen was accompanied by Ms Rebecca Apio, Senior Assistant Secretary of Amuria District and a member of the AKADEF Board.

During the visit, the CHDC Director Dr Siu who is also a board member of AKADEF, warmly received the Queen at the Centre. The Director used the opportunity to share the Centre's history, its key programmes, and overall objectives. He emphasized that improving the lives of children and women remains at the heart of the Centre's research and interventions.

The Director also introduced members of the CHDC to the Queen, showcasing the dedicated professionals behind the Centre's work.

In the same spirit, the team was privileged to receive a blessing from Her Royal Highness and shared a memorable photo moment. The Queen expressed her appreciation for the Centre's work, noting that she felt honored to have been part of the practitioners' course and for the opportunity to visit and better understand CHDC's work.

During the visit, the CHDC Director Dr Siu who is also a board member of AKADEF, warmly received the Queen at the Centre.



CHDC staff take a photo moment with Her Royal Highness the queen of Tororo, Juliet Among, (Third on the left) and second on the left is the Director of CHDC Dr Godfrey Siu.

## CHDC Staff participates in MAKCH Centennial Dinner



*Dr Godfrey Siu Director CHDC and staff during Makerere University College of Health Sciences Centennial Dinner at Hotel Africana*

On 6<sup>th</sup> March, staff from CHDC participated in the MAKCH fundraising dinner, held to commemorate 100 years of excellence and contribution to health sciences.

Led by the Director, Dr. Godfrey Siu,

the CHDC team made a financial pledge towards the renovation of the Davis Lecture Theatre.

The elegant event, held at Hotel Africana, brought together alumni, partners, and distinguished guests for an evening of celebration and

networking.

It also featured a lively performance by the legendary Afrigo Band, adding excitement as attendees reflected on a century of impact in advancing health sciences.

## CHDC Showcases PfR Impact at the Launch of Resilience and Social Challenges Project

On 10<sup>th</sup> February, CHDC staff actively participated in the launch of the Resilience and Social Challenges Project, an initiative aimed at improving Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) decision-making among young adolescents in Uganda.

During the event, CHDC presented its research on PfR programme, providing a comprehensive progress update and sharing key insights from its implementation in Uganda.

The presentation, led by Programme Manager Mrs. Carolyn Byekwaso Namutebi and Scale-up Specialist Mr. Hosea Katende, highlighted findings from various PfR studies. These included the cluster randomized controlled trial, scale-up efforts across five

districts, as well as components on Early Childhood Development (ECD), disability inclusion, and digital interventions.

Participants were particularly impressed by PfR's impact and its growing international

recognition, including its feature at the Bogotá Violence Against Children (VAC) Conference and its recommendation by the World Health Organization (WHO) as an evidence-based programme for scale-up. The panel discussion was chaired by CHDC's Dr. Betty Okot.



*Mr Hosea Katende presenting during the launch of the Resilience and Social Challenges project Right is Dr Betty Okot and other panellists.*

# Field Monitoring Visit Highlights Progress in Nairobi ECD Clusters

From February 27th - March 2nd, a comprehensive field monitoring visit was carried out across the Adolescent Girls Power Programme clusters in Kenya specifically for the parenting for ECD. Children's Rights and Violence Prevention Fund (CRVPF) funded clusters, adapt and pilot the PfR ECD programme. This is a collaboration between Centre for Transformative Parenting (CTP) and CHDC to ensure that targeted clusters adapt the PfR ECD program and document key learnings.

The visit provided a valuable opportunity to engage directly with cluster leadership, facilitators, and participants, while gaining first-hand insights into the program's delivery, effectiveness, and reception within the community.

During the field visit, the Programme Manager engaged with cluster leaders and staff, and also participated in an Early Childhood Development (ECD)



*Programme Manager engaging adolescent girls during PfR for ECD session.*

parental session led by facilitators.

In small community spaces, they watched as conversations unfolded between facilitators and adolescent mothers, each session revealing more than just program delivery. It revealed trust, curiosity, and a growing sense of ownership.

What stood out most was the response from the adolescent mothers. They welcomed the intervention, speaking openly about their experiences and showing genuine interest in the sessions. Their engagement was

not forced, it was natural, even enthusiastic. For many, this was more than a program, it was a space where they felt seen, heard, and supported.

Facilitators and staff, too, demonstrated strong commitment. During discussions, they shared honest reflections, what was working, what needed strengthening, and how the program could better serve the community. Their willingness to learn and adapt signalled a deep belief in the intervention's purpose.

## CHDC Director Participates in Leadership and Management Training Workshop



*Dr. Siu during a leadership and management training workshop at Makerere University.*

On March 11-12, the Director, Dr. Siu, joined other senior leaders in attending the Leadership and Management Training Workshop designed for Makerere University principals, deputy principals, deans, directors, and heads of department.

During the workshop, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, stressed the importance of academic leaders being well-versed in university policies. He also reaffirmed the institution's dedication to continuously strengthening leadership capacity and emphasized the collective

responsibility expected of all university leaders.

Prof. Nawangwe highlighted the pivotal role of heads of department and deans as the first point of contact within their departments. He noted that they are accountable for staff performance and for ensuring effective teaching and supervision.

Several leaders at the workshop underscored the significance of ongoing quality improvement, particularly in enhancing the student experience and maintaining high standards of teaching.

## CHDC, NTV Explore Partnership to Amplify Parenting Messages

CHDC is exploring a strategic partnership with NTV Uganda to expand public awareness of its PFR programme.

During a meeting held on March 17, both teams discussed collaborating on content creation and CHDC's participation in People's Parliament and Mwasuze Mutya a popular Luganda-language morning show to boost visibility and reach wider audiences beyond the communities it currently serves.

A key proposal includes developing a short film or drama series based on real parenting experiences from CHDC's field work, in selected districts. Storytelling through a drama series could have a stronger and lasting impact on Ugandan audiences.



*Dr Godfrey Siu, CHDC Staff and NTV take a photo moment after a private meeting*

The two institutions are now working towards a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to define roles, content ownership, and budget. CHDC also plans to evaluate how the media content will influence parenting behaviours.

The partnership, if finalized, is expected to strengthen efforts to promote positive parenting by bringing these conversations into homes across Uganda.

## CHDC Programme Manager Attends Regional Hearth Summit, Urges Staff to Prioritize Wellbeing

On 19<sup>th</sup> March, Mrs Carolyn Byekwaso represented CHDC at the Regional Hearth Summit for change makers from around the world. This provided change markers and managers an opportunity to explore and embrace the wellbeing for social change movement.

During the conference, participants engaged in a range of insightful discussions, including a session on recognizing burnout among managers and teams.

This was an open conversation on shifting cultures towards care and wellbeing in workplace, institutions and movements.

Following the summit, Mrs Byekwaso shared key lessons during the Monday staff meeting. She encouraged programme staff to prioritize their health and overall wellbeing, both at work and within their environment.



*Participants at a panel discussion during the Regional Health Summit in Nairobi, where CHDC Programme Manager Mrs Carolyn Byekwaso was in attendance.*

She emphasized that "Life is sweet and should come first, she encouraged team members to have work-balance within the day by taking short 'walks' in open places and enjoying the green as much as possible.

She further highlighted the critical impact of workplace environments on wellbeing across creative economy, caregiving and

governance were critical at such a time.

**During the conference, participants engaged in a range of insightful discussions**

# DIP Model Draws attention at Makerere University Scientific conference



*Emmanuel Asher Ikwaru presenting during the Annual scientific conference at Makerere University School of Public Health*

Disability-Inclusive Parenting (DIP) initiative being implemented by CHDC has drawn strong interest from public health experts and students after it was presented at the Annual scientific conference at Makerere University School of Public Health.

On March 27, Emmanuel Asher Ikwaru, representing the DIP project on behalf of CHDC, presented findings from a pilot study during the Makerere University Environmental Students Association (MUEHSA) Conference.

The study, titled “Disability-Inclusive Parenting for Respectability: A Hybrid Community-Based Programme to Strengthen Child and Adolescent Safety in Uganda,” highlights the urgent need to support children and adolescents with disabilities, who often face higher risks of neglect, violence, and poor developmental outcomes.

Presenting the background, Asher noted that these challenges are frequently worsened by caregiver stress, stigma, and limited access to mental health services. While parenting programmes have been

effective in addressing gender-based violence and strengthening family systems, few have been adapted to include the unique needs of children with disabilities, particularly in low-resource settings.

The study piloted a hybrid, disability-inclusive adaptation of the Parenting for Respectability (PFR) programme in Wakiso District. It aimed to assess its feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness in promoting child safety, reducing partner conflict, and encouraging inclusive caregiving practices.

Using a mixed-methods approach, the study enrolled 123 parents and caregivers either living with disabilities or raising children with disabilities across three delivery models, facilitator-assisted SMS, WhatsApp-based group sessions, and in-person engagements.

Findings from the study showed high levels of feasibility and participant retention across all delivery methods. There was a notable reduction in punitive discipline and partner conflict, alongside improved positive parenting practices and greater awareness of disability inclusion.

Qualitative insights revealed

that peer learning, psychosocial support through digital platforms, and a sense of community solidarity played a significant role in driving change. WhatsApp-based sessions were particularly effective in reducing isolation and fostering peer support, while in-person meetings encouraged deeper reflection and dialogue among participants.

The presentation generated excitement among conference participants, many of whom praised CHDC’s work on DIP. Several participants noted that the programme comes at a critical time, as people with disabilities are often excluded from mainstream interventions.

Officials from the public health sector also expressed interest in potential partnerships to scale up the initiative, citing its impact on improving parenting practices and promoting inclusion.

Participants further commended the DIP project for addressing a long-standing gap, emphasizing that inclusive parenting approaches are essential to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children, especially those living with disabilities.



*Emmanuel Asher Ikwaru and other participants at a panel discussion during the Annual scientific conference at Makerere University School of Public Health*

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