



Gender Transformation & Empowerment

GENDER BASED VIOLENCE SHELTERS

2014



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INTRODUCTION

This write up is to provide information about the holistic GBV prevention and response initiative which includes provision of free legal aid, psychosocial and temporary accommodation for women and children facing violence in their homes and communities. The initiative which commenced in January 2014 has been established by UWONET in the districts of Kamuli and Namutumba. This write up highlights information about the organisation and the GBV prevention and response initiative.

ABOUT UGANDA WOMEN'S NETWORK (UWONET)

Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) is an advocacy and lobbying coalition of national women's organisations, institutions and individuals in Uganda, born out of the East African Conference held in Kampala in 1993. This was in preparation for the UN World Conference on Women in Beijing, China in 1995. UWONET is a registered Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) with its secretariat in Kampala.

Uganda Women's Network membership comprises of 16 national women's Organisations and individuals. The organisations include: Action for Development (ACFODE); Community Development Resource Network (CDRN); Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE); Association of Women Lawyers in Uganda (FIDA-U); Association of Uganda Women Medical Doctors (AUWMD), Women Engineers Technicians and Scientists in Uganda (WETSU); National Council for the Advancement of Women in the Bahai Faith; Department of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University (WGS); Uganda Media Women Association (UMWA); National Association of Women's Organisations of Uganda (NAWOU), Uganda Women's Finance Trust (UWFT); Slum Aid Project (SAP); Disabled Women's Network and Resource Organisation (DWNRO); Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP); Isis Women International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) and well as 6 individual members.

UWONET's mission is to coordinate collective action among members through networking, research, policy advocacy and capacity building for the elimination of gender discrimination. It upholds human rights and the principles of gender equality, hence fostering opportunities

and effective participation of women at all levels and recognizing their contribution to national development. UWONET envisions a Ugandan society free from all forms of gender based discrimination. UWONET also envisions a women's movement that is vibrant, dynamic, proactive, inclusive, united in diversity, democratic with a collective voice on women's issues that is influential in shaping the destiny of Uganda.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Gender-based violence is a major problem faced by women in the world with over 70 percent of violence faced by women within homes and yet getting out of such abusive or violent relationship is a very difficult decision for majority to make. In Uganda, Gender based violence in the form of physical, sexual and psychological abuse is prevalent in the country. According to the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey (UDHS) 2011, 28 percent of the women have ever experienced sexual violence. 43 percent of women have ever experienced physical violence at the hands of their husband or partner, 28 percent have ever experienced sexual violence, and 43 percent have experienced emotional violence. Overall, about three in five of ever-married women (60 percent) have experienced any kind of violence (physical, sexual or emotional) by a husband or other intimate partner. Physical violence among women aged 15–49 is 43 percent while sexual violence is at 28 percent (UDHS 2011).

To respond to GBV, Government of Uganda (GOU) has integrated prevention and response strategies in the main development framework of Government namely the National Development Plan (NDP) and the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) for Northern Uganda. Addressing GBV is a Core Strategy of the NDP. The NDP was approved for implementation during 2010–2014. The Uganda Gender Policy (UGP) 2007 provides a strategic framework that guides the implementation of gender focused interventions to combat gender based violence.

National and district responses to GBV have been guided by a multi-sectoral approach, involving Government (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), Ministry of Health (MOH),

Justice, Law and Order system (JLOS) and Local government), Civil Society Organizations, Humanitarian and development partners. Government and national organizations have adopted a wide variety of measures to address GBV, including legal and policy reform. Some of the policy reforms that Government has made include the enactment of laws against gender violence and discrimination such as the Domestic Violence Act, 2010, the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, the recent amendments to police form 3 and 3A which seeks to bring access to justice closer to the communities through allowing clinical officers and midwives to examine survivors of SGBV, the MOH circular on management of GBV survivors in referral hospitals and district hospitals). Other national responses include public education campaigns, and support for shelters /crisis centers which the programme will seek to upscale in Busoga region.

BACKGROUND

In response to the alarming incidences of gender based violence, the Government of Uganda (GoU) through the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD) in partnership with Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) and Centre for Domestic Violence and Prevention (CEDOVIP) and 8 local governments with support from IRISH AID rolled out a Joint Programme to address Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the Busoga Sub-region focusing on 8 districts namely Bugiri, Buyende Jinja, Iganga, Kaliro, Kamuli, Mayuge, and Namutumba. The programme was launched in November 2010 and has effectively been implemented for the last 3 years. The focus on Busoga region was based on the fact that the region registered the highest incidence of sexual violence in the country as established by UBOS, (2006) in the Uganda Demographic Health Survey 2006.

The Joint programme on GBV in Busoga has registered several milestones, in a bid to address the prevalence of GBV in the Country, and contribute to the reduction of incidences of GBV and reduced social tolerance for GBV among various population groups. Some of the milestones include improved coordination for GBV prevention and response at national level through the National GBV Reference Group, strengthened male involvement of men and boys as catalysts for change at community level and improved capacity for GBV

prevention and response by duty bearers at individual, systems and collective level among others.

A needs assessment conducted by UWONET as part of its activities under the GOU/IRISH Aid JP, highlighted the urgent need for a comprehensive response mechanism for survivors of GBV as an emerging issue and, the need for timely support units for GBV survivors to enable the survivors escape temporarily from violent and unsafe situations.

The service delivery gap (urgent need for a comprehensive response mechanism of survivors of GBV) which was identified during implementation of the GOU–IRISH Aid Programme was incorporated in the International Convention on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) Kampala Declaration as a priority for Uganda at the 2011 4th Ordinary Summit and Special Session on Sexual and Gender Based Violence under the theme “United to prevent, end impunity and provide support to victims/survivors of SGBV through fast tracking the establishment and scaling up “Recovery Centers” that provide comprehensive services of free medical, psychosocial, forensic, judicial/prosecution services.

Therefore establishment of shelters as an approach to comprehensively address and in response to providing support to the service delivery component in the region will supplement the ongoing GOU–Irish Aid Joint Program on GBV where massive community awareness on GBV has resulted into increased reporting.

The shelters approach aimed to enhance GBV service delivery has been designed to provide a holistic approach to addressing the prevalence of GBV in the Country and contribute to the reduction of incidences of GBV and reduced social tolerance for GBV among various population groups. This component on service delivery will tap into the opportunities of the already on going Joint programme. The Partners of the Joint Programme such as CEDOVIP, MGLSD, UWONET, the 8 district local governments and MYSTIC Multi–Media will mainstream, integrate and support the smooth implementation of

the new component on shelter through their already existing activities. The activities highlighted will form phase 1 of the programme.

The component will seek to establish:

- i) a holistic GBV service delivery mechanism (Shelters) for victims/ Survivors of GBV,
- ii) develop comprehensive and integrated GBV prevention and response services through a multi sectoral; inter- agency approach among key actors at national and local government level for effective prevention and response to GBV through shelters,
- iii) a mechanism for assisting victims/Survivors of GBV through establishing temporal shelters as safe spaces that provide prevention, intervention, emotional support, and treatment services to physically, emotionally and sexually abused women and girls);
- iv) an effective community mobilization and engagement programme to support follow up of GBV survivors and victims, and foster community activism through community GBV prevention and response agents of change and
- v) Create a database of information and programme management on the functions, services being offered and the overall impact of the shelters for ease of assimilation in to government plans and budgets beyond the programme period.

The shelters approach will be implemented over a period of 3 years in a phased out approach beginning with the Busoga Sub region. The 3 year intervention will require concerted capacities of all the actors (duty bearers) to ensure that quality intervention is offered. There is need for capacity at individual level, which will require the individual competences to include their knowledge and skill. On the other hand, collective capabilities that refer to the group skills i.e. Local Councils to carry out their duties expeditiously and fairly, this should be determined by their ability to commit or engage/carry out tasks, build relationships and legitimacy with survivors, ability to learn, adapt and find balance their adjudication of matters. The functionality of a system is paramount and thus system capacity that refers to overall ability of a system to create public value. The collective effort

of all the actors to act as one is therefore very important; this effort will be concerted in an integrated GBV prevention and response strategy in a one stop center.

GBV SHELTERS

Two (2) functional GBV shelters for holistic GBV prevention and response are available. The shelters provide secure 24 hour emergency and crisis accommodation with competencies in GBV handling for physically, emotionally and sexually abused women and girls (will ensure survivors access timely medical, legal and psychosocial support among others) and professional support to reduce victimization while improving the process of holding the perpetrators accountable for their actions. This mechanism aims to address the challenges of proximity to the police stations, health facilities, and legal aid providers which greatly affects the feasibility of reporting GBV cases and accessing justice. Some of the activities at the shelter include:

Provide helpline services at the shelters. UWONET intends to set up toll free helplines at the GBV Shelter office premises. The helplines will be utilized for referrals, counseling and legal advice channels for the community. Telecomm companies have been approached and the process is underway.

Mobile legal aid/ counseling clinics. This involve visiting communities to provide legal aid and counselling services. UWONET will also liaises with other agencies providing reproductive health services to support the clinic and provide the necessary services and information.

Follow ups of GBV survivors

This includes following up of cases for the survivors of GBV.

Resettlement of survivors

This involves supporting survivors during the resettlement process. This process is undertaken after rehabilitation at the GBV shelters.

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