



SCOUTS HEALING INVISIBLE WOUNDS

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THE VOICES UNMUTED PROJECT: YOUTH-LED ADVOCACY FOR INCLUSION

TERMS OF REFERENCE - LIVED EXPERIENCE COUNCIL (LEC)

1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Scouts Healing Invisible Wounds (SHIW) is a youth-led and youth-serving organization registered in Kenya that uses innovative, evidence-based solutions to address the mental health issues that young people and communities are predisposed to.

We employ non-formal, and experiential approaches to advocate for, and create awareness on mental health, with a keen focus on Promotion of overall well-being and Prevention of mental illness.

Beginning August 2026, SHIW will commence implementation of a project dubbed **"Voices Unmuted: Youth-Led Advocacy for Inclusion"**, supported by the AU-EU Youth Action Lab. The project will run for twelve (12) months, from August 2026 to July 2027, and is grounded in the commitments of AU Agenda 2063, particularly Aspiration 6 on people-driven development and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in decision-making, as well as the African Youth Charter on youth rights to participation, health, and dignity.

Kenya's mental health burden is significant, with Mental illnesses accounting for 13% of the country's total disease burden, with depression, anxiety, and conduct disorders disproportionately affecting youth aged 10–24. An estimated 75% of those who need mental health care lack access to it, and existing national frameworks such as the Mental Health Action Plan 2021–2025 and the Mental Health Act 2022 rarely include youth with lived experience in their design or oversight. The Voices Unmuted project directly responds to this exclusion.

2. PURPOSE OF THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE

These Terms of Reference (TOR) establish the formal structure, roles, responsibilities, eligibility criteria, operating procedures, and support arrangements for the Lived Experience Council (LEC) of the Voices Unmuted project. They serve as the founding governance document of the LEC and are intended to guide the recruitment, onboarding, and operation of the Council throughout the project period and beyond.

3. ABOUT THE LIVED EXPERIENCE COUNCIL

The Lived Experience Council is a formal body of seven (7) young people with personal lived experience of mental illness and psychosocial disability. The LEC is central to the design, implementation, monitoring, and advocacy processes of the Voices Unmuted project, ensuring that all project activities are led by and accountable to those with direct experience of the realities the project seeks to address.

The LEC represents a deliberate power-shifting mechanism: moving young people with psychosocial disabilities from being subjects of mental health interventions to being architects, advocates, and decision-makers within those systems. The Council's voice is treated as expertise, and not testimony throughout the project and beyond.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCE COUNCIL

The LEC is established to:

- Lead and actively participate in the design, planning, and implementation of all project activities under the Voices Unmuted project.
- Provide ongoing monitoring, feedback, and accountability oversight throughout the project cycle, ensuring activities remain grounded in lived realities.
- Represent the interests and perspectives of youth with psychosocial disabilities in county and national mental health policy and advocacy spaces.
- Participate in stakeholder engagements, including meetings including government at both national and county level through the Ministry of Health, Nairobi County Government, higher education institutions, and workplaces.
- Participate in research and data collection on the persons with lived experiences and their care givers to document best practices and produce articles.
- Co-develop and contribute to key project outputs including the national policy brief, digital advocacy campaigns, and capacity-building training.
- Contribute to data collection, reflection, and learning processes, including baseline and endline assessments, outcome harvesting, and most significant change exercises.
- Support the sustainability of the project's advocacy agenda by integrating into SHIW's broader organizational structures beyond the grant period to inform the organization's programs and strategy.

5. MEMBERSHIP ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be eligible for membership on the Lived Experience Council, applicants must meet **all** of the following mandatory criteria:

5.1 Mandatory Criteria

- Be between 18 to 30 years of age at the time of application, in line with SHIW's governance structures and project requirements.
- Willingness to share their own stories with the public to encourage them to seek for professional and peer help, and champion for inclusion in different spaces.
- Be willing and able to commit a minimum of 3 hours per week to LEC responsibilities over the 12-month project period (August 2026 – July 2027).
- Be comfortable using English as the primary working language for meetings, communications, and documentation.
- Be able to participate in both online and in-person meetings and events, including travel within Kenya where required.
- Be willing to serve on a voluntary basis, with the understanding that facilitation (transport and accommodation) will be provided for approved in-person engagements and that airtime/data reimbursement will be provided for virtual meetings in line with SHIW's Financial Policies.
- Have personal lived experience of mental illness and/or psychosocial disability, supported by a brief written personal statement or equivalent evidence of lived experience (e.g. a doctor's note or other).

NB: Lived experience refers to experiential knowledge of a particular phenomenon. This can be thought of through the following definitions:

- Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representation constructed by other people
- The experience(s) of people on whom a social issue, or combination of issues, has had a direct impact

Within the mental and neurological health landscape, lived experience can refer to someone with personal experience with mental or neurological challenges, whether **they have lived with the condition themselves or have cared for a friend or family member with the condition**. Someone can have one or multiple lived experiences.

Someone with lived experience is also sometimes referred to as a service user, as they are the ones who will use or be affected directly or indirectly, by the service being provided.

In the context of mental health, SHIW defines lived experience as: Someone **having personal experience with mental ill-health or neurological health issues themselves**, whether in *their own lives or with people close to them*.

5.2 Desirable Criteria (at least 2 must apply)

- Demonstrable basic understanding of advocacy and/or policy processes in Kenya or at the continental/global level.
- A person with the WHO Quality Rights for Persons with Psychosocial Disability course will have an added advantage.
- Active membership in an existing group, network, or organization working on health, mental health, disability rights, or youth leadership, with a recommendation available upon request.
- Prior experience in community engagement, peer support, or any form of youth-led social action, with a recommendation available upon request.

SHIW is committed to inclusion and diversity within the LEC. We strongly encourage applications from young women, young people with intersecting disabilities, those from marginalised counties, and those from underrepresented communities. No formal educational qualification is required.

6. COMPOSITION AND GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

6.1 Composition

The LEC shall consist of seven (7) members. The LEC is intentionally composed of people with a wide variety of lived experiences from diverse backgrounds across geography, gender, age, race, ethnicity, education and professional experience. While the SHIW strives to have a LEC that is representative and that strives for this diversity, we acknowledge that no group can fully represent all voices of lived experience.

6.2 Leadership Roles

The following leadership roles shall be held by LEC members, elected by peers at the inaugural meeting:

- **Chairperson** — Presides over meetings, represents the LEC in external engagements, and ensures the Council fulfils its mandate.
- **Vice Chairperson** — Supports the Chairperson and acts in their absence.
- **Secretary** — Maintains records, circulates meeting agendas and minutes, and tracks action points.
- The remaining four (4) members will serve as full Council members with equal voting rights and shared responsibilities. All roles are held for the duration of the project period (12 months) unless a member vacates or is replaced.

6.3 Term of Service

The initial term of the LEC is twelve (12) months, aligned with the project period: August 2026 to July 2027. At the close of the grant period, SHIW intends to integrate the LEC into its routine programming activities, subject to mutual agreement with members.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEC MEMBERS

Each LEC member is expected to:

7.1 Project Participation

- Attend and actively contribute to all scheduled LEC meetings (minimum twice monthly).
- Participate in project planning sessions, workshops, and reviews as required by the project calendar.
- Contribute to the development of project outputs including the policy brief, training materials, and digital campaign content.
- Represent the LEC and the Voices Unmuted project at external advocacy events, institutional engagements, and policy forums as agreed.
- Participate in the global/regional learning event if selected as the LEC representative.

7.2 Monitoring and Accountability

- Participate in baseline and endline assessments to measure project progress and impact.
- Contribute to accountability scorecard exercises tracking stakeholder commitments.
- Participate in outcome harvesting and most significant change reflections.
- Provide regular feedback on project activities to ensure adaptive learning and continuous improvement.

7.3 Advocacy and Policy Engagement

- Participate in county-level and national-level advocacy forums and institutional engagements.
- Use their lived experience to inform and strengthen evidence-based advocacy, stakeholder dialogues, and policy recommendations.
- Support the development and dissemination of the national policy brief and digital campaign materials.

7.4 Conduct and Commitment

- Uphold SHIW's values of inclusivity, accountability, professionalism, and collaboration at all times.
- Maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive personal disclosures and organisational information as outlined in Section 12.
- Inform the SHIW team in advance if unable to attend a scheduled meeting or engagement.
- Declare any conflicts of interest that may arise during the course of the project.

8. MEETINGS AND ENGAGEMENT

8.1 Regular Meetings

The LEC shall meet formally at least twice per month. Meetings will predominantly be virtual (via a designated online platform) and in-person when resources permit, based on the project calendar and activity demands. Each meeting is expected to run for approximately 1- 1.5 hours. Members are expected to dedicate a minimum of 3 hours per week across meetings, preparatory work, and project activities.

8.2 Meeting Facilitation

Meetings will be facilitated by the SHIW Project Coordinator in collaboration with the LEC Chairperson. Agendas will be circulated at least 48 hours in advance. Minutes and action points will be documented by the Secretary and shared within 72 hours of each meeting.

8.3 Quorum for the Meetings

A quorum for decision-making purposes shall be five (5) out of seven (7) members. Where quorum is not met, the meeting may proceed for deliberation only; formal decisions will be deferred to the next meeting or resolved via written consensus.

8.4 Attendance of Meeting

Members are expected to attend at least 75% of all scheduled meetings. Persistent absence without prior notice may result in review of membership in line with Section 11.

9. SUPPORT AND RESOURCES

SHIW commits to providing the following support to LEC members:

- **Airtime/data reimbursement** — Members will receive airtime or data reimbursement for virtual meetings, in line with SHIW's Financial Policy.
- **Facilitation for in-person events** — Transport, meals, and accommodation will be provided for all approved in-person LEC engagements, advocacy forums, and institutional visits within Kenya.
- **Capacity building** — Members will participate in a dedicated 3-day capacity building training on mental health literacy, advocacy, stakeholder engagement, and social accountability, as well as ongoing access to the project's self-care and learning hub.
- **Psychosocial support** — SHIW will ensure that LEC members have access to appropriate psychosocial support, particularly before and after advocacy engagements that may involve sharing lived experience in public or policy spaces.
- **Documentation and recognition** — Members will receive a certificate of participation at the close of the project recognizing their contribution to the Voices Unmuted project.

Note: LEC membership is voluntary. No salary, stipend, or remuneration is payable for the role itself. Facilitation costs (transport, accommodation, meals, airtime) are logistical support, not compensation.

10. DECISION-MAKING

The LEC operates on the principle of consensus where possible. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by a simple majority vote of members present. The Chairperson holds a casting vote in the event of a tie. All members have equal voting rights regardless of their leadership role.

Decisions relating to project design, advocacy strategies, and stakeholder positions will be made jointly by the LEC and the SHIW project team, with the LEC's position given primary weight on matters relating to lived experience and representation.

11. VACANCY, RESIGNATION, AND REPLACEMENT

- A member may voluntarily resign at any time by providing written notice to the SHIW Project Coordinator.
- A member may be asked to step down if they fail to meet the attendance requirement (below 75%) or are found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct.
- In the event of a vacancy, SHIW will endeavor to recruit a replacement within one month, following the same eligibility criteria and selection process.
- Members who are facing temporary challenges (health, personal circumstances) are encouraged to communicate with the SHIW team to explore reasonable adjustments before a decision on replacement is made.

12. CONFIDENTIALITY CODE AND SAFEGUARDING POLICIES.

All LEC members are required to maintain confidentiality with respect to:

- Personal disclosures shared by fellow members in the course of meetings or activities.
- Sensitive organizational and project information shared in the course of their work.
- Personal data of project participants and beneficiaries.

SHIW is committed to the safety, dignity, and wellbeing of all LEC members. All members will be required to sign SHIW's Safeguarding Policy and commit to a safe and respectful environment within the Council. Members are not obligated to share their personal mental health history publicly, and SHIW will ensure that no member is ever pressured to disclose beyond their comfort level.

13. CODE OF CONDUCT

All LEC members agree to:

- Engage respectfully and inclusively with fellow members, SHIW staff, and all external stakeholders.
- Represent the LEC and SHIW with professionalism in all external engagements.
- Be transparent and honest in all LEC deliberations and feedback processes.
- Avoid actions that create a conflict of interest, and disclose any such conflicts promptly.
- Not make public statements on behalf of the LEC or SHIW without prior agreement.
- Uphold the dignity and privacy of all persons with lived experience of mental illness encountered through the project.

14. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE LEC AND SHIW

The LEC is a formal body within the Voices Unmuted project structure and operates in partnership with the SHIW project team. The SHIW Project Coordinator serves as the primary liaison between the LEC and the SHIW leadership. The LEC reports to and is accountable to the Voices Unmuted Project Lead.

The LEC is not a separate legal entity and does not have independent financial authority. All financial commitments relating to LEC facilitation are governed by SHIW's Finance Policy.

15. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the mid-point of the project period (January 2027) and may be amended by mutual agreement between the LEC and SHIW leadership. Any amendments will be documented and circulated to all members. Members will be given the opportunity to input into the review process.

16. DURATION AND TRANSITION TO INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRATION

These Terms of Reference are effective from the date of signing and remain in force for the duration of the Voices Unmuted project (August 2026 – July 2027). At the close of the project, SHIW intends to formally integrate the LEC into its routine organizational governance structures, ensuring the continuation of lived-experience leadership and advocacy beyond the grant period, in line with the project's sustainability commitments.

HOW TO APPLY

This is an open call for applications. Any young person who meets the eligibility criteria outlined is warmly encouraged to apply, regardless of formal education level, employment status, or geographic location within Kenya.

To apply, please send your application to careers@shiw.org by **10th August 2026 at 5:00 PM East Africa Time (EAT)**. Your application should include a brief personal statement (no more than one page) highlighting your lived experience of mental illness or psychosocial disability, your motivation for joining the LEC, and any

relevant experience in advocacy, community work, or health-related groups. Kindly also attach a short CV or résumé that showcases your experience in line with the LEC related work.

Given the high volume of applications, we anticipate; only shortlisted candidates will be contacted for a brief conversation. We deeply appreciate every applicant's willingness to contribute to this work.