



## QUARTERLY REPORT Q1 (January – March 2022)

### INTRODUCTION

StrongMinds (“SM”) has long considered leveraging its expertise in group therapy for depression and launching operations in the United States. SM is the largest depression treatment provider in Africa, but it still has strong roots in the US. The team was founded in the US and our Group Interpersonal Psychotherapy modality was originated here as well. While the US has a more advanced mental health care system than most of Africa, there is still a tremendous need for more accessible and affordable mental health care throughout the US.

Until early 2020 however, StrongMinds had resisted embarking on a US launch to ensure continued focus on Africa. The COVID-19 pandemic, with its ensuing impact on mental health globally, has challenged StrongMinds to become more ambitious in its strategy and to finally move forward on the US launch. Building from 2021 efforts and seed funding, we launched our pilot program in the US at the start of 2022. StrongMinds will leverage its experience of treating more than 150,000 depression sufferers in Africa and pilot and iterate a culturally tailored group talk therapy program specifically designed to treat depression among BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) youth in Newark, NJ, with a focus on women and men (ages 18-25). We will reach at least 36,000 BIPOC depression sufferers in Newark by the close of 2024.

StrongMinds is seeking to transform access to services and improve the mental health outcomes for BIPOC youth living with depression using Group Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT-G), which is a highly effective, time-limited, proven technique that has been rigorously tested in numerous clinical trials conducted with diverse populations in the US and abroad. StrongMinds will fill an important gap in affordable, accessible, culturally, and age-appropriate mental health services in BIPOC communities. Long-term, we seek to make our highly effective depression treatment available for the millions in need in the US, and to democratize depression treatment for the average American, much the same as we are doing in Africa.

### Q1/2022 KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- Initiated the StrongMinds program in the US in early January with the hiring of Valerie Wells as our Director of Programs. Valerie brings nearly 20 years of deep experience working with homeless populations in the NYC area to include a strong focus on improving their mental health.
- Completed 2022 workplan and updated program budget which is approximately \$500k.
- In preparation for launching depression treatment activities in the second half of 2022, we met with over 35 nonprofit organizations in Newark to explain our model and evaluate partnership opportunities.
- Met with Newark-based colleges/universities to explore collaboration and/or partnership efforts.



- Created a [two-pager](#) introducing the US program with a detailed explanation of the program's overview.
- Began legal research surrounding non-profit operations in the mental health sector in the state of New Jersey.
- Hired a part-time fundraiser to help us close our 2022 funding gap (now at \$150k) and to build a development pipeline into the future. Kevin George comes to StrongMinds with more than 15 years of professional fundraising experience.
- Launched the candidate search for an LCSW (Licensed Clinical Social Worker) who will be the first group leader for StrongMinds US.
- Conducted a comprehensive search and contracted with a Qualitative Market Research firm who will, in Q2, conduct a number of focus groups with the target population in Newark to help us better understand their needs and for us to begin to adapt our model to fit our clients' needs.

## **FOCUS FOR Q2**

- Onboard the LCSW and train him/her in our IPT-G model, leveraging talent from StrongMinds Uganda.
- Review focus group findings and modify program model accordingly. Key findings sought include willingness to pay information, and preferences around in-person or online therapy groups.
- Complete preparations and prepare to launch first depression groups at start of Q3.

## **PLANS FOR Q3/Q4**

- Launch depression treatment groups.
- Leverage learnings and complete plans/budget for 2023.
- Continue to identify potential partners for SM US—program/fundraising.
- Finalize new name for StrongMinds US program, secure web domain, and plan for a separate 501c3 entity (to include a NJ focused Board of Directors) to begin by the start of 2023.