

JOY FOR CHILDREN-UGANDA



*Community Based Response on Preventing Violence against Children in
Fort Portal Municipality – Project 2009 /2010 Report.*



Training Counselor



Implementation of "Good
School " Programme



Community Sensitization with puppets

Funded By



Supported by:



About Us

Joy for Children-Uganda is a registered non governmental, non profit making organization established to respond to issues facing children in Uganda. The Plight of orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda inspired the formation of this organization. Issues of poverty, health such as HIV/AIDS and Malaria, malnutrition, neglect, abuse and exploitation, poor education and illiteracy, conflict in families, water, sanitation and housing that has ravaged our country were at the forefront in the formation of the organization.

About the Community Based Response in Preventing Violence against Children in Fort Portal Municipality-Project.

Joy for Children-Uganda has been implementing a one year project funded by KIOS The Finish NGO Foundation for Human Rights. The project aimed at empowering the community to come up with measures of responding to increasing rates of Violence against children (VAC).

The project has been successfully implemented in Fort Portal Municipality covering eight parishes of Bazaar, Kijanju, Rwengoma, Bukwali, Nyakagongo, Kasusu, Nyabukara and Kitumba.

Activities that were covered include community mobilization, painting of Murals, training local leaders, sensitizing the community, production on IEC (Information, Education, Communication) materials, Radio programmes/ talk shows, creating a good school by implementing a good school tool kit developed and supplied by Raising Voices, training counselors and formation of Child Support Groups (Formally Victim Support Groups) among others. supporting support groups, Refresh training for counselors, Evaluation and Dissemination of information.

At the end of this project, the community is more aware of violence against children existing in the community and have created strategies of preventing it. Local leaders, child support Groups, counselors and School administrations have taken an

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active role in supporting children and preventing violence in their areas of jurisdiction.

Activities Implemented

Activity 1: Mobilization of parishes

Eight parishes were identified and mobilized. These include;

Bazaar, Kijanju, Rwengoma, Bukwali, Nyakagongo, Kasusu, Nyabukara and Kitumba.

Achievements

- More than 50 villages were mobilized from the eight parishes mentioned above.
- Of the 50 villages mobilized at least 40 villages were represented.
- Some villages which were not selected requested to be considered for the training and it was done.

Lessons learnt

- The local leaders welcomed the idea of the project.
- Some of the local leaders were cooperative in giving us direction and information about other villages for example Kasusu parish,

Nyakagongo, Nyabukara and Bukwali.

Challenges

- Some parishes were bigger geographically and in terms of villages which made it hard to mobilize.
- Some of the areas were not accessible in terms of transport due to poor road network for example Bukwali parish (East Division) and Rwengoma (West Division).
- Heavy rains made the mobilization difficult as roads were slippery and inaccessible.
- Some local leaders were not willing to give information freely. In some cases they asked for money.

Activity 2: Painting of Murals

Murals are paintings on walls that depict specific information to the target audience.

For this project, mural portraying the just way of relating with children in schools and communities were painted. This was done in the month of September 2009. The children,

community members and professional artists participated in the mural painting. The community identified the walls, children along with the professional artists did the painting. Three walls were painted by children, one at Buhinga Primary School and two at Kyebambe Model School. Professional artists painted the other three murals at Link Bus Park in the heart of Fort Portal Town and the other two were done at Buhinga Primary School and Kyebambe Model Primary School. Seven (7) children from Buhinga Primary School and Twelve (12) from Kyebambe Model primary School participated directly in painting the murals.



Figure 1 Mural painting at Buhinga P.S in Fort Portal Municipality by professional Artists

Objectives of the murals

The murals were painted in order to increase understanding on violence against children and demonstrate better ways of relating with them. The murals are also used as tools for increasing community discussion and dialogue on preventing violence against children. The children were able to demonstrate their understanding of violence through drawing and painting murals. The children in their small groups discussed about the pictures drawn and relating them to what real exists in their schools. The murals in schools carried relevant messages of what a good school is. Some of the messages incorporated in the murals include, *For Children a Good School means... A safe and conducive environment, Students have a voice, Non-Violent forms of discipline, written policies that are implemented, Teachers are friendly and approachable, students are encouraged to think for themselves. What does it mean for you? With a banner; Violence free childhood is everyone's right!*

Achievements

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a) Two murals were painted in Buhinga and Kyebambe Model Primary schools by professional artists.



Figure 2. Handing over the complete mural to school administration and student leaders after painting in Kyebambe Model P.S

b) To enhance Child Participation, children from the above schools took part in painting their own mural with guidance from professional artists especially on working with paint.



Figure 3 Children paint their own mural at Kyebambe Model P.S. on Preventing Violence against children in Fort Portal Municipality.

c) One mural for children was done at Buhinga Primary School, while two were done at Kyebambe Model Primary School.



Figure 4 Mural by children at Buhinga P.S being painted as fellow pupils look on.

Community Mural

A community mural was also painted at Link Bus Park in the heart of Fort Portal (F/P) Town. The wall was donated by Link Bus Park.



Figure 5: A community wall at Link Bus Park in Fort Portal Town

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Obstacles or Challenges faced

- The children were very slow in painting and all of them had never used paint before.

Therefore a lot of time was spent on guiding them how to work with paint than expected. However this didn't necessitate any significant changes in the original project/ activity plan.

- The much unpredictable heavy rains in the month of September disrupted the work of artists resulted to delays in the estimated time for the completion of the murals.

Lessons learnt

- Murals are one way of portraying the just ways of relating with children and also generating discussions on preventing violence against children.
- Many people are interested in viewing the murals; they create discussions on preventing VAC and learn from them.

- There is high demand for the mural in other schools and communities where murals were not painted and attract very many people.

Activity 3: Training Local Leaders

Training of local leaders was conducted. All the eight parishes planned were covered these include, Bazaar, Kijanju, Nyabukara, Kasusu, Rwengoma, Nyakagongo, Kitumba and Bukwali between the months of October and November 2009.

In each parish, one day training of local community leaders was held.

Five (5) villages were selected and from each village, five leaders were invited by virtue of their positions in relation to child protection. From each village council; the chairman, the vice chairperson (who is also the secretary for children), the youth representative, secretary for defense and the woman representative were invited and trained bringing the total to 180 of the expected 200 leaders.

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The main objective of the training was to enable the local leaders to;

- a) Understand the concept of violence against children.
- b) To increase local leaders' involvement in preventing violence against children.

To achieve this, key issues were explored that included; Sharing experiences of VAC, Understanding VAC, policies and laws protecting children, why violence exists in the community, feelings when a child is violated and feelings when a child is not violated, case study on violence against children, the role of community leaders in preventing VAC, what kind of action is needed to build the bridge: What can activists do and skills needed to be an activist.

Trainers from Child and Family Protection Unit of Uganda Police,

The legal Aid Project, Probation and Welfare officer, Kabarole NGO & CBO association and the staff of Joy for Children Uganda facilitated the trainings in a participatory manner.

Achievements



Figure 8: One of the local leader present findings in the group discussion

- 180 local leaders were trained from the 8 parishes of Fort Portal Municipality.
- The local leaders were able to identify the root causes of VAC in their communities.
- The Local leaders were able to cite out the forms of violence and the possible ways of preventing VAC in their communities.

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- The leaders were able to cite out some of the cases existing in their communities and guidance was given on how to handle them.
- The leaders also mentioned the challenge of video halls in the communities that are being used to recruit/initiate children to alcohol, marijuana, bangi, smoking and prostitution for young girls as they are used to attract men into video halls. And this was brought to the attention of the concerned authorities in their respective areas.
- Together with the Child and Family protection Unit, local leaders and community policing we drafted a memorandum to ban the video halls from admitting children and put a clear warning prohibiting children from accessing the halls.
- In some parishes the turn up was low due to heavy rains such as Bazaar parish and while in others the turn up was very high such as Nyabukara, Bukwali and Rwengoma causing budget constraints in terms of meals and materials for participants
- The participants demanded for facilitation in form of transport which we had earlier not budgeted for. This in a way also hampered the attendance.
- In some villages, one person holds more than one post of our target participants. This coupled with illnesses especially malaria that is accelerated by rainy season resulted in shortfall in attendance of the expected number of participants.

Key challenges encountered

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Training of local leaders at kasusu parish

Lessons learnt

- We have learnt that local leaders are aware of violence against children but lack skills and support from the Government in terms of training and facilitation to come out and address issues of violence in their communities.
- Since the Children's Act Cap 59 talks about the support for children by local authorities, they become the best group to be trained in order to help them exercise their powers to safe guard children and promote reconciliation between parents and children

with in their areas of jurisdiction.

- The local leaders have a mandate provided by the laws of Uganda in The Children Act Cap 59. Part 3, *Support for Children by Local Council Authorities*. Despite of this, majority of the leaders did not know their roles because the Children's Act is not accessible by the local people.
- Participants through group discussions are able to understand and identify violence in the community and suggest actions that can be taken to prevent it in the first place.

It's also important to report that our training attracted a legislature in parliament of Uganda for Fort Portal Municipality, Hon. Stephen Kaliba who promised to work with local leaders in promoting the rights of children and

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supporting bills in the parliament that prevent VAC such as Domestic Relations Bills (DRB) that is currently shelved in the parliament . He also applauded the work we were doing in the community.



Figure 9: Member of Parliament for Fort Portal Municipality, Hon. Stephen Kaliba addresses the participants during the Training at Nyabukara Parish where the MP comes from.



Figure 10: A group representative share their finds from a group discussion on VAC



Figure 11: Probation officer Mrs. Kakunguru Shamilah presenting laws and policies protecting children



Figure 12: Mr. Sunday Eric of Child and Family Protection present the Role of Local Leaders in VAC

Activity 4: Training of counselors

A four day residential training of counselors was conducted about their role in the community. Of the 15 (fifteen) people trained (eight were children and seven adults) as counselors of the expected sixteen

(16). The counselors were selected during the training of the local leaders and also identified children (between the ages of 14-18) who were trained along with the adults.

The main objectives of the training were to;

- a) Establish safe and adequate counseling opportunities to the victims of unfair child related actions, including abuse and violence against children at parish level.
- b) Ensure that counseling and response to issues affecting children are well addressed and,
- c) To encourage and support the setting up of child support groups at parish level.



Figure 13 Facilitator training counselors in November '09

During the four day training topics covered include;

Understanding counseling and the skills needed to be a counselor, communication skills and information gathering, conflict resolution and crisis handling, role play, case studies and legal procedures, what is needed to form Child Support Groups

(Formerly Victim Support Groups which was changed by participants and other stakeholders as being victimizing). The training of the counselors ended with drama show from Kiduukuru Youth Drama Group depicting common forms of violence against children in the homes.



Figure 14 Mr. Sunday Eric of Child and Family Protection Unit facilitate the training

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Achievements

- Fifteen (15) people were trained as counselors, eight being children between 14 to 18 years and seven were adults.
 - Four copies of the compiled handouts of the topics trained were given to each counselor.
 - Counselors acquired skills and understood counseling and promised to support the children through counseling
 - The counselors identified the missing gaps that were existing in communicating with children.
 - The training of counselors ended with a drama show on VAC by Kiduukuru youth drama and graced by Rev. Kafuruka Mwesige.
 - Film on stories of children's resilience to violence against them (Through My Eyes)
- supplied by Raising Voices was shown to participants.
 - The counselors learnt new ways of relating and handling children.
 - The youngest of the participants was aged 14 years from Kasusu parish.
 - Counseling and response to issues affecting children was expeditiously addresses.

Lessons learnt

- The counselors were trying to do counseling in their parishes, but lacked the skills in counseling and communicating with children.
- The counselors are willing to work together in order to help the children to create a violence free community for children in their parishes.
- The counselors need legal protection in order to do their work properly.

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Challenges

- The facilitation budgeted for participants was not adequate compared to the four day workshop.
- The training did not plan for medical emergencies for the participants and we were challenged when one of the participants developed severe headache on one of the evening.



Members of child rights club Buhinga Primary school

Therefore this tool kit helped to explore ideas, learn alternative ways of thinking and develop new skills through participatory learning.

The conventional learning applies the customary teacher- student relationship while participatory learning method uses a facilitator who guides the group and encourages participants to take an active role in their own learning.

This learning process taps into the wealth of experience that participants have and uses for collective problem solving. Participatory learning has also proven very useful for promoting change and working with participants who may not be used to being students.

Activity 5: Creation of “A Good School” Model.

The Good School Tool Kit

Creating a good school requires learning new skill and ideas. The Good School toolkit enabled participants explore new skills of learning, by shifting from conventional ways of learning to participatory.

However both methodologies are best depending on objectives of the training or study.

Five good school tool kits were delivered in five schools of Bukwali P.School, Kyebambe Model P.School, Buhinga Primary School, Sts. Peter and Paul P. School and Nyabukara P.School within the municipality.



Delivery of good school toolkit

These schools were identified by the local leaders that were trained. Periodic meetings were held in the respective schools to monitor the implementation of the Good Schools tool kit.

The objective of the good school tool kit was to sensitize the pupils, teachers and parents about the adverse effects of child rights abuses

and unfair child – related actions in the community.

In the five schools where the tool kit was delivered / or introduced, discussion on violence against children were held with children, teachers and parents some of whom are counselors and local leaders of where the schools are located.

In section 1 we looked at what is wrong with corporal punishments, what is a good school, what is a good teacher and what is positive discipline, creating accountable governance.

Section 2 we looked at understanding violence against children; discussing topics like do children have rights? Types of VAC, why does VAC exist, bullying, gender in school, sexual violence in school and responding to sexual violence. Which was covered in the first quarter of the project

Section 3 we covered developing positive discipline, developing helpful relationships children capacity which was covered along side with other activities like formation of child rights clubs and

setting up jointly agreed policies and implementing them

During this training booklets were also provided to participating children to read and discuss, some of these booklets included what is wrong with corporal punishments, what is a good school, what is a good teacher and what is positive discipline, creating accountable governance. These booklets have helped the children to understand issues involved in creating a good school and also act as a basis for their discussions in subsequent meetings and daily lives in and outside the school. The pupils, were pleased with the programme because it brought both players in the school together as well as bridging the gap that existed amongst them.

Achievements

- The good school toolkits was introduced in 5 schools. In each school three classes where primary four, five and six were selected. In each class five boys and five girls were selected bringing the

number to 30 children per school.

- In addition to this, class teacher of each of the selected class plus the head teacher and teacher in charge of implementing the activity participated in the weekly meetings.
- The children become aware of how they can create a good learning environment for their school.



Members of Nyabukara primary school child rights club planting trees around their school as one way of creating a good learning environment

- As a result of implementing the good school toolkit children's voices have been amplified, their rights and welfare has improved. Teachers as well as parents are now aware of their cardinal roles in making the education of the child a success.
- Five child rights clubs have been formed in the five schools; these consist of the 30 children selected per school.
- Child rights clubs have been involved in creating a good learning environment through planting of trees donated by Joy For Children to enhance the beauty of their schools and one way of appreciating their school
- Formation of the child rights clubs has helped in reducing child related abuses like corporal punishments in schools.
- New child friendly policies and laws formed by teachers' parents and pupils have been

incorporated on the existing regulations.

Lessons learnt

- It was also observed that many children used to leave their school in upper classes to join the neighboring schools which could affect the performance of the schools they leave just because they do not appreciate their schools.
- We realized that children knew some of their rights but they were not empowered or supported to demand for them in a manner appropriate to their age.
- The pupils were very much interested in the programme largely because it was advocating for their rights.
- The teachers as well as students want to make their schools conducive for learning but they did not know how to do it since there was huge gap between parents, teachers and

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student. This programme gave all players an opportunity to meet and design strategies to make the schools conducive for all players.

Challenges

- There were not enough toolkits at the start of the project to deliver a copy to each school as earlier planned. The one copy that we received from Raising Voices had to be shared among the five schools
- This made it hard for individual school receiving its own copy and implementing it at their own pace.
- Some teachers did not welcome the idea because they thought we are giving the children more rights to change their current status.
- It was also a bit hard to be incorporated in the schools programme because of the school calendar where all school activities are planned before the school year begins.

- Some of the target parents did not turn up in the first monitoring meeting of the implementation of Good School took kit.

Activity 6: Translation of Literature

UN Child Rights Convention was translated in Runyakitara in a child friendly language, printed and distributed in the subsequent activities during the implementation period

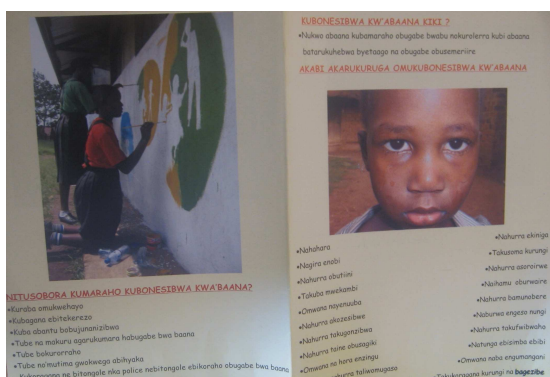
Activity 7: Production of Video posters, Leaflets and pamphlets

In a bid to increase understanding and prevention of VAC in the community, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) were prepared and printed.

Achievement

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- We translated the UNCRC in a child friendly local language Runyakitara.
- 500 copies of UNCRC in local language were designed, printed and distributed during community sensitization events and other subsequent project activities during the implementation.
- 16 pamphlets containing regional and international legal frame work on child protection were printed and distributed to the counselor as a reference point to child rights and human rights as a whole.
- 1500 leaflets were printed containing especially the views collected from the

community during the training of local leader on the cause and prevention of VAC.

- We also recorded and produced a video / documentary on violence against children with major input from schools we worked with, the district probation officer, the child protection unit of Uganda Police, our trained counselor, the public, child support groups and staff of Joy for Children –Uganda

Challenges

- There is a time lag between ordering and delivery of printed work. Therefore early ordering printing services is needed

Lessons learnt

- Publication such as posters, leaflets are very much liked and demanded by the community.
- They also tend to have a great impact in community sensitization since they can stay on the walls for a long time and we also find them

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easy to use during the trainings.

- The publications also stimulate discussion on the issues in question and therefore they can be instrumental in behavioral change.

Activity 8: Radio Program

We conducted interactive radio programmes in the local radio stations discussing about violence against children, forms of violence in the community, effects on violence on the children and how violence against children can be prevented.

The radio programmes were aimed at increasing community discussion and response on violence against children.

Achievement

- Four (4) radio programs (one hour each) were conducted on Better FM

- Two (2) radio programmes on life Fm, one for 2 (two) hour and the other for 30 minutes.
- Six (6) radio programs on Voice of Kamwenge (VOK). The programmes on this radio were sponsored by Raising Voices our partner organization in preventing violence against Children.
- Eight (8) radio programmes Kyenjojo Development Radio
- One hour radio programme on Voice of Tooro (VOT) sponsored by World Vision on the commemoration of 20th Anniversary of UNCRC.

Lessons learnt

- Many people (listeners) from a wide coverage called in and decried the rampant forms of violence existing in their areas. Most areas are far away from the municipality therefore they were requesting for the extension of the services to their areas.
- It was also observed that the listeners are aware of the various forms of abuse in

their community but lacked the information on the procedure to be taken to solve them.

- Radio programme is one of the effective ways of reaching a wider community. This can be evidenced by the wide coverage of the radio even beyond the project area.

Activity 9: Training of puppeteers

In preparation for community sensitization in January using puppets among others, training of two (2) puppeteers was conducted for fifteen (15) days.



Figure 15 Puppeteers demonstrate during the training

Puppets theatre has proved AIDS awareness campaign in Kyenjojo district to be a very good means of communicating and educating the masses in a very subtle way. Puppets are able to explain and express themes which are difficult or even impossible to present by human actors especially because of the cultural taboos attached to them for example sexual violence, oppressive male dominance, child battering among others.

Puppet theatres are popular thus help to attract people in the village to attend the sensitization programme.

Puppets not only raise the issues of the actions to be taken but also how to take these actions in practice to protect the rights from being abused. Support groups with trained counselors were introduced with other community members as well as leaders and these participated in focused discussions, answered and asked questions.

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Activity 10: Sensitization of the local community

Sensitization of both males and females, about the adverse effects of child rights abuses and unfair child-related actions in the community.

In each parish, two days of the local community sensitization using puppet theatre, music dance and drama on Violence against Children were used.

During sensitization the community was also engaged in discussion and booklets clubs that both helped to discuss in depth the forms of violence in the community and also how to prevent or seek justice when it occurs.



Drama performance during community sensitization

Achievements

- Eight (8) parishes were sensitized including; Rwengoma, Bazaar, Kijanju, Nyabukara, Kasusu, Kitumba, Bukwali and Nyakagongo.
- In each parish it's estimated that about 300 people attended the community events (sensitization) making a total number people sensitized to 2400 people.
- After sensitization the number of people joining child support groups increased from an average of 5 to 10 people and still growing.
- Through community sensitization we were able to introduce the 2 counselors from each parish that we had trained and the child support groups that were being formed to the local community.
- After the training reporting of cases increased to the police, the local council leaders, the trained counselors, the child

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support groups and to our offices in Mucwa.

- The sensitization brought on board other community and political leaders in the fight campaign of preventing violence against children. For example, the Local Council 5 LC V South Division Hon. Linda Irene.
- The people were able to understand the forms of violence that happen in their community and their adverse affects that were earlier being presumed to be normal.

- Finding places to carry out the sensitization was very difficult, people always demanded for money to let out the places.
- Communication barrier due to lack of public address system. Voices from the drama and puppets were not easily heard. Most of the sensitizations were held along the road side which made it difficult for people to listen.

Challenges



- Heavy rainfalls always disrupted the sensitization events because most of them were carried out in the open space.

Lessons Learnt

- The people were not informed about the violence against children, form and effects on the child's growth and performance in class.
- Some people testified on the existence of the forms of violence against children acted and more that were earlier being taken to be normal.
- It's also important to note that music, dance and drama

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especially combined with puppets has a greater effect on delivering the message to the local people; a) it attracts people as a form of entertainment. b) Presents real issues in the community in the way that is understood by many people sometimes mixed with compassion. d) Music, dance and drama using puppets is also inexpensive compared medium of communication that has the same effects.

- Community sensitization also enhanced people's participation in addressing their challenges in the community. For example people who took part in the plays were local who had an opportunity to transform their society through sensitization.

Activity 11: Assisting counselors to set up child support groups

The training of local leaders brought in the identification of individuals from their communities who would be trained as counselors to support their activities in protecting children against abuse and violence.

After the identification of counselors, they were trained two from each parish (An adult and a child) and they were asked to form child support groups in the community where children and parents could go for guidance, counseling and support when they are abused or their rights violated.



Kasusu child support group

Our project staff was involved in helping the counselors in supporting individuals and setting up child support groups for the victims of violence against children. The child support groups supplement the efforts of the existing structure to protect and safe guard the rights of children.

Achievements.

- Eight (8) Child Support Groups were formed, one from each parish.
- The Child Support Groups provide counseling and referrals for children affected by violence.

Lessons Learnt

- Setting up of the support groups need to be done immediately after the training counselors, as many of them may loose moral if activities don't follow each other without breaking.
- Though the work is voluntary, the counselors need to be facilitated when

they are mobilizing the community to get up the child support groups. Issues like stationary, airtime, transport and light allowances in the initial days of forming the child support groups need to be provided.

- We also learnt that timing seasons when setting up support group is important as many people tend to be difficult to mobilize and engage in the planting and harvesting seasons.

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Activity 12: Support Visits to Child Support Groups.

Support visits were undertaken to support child support groups and monitoring their activities. This was intended to seek ways to address the difficulties being met. The follow up visits were used for collection of information for radio programmes, production o f materials and further for local and national

advocacy.



Members of nyabukara child support group

Achievements

- Six (6) support and monitoring visits were carried out in each of the eight parishes.
- 80 community members (both women and men) are regular members of the child support groups from all the eight parishes.

The local leaders and trained counselors are able to handle and refer cases to relevant authorities in the district including the family and Child Protection Unit of Uganda Police, the probation office, Community

Development officers, Legal Aid Project, among others.

- The local community is regularly updated on the changing legal and policy issues passed at the district and in parliament concerning children in the country.
- There is an increase in cases reported, handled and referred with the help of Child Support groups and hope to increase as they learn more on human rights.
- The child support groups made home visits in their parishes to reach out to them the information on preventing violence against children in their homes.
- In addition to preventing violence against children, child support groups are also involved in sensitizing parents on food and nutrition, HIV/AIDS and malaria.

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- In Kitumba, the child support group is starting up income generating activities like drama to support their activities.
- Kasusu child support group is moving into registering their group as a community based organization (CBO) to continue with the work of protecting children on a large scale using their legally established organization. Therefore more people will actively be involved in preventing violence against children.

Lessons learnt

- Support groups have helped in handling a number of cases at grass root level and many people like the work being done by the groups in the community.
- The group members are willing to do more work in child protection and

encourage more people to join them.

- The existing structures of the child supportgroups are looking forward to making the communities violent free.

Challenges and solution

- Transport was among the challenges faced in execution of the project. Project private transport for the project staff and bicycles for the trained counselors are needed to ease movement and reach the people in the hard to reach areas. The project being in the remote area public transport does not exist and yet the area is wide and people are scattered in between villages
- Limited knowledge of legal, police and court procedures frustrate children in attaining justice. More training is

needed for the counselors and the local leaders to enable them carry out their constitutional mandate in protecting children as well as giving better legal advice.

- Intimidation from children rights abusers especially high profiled people in the community was sighted as another challenge hindering the support groups in executing their roles since they do not have identification cards as human rights defenders. The members of child support groups suggested formal identifications as human rights defender.
- There were also gaps in record keeping by the child support groups because they were not well facilitated in the work they were doing as well as documentation. Child Support groups need support such as stationary to enable them document their work for

current, future reference and intervention.

Activity 13: Refresh Training

We conducted a two- day residential refresh training for the counselors with the aim of enabling them (counselors) to reflect together, seek further information, plan future supportive and networking management.



COUNSELORS AFTER THEIR REFRESH TRAINING

Achievements

- 16 counselors from eight (8) parishes benefited from the refresh training.

- Challenges faced by counselors in execution of their work and solutions/lessons learnt were shared and solution suggested.
- Participants shared their achievements and challenges and how they were overcome.
- It was a refreshing opportunity for the trained counselor to continue their work and support Child Support Groups in their communities.

Challenges and suggested solutions

- There exists a gap in sharing information with members to seek advice and solution to the challenges being faced in the execution of their work.
- Local identifications such as T-shirts and identity cards as human rights defenders for recognition by the community.
- Transport to reach the people who need their help still remains a challenge. More reliable and inexpensive means of transport such as bicycles need to be provided.

Lessons Learnt

- The trained counselors are willing to work hand in hand with the project team in implementing the project activities and executing their roles.
- Apart from child protection, the counselors are also identified by the community and involved in other child related issues like promoting nutrition and good feeding, sanitation and hygiene, HIV/AIDS and malaria.
- The refresh training can be a good avenue of sharing experiences especially in handling

complicated cases and perpetrators

Activity 14: Project Monitoring and Evaluation

At the end of every project activity, evaluation forms were given to the participants to assess the impact of the activity and get feed back for further improvement as our routine assessment on the project.

At the end of the project, the final evaluation was conducted through interviews and focus group discussions;

The responses we got include the following but no limited to;

- Most of the local leaders appreciated the training because it gave them more information on their responsibilities in preventing violence against women and children.
- The participants requested for more trainings to make

preventing against Children successful.

- It was also cited trainings enabled leaders, counselors and the community to know their responsibilities and opened up their eyes to protect the children.
- The training was good to the community because each one had to check what he or she had been doing in relation to preventing violence against women and children.
- The local leaders, counselors, child support groups and the entire community learnt a lot on the management of their villages and protecting the most vulnerable in their communities especially children.
- The participants recommended that sensitizing the people should extend to other communities where violence against women and children is also rampant.

- Most of the participants in the survey suggested the expansion of the project to other areas that are underserved and hard to reach.
- Most of the local leaders appreciated the training because it gave them more information on their responsibilities in preventing violence against children.
- The participants requested for more trainings to make preventing violence against children successful.
- The trainings enabled leaders to know their responsibilities and opened up their eyes to protect the children.
- The training was good to the local leaders because each one had to check what he or she had been doing in relation to preventing violence against children.
- The local leaders learnt a lot on the management of their villages and protecting the most vulnerable in their communities.
- The participants asked for transport refund which was not budgeted for in training local leaders.
- The participants recommended that sensitizing the people should extend to other communities where violence against children is also rampant.

Benefits of the project to the organization

- The financial policy has been developed and being implemented in an effort to improve financial management in the organization.
- We have been able to open a branch bank account for Fort

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Portal to enable the smooth running of the project.

- Through the project, we learnt new ways of relating with the people in the community.
- Joy for Children-Uganda has been recognized as a key player in advocating and promoting the rights of children in the municipality.
- We also learnt more policies and cases relating to child protection and preventing violence against children.
- We learnt to handle various cases of violence against children with guidance from the Family and Child Protection Unit of Uganda Police, Legal Aid Project and the probation and welfare office.
- Local leaders have already begun handling cases in their communities which previously would go unattended to.
- Some schools such as Buhinga Primary Schools are already implementing alternatives to corporal punishment by introducing suggestion boxes in every class for misbehaving children. The children whose names appear more than three times are told that they will be entered in black books for misbehaving children in the school. This in a way has shaped the behaviors of children without necessarily inflicting pain on the child.
- About 15 cases have been handled and others referred to higher authorities. For example, we handled a case, where land for orphans in Mukonomura village was about to be sold by relatives - backed by Local Council III Chairperson which is against the laws of Uganda.

Short term impact

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- In the long term, we expect to have better treatment of children and respect for their rights.
- We see children having a voice in the community, schools and in the legal systems.
- We expect to see reduced cases of violence against children and having more people advocating for their rights.
- In Sts Peter and Paul Primary School where we were implementing Good School program have embarked on improving their schools and creating conducive learning environment free of violence. They have done major face lift of the class rooms, fenced the school compound to control outsiders with wrong intentions of harming the children from entering the school and planting flowers and tree in the school compound.
- We also anticipate more partnership with relevant authorities and Civil Society Organization (CSOs) in responding to violence against children.
- We also see the media such as local radio station getting more involved in exposing cases of violence against children in the community as a result of their participation in the project through radio talk shows.
- Reporting of cases of violence against children and openly discussing about it has increased in the community. And we hope that if this is continued and sustained the number of children experiencing violence in the homes, schools and communities will plummet.

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Relevance of the project to the situation in project background

The project has largely been an appropriate response to the situation described in the project background analysis. This is because it has mainly benefited the people directly involved in protecting children and preventing violence against them such as the schools, local leaders and trained counselors who will give guidance and counseling to the abused children a structure that did not exist before.

Also the project brought together key players in protecting the rights of children such as Child and Family Protection Unit of Uganda Police, the Legal Aid Project, The probation officer and introduced them to the community.

In addition to project activities planned, we would add the following components to address the emerging issues on violence against children;

We would plan an activity of sensitizing children alone on understanding VAC.

We would hire legal personnel to represent children in conflict with the law and those that need legal representation incase their rights have been violated as well as giving legal assistance to child rights activists and defenders.

Create a budget that would facilitate the staff in following up cases of VAC in the community whenever deemed fit. We would also very much consider facilitation for participants in all project activities as well as giving counselors bicycles for transport to handle cases of VAC in their community because they work in a large geographical areas that can not be accessed on foot. In addition, the bicycles and

facilitation would motivate the participants to do their work efficiently.

Plans for the follow-up of the project in future

To monitor and strengthen child rights clubs in schools as an avenue for sustainable child rights promotion in schools as well as communities.

To continue involving child support groups in trainings related to their work and provide opportunity or access of information and up to date resources to support their activities.



Cooperation with KIOS

KIOS cooperation has been so far good because they gave onsite visit to the project at its beginning.

They also encouraged and appreciated the work being done when we shared with them the activities we had carried out in the first two months of the project implementation.

In summary, the project of preventing violence against children has been well received in the community, local leadership and other key players in the rights of children.



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