

2025 PCAU Annual Report



Integrating Palliative Care in Primary health care and building compassionate communities to Improve Access to Palliative Care for ALL in Uganda!

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Members of the Board of Directors of PCAU and Staff

Some of the Members of the PCAU Board and Management team with Dr. Geoffrey Bukombi (middle), who represented the Ministry of Health at the closing of the two-day retreat in August 2025.



Some of the staff and volunteers at the PCAU Secretariat

Some of the staff and volunteers at the PCAU Secretariat, together with Mike Wargo (in the middle), the Vice President at Center for Hospice Care (CHC), a partner member organization with PCAU. Standing from the right, Tom Marentette from the University of Notre Dame has been part of the effort to enhance palliative care data, followed by Dr. Brandon Maser, who interned with PCAU during his PhD studies in 2025.



Members of the PCAU Board of Directors 2025

NO.	NAME	DESIGNATION
1.	Dr. Nixon Niyonzima	Chairperson
2.	Dr. Miriam Ajambo	Vice Chairperson
3.	CPA Timothy Basiima, PhD	Treasurer
4.	Grace Nayiga	Secretary
5.	Gloria Kirungi Kasozi, PhD	Member
6.	Rev. Sr Judith Kaddu	Member
7.	Roselight Katusabe	Member
8.	Dr. Elizabeth Namukwaya	Member
9.	Christine Grace Akullo Ebong	Member

Members and Volunteers at PCAU Secretariat 2025

NO.	NAME	DESIGNATION
1.	Mark-Donald Bikosa Mwesiga	Executive Director
2.	Joyce Zalwango	Capacity Building Manager
3.	Lisa Christine Irumba	Research and Information Manager
4.	Ritah Nannyomo	Finance Officer
5.	Anita Balikobaku	Program Officer
6.	Cynthia Kabagambe	M&E Officer
7.	Zipporah Kyomuhangi	Administrative Assistant
8.	Hope Tayebwa	Partnership and Resources Mobilization Officer
9.	Mathias Kakumba	Accounts Assistant
10.	Jaffar Mohamed	Driver
11.	Margret Kabajungu	General Assistant
12.	Joel Galiwango	General Assistant

Part-time Staff / Locum Staff

13.	Fiona Siima Karakire
14.	Danniella Akellot
15.	Sheena Asimwe
16.	Joseph Serebe
17.	Dr. Stephen kasula

Volunteer Staff PCAU West Nile Branch / New Life Hospice Arua (NELIHA)

NO.	NAME	DESIGNATION
18.	Agaboru Sebi Lucy	Clinical Team Leader
19.	Ndemaru Patricia	Administrator



Group photo of the Staff and Volunteers at the PCAU Secretariat at the end of the year event in Entebbe in December 2025.

Contents



- PCAU Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives** 9
- Message from the Board Chairperson** 10
- Message from the Executive Director** 11
- Our Achievements in 2025** 13
- Spiritual Assessment Tool for Palliative Care Teams in Uganda** 18
- Strategic Advocacy and Raising Awareness about Palliative Care** 19
- The Road to Hope Program supported 95 child caregivers in 2025** 22
- Creating awareness about Palliative Care through the media** 24
- Community engagement for information sharing, advocacy, and social responsibility, and strengthening partnerships with like-minded organizations.** 25
- Commemorating the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2025 in Uganda** 26
- Working with older people on Health Agieng, Long-term Care, and Palliative Care** 27
- Building Compassionate Communities to Enhance Access to Palliative Care for ALL in Uganda.** 28
- PCAU Social Media Presence** 31
- What affected the delivery of our work in 2024** 42
- A Look at our Financial Resources for 2024** 44



The Institutional Members of PCAU



A staff of PCAU, together with the staff of Hospice Africa Uganda, working at Little Hospice Hoima site, interacting with guardians, family members, and some of the beneficiaries for PCAU's Road to Hope Program, which supports child caregivers. PCAU works with Hopsices, which are institutional members of the association, to support child caregivers from indigent families across the country.

The institutional members are a vital structure and key stakeholders of PCAU. While PCAU does not provide direct care to patients and families, the institutional members do. PCAU's mandate involves coordinating all non-state palliative care actors in Uganda to work together and serve as a central advocacy voice in engaging the government to integrate palliative care at all levels of the healthcare system in Uganda.



Group photo of representatives of PCAU institution members and individuals at the Annual General meeting in May 2025.

A Tribute to Dr. Anne Merriman (1935–2025): The Mother of Palliative Care in Africa

In May 2025, we lost one of the founders of the Palliative Care Association of Uganda, Dr. Anne Merriman (MHSRIP), the visionary humanitarian and undisputed “Mother of Palliative Care in Africa.” A monumental figure in global health, she died on May 18th, 2025, at the age of 90. Her legacy is defined by founding many organizations, starting with Hospice Africa Uganda (HAU) in 1993, the Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in Africa (IHPCA), the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) in 1999, the African Palliative Care Association (APCA) in 2004, and, just before her passing in

2021, the Cancer Disabilities Advocacy Centre (CADAC).

Dr. Merriman was a founding member and Vice-Chairperson of PCAU’s founding Board of Directors. Her unwavering leadership was pivotal in forging a powerful national association that unites palliative care providers across Uganda, creating a stronghold for compassionate care. She always emphasized that PCAU’s work was to promote and support the development of palliative care programs across the country. It was always her pleasure to see palliative care expand into new districts, and

she worked tirelessly to support PCAU in this mission.

Dr. Merriman was a compassionate palliative care physician, leader, teacher, and mentor. She was a passionate advocate for patients’ access to pain-relief medication. Her role in introducing oral liquid morphine and the advocacy that followed to ensure a statutory instrument allowing specialists in palliative care and trained nurses to prescribe it shall remain part of her endearing legacy.

PCAU will forever be grateful for Dr. Anne Merriman’s advocacy and support. She helped establish the association and continued to support it. For all her work for PCAU, Dr. Merriman returned any facilitations or refunds for transport made to her in support of PCAU project work. She voluntarily contributed to PCAU’s development and to resource mobilization efforts for the association. Her personal commitment was evident;



she attended all PCAU events, including Annual General Meetings, national update meetings, and Annual members’ get-together dinners. At any PCAU event, one could count on Dr. Merriman. In 2017, PCAU awarded her a PCAU Merit Award for her crucial role in founding the organization and advancing palliative care in Uganda. She was also posthumously awarded a Medal of Honor by Uganda’s President in 2025, recognizing her lifelong dedication to palliative care.



The PCAU Vision, Mission, and Strategic Objectives

PCAU Strategic Direction



Focus Areas & Objectives 2022 - 2026





Message from **the Board Chairperson,**

Dear PCAU Members and partners,

On behalf of the Board Directors of the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU), I thank you all for your continued support of the association. I thank the Board members for their role in proper governance, and the management team and staff for running the secretariat and its programs effectively.

Last year, the ATLANTES Global Observatory of Palliative Care, a WHO Collaborating Center, published a global palliative care map evaluating 201 countries. They classified progress into four stages: emerging (40%), in progress (28%), established (17%), and advanced (14%). Uganda is among the countries with advanced palliative care, showing its efforts are globally recognized and commendable.

We appreciate all actors at different levels, including policy, planning, and implementation of services, who contribute to this recognition.

Even with this international recognition, access to palliative care in our country remains low at about 11% for those in need. One of the major challenges we face is reducing donor funding for palliative care programs. This is not only for the palliative care sector but also for other sectors.

While we continue efforts to harness opportunities for more donors and international partnerships, we are also strongly considering local solutions. Among other strategies, the Board has also studied and recommended an option for the association to start a social enterprise. We would like members of PCAU to support this initiative that necessitates incorporating 'PCAU Investments' with the Uganda Registration Services Bureau. The Board is keen on ensuring that PCAU maintains and strengthens its niche through diversifying income streams.

We appreciate the government of Uganda for its progressive efforts to integrate palliative care into the health care system and for its appeal for more investment. While the need for palliative care continues to grow, the number of service points and the required qualified human resources remain limited. We also need to develop palliative care fellowship programs that provide us with more qualified specialists.

Once again, I thank you all for your support and partnership in the past year and look forward to continuing our collaboration with all palliative care stakeholders.

Thank you all.


Dr. Nixon Niyonzima
Board Chairperson PCAU



Message from **the Executive Director,**

Dear PCAU members, partners, and friends,

Thank you for your continued support of the association.

We are excited to share our 2025 annual report highlighting our achievements. We accomplished a lot, as detailed in the report.

The need for palliative care in our country remains high, yet only 11% of those in need access the service. Our association aims to expand access to palliative care in Uganda, and one of the major ways we are doing this is by supporting the establishment of hospices and palliative care units, training health workers, and providing educational scholarships. We have increased community outreach through the compassionate community initiative and improved palliative care data collection, aiding decision-making. We extended advocacy for child caregivers and qualified providers, continuing into 2026. Our 5th Uganda conference on cancer and palliative care was a success.

Looking ahead, we urge the government to accomplish the National Strategy for Palliative Care. We have engaged with the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council and seek their support to recognize and license all qualified palliative care nurses, which will improve access to care. We also call on health facility leaders to prioritize data collection and reporting on palliative care through the national system, providing essential evidence to guide advocacy, decision-making, and resource allocation.

Our achievements in 2025 owe much to the individuals and institutions that supported PCAU. We sincerely thank our donors, the Center for Hospice Care (CHC), through Global Partners in Care (GPiC) and the American Cancer Society (ACS), for their ongoing support. We also appreciate all our partners and contributors, including the Ministry of Health, Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI), Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD), and Hospice Africa Uganda (HAU), among others.

Lastly, I thank all PCAU members who invest huge amounts of time offering care and comfort to families in distress across Uganda. The association delivers its mandate and strength from you all.

In case you would like to contact me directly for work partnership or for more information, please email mark.mwesiga@pcau.org.ug.

Thank you all.


Mark-Donald Mwesiga
PCAU Executive Director

Our Achievements for the year 2025

The year 2025 followed PCAU's Silver Jubilee celebration in 2024, and we sought to consolidate the achievements made over the association's 25 years. The top activities of the year were the 5th Uganda Conference on Cancer Palliative Care PCAU and the strengthening of public health and community engagement initiatives by expanding the compassionate communities program. During the year, PCAU published several achievements addressing each of PCAU's strategic objectives.



Education, training, support-supervision, mentorship, and coaching for Palliative Care Providers and Other Stakeholders in Uganda in 2025.

One of our strategic objectives is to **strengthen the capacity of palliative care providers in Uganda through supporting training, continuous professional education, mentorship, and supervision.** To achieve this objective, PCAU offers scholarships for palliative care education, promotes and delivers Continuous Medical Education (CME) focused on palliative care and pain management, promotes and conducts support supervision of palliative care, and fosters coaching and mentorship for palliative care providers in the country.



PCAU appreciates all partners and donors who contributed both financial and non-financial resources towards the work of successful implementation of the organization's activities in 2025.

Palliative Care Education and Training



PCAU Scholarships continue to grow over the years with the highest awards in 2024. In 2025, the PCAU Scholarships were targeted to districts without a single facility offering palliative care and 11 out of 40 were reached.

Training under the American Cancer Society's Global Health Provider Support Initiative (GHPSI) focused on multidisciplinary teams focusing on strengthening cancer care through guideline use, safe chemotherapy practices, and improved access to essential pain medicines across 5 hospitals including:

1. Uganda Cancer Institute
2. St. Francis Hospital Nsambya
3. St. Mary's Lacor Hospital
4. Masaka Regional Referral Hospital
5. Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital

In 2025, we provided 14 scholarships to students in the Advanced Diploma in Palliative Care Nursing and BSc in Palliative Care and supported clinical placements for over 30 students. We promoted and supported short-course training for over 1,000 health workers in palliative care, medicine handling, and pain management. Our quarterly update meetings attracted over 540 participants. We collaborated with the Ministry of Health to supervise palliative care support in over 40 health facilities in 20 districts. Meetings with the professional licensing bodies aimed to get PCAU accredited as a CPD credit provider for palliative care education. We also engaged over 30 higher institutions to strengthen delivery.

Sample posters were printed and disseminated to five hospitals in Uganda in 2025 with support from the American Cancer Society. Over the years, PCAU has developed an important capacity to support tailor-made Continuous Medical Education Sessions (CMEs) for both health and non-health professionals. Hospitals and organizations can contact the PCAU Capacity Building Department for support for their teams via email: capacitybuilding@pcau.org.ug



The team from Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI), after one of the sessions about the National Cancer Coalition Network's (NCCN) guidelines for Sub-Saharan Africa, aimed to promote safe chemotherapy and improve access to pain medicines.

In 2025, we implemented a project to improve cancer outcomes via provider awareness, stronger health systems, and regional collaboration. The initiative funded by the American Cancer Society (ACS) built capacity to adopt the National Cancer Coalition Network's (NCCN) guidelines for Sub-Saharan Africa, promote safe chemotherapy, and improve access to pain medicines. Activities in five hospitals included CMEs, discussions, poster and ECHO sessions, and follow-ups, reaching 1,011 staff to enhance cancer and palliative care practices. Additionally, 100 pain posters boosted patient awareness, leading to better pain management skills, navigation from screening to treatment, and safer chemotherapy, improving care quality. Other CPD sessions, including webinars, involved over 500 participants.

The training and information on assessing pain in children and adults were timely and very important for us at the hospital. We need more such CMEs, and this will lead to improved quality of care for our patients."

Staff of Uganda Cancer Institute at Gulu Cancer Center



The designated representatives from the five hospitals involved in the Global Health Provider Support Initiative (GHPSI), namely: Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI), St. Francis Hospital Nsambya, St. Mary's Lacor Hospital, Masaka Regional Referral Hospital, and Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital, participated in the project. The initiative aimed to enhance cancer care by implementing guidelines, encouraging safe chemotherapy practices, and increasing access to essential pain medicines.



▶▶▶ To support the establishment and enhance the functionality of palliative care units, as well as the delivery of palliative care in hospitals nationwide, PCAU, in partnership with the Ministry of Health, conducted support supervision for 20 newly graduated palliative professionals working in 20 facilities in 15 districts in Uganda in 2025.

The Support supervision visits conducted by PCAU in partnership with the Ministry of Health across the country involve strategic advocacy with health facility and district officials. The goals are to gain recognition for palliative care providers at district and facility levels, support the creation and strengthening of palliative care units, expand services to underserved facilities, and improve access to oral liquid morphine for patients with moderate to severe pain. These efforts aim to enhance the quality of care for patients and their families.



In 2025, PCAU held a breakfast advocacy meeting on palliative care education and workforce development in Uganda, convening stakeholders to discuss workforce recognition at all levels. Participants examined system gaps in training and deployment that affect palliative care. A case study highlighted how targeted district training, leadership, and supervision fostered nurse-led palliative care. Participants included leaders from the Ministry of Health, the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council, the Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in Africa, and hospitals, hospices, and palliative care units.



▶▶▶ Group photo of the Members of the PCAU Southwestern Branch with the PCAU Executive Director after their final quarterly update meeting of 2025, held at Ishak's Adventist Hospital.

PCAU conducts quarterly national update meetings, which are CME sessions that build palliative care providers' capacity by equipping them with knowledge of topical issues to ensure quality service delivery. In 2025, PCAU held 3 national update meetings, with an average of 96 online participants and 150 in-person attendees at each meeting. These platforms expanded awareness beyond palliative care by engaging experts on issues such as Capacity Building, Resilience, Cancer Survivorship, and Mental Health & Psychosocial Support.

Spiritual Assessment Tool for Palliative Care Teams in Uganda

In 2025, we piloted the **PCAU Spiritual Care Assessment Tool: Guideline for Palliative Care Providers in Uganda** at two sites: Little Hospice Hoima and the pediatric unit of the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI). The tool aims to guide healthcare workers, social workers, spiritual caregivers, and volunteers in delivering structured spiritual care. To pilot the tool, which was accomplished by a technical working group of expert teams at the two pilot institutions, the teams were first trained on how to use the tool. During the year, PCAU continued to monitor and received important feedback for improving the tool and scaling up the use of the tool in the coming year.



Team at Little Hospice Hoima with facilitators from PCAU after the training on the **PCAU Spiritual Care Assessment Tool: Guideline for Palliative Care Providers in Uganda in January 2025.**

Strategic Advocacy and Raising Awareness about Palliative Care

Strategic Advocacy engagements with Key Government Institutions in 2025		
Ministry, Department, or Agency	Advocacy issue	Key steps and Expected outcomes
Ministry of Health	Establish the National Palliative Care Strategic Plan for Uganda	PCAU offered technical and financial resources to support the development of a strategy to streamline planning, funding, and the delivery of palliative care.
Ministry of Education and Sports	Expand access and improve the delivery of palliative care at High Institutions of learning	Engaged Ministry, Universities, Nursing and Medical schools, including meetings with Principals of Nursing and Midwifery schools for improved delivery of education.
Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development	Integrate palliative care in social care programs for vulnerable individuals and families, including older persons	Palliative care is integrated into social care implementation plans for Uganda.
National Medical Stores (NMS)	Continue enhancing the supply chain for essential palliative care medicine and health supplies.	Strengthening the availability of oral liquid morphine
Public Hospitals and Lower Health Facilities	Establishment of palliative care units and palliative care practicum sites for students, and full integration of palliative care	Improved availability and access to palliative care across the districts of Uganda. Enhanced holistic care for patients and families
Parliament of Uganda	Conducive legislation and support for resource appropriation for the access and availability of palliative care.	Ensure a balance between access and control of controlled medicines for pain relief.



From the Right Director General, Health Services, Ministry of Health, Dr. Charles Olaro; PCAU Board Chairperson, Dr. Nixon Niyonzima; Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, Kedrace Turyagyende, PhD; PCAU Board Vice Chairperson, Dr. Miriam Ajambo; and Executive Director, Mark-Donald Mwesiga, during the event commemorating World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2025.



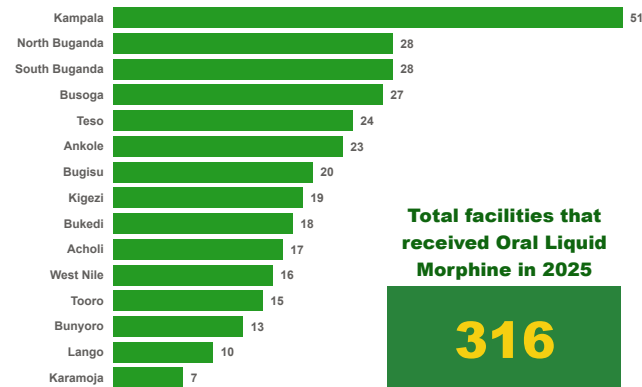
Some of the members of the technical working group at a meeting convened at Hospice Africa Uganda during the Strategy Development. In 2025, PCAU offered both technical and financial resources to support the development of the National Palliative Care Strategy for Uganda, which was near completion by the end of the year.



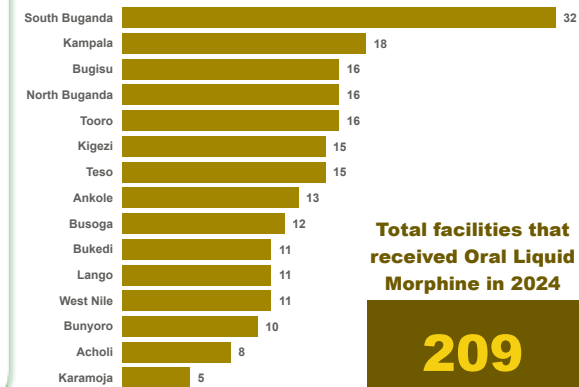
In 2025, we continued our focus on supporting the supply chain for essential palliative care medicines and health supplies, including oral liquid morphine. We coordinated bi-monthly morphine partners' meetings, which brought together the Ministry of Health, National Medical Stores (NMS), National Drug Authority (NDA), Joint Medical Stores (JMS), and the high-commodity consumers Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI) Kiruddu National Referral Hospital and Mulago National Referral Hospital to ensure national-level discussions on an uninterrupted supply chain.

Oral Liquid Morphine Distribution

Number of Facilities that received Oral Liquid Morphine by Health Sub-region (2025)



Number of Facilities that received Oral Liquid Morphine by Health Sub-region (2024)



In 2025, more than 300 facilities stocked and prescribed oral liquid morphine. We also conducted assessment and accreditation visits to hospitals in 20 districts to address concerns about facilities' access to oral liquid morphine.



Partners at the Morphine Partners Meeting, being chaired by Dr. Martha Ajulong, the Commissioner of Pharmaceutical Services at the Ministry of Health, at the extreme end on the left.

The Road to Hope Program supported 95 child caregivers in 2025

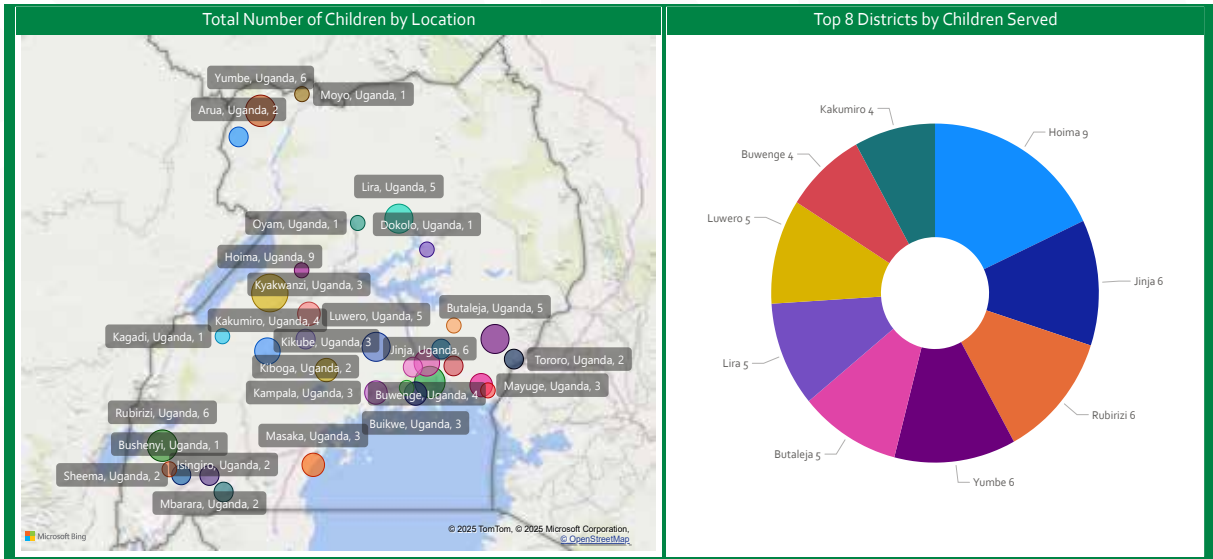
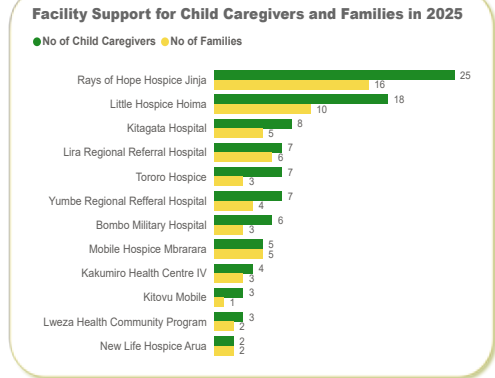
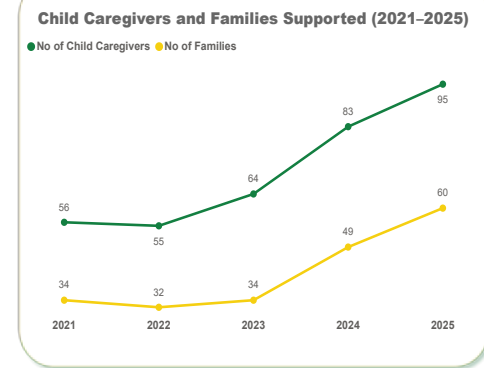
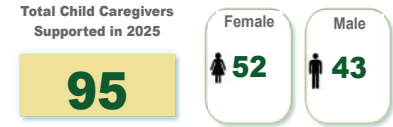


The Road to Hope Program has evolved from supporting individual children to uplifting entire communities, serving as a vital advocacy channel for reaching marginalized populations with hope, education, and compassion. Throughout the year, PCAU also worked closely with schools to equip students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to discuss palliative care and to extend compassionate care to others. The program is coordinated across 33 districts of Uganda with 10 hospices and hospital palliative care units involved in direct implementation.

By December 2025, the program was supporting 95 child caregivers from 60 families across 33 districts, in collaboration with 10 partner hospices.

In 2025, we supported eleven young adult caregivers to receive start-up kits and capital for their livelihood after vocational training. This assistance has enabled them to begin income-generating activities, improve their self-reliance, and contribute to the well-being of their families. Many of these young adults are now engaged in meaningful work, gaining practical skills, and building confidence as they work toward stable and sustainable livelihoods.

Support for Child Caregivers



Creating awareness about Palliative Care through the media



Throughout the year, PCAU engaged the media in several ways, including hosting media breakfast meetings, press conferences, radio and TV talk shows, and writing newspaper articles, among others. We worked with member organizations and partners to host monthly radio talk shows on Radio Sapientia. These talk shows are essential for increasing public understanding and awareness of palliative care across Uganda. They also helped strengthen the Morphine Supply Chain in Uganda by reducing stigma and improving public knowledge and understanding of essential palliative care medicines. During each 2-hour talk show, an average of 10 calls were made by listeners.



PCAU invited various experts to participate in the talk show on Radio Sapientia to share information on palliative care, pain management, and the need to empower people and communities. PCAU ran a monthly palliative care advocacy and information-sharing radio talk show in 2025.

Community engagement for information sharing, advocacy, and social responsibility, and strengthening partnerships with like-minded organizations.

PCAU operates nationally and is engaged in strategic advocacy and national-level work as per the strategic objectives of the association. In 2025, PCAU engages in several activities with partner organizations.

We collaborated with the Rotary Club of Kampala Daybreak to host a blood donation drive and a community health education session on palliative care at a busy location on Nasser Road in Kampala City. The activity promoted voluntary blood donation and raised community awareness of palliative care, its role in improving quality of life, and the importance of early access to supportive care services.



Kisubi Hospital @kisubi_hospital

"Kisubi Hospital and @PCAUganda Extend Love and Care to Families in Need within the community" 🙏🙏🙏

Ahead of World Day of the Sick, Kisubi Hospital, in partnership with the Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU), visited families with people facing various sicknesses. The teams engaged with the families, offering emotional support and gift hampers.

The families expressed heartfelt gratitude for the kindness and generosity shown by Kisubi Hospital and PCAU.

This outreach initiative embodies Kisubi Hospital's commitment to care for members of the community, beyond the hospital walls. We're proud of PCAU's compassion and dedication to making a positive impact on the lives of those around us.



L-R Mark-Donald Mwesiga (Executive Director, PCAU), Dr. Ronny Bahatungire (Ag. Commissioner of Clinical Services), and Dr. Jackson Orem (Executive Director, Uganda Cancer Institute) after the childhood cancer run by Child Cancer Foundation in 2025.

In March 2025, PCAU joined Kabaka Foundation's quarterly health camps, marking the first integration of palliative care into Buganda Kingdom 'tubeerebalamu' Health Camps. PCAU donated screening tools and coordinated palliative care support, with team members giving health talks over three days. Over 50 people engaged with PCAU staff, sharing information on pain medicines like oral liquid morphine and patient referrals.



Commemorating the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day 2025 in Uganda



We collaborated with the Ministry of Health and partners to mark World Hospice and Palliative Care Day under the theme “Achieving the Promise: Universal Access to Palliative Care,” building on the WHO resolution urging countries to enhance palliative care. The commemoration aimed to raise awareness, amplify stakeholder voices, and promote collaboration for universal access. Activities included a national webinar on 8 October 2025 and a main event on 11 October at Hospice Africa Uganda. The webinar, with over 100 participants, focused on empowering communities and sharing progress in palliative care, highlighting the needs of seriously ill children, lessons from the African palliative care atlas, and community-based expansion. The main event emphasized integrating palliative care into schools through an essay and poetry contest, involving 150 participants from 23 organizations, 5 media outlets, and 4 schools, attended by senior government officials.



»»»
Dr. Kedress Turyagynda was the Guest of Honor at the event to commemorate the World Hospice and Palliative Care Day in Uganda 2025.

Working with older people on Health Ajieng, Long-term Care, and Palliative Care

PCAU is engaged in aged care-focused work, especially advocacy for healthy aging and long-term care.
PCAU advocates for Universal Access to pain relief and palliative care, including care for older persons.
PCAU is a network member of HelpAge International and a founding member of HelpAge Advocacy Network Uganda (HANU), both of which are great partners for PCAU’s work on older persons.



On October 1, 2025, we joined partners at the HelpAge Advocacy Network Uganda and stakeholders in Jinja to observe the International Day of Older Persons with activities like a health camp, community sensitization, exhibition, and networking.



Students from Bishop Sisto Mazoldi Secondary School, Palliative Care Club, supporting an older person during a health camp hosted by the Lweza Community Health Program in 2025.



Hon. Dominic Mafwabi Gidudu, Minister of State for the older persons in Uganda, and a delegation visiting the PCAU exhibition stall during the event to commemorate World Awareness Day Against Elder Abuse under the theme “Strengthening Coordination to end Elder Abuse in 2025.”



The Uganda Ministry of Health Award of Excellence in Palliative Care 2025

In 2025, Dr. Jacinto Amandua received the Ministry of Health's Excellence in Palliative Care Award for his dedication, innovation, and integration of palliative care with community support to bring comfort and hope. The award honors those providing compassionate, holistic, and dignified care to patients and families with life-limiting illnesses. Dr. Amandua, a former Commissioner of Clinical Services and PCAU Board Member, has significantly advanced palliative care in Uganda and the region.

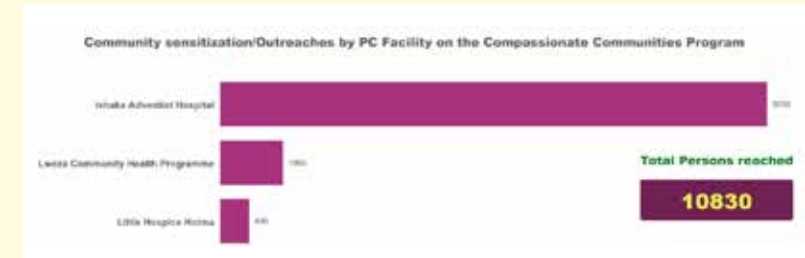


Building Compassionate Communities to Enhance Access to Palliative Care for ALL in Uganda

Our work on pioneering compassionate communities in Uganda continued in 2025. The initiative aims to address the dignity and quality of life needs of vulnerable individuals by empowering neighbors within their community to provide essential physical, emotional, social, spiritual, and practical support, which includes referrals. In this approach, an expert palliative care team at the hospice or hospital works with dedicated groups at schools, marketplaces, spiritual gatherings, and motorcycle taxis (boda boda) to inculcate the ethos of compassion to reach out for one another. Schools have been our utmost success.



In 2025, we expanded to five additional schools across three regions, bringing the total to seven. These include Taibah International School, Bishop Sisto Mazoldi Secondary School, Penguin Nursery & Primary School, Mandela Secondary School, Ishaka Adventist College, Ishaka Adventist Primary School, and Ishaka Adventist School of Nursing & Midwifery.



Building a community-based navigation program to challenge childhood cancer



The Special Hearts to Nurture Every Child Program (SHiNE) is a pioneering community cancer navigation initiative to reduce treatment abandonment among children diagnosed with cancer. The program also promotes, advocates for, and supports interventions for children living with life-limiting illnesses, including sickle cell disease, malnutrition and starvation, and impairments, among others. The program relies on grassroots community structures and partnerships to trace children in need from their families and the community, with lower health facility-based palliative care providers working with community volunteers. For children receiving care at the Pediatric Oncology Clinic at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital, each is traced by the palliative care provider at the nearest health facility in their district. The palliative care providers work with

community-based volunteers and caregivers to ensure that children adhere to treatment, keep records of their medical appointments, and receive required educational, psychological, and child protection services, among others. Most importantly, the program supports transport and upkeep, which are the main burdens for children from indigent families facing childhood cancer. The program is well structured, with experts at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital working with palliative care teams at Kitagata Hospital and Ishaka Adventist Hospital, who in turn work with palliative care providers at Health Center IV and III, as well as community health workers, to ensure that no child enrolled in the program is lost to follow-up. Children also receive holistic care and support. PCAU offers resources, support, coordination, and technical input to this pioneering and very successful community

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+256 789 737786 | pcau.admin@pcau.org.ug

cancer navigation program. Across the current program area of five districts in southwestern Uganda, 10 health facilities work seamlessly together to support children and their families. The program supported 64 children in 2025. Scan the QR Code to learn more about the program.

PCAU Social Media Presence

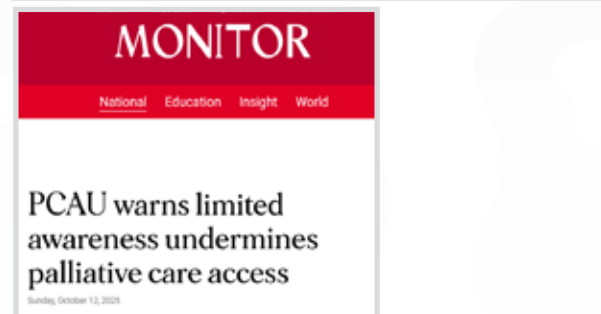
PCAU Social Media accounts 2025

Connect, Follow, and Subscribe to our Social Media Channels: **LinkedIn**, **Facebook**, **X**, **TikTok**, **Instagram**, and **YouTube** for updates and information.

Visit our website for more information.



Raising Awareness on palliative care: news articles, stories, and opinions in print and online media in Uganda in 2025



Palliative Care Research and Information

PCAU's objective under this focus area is to establish a hub of research and information on palliative care in Uganda.

Our primary activity and achievement under this objective in 2025 was the successful 5th Uganda Conference on Cancer and Palliative Care. The conference theme, "Embracing Uniqueness and Empowering Communities," underscored the importance of patient- and family-centered care and celebrated the diversity of service providers, community structures, and care models across Uganda and the region. The theme recognized the influence of socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups, cultural identities,

geographic locations, and ethnic communities on cancer and palliative care experiences.

The conference saw an increase in total delegates to close to 500 and an increase in all countries represented, Oral Abstract Presentations, Poster Abstract Presentations, breakaway sessions, and sponsors. With the conference, PCAU continued to disseminate research and evidence to inform decision-making as well as to strengthen its collaboration potential with research-minded institutions.



Numbers for the past three Uganda Conferences on Cancer and Palliative Care

Conference Year	2021	2023	2025
1. Total Delegates	350	448	482
2. Countries Represented	7	10	8
3. Oral Abstract Presentations	33	68	81
4. Poster Abstract Presentations	21	48	58
5. Conference Speakers	71	140	143
6. Breakaway Sessions	6	11	15
7. Side Events delegates	0	44	55
8. Sponsors/Partners	8	10	22



Email conference@pcau.org.ug to request and receive more information about the Uganda conference on cancer and palliative care and receive a copy of the science-packed conference booklet with abstracts and references of over 130 presentations made at the conference.

There were several outcomes of the conference that included:

- **Showcased palliative care and cancer Research in Uganda, regional and beyond:** presentations highlighted the latest cancer and palliative care research conducted in East Africa and globally to drive evidence-based improvements.
- **Discussed standardizing care for patients and families:** Delegates shared during plenary, workshops, side events, and other breakaway strategies to standardize and scale up cancer and palliative care services across the sub-Saharan region.
- **Mapped Resources to support cancer and palliative care work:** discussions were held on the available resources for research, training, and service delivery while identifying persistent gaps in healthcare access. The leaders of organizations had a side event to deliver on local solutions, given the reduction in donor-based funding.
- **Fostered Collaboration:** The conference promoted multi-disciplinary, multi-organizational, and collaborative work among national, regional, and international institutions that participated.
- **Enhanced the knowledge, skills, and attitude of practitioners towards** patient-centered models that tailor care to unique cultural and economic backgrounds, improving early detection and holistic support.



➤➤➤ From left, Dr. Fred Okuku from UCI, Dr. Moses Muwanga, Ministry of Health, Assoc. Prof. Rose Clarke Nanyonga, Clarke International University, Mark-Donald Mwesiga, Dr. Edith Byanyima, Mulago National Referral Hospital, Prof Julia Downing from International Children's Palliative Care Network, during the last conference panel discussion moderated by Dr. James Kafeero.

PCAU hosted local and international students, including a PhD student studying opioid advocacy and policy



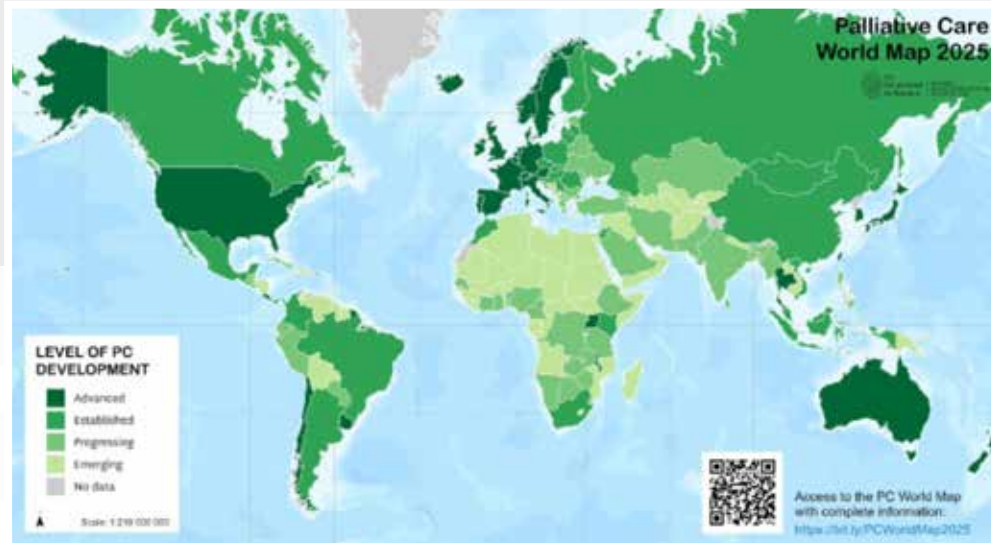
➤➤➤ Noah Lim, an undergraduate student from the University of Notre Dame, interned with PCAU in 2025, working alongside and shadowing teams at PCAU and Hospice Africa Uganda – Little Hospice Hoima for his experiential learning.



➤➤➤ A group of four Nursing students from HAN University of Applied Sciences in the Netherlands spent the last quarter of 2025 with PCAU on an internship and working on a research project titled Exploring Motivational Factors of Nurses That Work in Palliative Care in Uganda. PCAU provides students with support for placements and internships, as well as assistance with research projects, publications, and dissemination.

Uganda ranked High in the New Global Palliative Care Map

In October 2025, the ATLANTES Global Observatory of Palliative Care published the Global Palliative Care Map 2025, which classified 201 assessed countries into four levels: emerging (40%), in progress (28%), established (17%), and advanced (14%). Half the world still lacks access to basic palliative care services. Uganda ranks highest in Africa on the 2025 Global Palliative Care Map. Countries with a higher Human Development Index (HDI) have better palliative care. Globally, only 29 countries, about 14% of all countries, are classified at an advanced level. Uganda is the only African country with an advanced level of palliative care development. South Africa, Malawi, Kenya, Morocco, and Rwanda follow Uganda on the map.



Global Palliative Care Map 2025, showing Uganda as the only country in Africa ranked at the Advanced level based on new World Health Organization (WHO) Indicators for Palliative Care Development worldwide map by ATLANTES University of Navarra, accessible here: <https://unav.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html>

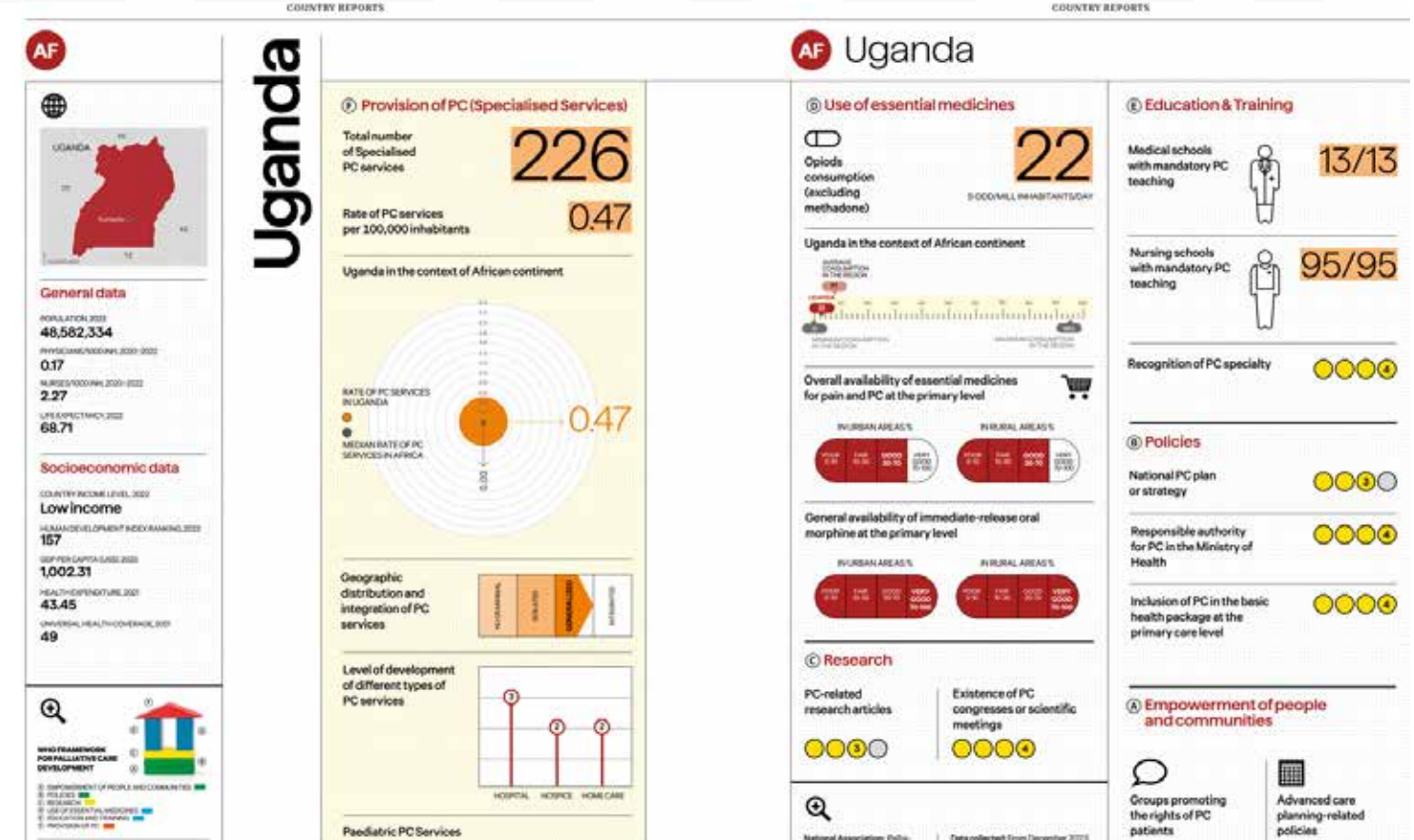


Global Palliative Care Map 2025, showing Uganda as the only country in Africa ranked at the Advanced level based on new World Health Organization (WHO) Indicators for Palliative Care Development worldwide map by ATLANTES University of Navarra, accessible here: <https://unav.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/basic/index.html>

“Uganda is the only low-income country to attain ‘advanced’ status in a global ranking of palliative care services, just one place behind the US”.

Yemisi Bokinni, Health Journalist

The New APCA Atlas of Palliative Care in Africa was launched in 2025 at the African Palliative Care Conference in Botswana, showing Uganda’s status on palliative care development ranked high in the region.

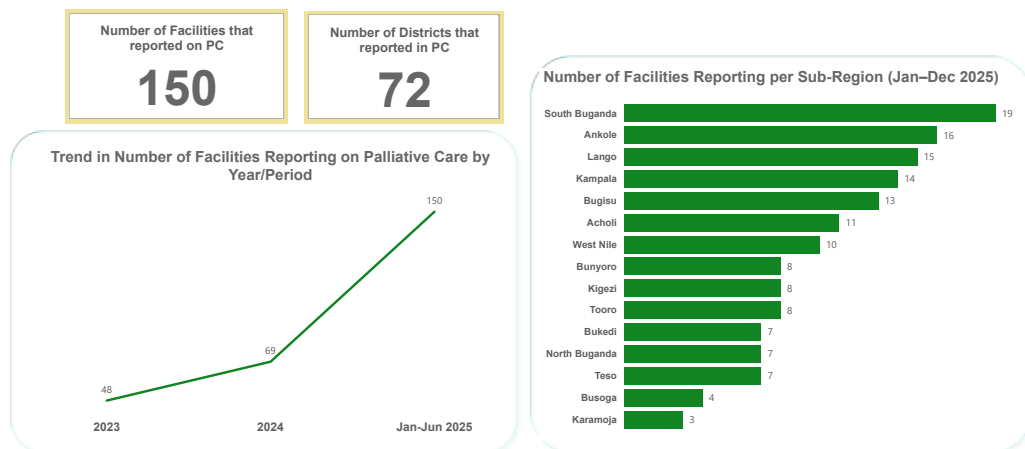


Extract of an infographic about the status of palliative care in Uganda from the APCA Atlas of Palliative Care in Africa, published in 2025. The document is accessible at <https://www.knowledge-action-portal.com/en/content/apca-atlas-palliative-care-africa-2025>

Uganda has successfully reported on Palliative Care through the District Health Information System II (DHIS)2, thanks to our partnership with the Ministry of Health.

Through collaboration with the Ministry of Health and support from partners, Uganda has successfully integrated the HMIS 105c indicators dedicated to palliative care into the main national HMIS 105 Health Unit Outpatient Monthly Report. This move transfers the responsibility for palliative care data collection to the Ministry of Health (MoH), promoting sustainability and standardization. In 2025, efforts continued to train lower-level health facilities on reporting. We worked closely with the MoH to identify and address various gaps that hindered reporting, based on feedback from multiple channels. Up to 70 health facilities received onsite training on palliative care reporting, although more than 150 facilities that offer palliative care have yet to report.

Palliative Care Reporting in HMIS/DHIS2 (January to December 2025)



PCAU Presentations and Papers at Local and International Conferences 2025

During the year, PCAU staff submitted scientific and program-based abstracts to conferences and presented at several local and international conferences, including:

- The 5th Uganda Conference on Cancer and Palliative Care in Kampala, Uganda.
- The 8th International African Palliative Care and Allied Services Conference 2025 in Gaborone, Botswana.
- The 15th AORTIC International Conference on Cancer in Africa 2025 in Tunisia.
- The 3rd National Health Professionals Education, Training, and Health Care Conference, hosted by the Ministry of Education and Sports
- The 3rd Africa Test and Treat Initiative Conference in Kampala, Uganda

PCAU Governance and Organizational Sustainability

PCAU's two objectives under this focus area are: to enhance the effective and efficient governance and management of palliative care services in Uganda, as well as improve resource mobilization and financial efficiency for palliative care in the country.

The major strength of PCAU as an association is our diverse membership base from across the country. In 2025, PCAU membership continued to grow. We had a significant growth in individual members at PCAU during the year, which now stands at over 2,007 individuals, including 57 life members.

A Growing PCAU Membership

2,007

Individual members - 2025

35

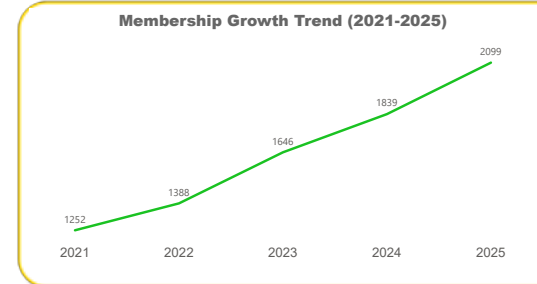
Institutional members - 2025

57

Life members - 2025

2099

Total PCAU members - 2025



PCAU Annual General Meeting and Recognition of Life Membership contributions



PCAU Members in a group photo after the PCAU Annual General Meeting in May 2025.

CHC Exchange Visit to PCAU 2025

In September 2025, two staff members from the Center for Hospice Care on various projects. Mike Wargo, CHC's Vice President and Chief Operations Officer, and Denis Kidde, the International Programs Coordinator, participated in the CHC-PCAU biennial exchange program. The two staff members attended presentations and meetings during the conference, met with partners at the Ministry of Health and the Uganda Nurses and Midwives Council (UNMWC), and with some of the PCAU member organizations. Since its inception in 2008, the partnership between PCAU and CHC has played a vital role in advancing PCAU's efforts and palliative care development in Uganda.



Join like-minded and compassionate people like you today.

The Palliative Care Association of Uganda (PCAU) was established in 1999 and registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO) in 2003. PCAU aims to advocate for and coordinate civil society efforts in supporting the government and integrating palliative care into the national health care system at all levels. Membership in the association is open to all individuals and institutions interested in palliative care.

Membership Fees

Membership Type	Fee	Frequency
Individual membership	20,000	Annual subscription
Individual Lifetime membership	1,000,000	One-time subscription
Institutional/Organizational membership	1,000,000	Annual subscription.

Subscribe to become a member or make a generous contribution to PCAU through **MTN MoMo** Pay at **+256 0789737786**



Scan the QR Code for more information on PCAU Membership

PCAU Annual Members Get-Together and Dinner

As tradition, the PCAU Annual members' get-together and Dinner was formalized during a Board meeting on September 22nd, 2016. Since then, the organization has held 10 consecutive annual dinners. The dinners provide members with an opportunity to connect, network, celebrate the achievements of the period, join in one voice to continue advocating, and contribute resources to a specific cause. The 2025 dinner focused on expanding the compassionate community program in Uganda. The dinner is also an avenue for offering merit awards to individuals and institutions who support palliative care in Uganda.

During the PCAU Members Annual Get-together in December 2025, we offered recognition awards to distinguished individuals and institutions for their support of palliative care work. These were:

PCAU Annual Merit Awardee 2025	Award Citation
The Rutamwebwa Family	The Generosity of the Rutamwebwa Family has had a profound and lasting impact on Hospice Africa Uganda (HAU). Their continued support has strengthened clinical services and, in a very special way, the Institute of Hospice and Palliative Care in Africa (IHPCA), ensuring that education, training, and compassionate care remain at the heart of HAU's mission. In particular, the dedication and personal involvement of Mrs. Naomi Nasasira have been exceptional. She beautified the resting place where Dr. Anne's ashes were laid to honor her.
Vet Centre	We acknowledge the Vet Center for its consistent support of Hospice Africa Uganda (HAU) through its Pain Stoppers fundraising campaign. Since the campaign's inception, the Vet Center has been among its most regular and exceptionally generous contributors, enabling HAU to continue providing palliative care to those who need it most.
Mr. Varghese Mundamattam	We recognize Mr. Varghese Mundamattam, the Chairman and Owner of ISBAT University, for his outstanding contribution to the growth of palliative care in Uganda, especially his dedicated support to S.D. Cancer and Palliative Care Center. Through his support, SD Cancer Center has strengthened its efforts to provide compassionate care to patients and families in the Busoga region.
Taibah International School	We recognized Taibah International School with profound gratitude for your contribution to advancing palliative care in Uganda through championing Palliative Care Clubs in schools
Dr. Moses Muwanga	We recognized Dr. Muwanga Moses, with profound gratitude, for his outstanding contribution to advancing palliative care in Uganda while serving as the pioneer Assistant Commissioner in charge of Palliative care at the Ministry of Health. Now serving as the Assistant Commissioner for Community Health in charge of Disability and Rehabilitation at the Ministry of Health, Dr. Muwanga continues to be a strong advocate for improved care and support for those in need.

What affected the delivery of our work in 2025

Some of the challenges that affected PCAU's mission in 2025 include the following:

Uganda still lacks a unified national palliative care strategy that defines service delivery indicators, standards, milestones, and timelines. Without this guiding framework, efforts to promote and implement the palliative approach encounter challenges, especially in mobilizing resources and deploying qualified personnel. PCAU is actively advocating for and assisting the Ministry of Health in accelerating the development of the National Palliative Care Strategy and is also seeking more funding to support this crucial initiative.

Unfunded priorities remain significant across national, regional, and community palliative care efforts, causing many patients and families to endure unnecessary suffering, agony, and pain, particularly at the end of life. Home care, access to essential medicines and medical supplies, palliative care education for both health and non-health professionals, specialized care for older adults, pediatric palliative care, and palliative care research are vital parts of the healthcare system that currently lack public funding. This issue is worsened by recent reductions in donor aid to many NGOs, making their survival harder. PCAU calls for increased public funding and encourages stakeholders to maintain their support. Private not-for-profit hospices play a unique, complementary role in alleviating pain and suffering among patients and families in the community.

Coverage and geographic reach of the palliative care service are still limited, resulting in poor access to services in Uganda. The need for palliative care remains high and growing, yet the service points and spread of the service are not growing as quickly. At least 40 districts in Uganda remain without a single health facility offering palliative care. PCAU is strongly advocating for filling positions for palliative care within health service structures, particularly at Health Centre IV and III. PCAU also seeks support to enhance the association's capacity-building scholarships, mentorship, and supervisory approaches, which have demonstrated potential.

Limited research and evidence on palliative care continue to undermine advocacy and decision-making efforts to fully integrate palliative care at all levels of the social services system in Uganda. The greatest impact of this phenomenon is the ongoing, invisible suffering of millions of patients from untreated pain and distress. Because palliative care and pain-relief services remain statistically undocumented, Ugandan policymakers often overlook palliative care in national and hospital-based health budgets and Universal Health Coverage (UHC) frameworks, leading to misallocated resources and inadequate access to essential palliative care across the sector. PCAU is supporting the Ministry of Health to improve data collection and reporting on palliative care across the country. This effort is still growing, with limited prioritization by many institutional heads, despite the yields it would bring to hospitals and at the national level.

Brief about the Work of New Life Hospice Arua (NELIHA)



Since 2016, we have supported New Life Hospice Arua (NELIHA) in its establishment. The hospice is growing strong with a mandate to reach the people and the underserved communities of the West Nile Region. Located within the premises of the Arua Regional Referral Hospital, NELIHA is a beacon of hope for palliative care voice and advocacy in the region.

In 2025, NELIHA conducted 235 home visits, over 100 community outreach clinics, and attended to over 1,200 patients with palliative care needs. The work of NELIHA covers 6 districts of the West Nile, including Arua, Maracha, Terego, Nebbi, Koboko, and Arua City. Most of the patients seen by the hospice team include those with cancer, HIV/AIDS, advanced heart disease, and other life-limiting conditions. The NELIHA team provides medical care, psychosocial support, pain and symptom management, education on home-based care, family counseling, and support.



A look at our Finance Resources for 2025

In 2025, PCAU's total income was 1.4 billion Uganda Shillings. The largest part of our income came from donors who fund our programs and projects. The local income comes from local fundraising initiatives, including membership subscriptions, generous contributions to activities, PCAU-branded items, get-together dinners, interest, and donation boxes.

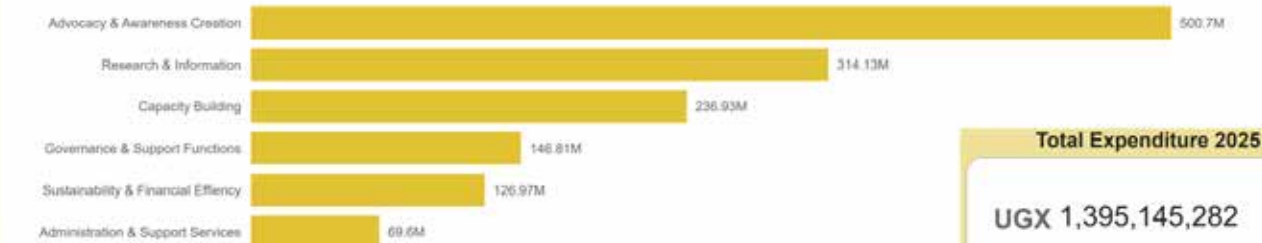
PCAU spends all the amounts received carefully to enhance culturally appropriate and quality palliative care for all Ugandans. All PCAU members can access the full audited financial reports at the Annual General Meeting or by emailing the Executive Director (mark.mwesiga@pcau.org.ug) to receive soft copies. PCAU is grateful to all donors, members, and supporters for their generous contributions.

A Look at Our Finances in 2025

What we received:



How we used it:



➤➤➤ Sales of PCAU-branded corporate items contribute to the association's internally generated income.

PALLIATIVE CARE AND THE CONCEPT OF TOTAL PAIN

01

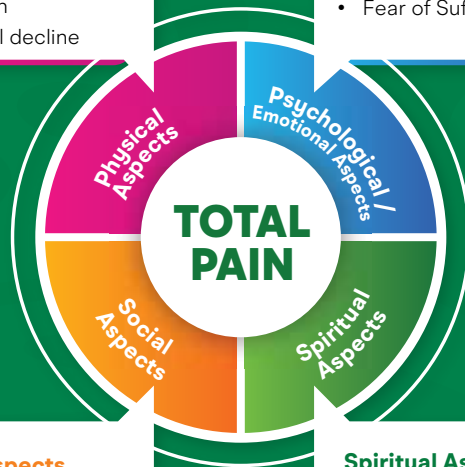
Physical Aspects

- Pain and Other distressing symptoms like nausea, vomiting caused by the illness and or treatment
- Co-morbid factors
- Nutrition
- Physical decline

02

Psychological / Emotional Aspects

- Frustration
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Adjustment disorders
- Self esteem
- Fear of Suffering



TOTAL PAIN

Physical Aspects

Psychological / Emotional Aspects

Social Aspects

Spiritual Aspects

Social Aspects

- Loss of role and social status
- Loss of employment
- Financial challenges
- Worries of future of the family and succession planning
- Dependency

Spiritual Aspects

- Finding Meaning and purpose
- Anger with God
- Loss of faith
- Reconciliation and forgiveness
- Fear of the unknown
- Finding peace and Hope

03

04

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