

Upili Pilot Impact Report

Challenge: Untreated depression and anxiety create barriers that keep Youth with Disabilities from succeeding academically or securing meaningful employment upon graduation.

Youth with Disabilities are 10 times more likely to suffer from depression, especially in East Africa where stigmatization, marginalization and bias is still widespread.

Solution: Next Step Foundation's Upili Program addresses this pervasive mental health challenge by providing Counselors with Disabilities to support Secondary School Students with Disabilities, their families and communities.

It instills self-confidence, improves academic performance and provides the tools to successfully navigate future bias so they can succeed in the workplace and achieve economic independence.

Pilot: Upili's Counselor with a Disability led group therapy sessions for two subsets of Form III and IV students at Joytown Secondary School for the Physically Disabled over the course of the first trimester of 2024.

The impact of poor mental health on workplace performance is significant.

A World Health Organization (WHO) report reveals **depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy One Trillion USD annually in lost productivity.** In East Africa, where mental health resources are not yet plentiful, the cost is even more pronounced.

Our Impact at a Glance:

Students with Disabilities who participated in the Upili pilot project reported the following results:



82%

Reduction in levels of daily and weekly levels of Anxiety



78%

Reduction in levels of daily and weekly levels of Depression

How does Upili benefit Participants in the workplace?

- ★ **Improved Performance:** Confident employees are more productive as they trust themselves to complete tasks efficiently.
- ★ **Enhanced Communication:** Self-confidence promotes clear and assertive communication, making it easier to share ideas, give presentations and participate in discussions.
- ★ **Increased Leadership Potential:** Confidence is a key trait of effective leaders as it helps motivate others and navigate challenges.
- ★ **Career Advancement:** Confident individuals are more likely to see and seize opportunities for advancement and advocate for themselves.

WHAT OTHERS ARE SAYING ABOUT UPILI

“

At Treeside we say our world is a silent world. Deafness, as we see it, is an invisible and silent disability. The students grow frustrated when they are unable to communicate and to a non-deaf person this frustration can convey as anger.

Group counseling would tremendously help with this anger and frustration. Our students would benefit from Upiili instilling confidence and helping them learn to self-advocate in the outside world. Helping them to realize I am equal, I am capable, I have the same strength as non-deaf people do.

Kasarani Treeside School for the Deaf

”

“

Before Upiili, I wasn't confident about myself. Through the sessions, I have learned to recognize my self-worth, increase my self-confidence, and appreciate the life I have. Thanks to Upiili, I have the tools to feel better about myself every day.

Student, SA Joytown Secondary School

”

“

Group therapy can be a powerful setting for Students with Disabilities, offering a space where they can connect with others facing similar challenges. Healing is a journey best traveled with companions and group therapy offers a compass to navigate the complex terrain of past trauma and present adversities. In the heart of the group, Students with Disabilities discover that their voices, often silenced by discrimination, can resonate with power and purpose.

**Rayhab Karuri, Counseling Psychologist,
Kenya Institute of Business and Counseling Studies**

”

“

Self-esteem and confidence in the workplace play a pivotal role in how individuals participate in their work. It also has a big impact on the attitudes employees display at work. Workers with higher self-esteem see themselves as capable and competent and view their work as a valuable contribution to whatever organization they work for.

Catherine Karega, Masters, Clinical Psychology

”