



SUCCEED
INCLUSIVE MENTAL HEALTH
RESEARCH & CARE IN AFRICA



LONDON
SCHOOL of
HYGIENE
& TROPICAL
MEDICINE



SUCCEED Annual Report 2025

**SUpport Comprehensive Care and EmpowErment for People
with psychosocial Disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa
(SUCCEED)**

Welcome

A warm welcome to our 2025 report! It's been a privilege to join the SUCCEED Africa consortium as CEO for the final year of this ground-breaking programme. I've been struck by the level of commitment, creativity and dedication across the partnership and by how strongly inclusion, lived experience involvement, respectful relationships and shared learning are the heart of SUCCEED Africa.

This year marked a major research milestone, with midline data collection for the intervention evaluations now complete across all four countries, and planning for endline data collection well underway. It's been another significant year for our capacity strengthening activities across individual, institutional, and consortium levels. The contribution of our peer researchers continues to grow, shaping all aspects of our research, capacity building and knowledge uptake activities. Peer researchers are increasingly taking on leading or co-leading roles across the programme, helping to guide our work and strengthen its impact.

Sarah Polack – SUCCEED CEO

Overview of the SUCCEED Africa project

SUCCEED is a partnership between LSHTM (UK), University of Makeni (Sierra Leone), University of Ibadan (Nigeria), Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (Malawi) and the University of Zimbabwe (Zimbabwe). The programme seeks to strengthen inclusive, community-driven responses to psychosocial disability in low and middle-income countries (LMICs), with particular attention to rural areas.

SUCCEED is generating evidence on “What Works” for people with psychosis and psychosocial disabilities in LMICs through systematic reviews, a Theory of Change process, formative research, and developing research tools. We have co-produced a holistic package of rights-based care and support for people with psychosocial disabilities in four sub-Saharan African countries, which we tested through four pilot studies. We are now evaluating the intervention via two randomised controlled trials and two before-and-after studies, with accompanying process evaluation.

Our intention is to produce evidence-based guidelines to facilitate uptake of the evaluated intervention in mental health research and policy. In addition to our commitment to co-production as a core means of working, we aim to generate new knowledge on co-production for mental health research in LMICs, building the capacity of people with lived experience of psychosocial disabilities as researchers and active contributors to the wider field of global mental health.



Research

Our intervention and research this year

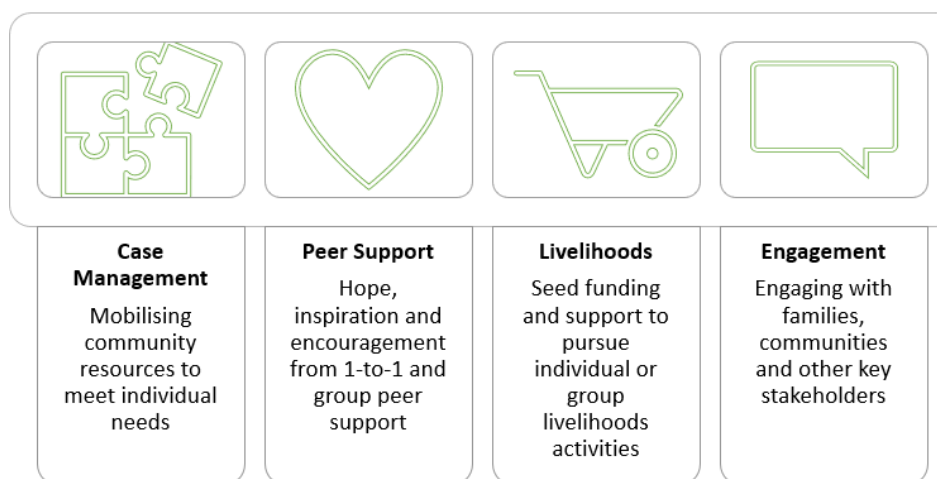
Year 5 was a remarkable year for SUCCEED. As the culmination of the formative work to co-develop and pilot the intervention, we launched large-scale evaluations in all four country sites.

About the SUCCEED intervention

The SUCCEED intervention is designed to be delivered by an experienced community health organisation; therefore, we worked with implementing partners in each country to pilot the intervention before the fully delivery and trial stage.

The SUCCEED intervention is a Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) intervention which aims to improve quality of life by supporting participants within their communities. The four main parts of the SUCCEED intervention are:

1. **Case Management:** Community Support Workers (CSW) help individuals and families link up with essential services like health, education, and social welfare as well as informal community supports.
2. **Peer Support:** Delivered by Peer Support Workers - people who have their own lived experience of psychosis - to provide encouragement and inspiration. Peer support workers provide one-to-one visits and lead peer support groups with other local people receiving the intervention.
3. **Livelihoods Support:** Participants engage in group or individual livelihoods activities (like small businesses or farming) to build self-reliance and income.
4. **Family & Community Engagement:** This includes support groups for caregivers and Community Mental Health Forums, as well as awareness raising and anti-stigma activities, to foster a welcoming and accepting local community.



About the evaluations

The aims of the evaluations are to a) assess how the intervention affected quality of life and social inclusion for people with psychosis, and caregiver's awareness of needs and rights and perceived care burden and b) understand how the intervention worked in practice.

The intervention is being evaluated through two different study designs:

1. Randomised Controlled Trial (RCT) – used in Zimbabwe and Nigeria

In these sites, participants have been randomised into two groups. One group is receiving the SUCCEED intervention, and the Control Group receives the usual standard care. They will be followed up 12 months after baseline data collection

2. Before-and-after study – used in Sierra Leone and Malawi

In these sites, there is no control group; everyone who signed up receives the SUCCEED intervention. We are measuring how participants were doing at the start and then again at the end to see if they improved. This helps us see if the program is practical and helpful in a real-world setting.

3. Process Evaluation - All countries

We are collecting quantitative and qualitative data to understand how the intervention is delivered, how it works to bring about change and how contextual factors shape intervention outcomes.

Intervention delivery

The intervention is being carried out for 12 months, delivered through a local implementing partner in each country:

- Malawi: Mental Health Users and Carers Association (MeHUCA)
- Sierra Leone: Mental Health Coalition of Sierra Leone
- Nigeria: ASIDO Foundation
- Zimbabwe: Zimbabwe National Association for Mental Health (ZIMNAMH)

Progress to date

In year 5, ethical approval was obtained for all sites. Training was delivered in all countries on i) the intervention delivery, with the implementing partners and ii) on data collection procedures for the research teams.

Data are being collected at baseline (month 0), midline (month 6) and endline (month 12). The table below presents the numbers of research participants included in the evaluations at baseline and midline. Follow-up at midline has been high; of those enrolled at baseline more than 90% have been followed up at midline in Malawi, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone and more than 80% in Nigeria.

Table 1: Number of research participants included in the evaluations at baseline and midline

	Nigeria		Zimbabwe		Malawi	Sierra Leone
	Intervention arm	Control arm	Intervention arm	Control arm		
Completed baseline	69	79	70	84	61	58
Completed midline data collection	63	60	67	81	57	53

Publications:

We continue to publish results from all of our work. We are proud to say our peer researchers are co-authors in all SUCCEED papers that have been published and submitted. Four papers were published in year five, with many more in the pipeline for our year six:

Bella-Awusah, T., Abdurahman, H., Omobowale, O., Aturu, O., Afolayan, A., Ogunmola, O., Fasoranti, B., Olusanmi, M., Tamamban, R., Bamidel, O., Ruan, G., Shakespeare, T., Eaton, J., Omigbodun, O. (2024). Lessons of Hope and Resilience: A Co-produced qualitative study of the experiences of Youth living with psychosis during the COVID-19 pandemic in Nigeria. *Community Mental Health Journal*, 60(1), 47-59.

Butura, A. M., Ryan, G. K., Shakespeare, T., Ogunmola, O., Omobowale, O., Greenley, R., & Eaton, J. (2024). Community-based rehabilitation for people with psychosocial disabilities in low-and middle-income countries: a systematic review of the grey literature. *International journal of mental health systems*, 18(1), 13.

Greenley, R., Tamambang, R., Koroma, A., Fasoranti, B., Munetsi, E., Chinoko, H., Stevens, N., Goba, N., Kinyabo P.A., Bella-Awusah, T., Ryan, G. K. (2024). SUCCEED Africa: Protocol for a multi-method pilot study of a community-based intervention for people with psychosis in Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Malawi Pilot and Feasibility Studies, vol. 10, no 1, p. 114.

Omobowale O, Greenley R, Ryan G, Ogunmola O., Dzapasi, L., Jimmy A., Sefasi, A., Olusanmi, M., Elisker, R., Koroma, A., (2024) Living with psychosis in West and Southeast Africa: SUCCEED Africa’s four-country situation analysis. *Cambridge Prisms: Global Mental Health*.;11:e133.

Engagement with and planning for other research projects

We were delighted to be awarded funding, from the Wellcome Trust, to work in collaboration with other African mental health research projects for an inaugural meeting of a new African Psychosis Research Network following the Global Mental Health Summit in November 2025. This will be an opportunity to discuss opportunities and priorities for African psychosis research moving forward, with funders in attendance. SUCCEED also participated in the EquiPar project to improve equitable partnerships and we hosted three MSc summer projects plus one staff PhD.

In Year 5, our peer researchers submitted a funding application to the Wellcome Trust for a grant to build capacity for lived experience involvement in mental health research in Africa. Whilst this application wasn't ultimately successful, they were proud to have got through to the final interview stages in a very competitive process and are keen to see if alternative funding can be found for this work. You can read more about this below. We also applied for a pump-priming scheme which unfortunately also wasn't successful, but again we will use the plans for future applications.



Capacity building

Year 5 has been an important year for our capacity building activities across individual, institutional, and consortium levels. We held 16 consortium-wide workshops covering topics such as grant and publication writing. Many of these were led by country teams. Peer researchers held a range of leadership roles, including leading the lived experience advisory group (LEAP) meetings and contributing to external events and publications. Grant submissions with peer and early career researchers as co-investigators also reflect increased research capacity.

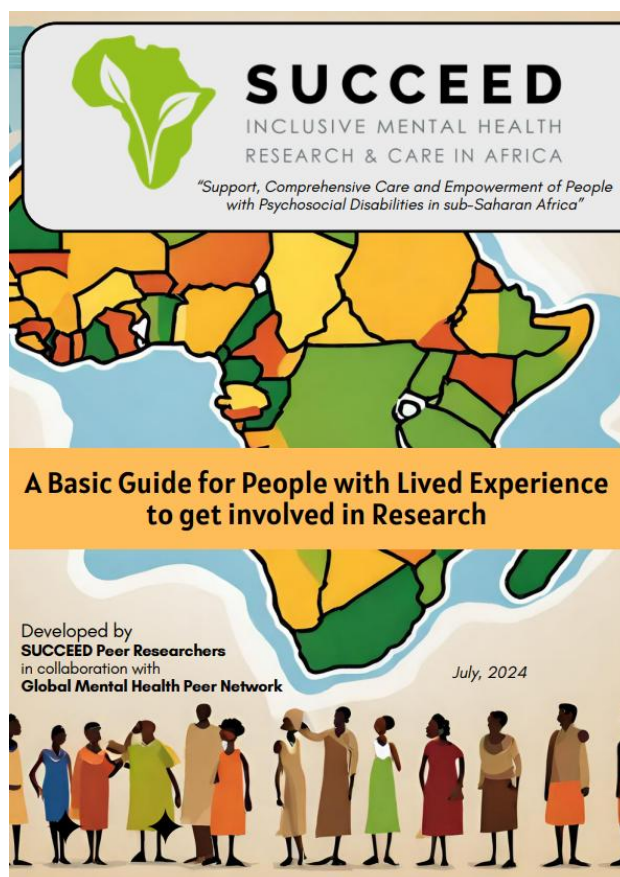
We have made progress in getting our online course (MOOC) on Coproduction in mental health research ready to be launched. We were initially hoping to run this on the FutureLearn platform but will now be launching it on the **LSHTM Open Study platform** (<https://open.lshtm.ac.uk/enrol/index.php?id=118>), and have done the work to transition to this platform. **Look out for this course being launched in 2026!**



Coproduction

The contribution of our peer researchers continues to go from strength to strength. They have been involved in all of our research, capacity building and uptake work and continue to guide us. They are now taking leading or co-leading roles in our meetings. They have produced and shared a stunning document: “**A Basic Guide for People with Lived Experience to get involved in Research**” which can be found [here](https://www.mhinnovation.net/resources/basic-guide-people-lived-experience-get-involved-research):

<https://www.mhinnovation.net/resources/basic-guide-people-lived-experience-get-involved-research>



Building on the success of winning an engagement grant from London School of Hygiene and Tropical in years 3 & 4, and completing this work, the SUCCEED peer researchers across all countries worked together to apply for a major grant from the Wellcome Trust. They proposed to produce a training and mentorship programme to share their learning of working as a peer researcher on a research project with others with lived experiences of mental health conditions across Africa who had no experience of working in research. This was a hugely competitive process, and we are proud that the peer researchers were selected to go to the second stage of applications and submit a full proposal. While disappointed they weren't successful, we all agreed that getting through to the second stage alone, as well as completing a nerve-wracking online interview with Wellcome Trust staff, was a huge achievement for the peer researchers' first major grant application.

The activities the peer researchers were involved in during year 5 were almost too many to mention! Here is a selection of highlights:

- Bessie and Musa were honoured to be invited to travel to Ghana to contribute to the lived experience advisory panel for the HOPE research project on psychosis and homelessness in Ghana, Ethiopia and Kenya. They participated in the Global Mental Health Peer Networks (now Aves) mentorship programme and attended several webinars, surveys and training opportunities. They presented in the SUCCEED annual webinar.
- The Nigerian peer researchers attended a workshop in Abuja by CBM Global on Coproduction and the establishment of Organisations of People with Disabilities in Nigeria.
- The Sierra Leone peer researchers responded to an invitation from Africa CDC and MHPSS regarding mental health during the MPOX outbreak. Nancy was invited to be team lead for the Stigma and Awareness Secretariat Working Group for the Association for Mental Health Reform in Africa.
- Three peer researchers led the MHIN podcast with WHO and UNICEF mental health leads, including hosting, writing questions and asking questions. Link [here](https://www.mhinnovation.net/resources/basic-guide-people-lived-experience-get-involved-research): <https://www.mhinnovation.net/resources/basic-guide-people-lived-experience-get-involved-research>
- All peer researchers gave input into the community WHO *A job aid for Community Health Workers (CHWs) to support people living with mental, neurological and substance use conditions*.

Knowledge Uptake and Communications

This year, continued to develop the visibility of SUCCEED's work at international, national, and community levels. We presented at three international and five national conferences. These were

International Conferences

SUCCEED Africa was present at various international conferences. The New Research directions in Global Mental Health. Worldwide Universities Network (WUN) symposium was held in Leeds, UK, 12-13 June 2024. Anna Chavez (LSHTM) gave a presentation titled: *Lessons from developing and evaluating an intervention of enhanced community-based rehabilitation for psycho-social disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa through a coproduction and a disability rights approach – The SUCCEED Africa project*. See our post on X [here](#). We also presented a post with the Mental Health Innovation Network titled: *Decolonising knowledge and interventions in mental health*



Faith Mpulula and Anthony Sefasi (Kamuzu University of Health Sciences, Malawi) presented our paper on *Use of WHOQOL-BREF in the pilot trial of enhanced community-based rehabilitation for psycho-social disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa through a coproduction and a disability rights approach – The SUCCEED Africa project* in Johannesburg, South Africa, 3-5th October 2024.

Rachel Greenley (LSHTM) presented a poster on *Navigating the maze: enhancing accessibility and equity in community mental health services for people living with psychosis in sub-Saharan Africa* at The 8th Global Symposium on Health Systems Research 18-22 November 2024, Nagasaki, Japan. See link to poster [here](#) Listed on page 10 of HSG24 poster list [here](#)

National conferences

We were also present at several national level conferences.

In Nigeria we presented at the workshop on *Sstrengthening the capacity of organizations of persons living with psychosocial disabilities* in Nigeria (with CBM) on 9th July 2024, See our post on X [here](#).



Also in Nigeria our Bisola Oladele and Mayowa Malomo gave a presentation titled: *Adolescents in Ibadan Speak About Mental Health Through Painting (ASAMP)* at the Women in Science: Sustaining the Future through Education, Innovation Organisation for Women in Science for the Developing World, Ibadan Nigeria. 3-5 September 2024, see our blog post [here](#).



The SUCCEED Malawi team presented a paper on Strategies to enhance mental healthcare in Malawi at the 9th Malawi National Mental Health Research and Practice Development conference, 27-29 September 2024



In Sierra Leone Amjata Bayoh (University of Makeni) presented the findings of the SUCCEED pilot at the **Sierra Leone National conference on mental health**, Kambia, Sierra Leone on 4 December 2024



We had two abstracts accepted for conferences in Year 6. We will also be co-leading a symposium on African psychosis research as part of the Global Mental Health Summit and two of our peer researchers will be travelling to the UK to present at the Road to Recovery Conference.

We delivered lectures and workshops on SUCCEED and mental health awareness at high schools and at universities, both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The SUCCEED Zimbabwe team delivered a lecture at University of Zimbabwe panel on Mental Health. The SUCCEED Zimbabwe team also gave a lecture to University of Zimbabwe undergraduate medical students. The SUCCEED UK team gave multiple lectures on SUCCEED's Theory of Change and process Evaluation for the MSc In Global Mental Health. The Sierra Leone team gave a series of lectures on mental health at various high schools.

We also held a high-impact, in-person policy engagement event in Nigeria, which brought together 420 senior policymakers through a participatory drama performance and question and answers session.

In addition, we took advantage of various media platforms, including six radio sessions across Zimbabwe, Sierra Leone, and Nigeria, a livestreamed mental health debate, and a feature on a television programme in Malawi.

Our role as hosts of the Mental Health Innovation Network (MHIN) Africa Hub has enabled us to amplify regional mental health dialogue. This year we worked directly with the Africa CDC (Centre for Disease Control and Prevention) to survey and map mental health civil society organisations across the continent—this resource is now publicly available [here](#). This also helped us increase African based membership for the MHIN Africa hub with approximately 2250 individuals and 400 organisations joined MHIN from Africa in year

Our other work with MHIN this year includes our peer researcher and uptake/communication team participating in MHIN global advisory and management groups where we work directly in collaboration with those leading the MHIN Asia and MHIN Latin America & Caribbean hubs our support for backend of MHIN website, promotion of mental health innovations and member activities globally.

The [SUCCEED website](#) hosted by LSHTM has now become the principal website for SUCCEED, whereas previously the focus has been the [MHIN SUCCEED](#) page.

Consortium meeting in Malawi

In 2024 SUCCEED consortium members gather for a week- long meeting in Malawi. A significant portion of the agenda was dedicated to personal and collective reflections on the “story” of SUCCEED, how to capture and harness this for different audiences, and to what ends Include stories and photos from the meeting

Plans for year 6 and conclusion

In Year 6, we will complete the evaluations in each country, followed by data analysis and a drive to write up, publish and disseminate our findings. We will also focus on sustainability planning, through engagement with relevant stakeholders and communities in each site. We will launch our online course on Coproduction in Mental Health Research during the first half of 2026. We are looking forward to our final consortium meeting which will be held in Sierra Leone!

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the support of the many communities with whom we engage throughout the SUCCEED programme in Malawi, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe. The civil society organisations implementing the SUCCEED programme (ASIDO Foundation in Nigeria, Mental Health Users and Carers Association (MeHUCA) in Malawi, Mental Health Coalition in Sierra Leone, and the Zimbabwe National Association for Mental Health (ZIMNAMH) have taught us so much about care provision in challenging environments. We would particularly like to thank the people with lived experience of mental health conditions for their valuable contribution insights in shaping the development of intervention. We are very grateful to FCDO for funding this consortium and for their ongoing support.

Report editors and contributors

Anna Chavez, Chuka Ononye, Sarah Polack, Erin Burn