



BasicNeeds

Strengthening Communities,
Improving Mental Health



BasicNeeds Network **IMPACT REPORT 2023**

FOREWORD

The BasicNeeds Network is proud to present its first consolidated report for the year 2023. This is our first published report, the result of collaboration between members from ten countries (India, Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Nigeria, Pakistan, USA and UK), as well as consultants and advisors. This report highlights how the BasicNeeds Model for Mental Health and Development has been, and continues to be, operationalised.

This report encapsulates the innovative and inspiring work of this group of global actors. Their work has made a significant contribution to enabling people with mental health and psychosocial support needs to satisfy their basic needs and exercise their basic rights. This report details how the activities of the network have made it possible for women, men, and youth to access medical treatment, engage in recreation and, actively participating in decision-making, a clear demonstration of why we do what we do.

The impactful local and national actions of our network members continue to strengthen communities and improve the mental health of populations. BasicNeeds Network members have worked to strengthen health systems to deliver better inclusive mental health services, especially to the most vulnerable populations. The report similarly

details how activities of BasicNeeds Network have supported the socio-economic rehabilitation of people affected by mental health conditions - whether living with a mental health condition or acting as primary caregivers - and whose lived experience inform the initiatives delivered.

The report outlines the strides made in galvanising people with lived experience to build and benefit from Self-Help Groups (SHGs), which contribute significantly to upholding the human rights of the poorest and most vulnerable in our communities. The network's activities ensure that poor and vulnerable people affected by mental health conditions exercise their rights. The personal stories contained in this report are particularly inspiring.

Looking ahead, the report also promises a brighter future, a future of increased collective effort. I take this opportunity to thank friends, partners, collaborators, and particularly funders of the work of BasicNeeds Network for the support and inspiration you provide. There is so much ahead, and we can only say this report will inspire you, so continue to walk with us!

Sincerely,
Peter Badimak Yaro
Executive Director BasicNeeds Ghana

ABOUT US

The BasicNeeds Network is a collective of community mental health practitioners, who utilise the proven BasicNeeds Model. By fostering expertise exchange, mutual support, and shared learning, the Network aims to advance mental health outcomes, particularly in low-income settings. Currently comprising of nine organisations and several affiliated individuals across ten countries, the BasicNeeds Network is excited about opportunities for further expansion in the near future.


Note: *Many of the BasicNeeds Network members work with people with mental health conditions, neurological conditions (such as epilepsy) and intellectual disabilities. This inclusive approach reflects the reality at the community level, where clear distinctions between these conditions are often not made, and they share common challenges, such as significant stigma.*

OUR VISION AND MISSION

Vision: the basic needs of all people with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities throughout the world are satisfied and their basic rights are respected.



Mission: to enable people with mental health conditions and their families to live and work successfully in their communities.

A photograph of a man in a blue shirt and orange hat pushing a wheelbarrow with two yellow jerrycans in a rural setting. The background shows a wooden building, a satellite dish, and trees under a cloudy sky.

For over 20 years
the BasicNeeds
Model has been
implemented in over
13 countries
across the globe.

The updated
BasicNeeds Model
was launched
in 2022.

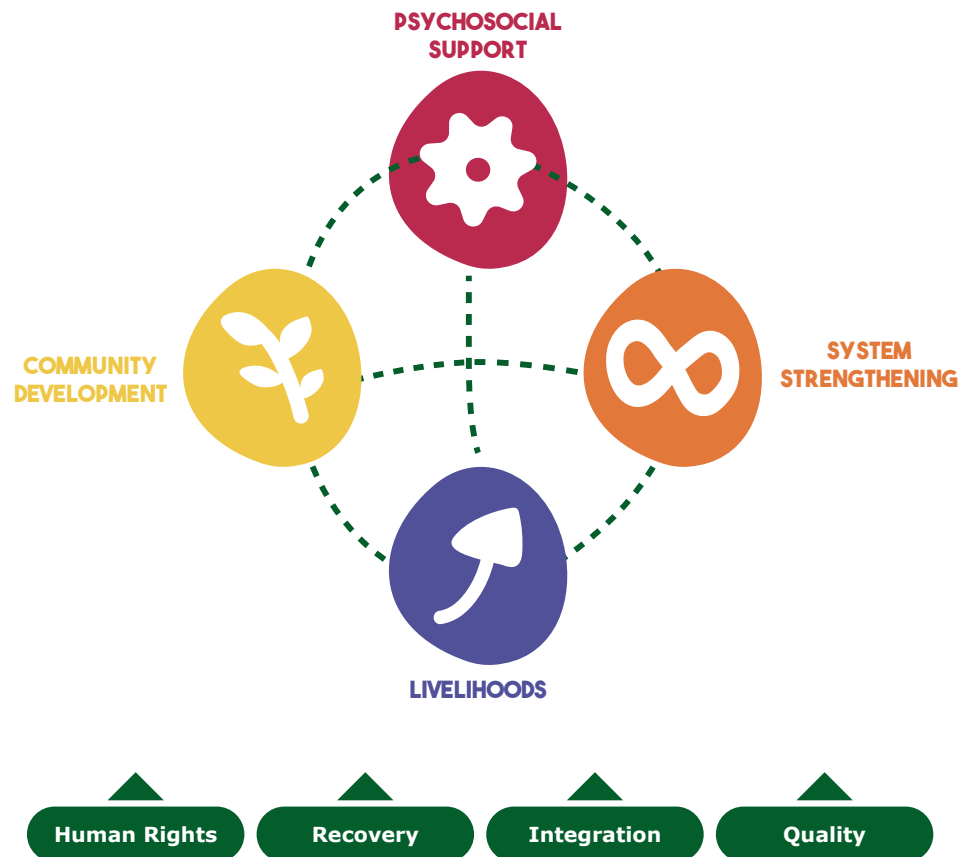
BRIEF HISTORY

BasicNeeds, a mental health development organisation, was founded in 2000 by social entrepreneur Chris Underhill along with practitioners from the Global South. At the time, there was very little focus on mental health, particularly in the Global South where BasicNeeds would implement most of its work. Underhill developed *The Model for Mental Health and Development*, a model harnessing resources from within communities to cost-effectively deliver mental health services even in the poorest and hardest to reach places. BasicNeeds tested the Model in 12 countries, efforts led by local leaders in those countries. As time went on, BasicNeeds country programmes such as those in Vietnam, Ghana, and Kenya became independently registered organisations in their respective countries and continued to deliver crucial mental health work. These organisations now form the backbone of the newly formed BasicNeeds Network (formed in November 2022). They also contributed to a recent review and launch of the updated BasicNeeds Model.

The BasicNeeds Network was formed because members recognised the value of collaboration. The BasicNeeds Network, supported by CBM UK and CBM Global, brings together community-based mental health practitioners using the tried and tested BasicNeeds Model.

BASICNEEDS MODEL

The BasicNeeds Model has four **Foundations** and four **Elements**.



The **four Foundations – Human Rights, Recovery, Integration and Quality** – represent the core principles and expected broader impact of implementing the Model. These Foundations reflect the unwavering commitments and outcomes that the Model strives to achieve.

The **four Elements – Psychosocial support, Community Development, Livelihoods and System Strengthening** – represent what we know to be important to people with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities. They also indicate the set of activities that are part of the Model.

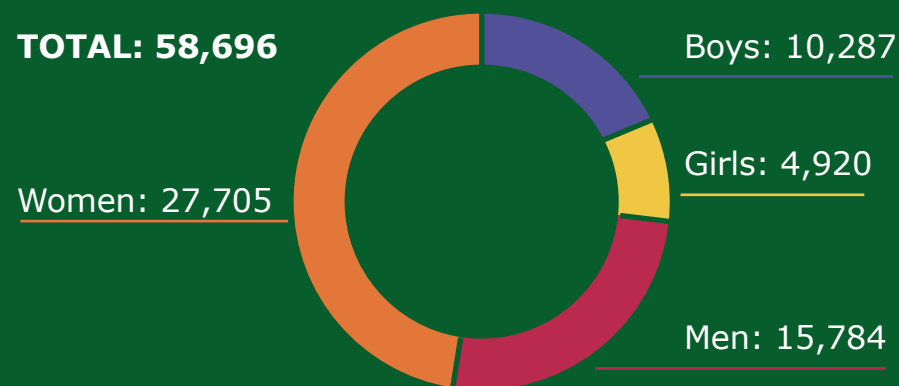
“The BasicNeeds Network is a great idea. Mutual support across countries and cultures is such a powerful idea and will create strength in numbers.”

Chris Underhill MBE, founder of BasicNeeds

SUMMARY OF OUR ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2023

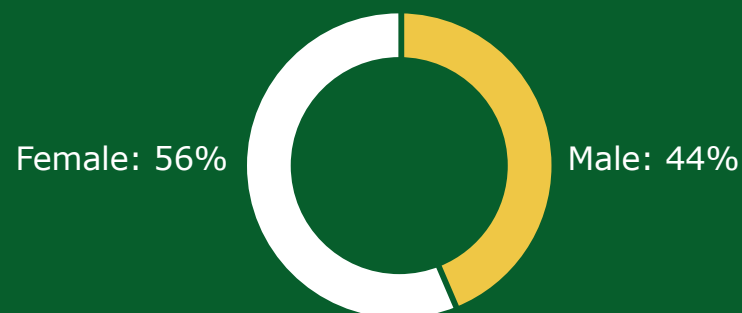
Together, BasicNeeds Network members have provided support to 58,696 persons with mental health needs.¹

TOTAL: 58,696



People reached in 2023 by BasicNeeds Network member organisations

Receiving support from BasicNeeds Network Programmes Distribution by Gender



456 peer groups or Self-Help Groups (SHGs) active among the BasicNeeds Network partners.

92,526 people attended face to face awareness events organized by BasicNeeds Network members.

3,120 frontline health workers and teachers received specialist mental health-related training

4,196 people supported in earning a living or improving their livelihoods

1. The quantitative data in this report comes from Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, Lao PDR, India and Vietnam.

DEEPER DIVE – CASE STUDIES AND MODEL ELEMENTS

The four Elements of the BasicNeeds Model are:



Psychosocial support



Community development



Livelihoods



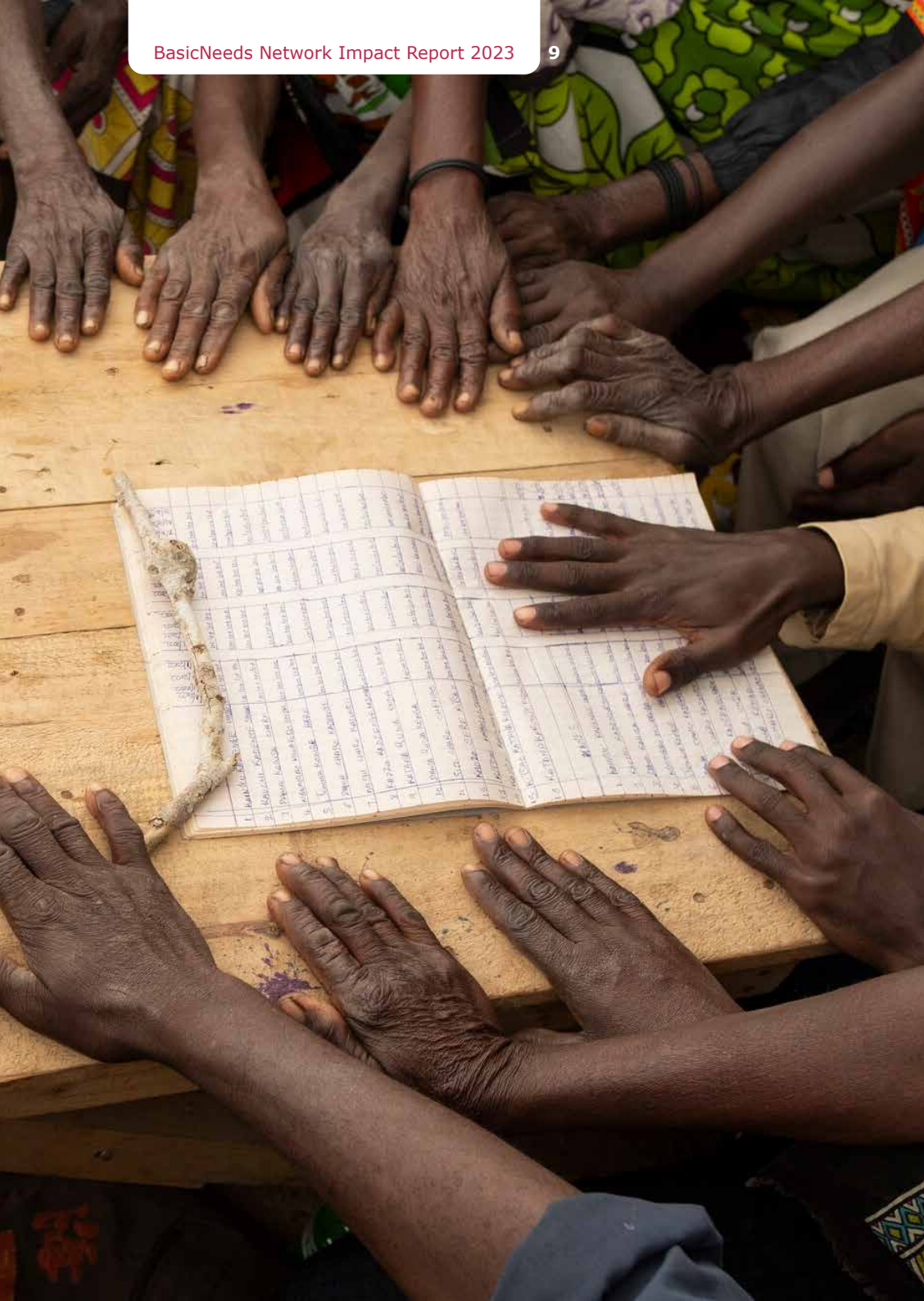
System strengthening

BasicNeeds Network members have made considerable strides in one or more of the Elements during 2023.

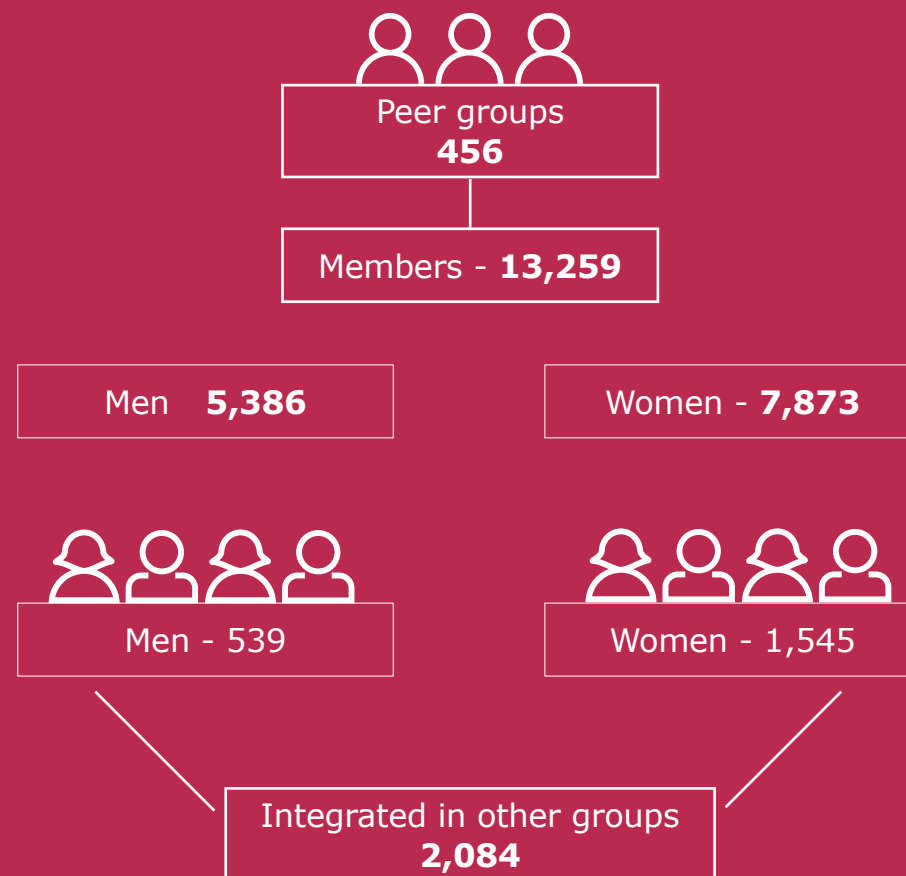


PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT:

Being able to access psychosocial support (main activities include group peer support, counselling, home visits).



Peer support groups provide local, immediate and free support for people with mental health needs. BasicNeeds Model implementers either promote peer groups for people with mental health needs within the BasicNeeds Model programmes or facilitate their enrolment in other existing community groups.



THE POWER OF SELF-HELP GROUPS – A CASE STUDY FROM GHANA

Hamdiya, a 24-year-old woman and the youngest of eight siblings, hails from Bono East Region of Ghana. Her father passed away before she was born. Hamdiya relocated to Tamale following her mother's death in 2018.

Hamdiya began selling various brands of soap and detergents to support herself. The onset of her illness was sudden. A year after relocating, she started quarrelling with neighbours and siblings over trivial matters and stopped respecting anyone in the house. Her family sought help from a herbalist. Despite using the prescribed herbal concoction for bathing three times, her condition did not improve. At a naming ceremony, Hamdiya's uncle met a volunteer from BasicNeeds Ghana. He explained Hamdiya's situation, and the volunteer encouraged him to seek help from a mental health worker.

In 2018, the volunteer and her uncle accompanied Hamdiya to a hospital in Tamale, where she was diagnosed with a mental health condition and medication was prescribed for her. However, her family struggled to afford the medication since the hospital did not have any in stock at that time. Later, BasicNeeds Ghana supported Hamdiya's treatment by taking care of the cost of a year's medication for her which improved her condition. The volunteer also invited her to join 'Bohiri Nye Bangda,' a Self-Help Group at a suburb of Tamale. Married in 2021, she and her husband were blessed with

"I always look forward to the Self Help Group meetings because there my views and opinions are respected, and I interact with people who don't judge or look down upon me."



a daughter. Presently, she performs her house chores without challenges. Hamdiya sometimes spends time with her best friend. Hamdiya's elder siblings continually call to check on her and encourage her to take her medication as prescribed for her.

According to Hamdiya, attending the Self-Help Group meetings keeps her interactive and makes her feel worthy as a person. **"I always look forward to the SHG Meetings because there my views and opinions are respected, and I interact with people who don't judge or look down upon me"**. Hamdiya said she almost lost hope when she was not responding to the herbal treatment. **"Meeting BasicNeeds Ghana is the best thing that ever happened to me; that was a turning point in my life"**.

RESOWING SEEDS OF JOY – SYNOPSIS FROM A BOOKLET PRODUCED BY BASICNEEDS VIETNAM

“With group meetings, people will not feel lonely in their battle against illness. Their fight against depression is accompanied by those who are also in the same fight. They share sympathy and encouragement from stories and sharing of the group members.”

Tâm, Director of
BasicNeeds Vietnam



CAPTURING THE VOICES OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE FOUND THEIR GROUPS INSEPARABLE PARTS OF THEIR RECOVERY JOURNEY

Mrs. Tươi shared with us how stressed out she was when her work, finances, and health were all on a slippery slope. Health volunteers invited her to join group therapy. Members were shy at first, so not many talked. However, as they met others experiencing similar struggles, they began to open up. After a few sessions, a bond was formed.

Everybody was genuine with their feelings and shared everything together. For some, it was their first time participating in group activities and playing games. However, Mrs. Tươi says that some felt sad because they were being mocked for “going to an insane place rather than a sane place.” In response, she encouraged them, saying, “Tell people that we are still fine. What’s important is that we feel better and enjoy ourselves here”.





COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

Being able to be part of a community that is supportive, understanding, and resilient (activities include training community leaders in mental health support, community engagement, community awareness and anti-stigma campaigns).

Awareness and Advocacy:

A total of 92,526 people attended face-to-face events organised by BasicNeeds Network members to raise awareness of the rights of people with mental health conditions and psychosocial disabilities.

COMMUNITY BUILDING – A CASE STUDY FROM KENYA

Teresiah has been caring for her son with a psychosocial disability for over 20 years. In that period, she has undergone exclusion and rejection from her family owing to myths and misconceptions about psychosocial disabilities that have long been held by her community. Teresiah has however benefitted from a mental health outreach clinic that enabled her to learn how to better care for her son as well as access medication. She is also a member of a group of people with disabilities from Kajiado County, Kenya and their caregivers who have been trained on financial literacy and business skills and have received seed grants to enable them to start sustainable income-generating ventures.

“My advice to my community is that they should stop hiding or mistreating their children with disabilities. They should allow them to freely interact with their peers and the wider community so that they can have a sense of belonging.”



MENTAL HEALTH CHAMPION FROM INDIA

Bhoomika is blind and had recovered from depression. She was trained as a Mental Health Champion through a project implemented by GASS-India². A Mental Health Champion is someone with lived experience of mental health conditions who uses their story to share with others and challenge stigma. Bhoomika continues to inspire people in the villages to come forward for mental health support, sharing her own story of recovery. She visited Singapore in 2019 to represent GASS in a mental health conference. She is an active anti-stigma campaigner in the remote villages of Bangalore.



2. Gramina Abyuday Seva Samsthe (GASS) is a BasicNeeds Network member in India, and one of the pioneers of introducing the BasicNeeds Model in India.



LIVELIHOODS:

Being able to access livelihoods and economic opportunities as an equal individual (activities include delivering start up enterprise support, develop savings and loan schemes, encourage productive work).

LIVELIHOODS AND INCOME:

The BasicNeeds Network programmes have supported 4,196 people in earning a living or improving their livelihoods.



1,638



2,558

4,196

ACCESS TO SOCIAL PROTECTION:

The BasicNeeds Network members have facilitated access to social protection systems for 11,151 people.



4,322



6,829

11,151



TRANSFORMATION WITH INCOME GENERATION – A CASE STUDY FROM UGANDA

“My name is Sarah (not my real name), and I am 48 years old, a member of a Self-Help group in a small town in northern Uganda. Growing up as an orphan in a child-headed household, I was captured by the Lord’s Resistance Army rebels in 2005. The harassment I endured led to health complications, preventing me from having children, and causing severe depression.

In 2019, I learned about BasicNeeds Uganda services from a fellow villager and enrolled in their programme. I received medication and counselling, and my condition improved. I was trained in financial literacy, the functioning of Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA), human rights, advocacy, and managing a drug bank. With livelihood inputs received from BasicNeeds Uganda like cooking oil and soap, I diversified my business, significantly increasing my household income.

Engaging in income-generating activities brought peace and stability to my marriage, as I could now provide basic needs for my family. My savings grew, allowing me to invest in goat farming and join several VSLA groups. This reduced my dependency, enabling me to support my family. My husband even saved enough to pay part of my bride price.

Stigma from not dressing well or failing to provide for my family, which triggered my depression, diminished. Business proceeds now help with clothing, feeding, medication, and school fees. Thanks to BasicNeeds Uganda, I have gained friends, community confidence, and now hold a leadership role in my local council.”

“My savings grew, allowing me to invest in goat farming and join several VSLA groups. This reduced my dependency, enabling me to support my family.”

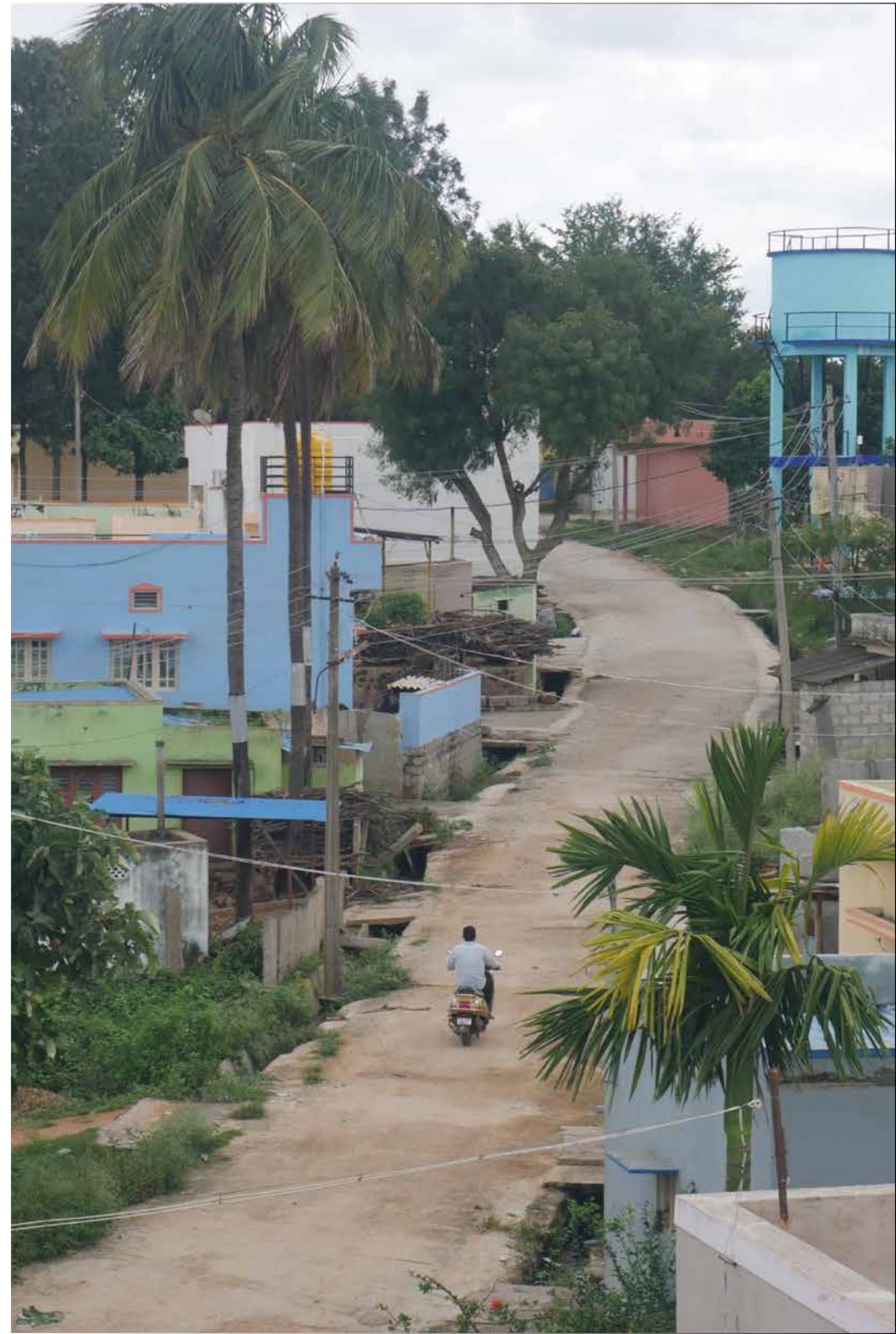
FROM PROJECT PARTICIPANT TO BOARD MEMBER – A CASE STUDY FROM INDIA



Shekar, aged 60, lives in South India. He is unmarried and has been living alone since the death of his parents ten years ago. He had attended the community mental health camp organised by GASS a few years back and was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Later, he worked as a volunteer for the community mental health project of GASS.

He is interested and passionate about playing the flute. He was earning his living by teaching music in schools. However, during the Covid pandemic, his work was disrupted, and his income paused. Shekar approached GASS for support and he was provided with a laptop after receiving online training. He quickly adapted, offering online music classes to school children and started earning again. Now, with schools reopened, he continues to teach both online and in person. The laptop boosted both his income and confidence.

In 2019, Shekar attended GASS's Mental Health Champions training. He now shares his story and flute performances at small gatherings as a guest influencer. His strong rapport with GASS led to his appointment as a member of the Board of Directors of GASS in 2020, where he remains an active member.



EMPOWERMENT THROUGH VOCATIONAL TRAINING – CASE STUDY FROM PAKISTAN

“My name is Suman, and I come from a humble background. Life at home was difficult, and I often found myself consumed by worry and irrational thoughts, leading to long periods of silence that deeply concerned my family.

One day, my friend told me about a centre offering free courses. I decided to visit. There, I met a beauty instructor who gave me a questionnaire and referred me to Dr. Fizza, the centre’s Director. She spoke with me in detail, diagnosed me with depression, and recommended counselling. On the first day, Madam spoke about mental health conditions, and it felt as though she was describing my own experiences. Her words gave me immense encouragement, and I decided to take the beautician course despite having no prior knowledge in the field. Necessity drove me to this decision, my father had passed away, and I had to discontinue my studies to support my family. My mother’s health was also poor. I took free admission at the centre and completed the four-month course with dedication. The training I received empowered me to work from home and start earning. Now, I make about 10,000 rupees (\$35) per month through eyebrow threading and makeup services. Our home situation is gradually improving, and I feel confident and mentally strong. I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Fizza and the instructor at the centre for making me capable enough to support my family and mentally strong and happy. Your support means the world to me, and I am forever grateful.”

“When Madam spoke about mental illness, it felt as though she was describing my own experiences.... Your support means the world to me, and I am forever grateful.”





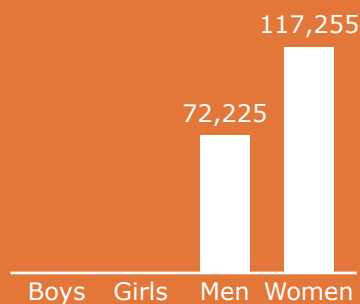
SYSTEM STRENGTHENING:

Being able to access services which are effective, responsive, and recovery focused (activities include building mental health capacity in systems, strengthening existing community mental health services, training of health personnel, training of teachers etc).

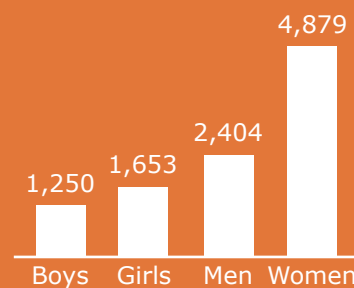
A total of 3,046 frontline health workers and teachers received specialist mental health-related training through BasicNeeds Network interventions, aligning with a focus on building capacity within existing systems to better address mental health needs.

Integration with Healthcare Systems: A total of 189,886³ individuals were supported in accessing mainstream health services, and 286 mental health services were integrated into mainstream healthcare facilities with BasicNeeds Network support facilitating 14,147 people to access these services, demonstrating efforts to mainstream mental health care.

People accessing mainstream health services
N= 189,886



People accessing integrated mental health services
N= 14,147



3. This number includes those who were being followed up from previous programmes. It is not limited to 2023 data.

"I will definitely continue to knock on every door and send hope to people. I find my everyday joy in seeing people with depression get better."

Trần Huyền Thuong, Village Health Worker at Phú Xá commune health station, Vietnam



Access to mental health services is crucial. BasicNeeds Network members always build collaborations with government providers of mental health services in their countries of work. This enables continuity of services even when the projects come to an end after the funding period.

SUSTAINING MENTAL HEALTH INTEGRATION: LESSONS FROM BASICNEEDS LAO PDR'S COLLABORATION WITH VIENTIANE PROVINCE

BasicNeeds Lao PDR has been actively collaborating with the government to enhance mental health services in Vientiane Province. Significant efforts have been made to integrate mental health into general health services, particularly in Vientiane Province, where BasicNeeds has been involved in training village health volunteers and health workers.

During the project exit strategy training in September 2023, 36 partners from the province participated. It was encouraging to hear from the Chief of the Curative and Rehabilitation Division and the Chiefs of the four District Health Offices that mental health treatment will continue to be supported, regardless of funding, because it is their mandate. Additionally, the Director urged provincial staff to prepare early project proposals on mental health to attract funding from interested donors. A province level WhatsApp group has been promoted to ensure multisectoral cooperation and sustainability.



SYSTEM STRENGTHENING IN ACTION – HOW ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE TRANSFORMED MALLAN'S LIFE

Mallan is 13-year-old boy from Plateau state, Nigeria. He was diagnosed with epilepsy during a mental health camp at the Primary Healthcare centre. He dropped out of school due to frequent seizures. He was placed on medication at the camp, and after a few months on medication at the Primary Healthcare centre, the frequency of the seizures reduced until the condition became undetectable and he was able to continue his education. The parents are supporting his medication cost, and he is living his life like other pupils in the community.





BASICNEEDS NETWORK GOALS

Our Key Network goals include,

- Working together to scale-up our work, to be able to help more people with mental health conditions and their families to live and work successfully in their communities.
- Offering a platform for knowledge sharing (Community of Practice)
- Providing standardised technical expertise and mentoring to emerging players in community mental health (BasicNeeds Academy)

Our goal for the next ten years is to touch the lives of five million people with mental health needs through expanding the multilevel stakeholder partnerships.

MEMBERS PROFILE

BasicNeeds Ghana
BasicNeeds Kenya
BasicNeeds Lao PDR
BasicNeeds Uganda
BasicNeeds US
BasicNeeds Vietnam
CBM UK
GASS India
Gede Foundation Nigeria

*several individual members as well

GET IN TOUCH

The BasicNeeds Network supports aspiring and current implementers to deliver the Model and its activities via a range of service packages:

- Training, mentoring and capacity building
- Access to the BasicNeeds Operations Manual and the BasicNeeds Impact System
- Peer-support from a community of like-minded organisations and individuals
- Networking and knowledge sharing opportunities
- The chance to become an Accredited BasicNeeds Model Implementer

Contact

Erla Magnusdottir
BasicNeeds Mental Health Coordinator
erlam@cbmuk.org.uk

