

MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

2020 National Virtual Learning Event on Child Wellbeing

November 25-26, 2020

ABSTRACTS BOOK



Child wellbeing during and Post COVID-19 Context in Uganda

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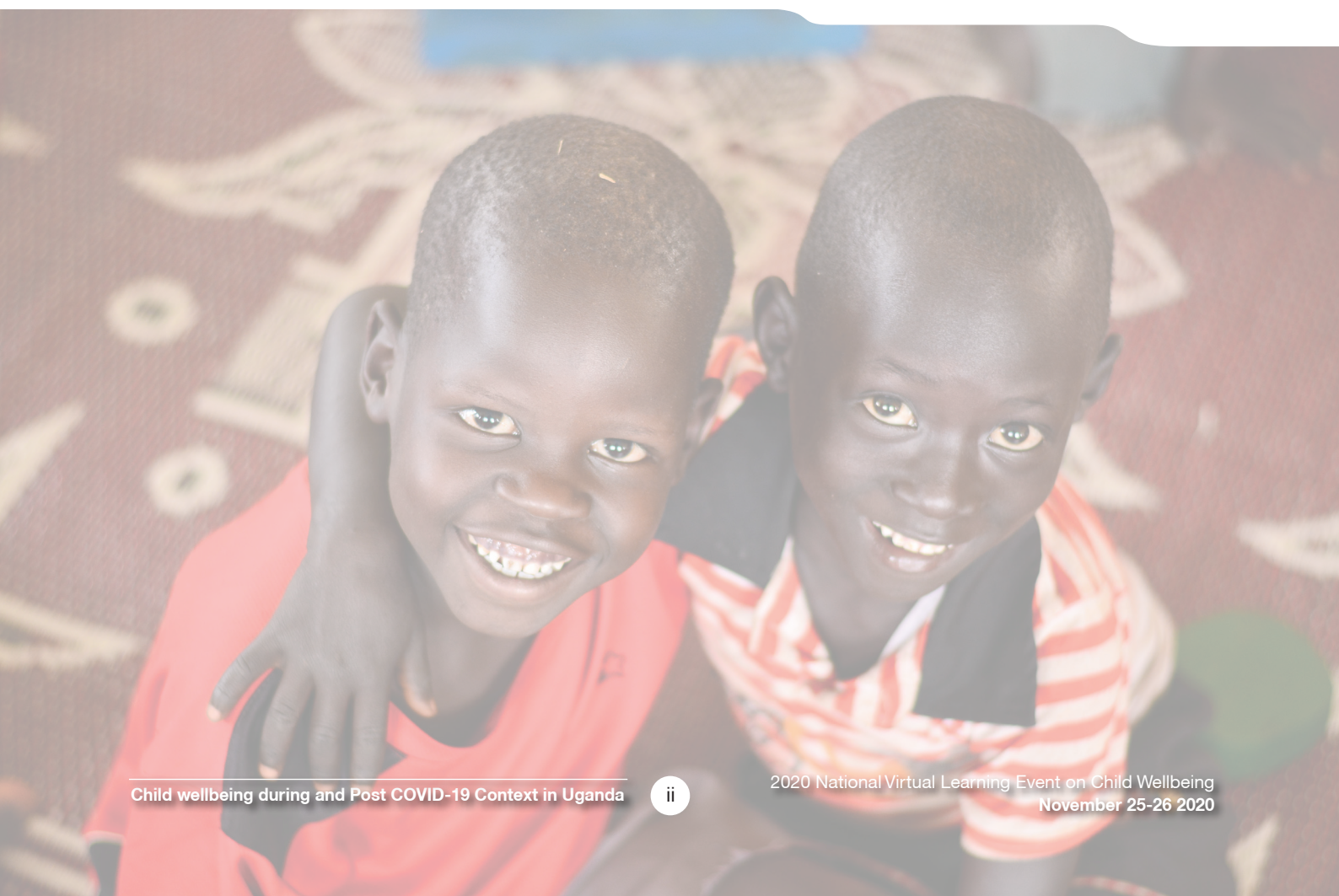
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More work is available at www.jakelyell.com

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National Organizing Committee

- 1) Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
- 2) Childs i Foundation
- 3) The Africhld Centre
- 4) TPO Uganda
- 5) Impact and Innovations Development Centre
- 6) World Vision Uganda
- 7) Child Fund
- 8) Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative
- 9) International Justice Mission
- 10) SOS Children's villages
- 11) Child Health and Development Centre, Makerere University
- 12) National Association of Social Workers of Uganda
- 13) Platform for Labour Action
- 14) Refugee Law Project
- 15) Save street children Uganda
- 16) Save the Children
- 17) Education local Expertise Centre (ELECU)



Convener



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Guests and Key Speakers

GUESTS



Chief Guest

**Hon. Florence Nakiwala
Kiyinji**

Minister of State for Youth and
Children Affairs



Aggrey David Kibenge

Permanent Secretary, Ministry
of Gender, Labour and Social
Development



Key Speakers



Keynote speaker

Stella Ayo-Odongo

Coordinator, Africa Partnership to end violence
against Children



Dr Janestic Twikirize

Senior Lecturer, Makerere
University



Birgithe Lund-Henriksen

Chief, Child protection,
UNICEF, Uganda country
Office



Sayson Rossette Meya

Human Rights, Safeguards,
Gender and Social Inclusion
Advisor, CIG UKAID



Patrick Onyango Mangan

CEO, Regional Psycho Social
Support Initiative (REPSSI)



Dr. Mary Gorette Nakabugo

Executive Director, UWEZO
Uganda

Event Coordinator



Agnes Wasike

Event Moderator & Consultant



Dr. Richard Wamimbi

Bio-Sketches

Birgithe Lund-Henriksen

Joined UNICEF in 1996 in Bangladesh. Since then she was Chief of Child Protection in Indonesia, Kenya and Tanzania before Uganda. She is committed to a strengthened protection system.

Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo

Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo is Executive Director of Uwezo Uganda, which works to promote equitable quality education through research, learning assessments and advocacy. Previously she was Twaweza Country Lead and Regional Manager of Uwezo East Africa. She is Vice President of the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS) and chairs its Standing Committee on Education. Her major work experience has been in higher education. She is Chairperson of Kyambogo University Council and is member of Muteesa 1 Royal University Council. She was Senior Lecturer of Higher Education Studies at University of KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa and Head of the Department of Curriculum, Teaching and Media at Makerere University, Uganda. She worked as a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland and was a Visiting Professor to the Centre for the Study of International Cooperation in Education, Hiroshima University, Japan. She holds a PhD in Education from the University of Cape Town, South Africa.

Mr. Patrick Onyango Mangan

Mr. Patrick Onyango Mangan, Msc, is a Development Management Specialist that has worked in Uganda and the Great Lakes Region for over 25 years designing and promoting programs supporting children, women and families in general. He is renowned in the fields of mental health and psychosocial support, care and protection of vulnerable children as well as strengthening community child protection systems. He has served on several local and global boards, as a founding member of AFRCHILD and the Child Protection Working Group in Uganda; a past member of the Columbia University Child Protection in Crisis Global Steering Committee, a member of the International Advisory Board of the *intervention* a peer reviewed journal on psychosocial support and mental health; a past member of the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance Steering Committee; an Advisory Board member of the EMERALD Project of Kings College London; and a member of the Community Based Child Protection mechanisms global reference group coordinated by Save the Children UK.

Dr Janestic Twikirize

Dr Janestic TWIKIRIZE, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work and Social Administration, Makerere University, Uganda. She holds a PhD in Social Work and Social Development. Prior to her teaching and research career, she worked a child development specialist with Compassion International, Uganda. She has published widely in the areas of childcare and protection, professional social work in Africa, indigenisation of social work, gender and children's rights. She provides consultancy services to child focused organisations to strengthen their child protection systems and care reform. She was part of the team that developed the online Case Management Course and has participated in designing and delivering several Continuing Professional Development courses (CPD) for the Social Service Workforce in Uganda. Dr Twikirize led the team that developed the first ever National Minimum Standards and Competencies Framework for Social Work Education in Uganda. She was the National Consultant in the Functional Review of the Social Service Workforce in 2018/2019. Dr Twikirize has a rich international experience in the field of social work, having served as Africa's Representative on the Board of Directors of the International Association of Schools of Social Work as well as the Immediate Past Vice President of the Association of Schools of Social Work in Africa. She is currently a Commissioner of the International Federation of Social Workers' Indigenous Commission. She is also a member and has worked closely with the Global Social Service Workforce Alliance.

**Sayson Rossette
Meya**

SAYSON ROSSETTE MEYA is a multi-disciplinary social scientist working with CIG UKAID as a Human Rights, Safeguards, Gender and Social Inclusion Advisor. She is a Human Rights Defender, with 20 years' experience in human rights, rule of law and governance, gender equality and development, child protection, Civil Society enhancement, social empowerment of the marginalized, program Management and organizational development, a policy Analyst and an inspirational Speaker on multi-dimensional social aspects. She has worked as an Advisor with USAID, DfID, European Union, African Union, UN Agencies and other Institutions in Europe and Africa. Meya is a holder of an MA in Local Governance and Human Rights, BA in International Relations & Women Studies; BA, Social Work & Social Administration; Post Graduate Diploma in Conflict Management, Peace and Security; Post Graduate Diploma Project Planning & Management, Advanced Diploma in Child Protection and Safeguards, and a Certified Trainer and Trainer of Trainers (TOT).

**Ms Stella Ayo-
Odongo**

Ms Stella Ayo-Odongo is a child rights, child protection, social policy expert and an advocate for social justice. She is a motivated leader and development practitioner with over 20 years of progressive experience in strategic leadership, development management and programme operations. She has extensive knowledge and experience advocating for vulnerable groups such as the children, youth and the elderly. She is a visionary pan African leader as demonstrated in the founding of national and regional level movements for social justice such as the African Wide Movement for the children, Civil Society Organizations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU) and the Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Children (UPFC), all of which have made significant contributions to voicing issues of the affected.

Ms Ayo-Odongo has spearheaded several technical and advocacy initiatives at national, regional and international levels particularly on child rights concerns. Some of these engagements include: evaluation of the child labour programme and facilitating the development of a national child labour policy for the KURET Initiative in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda, evaluation of the mental health programme for Mental Health Uganda and contributing to the generation of a National Situational Analysis Report on the situation of children in Uganda. Ms Ayo-Odongo has played a leadership role in the development the Child Protection Advocacy Report for the African Child Policy Forum (ACPF), the Contextual Analysis on the Situation of Children for the International Child Support Programme, in addition to facilitating the development of a National Child Participation Guideline for Uganda. Ms Ayo-Odongo is also a founding member of the Africa-Wide Movement for Children (AMC, an Africa Wide COS platform advocating for the rights of children in Africa. She currently heads the African Partnership to End Violence against Children (APEVAC), a multi stakeholder platform promoting a conversation on preventing violence against children in Africa.

Ms Ayo-Odongo has an MSc degree in Development Management (Open University-UK) and an Honors degree in Social Sciences (Makerere University-Uganda), and has participated in several professional development courses in political and policy advocacy training, project planning and management among others.



Background

The National Child Protection Working Group (NCPWG) is a national child protection mechanism that was established in September 2009 within the Institutional framework of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) following the phasing out of the Inter agency Sub-committee (IASC) on Child Protection Sub-cluster coordinated by UNICEF under the humanitarian response in Northern Uganda. Under the overall leadership of MGLSD, the broad mandate of the NCPWG is to enhance linking, information sharing and learning among child protection stakeholders for a more coordinated child protection response in the Country. Under the learning agenda, in 2017 the CPWG secretariat conceptualized and co-convened with MGLSD the first ever national learning forum on child wellbeing. The MGLSD State Minister for Youth and Children Affairs who officiated at the inaugural learning forum endorsed it as an annual event, and since then the annual learning event on child wellbeing has served as a national platform for learning from actions for the wellbeing of children undertaken in a calendar year across policy, practice and research.

Aims of the learning Event

The 2020 National virtual learning event on child wellbeing provides a platform for collaborative and shared learning among practitioners, policy makers, researchers and academicians about what is emerging, what is working and what is not

working in ongoing efforts to ensure children's survival, development, protection, participation and strengthening of systems for child wellbeing during and post the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda. The 2020 child-wellbeing event is being co-hosted by the National Child Protection Working Group together with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

The specific aims of the learning event include:

- a) Promote shared learning on service delivery, programming and research related to addressing the effects of COVID- 19 crisis on children to inform response to future pandemics.
- b) Empower participants with knowledge and skills on new or existing models, methodologies and approaches that are community grounded and evidence- based from the emerging research to improve child wellbeing during and post the COVID -19 pandemic.
- c) Establish and prioritize issues affecting children during and post the COVID-19 pandemic for advocacy, policy, practice and applied research.
- d) Strengthen networking and commitment to mutual support for the learning and experience sharing related to child wellbeing.

Wednesday 25 November

ACADEMIC ABSTRACT SESSIONS

WEDPA 100 Strengthening Child Protection systems in the Context of COVID-19 in Uganda: Data-driven virtual technical assistance to the government Social Service Workforce to strengthen protection response.

Barbra Aber, MSc. - Catholic Relief Services

Background: The USAID/PEPFAR-funded 4Children Uganda System Strengthening Project has been working with partners to strengthen the child protection system since July 2017. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, 4Children had been providing technical support to the government social service workforce (SSW) at the national and district level. This included support for regional sector reviews, the roll-out of standard operating procedures and tools for case management, development and nationwide dissemination of an App and over 400 Android Tablets containing all child protection laws and approved guidelines.

Methods: To understand and address child protection needs amid the COVID-19 lockdown, 4Children, working in partnership with PSWOs, began collecting and collating critical information virtually on protection cases. The project also rapidly shifted to a virtual technical assistance model to continue monitoring and supporting the child protection response. This included weekly phone check-ins, establishing WhatsApp groups and sending out regular emails. Also, 4Children supplied frontline social workers with mobile data, which enabled them to continue working remotely. To support the reopening of the Helpline, 4Children mobilized additional funding from Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to purchase hand sanitizers, face masks, and infrared thermometers – critical needs identified by the Helpline Management. In addition, the team actively engaged with other partners, including UNICEF, to support and assist

the frontline government Social Workers, namely Probation and Social Welfare Officers (PSWOs), who were directed to work remotely during the lockdown.

Results: The data from a rapid review analysis indicated an increase in protection violations reporting since the lockdown. The data also demonstrated that the government social service workforce handled nearly as many protection cases in the first three weeks of the lockdown (n=286) as they handled in a previous three-month period, September – November 2019 (n=314) in 30 districts. The senior leadership at MGLSD used this data to advocate for government social workers and the need to include them in the COVID-19 response. Within one week of receiving this data, the Ministry of Local Government issued a nationwide directive that all District Task Teams should include the SSW - Probation and Social Welfare Officers (PSWOs) and Community Development Officers (CDOs) - due to “reports of escalation of violence against children and gender-based violence.” Relatively small program investments, like mobile data packages to the SSW (approximately \$5 per Social Worker), enabled the workforce to continue serving vulnerable children. According to one PSWO, “*it [the data bundle] came at the time we most needed it.*” Similarly, with the creation of a WhatsApp Group for the SSW in the 4Children supported districts, the initial posts were focused mainly on appreciation for belonging to a network of peers. This online forum has provided

a venue for the workforce to motivate each other, share difficult cases, and seek emotional support from their peers.

Conclusion: 4Children found unique ways to support child protection system strengthening efforts amid the COVID-19 pandemic in Uganda – drawing upon well-established partnerships with the government to rapidly collect, analyze and use data for advocacy and targeted technical assistance. 4Children demonstrated that virtual technical assistance is not only possible but can also be effective in strengthening the capacity of the frontline workforce in their response to protection violations.

WEDPA 200 Parenting Programming in Uganda: a mapping of the actors, motivations, coverage and evidence of effectiveness

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³MGLSD

Background: The way children are parented plays a key role in their physical and socio-emotional development and wellbeing, and future resilience. Uganda is currently experiencing a proliferation of parenting interventions aimed at improving parental skills and modifying various child outcomes. There is need to map existing parenting programmes and assess the extent to which they are evidence based. We examined how the programmes were developed, their origin, location, the services they deliver, and what their past evaluations found out in regards to their effectiveness.

Methods: Using a mixed-methods approach including web-based searches, phone-based and face-to-face interviews with child focused apex agencies, we undertook a national study to map parenting interventions across the country.

Results: We found that over one hundred organizations in Uganda are involved in parenting programming. The programmes are sponsored/promoted by different range of agencies, often in an uncoordinated manner, with evidence of fragmentation and duplication of effort. Programmes were driven by the concern to address a wide range of societal issues: gender-

based violence particularly sexual violence, harsh parenting and child neglect, and the need to promote access to education. Other parenting programmes were initiated to promote positive spiritual growth, while others were prompted by the need to address the effect of armed conflict. The programmes reviewed could be categorized into four broad types: -

- i) Those which are entirely concerned with parental skills development and promoting particular parenting approaches.
- ii) Those with a wider social development work and child protection remit, but with parenting component within
- iii) Those embedded in economic strengthening programmes.
- iv) Those delivering parenting interventions without a clear description.

Very few of these programmes have been rigorously evaluated, and there is no consensus on recommended parenting programmes to be scaled-up widely.

Conclusions and implications of the study:

The findings point indeed to a compelling need for a national and systematic effort to coordinate parenting interventions. This effort will require an effective consultative process that will guarantee a nationally owned product of the package of parenting programming interventions whose contribution and impact children's current and future well-being can be predictable measurable.

WEDPA 300 The Effect of COVID-19 on Prevention and Response services to VAC in Uganda

Clare Bangirana, Laban Kashaija Musinguzi, Timothy Opobo, Mathew Amollo, John Bosco Apota

AfriChild Centre

Background: This study sought to generate empirical evidence on the effect of COVID-19 on the wellbeing of children in Uganda in order to inform child protection policy and practice during this and similar future pandemics.

Methodology: The study employed a cross-sectional survey design utilizing quantitative and qualitative approaches of data collection among 10-17 year olds.

Results : Between April and August 2020, there were over 400 cases of VAC reported to the UCHL or an increase of 65%. Three common forms of VAC increased during COVID-19; child neglect, physical and sexual violence. More than a half (54%) of the children who participated in the study reported experiencing physical violence during the three months, slightly affecting more

boys (56.0%) than girls (52.1%). Of the 9.9% who reported having ever experiencing abusive sexual touching, at least six in every ten children (or 59.4%) reported abusive sexual touching during the three months. Despite the increase in cases of VAC, few children were reporting abuse. COVID-19 control measures have created significant challenges for children where they have become susceptible to sexual exploitation.

Conclusion : VAC cases have increased during the COVID-19 period yet access to services remains low due to several factors including restrictions on movement instituted in the early phases of the pandemic. The pandemic has revealed the need to clearly define and strengthen the child protection system. Focus should be placed on integrated and coordinated approaches in preventing and responding to violence against children. The MGLSD together with other non-state actors should consider a strong advocacy campaign that recognizes child protection services as essential services at all times.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION SESSIONS

WEDPI 400 Reintegration of children in residential care: readiness, motivations and experiences of children and care institutions participating in the ACCoSS project in Uganda

Godfrey Siu¹, PhD, Jude Sekatte¹, Brenda SSimbwa¹, Shafiq Butanda² & Lillian Mpabulungi Ssegooba³

1 Makerere University Child Health and Development Centre, 2 MGLSD, 3 SOS CV

Introduction : While residential care of children can offer many temporal benefits, it is prone to negative consequences for children's development, including emotional attachment disorders, and it is costlier to keep children in institutions than in family and community-based care options. Yet this form of care remains a reality in Uganda, with an estimated 50,000 vulnerable children living in residential care. The Alternative Care Consortium on Systems Strengthening (ACCoSS) project, implemented between 2018 and 2020,

by SOS CV, Makerere University and the MGLSD, sought to contribute evidence on reintegration by undertaking resettlement of children back to their families, strengthening the national and district alternative care institutional capacity to implement alternative care framework, strengthening capacity of families to prevent separation with children, and conducting evidence based operational research to inform policy and programming.

Project implementation and evaluation:

There were two stages in the evaluation of the programme. First, we conducted a baseline survey between May and August 2019 with 282 children in residential care from 13 child care institutions, 100 of them being those that had been identified by those institutions as candidates

for reintegration under the ACCoSS project. This was complemented with focus group discussions with children and interviews with caretakers and managers of care institutions. The second stage was a follow-up qualitative studies of children once they had been reintegrated back to their families, which was conducted between May and August 2020, with 60 children.

Baseline study results

The baseline survey assessed readiness and perceptions about reintegration by children and child care institutions, and to describe the situation of children prior to being reintegrated. A total of 282 children were surveyed from 13 child care institutions. They came from 32 districts across the country, with the majority (31%) coming from Mukono district, followed by Buikwe. The mean age of children interviewed was 12.4 years, and the majority (55.9%) of the children surveyed were girls. Most (40%) of the children surveyed reported that they had both parents still alive, while 27.2% had at least one parent still alive, and 8.2% reported they were total orphans. With regard to length of stay in institution, a quarter of the children (24.2%) had by the time of the survey lived in the institution for 10 years or more and only 8% were within the recommended period of 3 years that a given child should spend in a residential centre while preparation for reintegration is being arranged. Reasons for admission in care were poverty at home (16.4%), living on the street (12.5%), while 12.8% did not know why they were admitted in care. Although children were generally satisfied with the care in the institutions, approximately 7% reported that they had ever suffered physical abuse at the institution, and 3.6% reported they had experienced sexual abuse. Regarding willingness to go back to their homes, 64.1% of the children were not willing; 58.3% of them being boys. Most of the children not willing to go back home were aged 6-8 years (69.2%). They feared that the CCIs may stop supporting them. They also feared being discriminated against or abused in their respective families, while others did not want to break the strong relationships and pattern of life established at the CCI. However, children willing to be reintegrated back home were motivated by the desire to know and bond with own respective families, a concern that CCI managers and social workers also confirmed. CCI caretakers/mothers

feared that reintegration would result in them losing jobs. In addition, they had a strong attachment to the children, some of whom they had looked after from very early days. These results were used to strengthen the interventions by undertaking sensitization of CCI management and district alternative care committees on the alternative care framework, engaging CCI mothers/caretakers and social workers to allay their job related fears, and improving the processes for preparation of children before reintegration as well as designing a followed-up plan to assess children whether are fitting into their new life and family.

Follow-up study findings

By the time of conducting the follow-up study in August 2020, the project had resettled 108 children from six different care institutions, surpassing its target. We conducted follow-up qualitative interviews with 60 of these children and their families to explore their experience and perception of reintegration and document how they were coping at home. We had roughly equal proportions of boys and girls from Kiboga, Kyotera and Mukono. Overall, we found positive experiences of reintegration, although there were many variations, dilemmas and fears. Almost all the children reported that they felt either bad or not ready when they were told that they were going to be reintegrated back home. Several children were dissatisfied with how their institutions had prepared them for reintegration, with some saying they were told as a group and given short notice, and limited counseling. However, some reported that they were already mentally prepared to go back home due to challenges faced in CCIs, while for others, the fear of COVID-19 made the desire to leave the CCI urgent. We heard some bad stories from children about living conditions at home, with many lacking basic material needs such as bed nets and adequate clothes, while most girls reported they had challenges accessing sanitary pads compared to when they were under institutional care. Some few children were found to be living alone as their caregivers temporarily shifted to live where they run businesses and could not afford to return home daily due to COVID-19 lockdown and/or curfew. However, many found life tolerable or comparable to when they were in CCI's. They had gotten used and fitted into their families' structure and routine. Parents generally felt happy with the

children, but a few described worrying that their children could have returned with unacceptable and perverse behavior such as gay relationships, which they had heard was common in some institutions.

Conclusion and recommendations: We found that majority of children resented reintegration. However, once reintegrated, many found life at home tolerable, although lack of consistent support with basic needs risks driving children back to institutional care, while prolonged lock down, which had affected schooling and family incomes is a threat to reintegration. There is need to explore the impact of integration on families of reintegrated children.

WEDPI 500 Protecting Children from violence, abuse & neglect in the home during and post COVID19: The Remnant Generation's Peer-Peer skilling & sensitisation Project

Annabelle Nakabiri Ssebakiije

The Remnant Generation

Background: From the moment schools were shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a disturbing increase in the number of children being abused and neglected by those considered the primary caregivers. Previously, it was estimated that one in four children will experience child abuse in Uganda, but this number has now risen judging by the number of cases being reported weekly, monthly and quarterly by the Police and the Ministry of National Guidance and Information. A recent report by the Ministry showed that 21,260 cases of child abuse were reported in just five months (from March to August) of the lockdown. However, these are only the cases that have been reported to Police and many go undercover and unreported because of fear or ignorance of the law. Homes which were once deemed to be safe havens have now become the place where children are most vulnerable and at risk of abuse and violence. Child abuse presents in the following forms:

- Sexual abuse in form of rape, defilement, incest, exposure to pornography, molestation, homosexuality and forced child marriage among others.
- Neglect by parents which involves denial of basic needs like food, failure to take responsibility of care and protection, total abandonment...
- Child labour which involves the use of children in money making ventures/ child employment
- Physical abuse where pain is inflicted on the body of the children through beating, mob justice, corporal punishment among others

- Emotional abuse which involves speaking to children in ways that demean them or cause them pain.
- Denial of justice for the children is another form of abuse.

Program description: The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted many plans that we had for our community projects, the School of Purpose skilling project and the Incubation plans for Alumni who were starting businesses. There is a ban on public gatherings exceeding 200 people, strict standard operating procedures imposed by the government through the Ministry of Health are being enforced; including social distancing and compulsory wearing of masks. Schools and places of worship partially are closed.

In our context, this meant that we could not have girls coming for trainings at the centre which has 80 girls from our immediate community. They are mostly teenage mothers, girls rescued from sex trafficking and the streets and receiving support to start a new life, and girls that could not continue with school fees due to challenging family situations. We had enrolled these girls for cohort 2020 for the business training, life skills and vocational skilling program. Many of our Alumni have lost their income streams. It continues to be difficult for several of them to afford a meal a day. Even now that there has been a re-opening of the business sector, they need a financial stimulus to help them reinvest & start over. Some of the girls were the bread winners for their families. The Opportunity: On realising these challenges, we noted that the situation also presented a unique opportunity. This is the first-time children are at home for a very long time. The parents are stressed and struggle to keep their children occupied productively which

presents an opportunity to train life skills and values. The reports of abuse and high numbers of teen pregnancy presented an opportunity for us to talk to both girls and boys who are willing to listen. The loss of sources of income presented an opportunity to train business and vocational skills. The COVID-19 safety procedures presented great business opportunities like making/selling masks and liquid soap. From feedback gathered from our Alumni, The Remnant Generation developed the Peer to Peer Skilling and Sensitisation Project. We are adopting a short form for this project as – PEER. The PEER Project is an initiative through which girls supported by The Remnant Generation are at the forefront of mobilising, organising and facilitating learning for fellow girls and identified groups of boys & parents within local communities. Our goal is to equip and empower girls to catalyse social and economic renewal in their immediate communities during this COVID-19 crisis. Project duration: 3 months (September to November)

Program output: In the two months that the Project has been running in 10 zones in Busega, Rubaga Division;

- 187 young people (145 girls and 42 boys) have been reached through the PEER outreach programs; they have received life skills, basic

knowledge on sexual abuse and on combatting COVID-19. They have also received training in liquid soap making and re-usable pads.

- 20 Local Council Chairpersons from 20 zones have been engaged and sensitised on how to handle survivors of sexual abuse and their perpetrators;
- 15 District Officials engaged and working closely with us to ensure safety and response to children namely; Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), District Education Officers, District Health Officers, Probation Officers from Wakiso, Nsangi, Mpigi, Central Kampala, Kawempe, Makindye Sabagabo, Lyantonde, Makindye, the Resident City Commissioners and Ministry of Gender officers
- 14 parents have participated been sensitised on issues of child abuse; how to prevent, identify and report cases.

Conclusion & Implication: COVID-19 is going to leave a grave wound on Uganda's children. The closure of schools has adversely affected children and all players need to come together to find a solution to this problem. Small isolated activities like ours in the Community need to be scaled up to cover the rest of the Country.

WEDPI 600 “Our Parents Do Not Know”

Homes schooling fatigue among refugee children during COVID-19 induced lockdown

Onen David Ongwech,

Refugee Law Project

With the relentless pursuit for vaccines globally, COVID-19 continues to pose existential threat to humanity as economies slow down, employees adopt teleworking while others cede to redundancy exercises, school shutdown, and both caregivers and children ‘embrace’ home-schooling and digital technologies – all in the interest of ensuring business continuity. If any, COVID-19 has shown that even the least imagined can be done ‘virtually’ including imparting knowledge.

However, while unavoidably work went home, and children left with limited options rather than to *befriend* home-schooling approaches, technologies and methodologies, virtual learning

was unavoidable and hurriedly adopted. But what does it mean to embrace e-learning especially in the context of refugees and host communities in ‘hard-to-reach’ areas of Uganda? This paper contends that refugee children and their caregivers are grappling unprecedented fatigue resulting from the dynamics and demands of home-schooling.

It further explores the psychological and physical fatigue associated with virtual learning, psychological defence mechanisms adopted by refugee children and their caregivers in dealing with home-schooling fatigue, and postulates futuristic perspectives on how state and non-state actors can comprehensively work together with children, refugee and host communities, academics and international community in addressing home-schooling fatigue symptoms.

WEDPI 700 Protecting Children through Child Self-Study Plus Groups during & Post COVID-19

Michael Moses Mogowa

World Education, Inc./Bantwana

Program Description: The Western Uganda Bantwana Program (WUBP), a program of the Bantwana Initiative at World Education, Inc., provides a holistic approach placing children at the center of violence prevention and response by building their agency. We engage key influencers (children, teachers, parents/caregivers, community members, local government) at every level through targeted norms-change approaches that strengthen the ring of protection around children and mobilize communities to shift attitudes and take action around violence against children. The Ugandan presidential directive to close schools due to pandemic was a preventive measure to reduce spread of COVID-19 to learners. The Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) worked to support all children with educational materials (print and mass media) during the lockdown. However, not all children were reached efficiently, so WEI/Bantwana printed the MoES self-study packages along with six child protection and parenting topics and delivered these materials to children of caregivers in existing WEI/Bantwana programs.

Implementation Process: This intervention was initiated at the time when the government started to ease the lockdown. All Ministry of Health Standard Operating Procedures were observed before the sessions started. Children of the caregivers in existing WEI/Bantwana village savings and loan associations (VSLA) and positive parenting groups (PPGs) were selected to join the Self-Study Plus groups. A teacher such as a patron or matron was

selected, trained, and then facilitated lessons for the children using these materials to continue their education and protect them from violence at home or in their communities. These groups met twice a week for academic support and to discuss, reflect on, and report VAC cases in their communities. WEI/Bantwana incorporated both child protection and parenting topics including mapping safe and unsafe spaces, violence against children (VAC) prevention, early marriages, early warning signs, emotions management, responding to crisis and widening circles of support.

Program Output: Eleven Child Self-Study Plus groups were established and WEI/Bantwana has reached 308 pupils so far using the NCDC educational materials and WEI/Bantwana materials. Ten teachers and ten parenting facilitators were trained on how to guide children through the materials. Of the 308 pupils reached, 244 children completed at least 5/6 sessions aimed at reducing opportunities for abuse and 14% of these children reported at least one case through this group. Just over 80 action points around safe and unsafe spaces within the communities were documented.

Evaluation/Lessons Learned: The results indicate a positive impact of these Child Self-Study Plus groups on both educational support and child protection.

Conclusions and Implications: This model will continue to be used to enhance children's education while keeping them safe from violence during and post COVID-19. WEI/Bantwana is in the process of enrolling more children to benefit from this program.

WEDPI 800 Building the Agency of Girls to Protect Themselves

Justine Nuwagaba

World Education Inc./Bantwana

Program Description

The Western Uganda Bantwana Program (WUBP), a program of the Bantwana Initiative at World Education, Inc., provides a holistic approach placing children at the center of violence prevention and response by building their agency. We engage key influencers (children, teachers, parents/caregivers, community members, local government) at every level through targeted norms-change approaches that strengthen the ring of protection around children and mobilize communities to shift attitudes and take action around violence against children.

One of the biggest problems girls in western Uganda face is the lack of sanitary pads. Many girls miss school during their menstruation because they do not have sanitary pads and this has resulted in girls dropping out of school. According to a study report on menstrual management in Uganda by the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV)/IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre (2012) about half of the girls in their study reported missing 1-3 days of primary school per month. Girls' menstruation has also been stigmatized and boys will tease girls regarding them as 'contaminated', 'dirty' and 'impure' during menstrual periods. Due to their absenteeism, girls have experienced sexual abuse and fear of talking about their abuse, which has led to the rising cases of defilement. The Girl Talk platform is aimed at building their assertiveness, awareness and reducing absenteeism from school. WUBP works with girls in Kyenjojo, Kabarole, and Bunyangabu districts through Girl Talk sessions to support their continuation in school by teaching girls how to make reusable sanitary pads. In addition to making reusable sanitary pads, the Girl Talk sessions provide a platform where girls can discuss and reflect on issues around menstruation and sexual abuse. With support from community leaders, head teachers, matron/patrons, and caregivers these Girl Talk sessions have continued during COVID-19 in safe spaces and girls have continued to discuss specific issues affecting them during the lock down.

Implementation Process: Six Girl Talk groups have been set up in different communities comprising 90 girls aged 11- 15 years. The girls meet twice a week to build protective assets, receive mentorship, build their self-confidence and acquire decision-making skills. To date, all six groups have completed nine sessions on menstrual hygiene, detecting early warning signs, early marriages and teen pregnancy, mapping of safe and unsafe spaces, responding to crisis and widening the circle of support (content was developed from the Sinovuyo parenting curriculum and the Child Rights Club packages). Notable protective assets acquired include 39 girls in three Girl Talk groups who are now walking in groups for increased safety.

Program Output

Girls have used this time to improve their skills and increase access to one of their basic needs through making reusable sanitary pads. So far, 184 reusable sanitary pads have been made benefiting a total 71 girls, 13 of whom are vulnerable girls identified from communities. Through the Girl Talk sessions, 34 cases of abuse have been reported, of which 30 have resulted in teen pregnancies. Ten cases were forwarded to the different child protection actors (CDOs, and VCCMCs) for follow-up. Girl Talk groups have provided a platform for girls to share their experiences and build their own social protective assets such as walking in groups to protect themselves from abuse. Through supporting girls with sanitary pads, at least 80% of the girls in the targeted schools in primary seven have been able to go back to school.

Evaluation/Lessons Learned

The provision of better and adequate menstrual materials and facilities for girls is critically important to provide a safe space for them to stay in school and complete their studies. The involvement of community caregivers and teachers, provided a safe environment for girls during COVID-19 and created awareness to other community members to prevent and response to violence against children. Girls should be encouraged to participate in school health clubs. The school health clubs and/or Girl-Education Movement (GEM) clubs should in turn also focus the issues around menstrual hygiene

management. Districts should ensure that all primary schools have established functional school health clubs and girl-education movement (GEM) clubs; each school should have a trained and well-motivated senior woman teacher to support and advise school girls reaching puberty.

Conclusions and Implications:

It is important to note that a majority of female students who experience menstrual periods are in upper primary, and a higher majority of them in Primary seven (Candidate class). If each girl misses a minimum of 8 days of school in a term, the implication is that she will miss a significant amount of her schooling and she will fall behind in her assignments. Evidence shows that girls who miss school due to their periods sometimes drop out of school all together. Dropping out of school increases risk to early marriage, premature pregnancy and reduces the economic and job opportunities for girls' futures.

WEDPI 0130 Child wellbeing: Using Parenting without Violence Common Approach to address VAC at Home during COVID – 19

Barbara Lukyamuzi

Save the children

Programme Description

The global COVID-19 outbreak is already having serious impact on Uganda's health, education and social systems – and ultimately on the fulfilment of children's rights. Unfortunately, COVID-19 is magnifying these risks, placing children and their caregivers under more pressure. With schools closed in Uganda, caregivers have often had to simultaneously take on the role of both breadwinner and self-made teacher. Save the Children's (SCI) new report, *The Hidden Impact of COVID-19 on Child Protection and Wellbeing* highlights violence in homes, with nearly one-third (32%) of households having a child and/or caregiver report that there had been violence occurring in the home, with a child or adult being hit or verbally abused. The loss of family income is also a major stressor with nearly 1 in 5 children reporting violence in the home when there had been a loss of household income owing to COVID-19, compared to 1 in 20 when no loss of income was reported.

Implementation process

Parenting without Violence (PwV) Common Approach is a universal preventative programme that is built on evidence based INSPIRE strategies for parents and caregivers support. This intervention is to help build strong relationships between children and their parents/caregivers to enable them to resolve problems together. What makes this parenting programme unique from the existing positive parenting models is that it slowly helps to shift caregiver's perceptions of their

children – from looking at trying to get the child to obey and not be heard to viewing their children as rights holders with their own experiences and perspectives. This programme gives parents and caregivers the skills to solve problems together with their children with the aim of preventing physical and humiliating punishment at home. To enact real and lasting change, the PwV common approach will bring together children, fathers, mothers, caregivers, and communities to holistically transform power dynamics, and negative socio cultural and gender norms and practices that triggers violence in the community. The method of delivery depends on the context in the community in which Save the Children is working. In determining the mode of delivery, child protection teams consider the Ministry of Health guidance and how most people in their chosen community receive their information (this could be television, community radios, community drives, posters, people with megaphones or even face-to-face session gatherings etc.). The CP team then selects the most cost-effective mode with the largest reach, to include the most marginalised children and families. In addition, they consider which means of information community members find the most trustworthy. The child protection team will also determine how to receive feedback from the sessions. This could be through WhatsApp caregiver groups, phone calls or calls or walk-ins of parents/ caregivers and children.

Lessons learned

Using Parenting without Violence common approach as a universal preventative programme, enables parents and caregivers to critically keep in check their parenting skills by addressing the root

causes of discriminatory gender norms and power imbalances, empowering children, ensuring wider community level change, and strengthening equitable and gender-sensitive child protection system.

Implications for the field

The combination of physical stakeholders' engagements with parents/caregivers, dissemination of information through IEC materials and mass media forms effective and efficient behaviour change communication strategies which can be tested at large scale. Therefore, SCI intends to scale up the PwV Common Approach to wider Ugandan communities to include coalition groups, partners and government structures through sharing of the best parenting interventions that empower parents, caregivers and children with skills and tools to build stronger relationships together.

Key words

The Parenting without Violence Common Approach is a universal preventative program that aims to eliminate physical and humiliating punishments of children in homes and to improve positive parenting capacities of fathers, mothers, and caregivers of girls and boys of all ages. Positive Parenting is the parental behaviour based on the best interests of the child which involves setting of boundaries to enable the full development of a child, respecting children's rights and provision of a non-violent environment, where parents do not use corporal or psychologically demeaning punishment to resolve conflict or teach discipline and respect. Universal preventative programme This is a collective and individual responsibility of fathers, mothers, expectant parents, caregivers, children and other key stakeholders to prevent violence against children in the home, especially physical and humiliating punishment.

Thursday 26 November

THUPI 900 CHILD PROTECTION APPROACHES DURING AND POST COVID-19 A PRACTITIONER'S PERSPECTIVE

Nshakira Keren

Child's I Foundation

Background

As a result of Covid -19 and the containment measures put in place to prevent the spread it has been indicated that there is an increase of domestic violence and violence against children. Emerging evidence on the impact of essential *lockdown* measures and the economic fallout of the pandemic paints a frightening picture. The crisis has led to an alarming rise in violence in the home, with women and children bearing the brunt of the frustration and anger. At the same time, some COVID-19 prevention measures have abruptly cut children off from positive and supportive relationships they rely on when in distress, including at school, in the extended family and in the community. Children's rights to safety and protection as outlined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Minimum Standards for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action are threatened. Amidst all the circumstances during and post Covid -19, here are some of the approaches to protect and safe guard children from all forms of abuse, exploitation and violation.

All children (under 18 years of age) can be vulnerable to violence, abuse and neglect. Such violations can take place in a home environment under the care of parents and other family members.

Important to note is that children, particularly girls are at high risk of sexual violence as well as at risk of similar abuse outside of the home. Home should

be a child's first line of defence and protection, and Stressors related to COVID-19 are threatening that defence. Households are struggling to cope with new restrictions on travel and work, concerns over health, food security, financial instability at personal and global levels as well as conflicting information on a range of issues. The outstanding to note are the following challenges;

Poverty: Families living in extreme poverty hit harder by the crisis as prices of basic food items and supplies skyrocketed especially during the COVID-19 lockdown. These directly deprived children of their rights to protection and access to basic needs.

Unemployment

Loss of livelihoods for those that were supporting themselves for a living and also those that were supporting their families. Children were unable to enjoy the same lifestyle as before when the primary carers still had a job which posted psychological trauma, uncertainties and subjected children to various forms of abuse, exploitation, and vulnerabilities.

Psychological trauma

Children have been exposed to various forms of abuse, exploitation and violations during COVID-19 lockdown. This has resulted into distress and psychological stress presented by the new way of life both at home and in the community.

Implementation process

Strengthening child protection structures at community levels.

It is important to work closely and support various community level child protection actors such as CVs, CDNs, LCs, VHTs and Para social workers to identify, report and be able to respond to issues of child protection. These can be achieved through capacity building and providing them with appropriate means of mobility to be able to access children and families e.g. equipping them with bicycles.

Strengthening social safety nets: Extending direct services to children and families in form of food, rent, cash transfers, education, rent, IGAs, medical support and health supplies is very critical for the protection, response and general wellbeing of the children during and post COVID-19.

Strengthening networking and referral mechanisms among child protection actors. Close collaboration and strong networking amongst different child

protection stakeholders including NGOs, governments structures, community level actors etc. A strong networking and referral mechanism provides safe avenues where child protection issues are holistically resolved at all levels through collective efforts from various actors offering specific interventions to ensure full support to children and families e.g. legal, education, health, nutrition and economic support.

Conclusion

It is therefore, it is pertinent for all stakeholders including government, private and civil society actors in the child protection system to galvanise efforts and harmonise the various interventions or approaches to ensure children are protected and are safe in their families and communities in which they live while accessing all the basic needs of life.

THUPI 0100 Harnessing information communication technology to promote positive coping mechanism among children, families and communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. A reflection of what has worked in a national youth-led advocacy intervention coordinated by NASWU with support from CRS/4Children.

Ssekate John Mary

National Association of Social Workers of Uganda

Project description

Covid-19 has come with unusual stressors brought about by isolation, fear, death, closure of schools, anger, rejection and powerlessness, loss of income leading to aggressive behavior and mental breakdown which has adversely affected mental wellbeing and potential of children, families and communities yet the conventional interventions and advocacy approaches of direct interactions with communities has largely remained unworkable in what many practitioners define as a new normal.

National Association of Social Workers of Uganda-NASWU with support from Coordinating Comprehensive Care for Children (4Children) implemented a one month national youth led advocacy intervention using information communication technology to promote positive coping mechanisms, mental health and resilience of children, families and communities amid

new and changing restrictions around social interactions and gatherings as viable strategy to continue supporting children and families remotely between July 17, 2020- August 21, 2020. The project drivers were social work students and out of school youth using social media channels to provide important outlets and positively influence their networks of friends and family to promote resilience and unite families amid the evolving situation. Virtual guidance and support was provided by NASWU for the posting and sharing of accurate and positive information to assist families and communities cope with effects of COVID-19.

The project empowered 100 social work students and recent graduates from 20 social work teaching institutions representing five regions of Uganda to promote mental health and resilience amid the COVID-19 pandemic through the innovative use of social media. And through this contribution, to demonstrate the role of professional social workers in situations of adversity. This youth led advocacy was founded on a social work principle of self-determination that views a community as a catalyst

of change, agent of change, target of change and an indispensable resource that the community itself consumes. The choice for university students and out of school youth was informed about foundational knowledge and skills to use strengths-based approaches to strengthen coping mechanisms, are online with capability to use social media to engage with others, they have large networks and respected

Implementation process:

NASWU Identified 100 active social work students and recent graduates from 20 social work member teaching institution to take part in the activity and created a WhatsApp group for easy communication with the youngsters.

All social work students and youth were oriented to understand well the concept of advocacy using online platforms, psychosocial support and were reminded of the ethical values and principles of social work including ethical use of technology and social media.

NASWU Worked with younger social workers to develop and share posts, every week for four weeks, on the selected social media sites, linked to chosen and approved themes by 4Children and NASWU.

NASWU Conducted weekly reflective discussions with the social work students/recent graduates to analyze and summarize the response to the posts in regard to promoting positive coping mechanisms, mental health and resilience of children, families and communities. Subsequently, NASWU updated 4Children and the social work fraternity through weekly updates.

NASWU came up with a final report of the entire project detailing the success stories of children, families and communities supported along positive coping mechanisms, mental health of children and families.

Week	Theme	Facebook		WhatsApp		Instagram		Twitter	
		Likes	shares	likes	shares	likes	shares	Likes	shares
Week 1 27-31 st July	Resilience amid covid-19	15,046	224	143	40	236	21	217	15
Week 2 3-9 th August	Protection of children against violence amid Covid-19 pandemic	20,211	325	174	48	292	22	280	25
Week 3 10-15 th August	Safety measures in preventing the spread of covid-19	20,370	351	185	26	365	19	302	21
Week 4 17-21 st August	Increasing community vigilance on measures to curb COVID-19	10,887	98	48	6	168	4	272	14
Total output.		66,514	998	550	120	1,061	66	1,071	75

Project output:

The project measure of output in this advocacy was highly based on the number of online discussions along major social media platforms, number of online shares, promotion of positive coping mechanism and creation of enabling environment for resilience of children, families and communities as summarized in the table here under:

Evaluation/lessons learnt

We learnt that younger professionals have greater potential when supported to spark positive online

exchanges that bring attention to positive coping methods within our families and communities.

We observed that Facebook and Instagram are the most common usable social media platforms by younger people in Uganda and can be explored as a major strategy to protect children and communities from violence even in remote settings. The creativity of younger stars and the fun of connecting with other fellow youth in different parts of the country and the desire of younger people to actively participate and create a difference in their communities was a clear demonstration of the indispensable role of professional social workers in situations of adversity and a force to reckon with in creating a positive change in our communities. We learnt that community/youth led interventions in the fight against COVID-19 and its effects are more reliable and sustainable as many of these younger stars continue to post such messages to foster resilience, positive coping mechanisms and positive online exchanges within their networks.

We learnt that organizations need to mainstream younger people in their programming to create significant and sustainable protection of children and families from stressors of COVID-19 including violence.

Conclusion/ Implication:

This project presentation will work as an eye opener and foundation for a paradigm shift from conventional forms of advocacy and interventions to technology led advocacy interventions putting youth at the center. We also believe that it will create new lessons/best practices to many social work agencies to better their interventions and create new partnership with the National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) to ensure continued engagement of in and out of school. Youth are an indispensable force of promoting positive coping mechanism for children, families and communities in the face of a global health catastrophe and challenge of our time.

THUPI 0110 A Mechanism for Addressing Child Protection Issues in Schools and Communities

Aliyu Wamboga

World Education, Inc./Bantwana

Program Description

The Western Uganda Bantwana Program (WUBP), a program of the Bantwana Initiative at World Education, Inc., provides a holistic approach placing children at the center of violence prevention and response by building their agency. We engage key influencers (children, teachers, parents/caregivers, community members, local government) at every level through targeted norms-change approaches that strengthen the ring of protection around children and mobilize communities to shift attitudes and take action around violence against children. Despite of the considerable efforts made by the Government of Uganda under the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop and disseminate a policy document in 2015 that spelled out the roles of stakeholders in reporting, tracking, referring and responding (RTRR) to violence against children in schools, most of the violence against children (VAC) cases in and around schools still go unreported and are not effectively addressed

even with the existence of the school disciplinary committees and the community child protection structures. WEI/Bantwana introduced the Village Child Case Management Committee (VCCMC) model in 20 schools as an exemplary model for mobilizing schools and communities to prevent and respond to VAC. Caregivers and community members are able to reach out to the VCCMCs to report cases and also seek information about the available services in the communities.

Implementation Process

A VCCMC is a village-based group that meets regularly to identify and resolve non-statutory cases of VAC in both the school and community. Statutory cases beyond their capacity are always referred to other service providers as mandated e.g. Community Development Officer (CDO), police etc. An ideal VCCMC consists of 7 members i.e. Para-Social Workers (PSWs)/Case Care Workers (CCWs), religious leaders, teachers, local council LC1 representative, village health team (VHT) worker, school parent-teacher association (PTA)/ school management committee (SMC) member and an opinion leader. In addition, each of these

people should be experienced in handling cases of violence against children. The formation of the VCCMC is supported by the CDO and once the committee has been formed, each member is assigned a role to play on the committee (e.g. chairperson, secretary, mobiliser, time keeper, etc.). Each VCCMC committee meets at least once a month on specific days agreed upon by the group. However, members are encouraged to meet more regularly, and in emergencies or cases requiring an immediate response, the committees can meet any time. During the lock down, the VCCMC members have acted as community watchdogs in the absence of proper systems of reporting. Nine active VCCMCs continued to meet safely with appropriate precautions given the COVID-19 pandemic.

Program Output

Twenty VCCMCs with 143 (68 male & 75 female) members were established and trained to enhance their skills and competencies to focus efforts on identifying, documenting, reporting, referring and follow-up of cases. These VCCMCs have had a positive impact on community-led initiatives, such as when 468 cases were registered in a period of one year, resulting in collective community reflections and VCCMC outreach to identify more hot spot areas for VAC.

The VCCMC committees' effort during lock down resulted in the identification and monitoring of 93 children who were at risk of sexual, emotional, and/or physical abuse. 35 of these children received home visits and given counseling, 17 children received at least four rounds of psychosocial support, 20 children received basic needs like food and soap, and 20 children received reading materials.

131 caregivers were approached by VCCMCs in hot spot areas where abuse was occurring

(Bwabya, Kiboota, Bucuni, Katoosa, Mpumbu and Haibale) to ensure children are protected from abuse. The outreaches focused primarily on child neglect, hotspot areas for abuse, child labor, drug and alcohol use and defilement. VCCMCs were able engage communities to take action around specific hotspots leading to early warning interventions that address risk factors.

Evaluation/Lessons Learned

The introduction of VCCMCs in communities has provided an opportunity for caregivers to reach out to committee members to report cases of neglect, sexual, physical and emotional abuse and also seek information about the available services in communities. Community watchdog structures including VCCMCs and Case Conferences can be leveraged for VAC prevention and response.

VCCMCs are seen as a dynamic and robust safety net to prevent and respond to VAC. For example, in some communities like Nsinde in Kyarusozi sub-county Kyenjojo District, the Chairperson of the VCCMC was named village CDO during the COVID-19 pandemic period because the regular CDO was not always present to attend to child protection issues.

VCCMCs are becoming a prominent way to hold schools and community members more accountable and to teach them to become less tolerant to VAC. For example, the VCCMCs of Kiboota and Kiryatama in Buheesi Town Council in Bunyangabu were able to put pressure on their CDOs and Town Clerk to conduct community outreaches and dialogue on VAC issues.

Conclusions and Implications

VCCMCs have played a vital role in preventing and responding to VAC and thus being part of the solution to protecting children from violence, abuse and neglect in the homes especially during and post COVID-19.

THUPI 0120. Protecting children from Violence, Abuse & Neglect in the Home during & Post-COVID-19 Pandemic

Peninah Kia

TPO

Programme description

Violence against Children is prevalent in Uganda with far-reaching effects for children across different settings in the country. Children are routinely exposed to various forms of physical, emotional and sexual violence. The plight of the children has further been worsened in the last 6 months during the COVID-19 lock-down with over 2,000 cases reported on sexual violence alone in Uganda (Report by WHO). Evidence suggests that, children have mainly suffered from bullying, domestic violence and violent punishment, sexual violence especially for the girl-child emotional and psychological violence. This has increasingly created more unsafe environments for children with places such as homes and schools that traditionally provide safety turning into violence centers and it has become awful during this period of COVID-19.

Furthermore, TPO Uganda is implementing a project that has tested the efficacy of holistic violence prevention program design which entails scaling up to four INSPIRE strategies that we have piloted in Lira namely; norms and values, parental and caregivers support, response and support services, income and economic strengthening interventions at the community level. The project is delivering holistic community-driven manners, which is building on existing community capacities and aligning them to INSPIRE strategies. This has tapped into enthusiasm and call for action among community actors and their participation in community-level prevention work.

Implementation process

To strengthen coordination and engagement of existing child protection structures at the sub-county level, TPO Uganda constituted VAC community reference group (CRG) in three sub-counties in Lira district which include the Sub-county Orphans and Vulnerable Children Coordination meeting (SOVCC) and additional informal structures like mothers union, fathers union, parenting facilitators, religious leaders, clan

leaders, senior men and women teachers among others. These structures have been in a position to support in prevention and response of VAC.

Since March, there have been numerous cases of VAC being reported from the community through community support structures that were constituted by TPO Uganda, with the recent baseline TPO Uganda conducted in June 2020, we realized that children are being subjected to heavy work (Child labor), the rise in intimate partner violence, maltreatment, a high rate of child neglect most especially by men, no proper shelter for children to sleep in, children defiled by their guardians, forced to get married since there is no food in the house, boys being bullied by their peers, physical torture by burning of fingers, child starvation since there is no household food and as such, children have gone into petty business to raise money for food. There is also fear that most of them may not return to school. Some children are now exposed to watching of pornographic movies from community casinos while others are getting into conflict with the law through armed robbery and imaging centers/places that have been identified by the community as 'hot spot' that prevents violence against children.

From the different sub-county groups, the duty bearers were informed of the forms of maltreatment in homes that are violations against children in the following areas; rise in intimate partner violence child labor, neglect, desertion, torture, exploitation, authoritative ways of child-rearing, involving children into hard work e.g. grazing animals for long hours, using abusive language in disciplining children, exposing children to pornographic materials and videos (e.g. parents watching videos with their children), sharing rooms with children, parents exposing children into alcohol and drug use, failing to monitor children and setting limits at homes

Lessons learnt

The COVID-19 ramifications have called for a change in project implementation modality. The project embraced door to door sensitization campaigns using community-based parenting facilitators to reach out to families while observing

COVID-19 prevention guidelines. Additionally, we liaised with health facilities during antenatal visit days to sensitize expectant parents who come to the health center on VAC prevention. There has also been a deliberate effort to mainstream COVID-19 prevention guidelines in project activities for example capacity building for duty bearers in the prevention of violence against children. Here, we have been involving health workers to sensitize our beneficiaries on COVID-19 prevention practices. TPO Uganda has immensely involved the traditional leaders (cultural leaders) and other duty bearers in creating an empowering and protective environment of children that protects their needs and rights and impacts change in their behavior and attitude through working closely with clan leaders at the grass-root level since they are part of the SOVCC teams. A case story of how the traditional leaders (clan leaders; Rwot and Janjago) saved the family of Janet. As lessons

learned, several victims feared being victimized by the perpetrators. Cases were reported of long-standing tension between the families of the victims and that of the perpetrators, especially where close relatives are involved. Generally, the fear of disclosure seems to be still common even where the protection of the victim is assured.

Conclusion

The project interventions in close sub-counties, villages, and parishes while gains have been registered in controlled environments where the interventions are being implemented cases are still being registered in nearby communities that have affected the success of the project. Communities are mutually connected and often have crosscutting socio-cultural norms that facilitate negative undertones to undermine success in intervention areas through promoting VAC.

THUPI 131. Strengthening communities and families beyond the crisis - Learnings from a community led child protection response to COVID-19 and emerging child protection threats beyond the pandemic.

Aloysius Okiror,

Child's i Foundation

Background

Eighty years of global research demonstrates the detrimental impact of institutional care on children's physical, cognitive and socioemotional development. (*Bowlby 1940, Browne 2009, Science 2007, Lancet 2020*). Current use of institutions contradicts Ugandan concepts of kinship care, value of family and community. However, the root causes of institutional care are not limited to children who lack appropriate adult caregivers; It is a complex set of issues affecting families, largely related to poverty, lack of primary services e.g. health, education, social services (*Walakira, D-Nyanzi, & Bukenya, 2015;*) and discrimination. The evidence base signals the urgency of reintegrating children from institutional care back to family-based care and ensuring that Civil Society works together with local governments and communities to strengthen systems that prevent providing the much-needed social services that prevent the separation of children in the first instance. As such, Child's i Foundation was established in October 2008, to

work with the government to strengthen families through implementing evidence based, community led child protection systems that enable the safe transition of children from residential care to their families, repurpose institutional / residential care facilities into community hubs, and to develop a social workforce network of professionals and paraprofessionals.

Covid-19 pandemic is having and will continue to have a dramatic impact on the most vulnerable children and families, compounding structural weaknesses in child protection and social protection systems. The economic shocks to children and families globally will be felt for years to come. Preliminary reports show that Uganda is no exception. (*Development Initiatives (August 2020) Socioeconomic impact of Covid-19 in Uganda; UNDP Uganda (April 2020) Socio-Economic impact of COVID-19 UN Uganda*) The situation for already vulnerable families also became much worse due to the pandemic. With an unprecedented increase on unemployment seen globally, it has been projected that millions of Ugandans will be further pushed into poverty (*Xinhua (20 March 2020) Uganda braces for economic impact of COVID-19*)

We have successfully demonstrated deinstitutionalisation of children at district level where the Probation and Social Welfare Officers take ownership of child protection, with a pool of community networks and volunteers trained on how to support families to stay together e.g. Strong Beginnings (SB) supported by Terre des Hommes Netherlands (2014-2015), Deinstitutionalization of Vulnerable Children in Uganda (DOVCU) funded by USAID (2014 –2017); Keeping Children in Healthy and Protective Families (KCHPF) funded by USAID (2017-2019), and Families Not Orphanages (FNO) funded by UBS Optimus Foundation (2017-2019).

Methods

The new approaches used were the ACTIVE Family support (with the network of Community volunteers and established CDN's) where vulnerable families were assessed and support in terms of food, medicine, rent among others provided based on that model, the use of bicycles during lock down which were procured and distributed to the community volunteers to ease movement during the lock down, text messaging was working properly as we continued to be in touch with the community volunteers, we were piloting it and it worked very well. But before the Pandemic and subsequent lockdown, we had been working with vulnerable families in local communities for many years and had well-established networks in place. We have helped to put together plans to protect families most at risk, from ensuring that food packages are delivered where they are most needed, to using community networks to ensure the welfare of children at risk as providing long term interventions to survivors of abuse, and refugee families with limited resources to call on. Our priority has been to respond to the crisis, but to ensure that we have a sustainable long term plan in place to support families to rebuild

better. We have maintained a front-line presence in implementing a strengthened child protection system (both formal and informal).

Results

In 2018 Child's i Foundation moved 132 children from residential/ institutional care to families, over 9,000 children received gatekeeping support through established Community Development Networks and 6,068 Children received support through our ACTIVE Family Support intervention to prevent family breakdown. In 2019, an additional 44 Children were moved out of residential/ institutional care to families.

Also 19,582 children received gatekeeping support through established Community Development Networks and 4,476, received support through our ACTIVE Family Support intervention to prevent family breakdown. To date October 28 2020, 204 Children have been moved out of institutional care to families this year and 40,820 Children have received gatekeeping support through 22 established Community Development Networks and 1,914 children received support through our ACTIVE Family Support intervention to prevent family breakdown. 1,572 Children in 461 families have been supported since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020.

Conclusion

While the Covid-19 crisis presents immense challenges, it also offers tremendous opportunities to strengthen the health and social wellbeing of children who have been returned to their families by ensuring they are not re-institutionalised. During this pandemic, the monitoring capacity of community health and social workers has been improved to support children in families and facilitate their reintegration process through health, psychosocial and other referral pathways.

THUPI 132. Children as Active Participants in Violence Prevention During COVID-19: Lessons from Using the Child Friendly Accountability Approach

Dorah Musiimire

ChildFund International

Introduction

ChildFund International, Uganda Country Office, has been operating in majorly three regions in Uganda, Central, Eastern and Northern Uganda for over 30 years in over 30 Districts. As a child focused organization one of the focus areas is deepening child protection work through strengthening the children's agency. In the recent past, since 2017, ChildFund has implemented Child Friendly Accountability, an approach that seeks to empower children to become active agents of change to reduce violence against children and ensure that the child protection system is functioning. In spite of the emergency of COVID-19 pandemic, ChildFund has continued to find ways to ensure children's participation is sustained.

Program Description

Child Friendly Accountability is a methodology developed by ChildFund Alliance in line with INSPIRE strategies and SDG.16.2. The methodology is currently being implemented in nine countries including Uganda, India, Mexico, Paraguay, El Salvador, Burkina, South Korea, Tanzania, Nepal and scaling up in more locations.

Approach and Target Group

The Child-friendly Accountability Methodology focuses on monitoring the performance and accountability in child protection systems. It does not monitor individual incidents of violence. The methodology engages children between the ages of 13 and 17. It is designed to work with children who are in school and children who are not in school, such as those who are working, in vocational training or living on the street.

The approach is built on 3 Pillars

Pillar 1: Assessment. Young people are educated on child rights, violence prevention and child protection. They work with facilitators to identify child protection laws and policies and translate them into child-friendly versions. They share this information with peers, parents, teachers and

other members of the community.

Pillar 2: Analysis. Children then map and analyze the performance of the protection system, starting at the local level. They identify and interview/dialogue with child protection actors. They analyze whether the laws and policies, and the child protection actors, are meeting their protection objectives and mandates. They identify gaps and bottlenecks. They then share this information with their community

Pillar 3: Action. They identify concrete ways to improve the child protection systems in collaboration with duty bearers. They develop an action plan to mobilize peer and community support. For example, they might carry out a campaign, put on a play, or paint a mural.

The Methodology, Toolbox and Field Manual are the key resource materials to guide how the approach should be implemented.

Implementation process

ChildFund Alliance trained the Country Office Trainer of trainers. Country Office Team trained Country level staff to form a team of resourceful staff to support roll out. 2 Implementing partners in Kiboga District, central Uganda and Mbale District in Eastern Uganda began initial roll out. In 2018 Scaled up in 2 more IPs and one child protection project all in Northern Uganda, bringing the total to 5 sites.

Implementing Partner staff were trained in the methodology, Government officers, teachers and Community based structures were trained to understand their role in CFACC. Primary School going children were trained as child advocates to monitor the CP system. The advocates work through child rights clubs and communities to document children's experiences of the CP system

Children hold dialogues with adults and provide feedback. Utilizing several entry points such as: Primary schools; through Child Rights Clubs; child advocates engage: School Management structures e.g. Parents Teachers Associations, School management committees, Peer to peer outreach

in school and communities, District Leadership, National level Policy makers (Parliament). Children also participate in global platforms.

Preliminary activities such as mapping of Community based Child protection systems was done to identify and update the child protection referral pathways. Each implementation site did a child safeguarding risk analysis and developed a mitigation plan. Child friendly versions of laws were developed in consultation with children to help them understand laws and hence identify gaps in there.

Implementation During COVID-19 Period

- Activities were modified to make sure they follow COVID-19 SOPs but still allow children to participate and raise their voices. Mass media, broadcast media, online and social media were and are still the main platforms used during COVID-19 period.
- Children in Kitgum District, from Lagoro and Kitgum Matidi sub-counties participated in making pre-recorded radio talk shows which were aired on Radio stations
- Children in eastern, central and Northern Uganda participated in drawing their experiences of COVID-19 and these murals and artwork were shared with duty bearers to create awareness of what children's experiences are.
- Children participated in an online via Zoom live talk show on NTV where they asked senior Government Officials questions related to COVID-19. This was jointly done with Joining Forces, a coalition of 6 INGOs to commemorate Day of the African Child 2020
- One child delegate participated in an online dialogue with High level Global leaders at the UN together with children from 4 other countries to raise concerns of what children want during COVID-19 and the aftermath
- 40 children participated in an online survey to inform a global policy brief developed by ChildFund Alliance and Joining Forces to raise policy issues regarding child well-being during COVID-19.
- On November 12th 2020 10 Children participated in a face to face dialogue with members of parliament and District Leaders in Kitgum to raise issues of child protection during COVID-19 lockdown.
-

Key Issues from Engagements During COVID-19

- Children feel safer at school than at home and would like schools to re-open
- Many children have been married off
- Many children are still not able to access reading materials
- Child advocates still reach out to their fellow peers and form support groups

Program Output

Trained about 35 staff both ChildFund and Implementing Partners

Total sites so far: 9 (7 Implementing Partners and 2 Projects)

Locations: 4 in Northern Uganda, 2 in Eastern, 3 Central (including Capital City)

Reached over 30 schools, 30 child rights clubs, 900 members

Reached over 9,000 school going children directly
Reached over 10,000 children indirectly

Worked with over 250 local leaders and 100 Members of Parliament and Policy makers at national level

Children held over 150 direct engagements with duty bearers

IEC materials disseminated

More children empowered with life skills

Monitoring and Tracking: Mapping/assessment done, Quarterly Reflection meetings, Regular on-going field visits, quarterly and annual reports

Lesson learned

Empowerment and meaningful participation of children through direct dialogues with stakeholders and duty bearers

Child-led Advocacy at school, district, national and International level

Appreciation of the role of children in social development

Children raising key issues that have caught the attention of duty bearers

Conclusion and implication

Children's participation should underpin program development and execution at all levels. Children are empowered and this is a lifelong outcome and impact. Government should implement the Child participation strategy and deliberately invest in child participation at central but also at lower levels.

Annex 1: Event Schedule



DAY ONE Wednesday November 25, 2020

Time	Topic/ Activity	Presenter	Session Chairperson
8:30 Am	Welcome remarks and Conference aims	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	Dr. Richard Wamimbi
9:00 – 10:00	Official opening of the learning Event	Chief Guest	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
10:00 – 10:30	Key note address Violence Against Children during and post Covid-19: Implications for child wellbeing	Stella Ayo - Odongo Coordinator, Africa Partnership to End Violence against children	Mr. Ngabirano Fred, MGLSD
10:30 – 10:40	Q&A		
10:40 – 11:00	Break		
11: 00 – 11:30	Plenary presentation Strengthening systems for Child wellbeing during & post COVID-19 Context in Uganda.”	Birgithe Lund – Henriksen Chief, Child protection, UNICEF, Uganda Country Office	Mr. Mondo Kyateka, MGLSD
11:30 – 11:50	Q&A		
11:50 – 12: 20	Plenary presentation Implications of Covid-19 on children's education and learning in Uganda	Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo Executive Director, Uwezo Uganda	Mr. Tollea Franco, MGLSD
12:20- 12:45	Q&A		
12: 45 – 2:00 PM	Lunch		
2:00 – 4:00	Presentations Sessions running concurrently (Choose maximum 3 sessions one from each time slot)	Authors based on Abstracts	Moderator per session
4:00 – 4:30	Plenary and Closing		

DAY ONE

Wednesday November 25, 2020

Time	Session	Session	Session
2:00- 2:35	WEDPA 100 Strengthening Child Protection systems in the Context of COVID-19 in Uganda: Data-driven virtual technical assistance to the government Social Service Workforce to strengthen protection response. Presenter: Barbra Aber Catholic Relief Services Moderator: Aloysious Okiror, Childs I Foundation	WEDPA 200 Parenting Programming in Uganda: a mapping of the actors, motivations, coverage and evidence of effectiveness Presenter: Firminus Mugumya Makerere University Moderator: Helen Namulwana, World Vision Uganda	WEDPI 500 Protecting Children from violence, abuse & neglect in the home during and post COVID19: The Remnant Generation's Peer-Peer skilling & sensitisation Project Presenter: Annabelle Nakabiri Ssebakiije The Remnant Generation Moderator: Innocent Byaruhanga, MGLSD
2: 35- 2:40	Choose session and move to your Breakaway room		
2:40- 3:15	WEDPA 300 The Effect of COVID-19 on Prevention and Response services to VAC in Uganda Presenter: Clare Bangirana Africhild Centre Moderator: Aidah Agwang, Childs I Foundation	WEDPI 400 Reintegration of children in residential care: readiness, motivations and experiences of children and care institutions participating in the ACCoSS project in Uganda Presenter : Godfrey Siu Makerere University Child Health and Development Centre Moderator: Florence Ayo, catholic Relief Services	WEDPI 600 Our Parents Do Not Know” Homes schooling fatigue among refugee children during COVID-19 induced lockdown Presenter: Onen David Ongwech, Refugee Law Project Moderator: Byamukama Michael, REPSSI
3:15-3:20	Choose session and Move to your Breakaway room		
3:20- 4:00	WEDPI 700 Protecting Children through Child Self-Study Plus Groups during & Post COVID-19 Presenter: Michael Moses Mogowa World Education, Inc./Bantwana Moderator: Dorah Musimire. Child Fund Uganda	WEDPI 800 Building the Agency of Girls to Protect Themselves Presenter: Justine Nuwagaba World Education Inc./Bantwana Moderator: Damon Wamara, Uganda Child Rights NGO network	WEDPI 0130 Child wellbeing: Using Parenting without Violence Common Approach to address VAC at Home during COVID – 19 Presenter: Barbara Lukyamuizi Save the children Moderator: Reagan Rwambabari, TPO Uganda

DAY TWO

Thursday November 26, 2020

Time	Topic/ Activity	Presenter	Session Chairperson
8:30AM	Welcome Remarks	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	Dr. Richard Wamimbi
9:00 : 9:30	Multi-sectoral response and coordination to child wellbeing during and post COVID -19	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	Mr. Mondo Kyateka, MGLSD
9:30 – 9:50	Q&A		
9:50 – 10:20	Plenary presentation Psycho social wellbeing of Children during and post COVID-19 context in Uganda	Patrick Onyango Mangen CEO Regional Psycho Social Support Initiative (REPSSI	Mr. Innocent Byaruhanga, MGLSD
10: 20- 10:40	Q&A		
10:40 -11:00	Break		
11: 00 : 11:30	Plenary presentation Coordinated funding for children services during and post COVID-19: Towards Child wellbeing in Uganda'	Rosette Sayson Meya, Human Rights, Safeguards, Gender and Social Inclusion Advisor, CIG UKAID	Ms. Ayo Florence, Catholic Relief services
11:30 – 11:50	Q&A		
11:50 – 12:20	Plenary presentation The essential role of the Social Service Workforce in Child wellbeing during and beyond COVID-19 in Uganda'	Dr. Janestic Twikirize Senior Lecturer, Department of Social work and Social Administration, Makerere University	Ms. Irene Oluka, UNICEF
12:20- 12:40	Q&A		
12:40 – 2:00 pm	Lunch		
2:00 Pm – 3:10	Sessions running concurrently (Choose maximum 3 sessions one from each time slot)		
3:20- 4:00pm	Closing ceremony	MGLSD	MGLSD

DAY TWO

Thursday November 26, 2020

Presentations will be running concurrently from 2:00 – 3:10pm in breakaway rooms.

Please choose one your sessions

Time	Session	Session	Session
2:00- 2:35	<p>THUPI 900 Child protection approaches during and post COVID-19: A practitioner's perspective</p> <p>Presenter Nshakira Keren Child's I Foundation</p> <p>Moderator: Michael Byamukama, REPSSI</p>	<p>THUPI 0100 Harnessing information communication technology to promote positive coping mechanism among children, families and communities amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. A reflection of what has worked in a national youth-led advocacy intervention coordinated by NASWU with support from CRS/4Children</p> <p>Presenter : Ssekate John Mary National Association of Social Workers of Uganda</p> <p>Moderator: Damon Wamara, Uganda Child Rights NGO Network</p>	<p>THUPI 0110 A Mechanism for Addressing Child Protection Issues in Schools and Communities</p> <p>Presenter: Aliyu Wamboga World Education, Inc./Bantwana</p> <p>Moderator: Helen Namulwana, World Vision Uganda</p>
2: 35- 2.40	Choose session and Move to your breakaway room		
2:40- 3:10	<p>THUPI 0120. THUPI 0120. Protecting children from Violence, Abuse & Neglect in the Home during & Post-COVID-19 Pandemic</p> <p>Presenter: Peninah Kia TPO</p> <p>Moderator: Claire Bangirana, Africhild Centre</p>	<p>THUPI 0131. Strengthening communities and families beyond the crisis - Learnings from a community led child protection response to COVID-19 and emerging child protection threats beyond the pandemic.</p> <p>Presenter: Aloysious Okiror Child's I Foundation</p> <p>Moderator: Reagan Rwambabari, TPO Uganda</p>	<p>THUPI 132. Children as Active Participants in Violence Prevention During COVID-19: Lessons from Using the Child Friendly Accountability Approach</p> <p>Presenter: Dorah Musiimire Child Fund</p> <p>Moderator: : Aidah Agwang, Childs I Foundation</p>



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