

Somero Uganda
Supporting Education for Vulnerable Young People
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**Supporting Education
for Vulnerable Young People in Uganda**

Strategic Plan 2013 - 2015



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Preface

Since its set-up in 2009, Somero Uganda, together with its stakeholders, has been working hard to fulfil its mission of mobilizing educational opportunities and community support for vulnerable young people in Uganda.

As the implementation of its mission is both successful and challenging in many ways, Somero Uganda is in need of (1) evaluating its activities so far done and (2) of developing a strategic framework in order to guide its management in the coming years.

It is important for Somero Uganda to have a strategic plan 2012-2015 that is both sensible and possible to implement.

The need to develop a strategic plan was greatly felt by the management and staff of both Somero Uganda and Somero Germany. We expect that a strategic plan will provide the Somero team with a bigger picture of our activities and our plans and will enable us to follow a proactive rather than reactive approach.

Our strategies reflect our organisational history and culture as well as the identity we have built up as a grassroots organisation during the past years. They will help us to further commit ourselves to working with vulnerable young people affected by poverty in slums within and outside of Kampala. We will continuously work hard to secure their rights, to sustain their human dignity and to empower them to escape poverty by developing and promoting education as indicated in UN Millennium Development Goal number 2: The achievement of universal (primary) education. Our work will take place in the following priority areas: child exploitation and commercial sex activities, child abuse and child labour, youth unemployment, special education for the vulnerable youth and HIV/AIDS.

We are committed to use this strategic plan as a foundation for our present and future activities. We will regularly monitor our performance against this plan, evaluate and learn from our efforts.

We would like to thank all colleagues and partners involved in elaborating this strategic plan. Our special thanks goes to the Uganda Youth Welfare Services, the Advisory Board, the community and youth leaders, our beneficiaries, and to our staff and volunteers. Without their valuable input this process could not have taken place.

Executive summary

Somero Uganda is a Community Based Organisation located in the Kawempe Division in Uganda's capital Kampala. The organisation was first registered under the Kampala City Council Authority Reg No. KAW 778, in 2010.

After two years of being in operation, the organisation has conducted an impact and needs assessment of the activities conducted in consultation with all stakeholders. This process has resulted in the present strategic plan which aims to reach out to the needs of the community so as to strengthen the impact of the programmes implemented by the organisation.

We target girls and young women living in the slums and through them the entire community including their male counterparts. These girls and young women belong to the most vulnerable groups of society, as they usually have to earn their living in the informal service sector, where they are at risk of being exposed to sexual exploitation and violence. Somero Uganda regards itself as a key actor in implementing some of the government's proposed guidelines on socio-economic and health interventions for our target group by linking national concerns to local interventions built on capacities and resources of youth themselves. A strong peer-to-peer network is the backbone of Somero.

Our vision is a Uganda where girls and boys 13-25 years achieve meaningful education and training needed for a self-determined and self-sufficient life to act as agents of social change with full community support. This goal shall be achieved through the following objectives: to increase enrolment and completion of secondary and university level of education for girls and young women living in the slums; to increase access to appropriate skills training and development programmes among girls and young women living in the slums so that they are employed without being exploited; to increase information and access to sexual and reproductive health services among girls and young women living in the slums; to enhance an integrated community based area approach with support from the government, schools, community members and young people in promotion of female education; to professionalize and further develop the programmes provided by the organisation; to guarantee financial sustainability.

Our core values are the fundamental principles and standards to which we adhere. They reflect our rich and diverse organisational history, our culture and our identity. These values are integrity, engagement and empowerment, education support, students' participation, gender sensitivity and community involvement.

1. Introduction

Uganda is a highly populated country with 34 million people, the majority of whom are young people. The government of Uganda supports the development of these young people through education, vocational skills development and provision of health programmes. This is evident with the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) Policy where all children and young people of school going age are supposed to enrol in formal or vocational skills development institutions, as well as with the Health Policy and the Youth Employment Policy. Somero Uganda supports the government's plan towards empowering young people with a special focus on the most disadvantaged.

The organisation targets young people living in the slums majority of whom being girls and young women. These girls belong to the most vulnerable groups of society, as they usually have to earn their living in the informal service sector, where they are at risk of being exposed to sexual exploitation and violence. This is especially a problem for commercial sex workers (CSWs), but female street workers as well as the typically underpaid housemaids also have to endure sexual harassment. Often enough they become unintentionally pregnant, despite being still children themselves.

The majority of these girls have not been born in the slums but are rather victims of trafficking or have been forced into marriage with irresponsible or financially unstable men. More still, the majority of these girls and young women have not only been denied school education by their parents due to social-cultural practices, but also did not obtain a sex education that prevented them from early pregnancy. It should also be noted that parents have forced girls and young women into marriage for bride wealth. We should also keep in mind that no school allows a pregnant girl to continue with studies and neither do schools allow mothers to continue with their education. Also the Uganda National Examination policy allows the pregnant mothers to sit for their exams but it is silent about attending classes which make the situation even worse. This has increased the rate of school drop-outs among girls and young mothers immensely.

Kawempe division in Kampala district is largely covered by slums whose main habitants are young people, the majority of whom being girls and young women. These are majorly surviving on commercial sex mainly due to low levels of education and lack of economic skills which makes them vulnerable.

It is against this background that Somero Uganda sets strategies and actions to empower girls and young women with a mobilised support of the community including their male counterparts through special education programs, skills development and sound health.

Process of developing the plan

The plan has been developed through a participatory and consultative process. The process which began in January 2012 and ended in June 2012 brought together key stakeholders from Kawempe division district authorities, local government authorities, development and social partners, CSOs working in the area, young people living in the area, parents, local leaders, schools administration, students and religious institutions. The planning process is a continuous cycle as it still requires effective implementation and review as shown in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Strategic Planning Process of Somero Uganda



2. Assessing the situation

Elaboration of our target group

Our target group are girls and young women living in the slums, especially commercial sex workers and school drop-outs. At present, in our daily practice, we mainly focus on girls and young women between 13-25 years of age living in the slums. These girls and young women are engaged or are at

risk of engaging in exploitative labour such as commercial sex work, human trafficking, working as maids, bar attendance and nude dancing among others due to their sex and level of education. In the past two years, we have built up good working relationships with these girls and we feel that they are the ones in most need of our services. Currently, we do not offer our services to boys and young men, this is mainly because the boys and young men in the area still stand greater advantages than girls and young women with respect to access to education and employment because of the community perception of their sex. However we conduct special sensitisation programs for the boys and young men to be able to empower them with information and knowledge on the need to support their female counterparts.

Our external environment

According to the State of Uganda Population Report 2011¹, Uganda has the youngest population in the world with a median age of 15 years. 56 percent of the population is below 18 years while 34 percent is between ages 10-24. The current data shows that by 2016, Uganda will have 10.4 million adolescents, who will have become sexually active and thus be predisposed to early pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV (Uganda Bureau of Statistics).²

Adolescents in Uganda are more susceptible to STIs, HIV, poor sexual health and sexual violence than older age groups because their sexual and reproductive health needs are influenced by the many physical, psychological, social and behavioural changes they experience while being teenagers. Young people in Uganda are especially vulnerable because of the harsh socio-cultural and economic conditions they face while being young, especially the young girls. Deep-rooted gender inequalities in Uganda have led to a situation where it is difficult for young girls to make their own sexual and reproductive choices. In practice this means that they have little control over negotiating safe sex, the use of contraceptives or against forced female genital mutilation (FGM). Additionally, figures show that 'high levels of violence on young people, especially girls, are widely accepted in society'.³ Statistics show that 60 percent of young girls experience physical violence, 49 percent of sexually active primary school girls have been forced to have sexual intercourse and 70 percent of young persons (15-19 years) feel it is justified for a man to beat his wife.⁴

The high levels of poverty make it difficult for some young girls to afford some of their basic needs, making sexual relations in exchange for material gains more tempting. Health and education are essential in increasing socio-economic development of girls, thereby decreasing the risks of engaging in unhealthy and abusive sexual practices leading to teenage pregnancy and STI/ HIV infections.

¹ Population Secretariat (POPSEC) (2011). The State of Uganda Population Report.

² Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2002). The 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census, Gender and Special Interest Groups.

³ POPSEC (2011), p. 48.

⁴ POPSEC (2011), p. 48.

Teenage pregnancy and childbearing are widespread in Uganda because of early marriage and early sexual relations with the number of births per 1000 girls in the age category 15-19 years standing at 159.⁵ They are both causes and effects of poverty. This poverty is likely to be transferred to a teenager child because of dropping out of school of the mother, less schooling for the child, lower consumption patterns for both mother and child, lower labour force participation, poorer health outcomes and reduced community participation in general.

UNICEF (2010) data show that though adolescents have high expectations to complete secondary or higher education, the transition rate to Senior 1 (S1) and completion of Senior 4 (S4) is generally low, especially for girls. In fact, the Uganda Demographic Health Survey provided by the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development states that only one third of the girls who were enrolled in primary are still at school at the age of 18 years compared to about half of the boys. Moreover, what is most worrying is that there has not been any noticeable improvement in these rates since the year 2000.⁶ In its Uganda Report for 2012, the United Nations Girls Education Initiative (UNGEI) even shows that the girls' school completion rate has dropped from 55% in 2000 to 48% in 2009. In its analysis of the reasons for this decline the UNGEI report attributes the education of the girl child as being challenged by a number of limitations including, early pregnancy, early marriage, sexual harassment, female genital mutilation, lack of sanitary facilities in schools and long distances.

The Ugandan government recognises the importance of young people in development and is guided in its development process by principles laid down in documents like the National Development Plan, the National Adolescent Health Policy, the Health Sector Strategic Plan III and the National Population Policy. Somero Uganda regards itself as a key actor in implementing some of the government's proposed guidelines on socio-economic and health interventions for vulnerable youth, especially girls, by linking national concerns to local interventions built on capacities and resources of youth themselves.

Our internal environment

The organisation works with a number of members who monitor the everyday running of the centre. Membership is growing in numbers as former beneficiaries also register as members when they become financially stable. Apart from their contribution in form of registration as members, they also help in fundraising and everyday running of the organisation.

⁵ World Health Organisation (2009). *Advocates for Youth*.

⁶ United Nations Children's Fund (2011). *The State of the World's Children 2011: Adolescence, an Age of Opportunity*.

The organisation also has an advisory board of five members with experience in social work, education, project planning and legal fields. These also guide the everyday monitoring of the organisation and help to create synergies with our stakeholders.

The office and the centre provide the basis of the planning and implementation of the activities of Somero Uganda. The centre, which is located in the slums of Kawempe division, harbours offices of the administration unit, the programmes office and finance office. The centre also has a computer lab, a training room and a library. At this centre, community programmes are planned before they are implemented within the community. The centre is run by a team of social workers with relevant related professions and skills. The social workers have grown up in the area which has made it easy for them to reach out even into the hard-to-reach areas.

The strong peer-to-peer network is the backbone of Somero. The organisation has a peer network for both the girls and young people, which include the ambassadors, the community members and the mentors. These help in the planning, implementation and monitoring process of the programmes.

The partners include members who have the same vision or whose work contributes to the realization of Somero Uganda's vision. Major partners include Somero Germany, ILO-IPEC, FAWEU, DSW, Foundation of Education NGOs in Uganda (FENU), Kyambogo University Child-child program, Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU) Uganda youth Development Link, Uganda Youth Welfare services among others. These partners do not only provide technical support but also fund or fundraise for Somero Uganda programmes.

The enhanced relevance and impact of the programmes and continued expansion of the organisation has created additional opportunities. In addition, the increased capacity of the organisation has increased professionalism and a team-culture that promotes wellbeing and the constant search for new ways to make a difference.

3. Mission, Vision, Objectives and Strategies

Mission statement

We strive for offer specific education programs, life skills development and health promotion among slums girls and young women in order to improve their conditions of living and rehabilitation as well as to promote education and the protection of their human rights in their communities.

Our vision is:

A Uganda where girls and boys 13-25 years achieve meaning ful education and training needed for a self-determined and self-sufficient life to act as agents of social change with full community support.

Our core values are:

Our core values are the fundamental principles and standards to which we adhere. They reflect our rich and diverse organisational history, our culture and our identity. These values are

1. Integrity
2. Engagement and empowerment
3. Education support
4. Students' participation
5. Gender sensitivity
6. Community involvement

Strategic Objectives

The goal shall be achieved through the following objectives

1. To increase enrolment and completion of secondary and university level of education for girls and young women living in the slums.
2. To increase access to appropriate skills training and development programmes among girls and young women living in the slums so that they are employed without being exploited.
3. To increase information and access to sexual and reproductive health services among girls and young women living in the slums.
4. To enhance an integrated community based area approach with support from the government, schools, community members and young people in promotion of female education.
5. To professionalize and further develop the programmes provided by the organisation.
6. To guarantee financial sustainability.

Key strategies

Strategy 1: Support and promotion of education of girls and young women

This strategy will employ activities to mobilize and provide scholarship to girls and young women who cannot afford the fees in the education system. In addition, we advocate for and create awareness among schools and communities to appreciate the value of educating girls. The peer to peer education shall form the backbone of advocacy and awareness raising.

A safe school environment shall form an important part of the strategy. Emphasis shall be put on the girls completing at least secondary level of school education.

Strategy 2: Provision of skills training and development

Skills including vocational skills, IT skills, economic skills development and life skills are very important factors for employment. Acquiring these skills will reduce the vulnerability of the girls and young women to be exploited as they get integrated in the employment sector.

The strategy will include a strong network of organisations in the area which provide vocational skills to young people. Somero Uganda will then provide skills which are not provided by the partners, including IT skills, economic skills and life skills.

Strategy 3: Advocacy and awareness raising

Increasing awareness and access to sexual reproductive health issues and rights at all levels is a very vital element in the promotion of female education. Under this strategy the girls and young women and the community members at large shall be mobilized to understand the crucial importance of sexual reproductive health issues. The peer-to-peer approach shall create a major backbone of this strategy. Networking and referral shall be emphasized.

Strategy 4: The integrated community-based approach

Promotion of girl child education calls for a mobilized community. This strategy therefore shall employ activities to encourage parents, local leaders, law enforcers, schools, religious leaders, young people both male and female and the government to join the campaign.

Strategy 5: Motivation of staff and encouragement of volunteering

The strategy will look at the welfare of staff and build-up and improve their capacity to provide services to the girls and young women. International and local volunteers and intern students will also be encouraged to join the organisation for their input and creation of synergies. Documentation and professional services will be an emphasis.

Strategy 6: Fundraising for sustainability

For sustainability, the organisation will need to embark on a strategy to get assets that can help run the programmes with less or no dependency. This strategy will entail looking for equipment, furniture and land where an IT centre could be built. Building capacity and networking will be an emphasis.

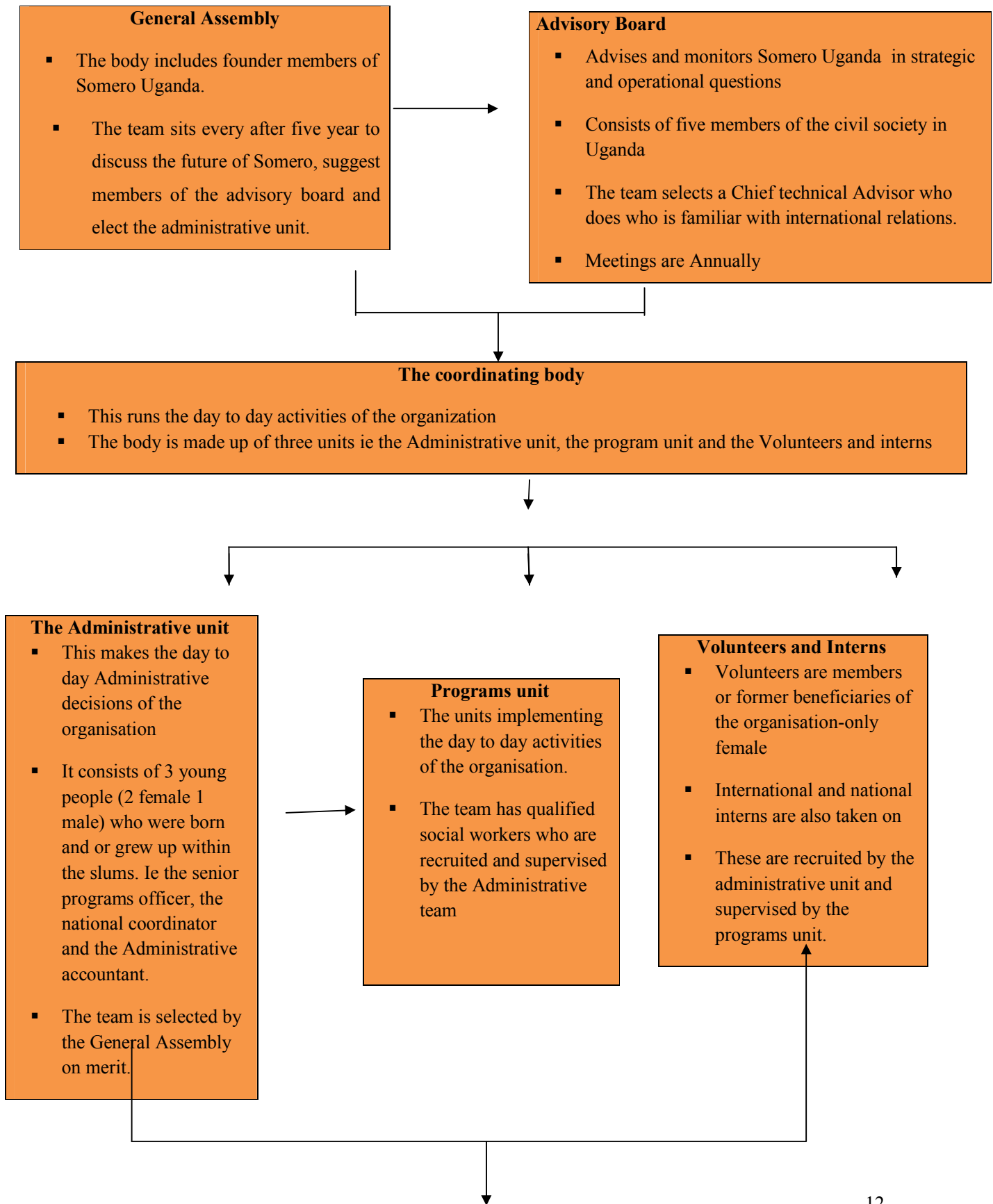
4. Monitoring and Evaluation

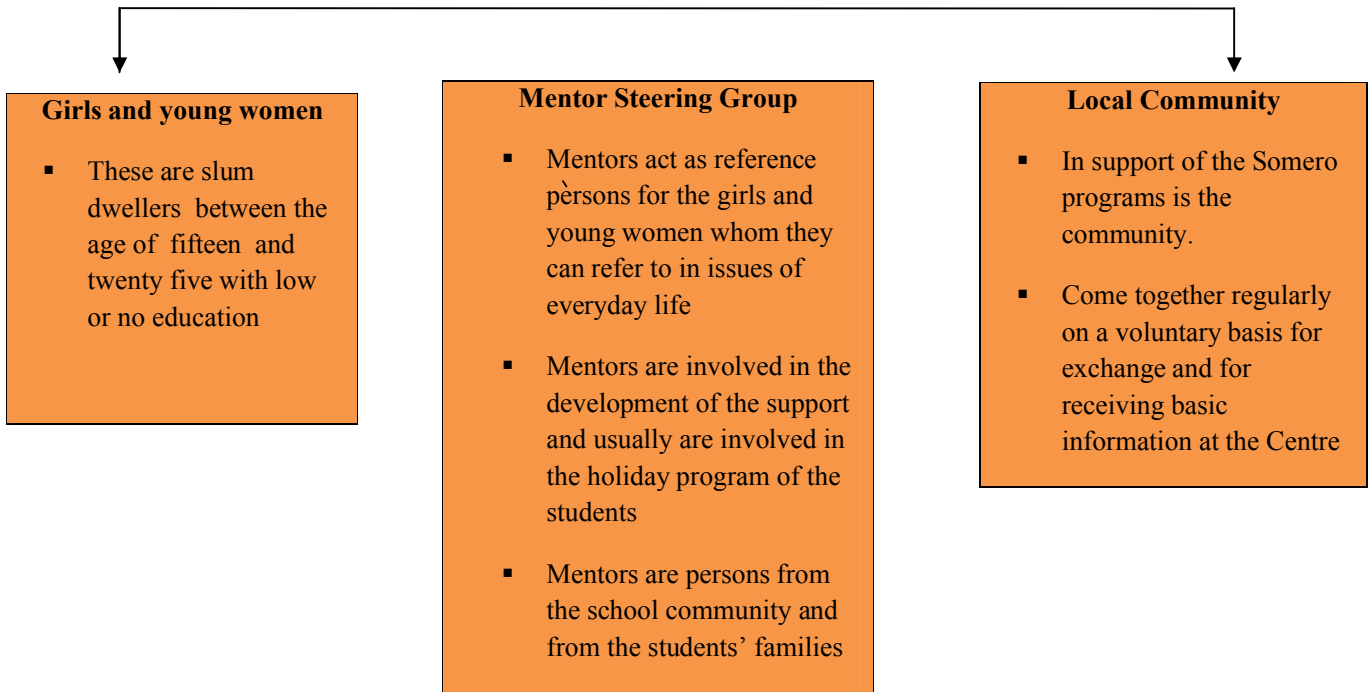
The implementation of the plan requires an effective monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system as well as an appropriate feedback mechanism. In the process of strategic planning, Somero Uganda has developed a coherent system of indicators that will provide the foundation of the monitoring and evaluation system. Based on these indicators, which are listed in Appendix II, the organisation shall

establish a reporting and feedback mechanism that will be implemented. Progressive reports shall be used on an annual basis and presented to the different stakeholders for review and policy advice.

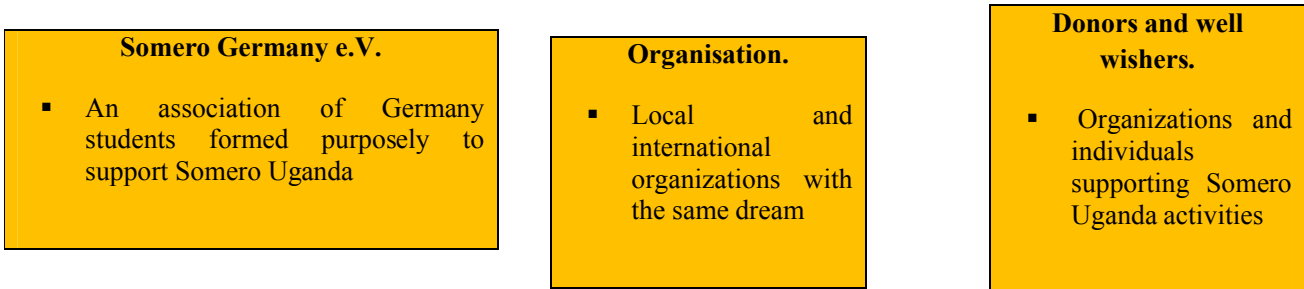
A survey shall be done on the basis of measuring activity indicators and progress of the plan. An annual and final evaluation shall identify gaps and emerging issues. This information shall be shared with the different stakeholders directly involved in the implementation of the strategic plan. At the division, the community development worker, the division education officer and the probation officer shall be the focal point persons and will work in collaboration with the ministries.

Appendix I: Somero Organisational Structure





Partners



Appendix II – Table of Outputs and Indicators

Objective 1. To increase enrolment and completion of secondary and university level of education for girls and young women living in the slums		
Output	Activities	Indicators
1.1 School enrolment and retention of girls and young women increased	1.1.1. Provide full and partial scholarship until institution level.	No of scholarship awarded to girls and young women
	1.1.2. Home-based schooling for young mothers and pregnant girls developed.	No of girls supported under the programme
	Provisions of school materials	No of girls supported
	1.1.3. Development of community art murals to raise awareness on the education of girls.	No of art murals developed
	1.1.4. Radio/TV shows to create awareness on girl-child education.	No of radio talks organised
	1.1.5. Awareness-raising workshops for all stakeholders on the importance of girl child education.	No of workshops organised
1.2. School-community learning environment improved	1.1.6. Income-generating activities for young mothers to support their children.	No of mothers depending on IGAs.
	1.2.1. Fully equipped public library	No of students accessing the library
	1.2.2. Education-booster meeting organised during holidays.	No of students attending EBM
	1.2.3. No-stigma campaigns among schools and communities	No of activities organised
	1.2.4. Formation of school clubs	No of clubs formed
	1.2.5. Formation of mentor-schools networks	No of schools network formed
	1.2.6. Development of a student- friendly teaching manual to facilitate learning	No of manuals developed and used
	1.2.7. Building of sanitary facilities	No of facilities built
1.2.8. Print and disseminate advocacy materials including flyers and research findings	No of materials produced and disseminated	
Objective 2: To increase access to appropriate skills training and development programmes among girls and young women living in the slums that they easily be employed without being exploited		
2. 1. Girls and young women in the slums trained in employable skills	2.1.1. Run IT drop-in centres in the slums	No of centres in the slums
	2.1.2. Equip the IT drop-in centres with necessary equipment to facilitate the trainings	

	2.1.3. Buy land where an IT-skills training centre can be built	Land bought
	2.1.4. Equip young people with unique employable vocational skills not provided by partners in the areas of operation	No of students accessing such skills
	2.1.5. Identify and train beneficiaries in IT and Vocational skills training	No of girls trained
2.2. Girls and young women provided with business skills		
	2.2.1. Conduct business skills training workshops	No of beneficiaries reached out to
	2.2.2. Conduct application training and profiling lessons	No of beneficiaries reached out to
	2.2.3. Conduct accounting and financing workshops	No of workshops conducted
	2.2.4. Organize business tours	No of tours conducted
	2.2.5. Conduct life skills building sessions	No of beneficiaries reached out to
	2.2.6. Hold regular behavioural change communication sessions	No of sessions conducted
	2.2.7. Organize for retreats (girls-day out) to encourage exchange and sharing of ideas among the beneficiaries.	No of girls attending the retreat
	2.2.8. Formation of business groups	No of groups formed
	2.2.9. Conduct a one-month internship to have hand on skills.	No of beneficiaries
2.3. Strengthen networks with business mentors and the community	2.3.1. Conduct workshops for business mentors	No of participants
	2.3.2. Hold a quarterly stakeholders meeting	No of participants
	2.3.3. Conduct and disseminate tracer studies to track performance of trainees and their successful entry to the job markets	No of studies documented
Objective 3: To increase information and access to sexual and reproductive health services among girls and young women living in the slums.		
3.1 Increase access to health services	3.1.1. Identifying, networking and reference of young women to youth-friendly health centres	No of networking health centres
	3.1.2. Organise community and schools VCT services	No of VCTs carried out
	3.1.3. Provide health counselling and guidance sessions	No of beneficiaries
	3.1.4. Organisation of a mobile clinic in the slums to provide	No of beneficiaries

	reproductive health services	
3.2 Increase sexual and reproductive health information among slum girls and young women	3.2.1. Build capacity of Somero staff and school administration on sexual reproductive health services	No of staff and schools in attendance
	3.2.2. Conduct peer-training workshop for in-and out-of-school peer educators who will be trained as health ambassadors	No of peers trained
	3.2.3. Conduct weekly peer-to-peer activities for young women at the centre	No of activities carried out
	3.2.4. Conduct peer-to-peer community health shows	No of shows carried out
	3.2.5. Conduct schools peer-to-peer health shows	No of shows carried out
Objective 4: To enhance an integrated community-based area approach, with support from the government, schools, community members and young people in advocating and promoting female education		
4.1 Increased awareness on female education among community members	4.1.1. Print flyers	No of flyers printed
	4.1.2. Print and disseminate posters	No of posters printed
	4.1.3. Conduct awareness-raising workshops	No of participants attended; no of workshops conducted
Objective 5: To professionalize and develop programmes provided by the organisation		
5.1. Provide nationally and internationally recognised certificates	5.1.1. Network and follow online programmes from and national institutes	No of certificates awarded
5.2. Staff and volunteer development and accountability	5.2.1. Development of individual working plans	Work plans developed
	5.2.2. Performance on-the-job coaching	Performance of staff
	5.2.3. Organising temporary internships within other organisations and schools to gain experience	No of internships organised
	5.2.4. Providing an increase in salary or a volunteer allowance	Salary structure given
	5.2.5. Develop international and national internship and volunteer programmes	No of participants involved
5.3. Advisory board works strengthened	5.3.1. Quarterly meetings conducted	No of meetings conducted
	5.3.2. General assembly organised	Assembly organised
5.4. Organisation documents	5.4.1. Review of the constitution	Constitution reviewed

streamlined		
	5.4.2. Organisation policies developed	No of policies developed
	5.4.3. Writing of a code of conduct	Code of conduct written
	5.4.4. IT communication strategies strengthened over web site and facebook page	Web site and facebook page
Objective 6: To develop financial sustainability		
6.1 Obtainment of own premises and equipment	6.1.1. Mobilise for land to build an IT centre	Land mobilised.
	6.1.2. Mobilise for more computer equipment	No of computer mobilised
	6.1.3. Mobilise for furniture	No of furniture mobilised
6.2 Set up self-sustaining programmes	6.2.1. Start payable computer training programmes for non-target population, e.g. men, older women, the working class etc. to mobilize funds	No of participants
	6.2.2. Encourage more people including the former beneficiaries to become members with a membership fee	No of members registered
	6.2.3. Keep overhead costs to a minimum level	Overhead budget line at minimum level
	6.2.4. Train staff in fundraising activities	No of staff trained
	6.2.5. Link up with partner organisations	No of new partners
	6.2.6. Ensure a continuous support from Somero Germany	Somero Germany's continuous support
	6.2.7. Invest in fundraising activities, e.g. a yearly calendar	No of fundraising activities conducted

Appendix III: Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats analysis

During our strategic planning process, we reviewed our past performance by making a SWOT analysis. With the planned strategies 2013-2015, we believe that we shall be able to work our weakness into strength and threats into opportunities as we strengthen the existing. This was the outcome:

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive fundraising team • Working with the community persons • Somero focuses and addresses key socio-economic problems in the community • ☺ Locally registered by local authorities • ☺ Educated staff and good managerial skills • Mobilization of the beneficiaries directly from the community • On-the-job training for the staff • Strategic location of Somero Uganda • Networking with other organizations • ☺ Beneficiary involvement and participation • @ Most youth have grown up in the area • Existence of an advisory board • ☺ Committed donor (Somero Germany) • Competent staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ☹ Not gender sensitive • Lack of a self-sustainability plan • No organization policies • @ No resource mobilization strategy • Limited programs for the community • No clear payment schemes • Limited publicity of Somero's activities in the community • Relying on young volunteer who could look for greener pastures • ☹ Limited office space and supportive equipment • Lack of own premises • No sustainable support (funding) for Somero • ☹ /@ Lack of impact evaluation • ☹ Not registered as a national NGO • No strategic plan
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having community leaders on board • CBO's having similar interests • Existing donor support • Strategic location of Somero 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ☹ Image change of our country (corruption, insecurity, immorality, political problems) • Changes in the political climate (elections, riots)

<p>directly in the community of focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government will thrive public-private partnership • ☺ Availability of different programs • Existing partners in the community (local gvt and UYWS, UYDEL, Plan Uganda) • Favorable policy environment • ☺ Community support and involvement • The existing policy environment on gender issues • @ Willingness of the beneficiaries to participate in Somero's activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Donor fatigue • ☹ Lack of financial sustenance • The ever changing laws and regulations sometimes slow down implementation of Somero's activities • Inflation • Reducing funding from the donor-donor stress • @ Few funding opportunities individual scholarships • Environmental causes like floods and other disasters
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