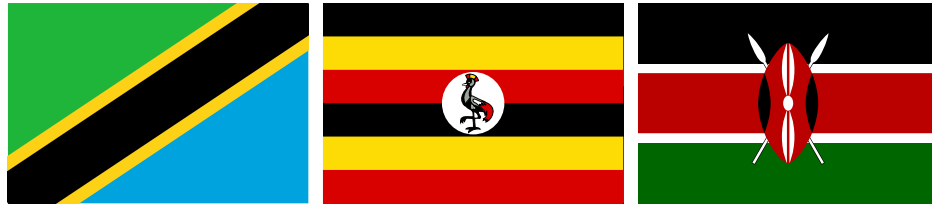


# The Professional Fellows Program on Inclusive Civic Engagement



## Fall 2025 Professional Fellow



### John W. Mwangi

**Founder and Chief Executive Officer,  
Psychosocial Development and Response  
(PDRO-KENYA)  
Kenya**

John is the Founder and CEO of Psychosocial Development and Response, a Kenyan survivor-led organization dedicated to promoting mental well-being. Drawing from his personal journey of overcoming mental illness, he encourages young people with psychosocial disabilities to lead fulfilling and productive lives.

John also volunteers with Generation Mental Health, a global organization that empowers youth with lived mental health experience to drive systemic change through research, programs, and advocacy.

He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and management and a diploma in project management from St. Paul's University.

### Follow-on Project

#### “Unsilenced Minds” Initiative in Kenya (Nakuru County)

**Issue:** Despite constitutional guarantees under Article 43(1)(a) of the Constitution of Kenya (2010) and obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) (UN, 2006), Kenya's mental health system fails to meet citizens' needs.

The Silenced Minds report by the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (2011) highlighted challenges such as underfunding, limited access to care in rural areas, and an over-reliance on institutional care, all of which violate the CRPD and exclude individuals with lived experience from decision-making.

The *Mental Health and Well-being Report* (Kenya Ministry of Health, 2020) shows that 75% of Kenyans with mental health conditions lack access to services due to infrastructure and funding issues. Young people face additional challenges, including the lack of youth-friendly services and insufficient integration of mental health support into primary care.

**Project Objective:** John aims to empower 25 youth (ages 18–35) with lived mental health experience, along with their caregivers, in Nakuru County, Kenya. The project will equip both youth and caregivers with skills to assert their rights, navigate mental health services, and collaborate in shaping treatment plans.



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**Project Descriptions:** John will conduct a needs assessment through a community-driven online survey, developed in collaboration with self-advocates, mental health professionals, and the Department of Social Services. The survey will assess participants' understanding of mental health, available services, and their advocacy skills (including public speaking, media interviews, and emotional management).

Based on the survey results, John will develop a training program tailored to the needs of Kenyan youth with mental health conditions, incorporating international best practices. Participants will be assessed through pre- and post-training surveys, developed in collaboration with mental health professionals and individuals with lived experience.

The two-day workshop will include:

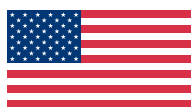
- Day 1: Rights-based training led by experts with lived experience.
- Day 2: Storytelling coaching by a certified Living Proof Advocacy (LPA) coach. LPA emphasizes advocacy storytelling based on lived experience, empowering individuals to share their stories to drive change.

Following the training, participants will be equipped to advocate for their mental health rights and use storytelling as a tool for change.

John will leverage his network of partners, including Rotaract Clubs and other youth organizations, to engage youth and access resources. He plans to use the American Space Nakuru as a venue for workshops. Local mental health groups will help recruit youth with lived mental health experience and their caregivers.

## References

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