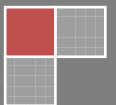# Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda

End of Project Evaluation Report

Somero Uganda

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Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda

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June, 2013

Executive summary

This report presents the findings and conclusions of an end of project evaluation for the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda. The Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda, is a one year project that was implemented by Somero Uganda in Kawempe division, Kampala Capital City Authority. The overall goal of the project is the personal and professional empowerment of girls and young women, aged between 16 and 25 years, by acquiring computer skills and intense psychosocial support. The objectives of this evaluation were to: assess the impact of the project on the girls and young women and their community; relevancy and effectiveness of the project design, monitoring and implementation of the project and document best practices and lessons learnt to inform sustainability plans and future interventions; and document challenges, and suggest recommendations.

Key findings

The evaluation established that the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project to a large extent achieved its targets. The girls and young women were trained and they undoubtedly demonstrated mastery of knowledge and skills in IT related applications. All the 55 young women interviewed could ably talk about MS office that includes word, excel, power point and other packages like graphics and photo on top of how to use different machines learnt during internship.

The different approaches utilized by the project team, greatly contributed to increased knowledge and awareness about ASRH especially family planning, HCT, responsible sexual behaviors and health seeking behaviors such as HCT, STD and HIV/AIDS screening and treatment. This was done in partnership with knowledgeable facilitators in social and health issues among young people sourced from partners such as Kawempe Health center/Kawempe Youth center, Reproductive Health Uganda, Uganda Youth Development Link, Uganda Youth Welfare Services, Mulago Hospital STD clinic, the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and Kampala Capital City Authority

The evaluation further established that the project withdrew and rehabilitated a significant number of 96 girls and young women through ongoing counseling, IT training, BCC and financial skills training. This strengthened their capacity to engage in alternative livelihood activities and move out of health risky behaviors like commercial sex. Out of the 55 girls and young women interviewed during the evaluation, 27 percent (15) had found employment in IT related employment, 33 percent (18) were volunteering at the places where they did internship, 7 percent (4) had gone back for further studies, that is, 2 pursuing IT related courses and 2 joining other vocational skills training, and 4 had found employment in a retail shop (2) and the other 2 started their own business, in charcoal making due to the fact that they had received both life and business skill training. 25 percent (14) were hopeful that they would get jobs or start their own small businesses using the acquired IT, financial literacy and life skills.

Most importantly, the evaluation established that 36 of the 55 girls and young women interviewed had chosen to move out of any risky behavior such as engaging in transactional and survival sex, multiple partners, and drug abuse that could expose them to health risks as a result of their involvement in the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project.

Reaching out to the community the evaluation established that the project received a strong community support especially towards the end of the project. Though with challenges and resistance of some community members, the community leaders, division authorities, religious leaders, business mentors and most importantly the former beneficiaries of the organization provided wholesome support to the project implementation, monitoring and have been instrumental when we are carrying out this evaluation.

The evaluation reached out to 10 community members (2 local leaders, 1 Community Development Officer (CDO), 1 Mentor, 1 partner organization, 3 Employers, 2 business mentors/Internship supervisor) and 7 former beneficiaries through an FGD. Though support of these community members was paramount to the project, a need to involve the entire community was revealed.

Administratively the project empowered the organization and staff with equipments and learn on knowledge and skills needed to handle girls and young women acquiring IT skills as a mean of self-empowerment. The forth and back communication of the business mentors during internship placement has provided first hand information on relevant topic leading to changes in the curriculum and the desire to design an "IT- training manual for girls and young women with less or no education" and a "Financial Literacy- manual for girls and young women with less or no education".

Challenges
The evaluation established a number of challenges that were faced by the project.

- IT services were conveniently taught in an understandable language but the young women felt they missed out on some of the vital IT skills such as publisher graphics, Photoshop and photography, scanning, printing, and laminating, photocopying and internet. These components were not taught/ not taught effectively and thus the girls and young women could not use the machines related to photo copying, still photo and video coverage, and binding which are required by most businesses and also enable the girls to compete favorably in the current job market.

- Additionally the software-(Picasa and Pinacle 9) used for some programs such as photo and video editing was easy to understand but not widely used in the field. Majority of the businesses are using adobe soft ware which made it difficult for the young women to integrate easily.

- Though internship placement is very crucial for the successful integration and employability of the young women, the time was too limited for them to learn and thus

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missed out on this exposure opportunity. The business mentors, for this case, the internship supervisors advised that the young women need to get at least 6 weeks of internship to get exposed to the different components in the business such as customer relations, record keeping, the real IT work that they do, and the real business interactions.

- While Somero Uganda has established itself very well in the community where it works. It has to raise a lot of sensitisation about the different vulnerabilities of the girls and young women. This will address the issues of stigmatisation that some of the girls and young women have face as a result of the community dubbing the centre a place where prostitutes congregate. This alone brought about drop out of 3 young women and irregularities in attendance of another 5 who felt not protected enough to come to the centre to seek services.

- Though Somero Uganda mobilised a lot of support for the project in the community, the male counterparts as part of the stakeholders were not targeted a lot to support their female counterparts through the project time. This brought about challenges where male counterparts competed for time with the project. For example 4 of beneficiaries' sexual partners discouraged them from coming for training as they thought they were wasting time and needed them to engage in other businesses like hawking, selling food stuff at the road side which also exposes them to more vulnerability and male dominance.

- Although there were efforts to follow up girls and young women during their internship to support them, this was a onetime activity and to some not any follow up was done. This was insufficient considering that the girls and young women had insufficient knowledge and skills required to penetrate and get absorbed and integrated into the employability system.

- The project did not have a component of home visits which is a very important aspect of understanding the different interests of the girls and the young women. Some of the young women interviewed confessed that they could not come because of challenges with their families especially when they had no one to leave their children with and not knowing how they would survive in the night and the following morning. To such cases a home visit would be important to understand the particular interests of such beneficiaries and assess how the project can help.

- Though the project had a component of financial literacy, business skills development where not corded efforts which affected especially the young people who did not manage to get job.

- The topics of Behavioural change session (BCC) were very informative but the design of the project presented challenges. In the first case the sessions were provided jointly i.e. the afternoon class had to join students of the morning class. The evaluation revealed that many girls missed out on some topic mainly because their convenient time was during the afternoon.

- More to that, the sessions revealed a desire for the girls and young women to seek health services especially STI and HVT but the project design did not provide for such services.

It's true that the networking hoped to have bridged this gap however the stigma and cost attached to service in these health centres scared away the beneficiaries.

- Additionally the girls and young women developed the desire to reach out to fellow youth with ASRH information but lacked competent peer education skills and support from the organisation.

- Administratively there were an overwhelming number of girls and young women seeking services compared to the equipments available. This made the assessment process very difficult for the staff. 65 and 71 girls were identified in the first and second half of the project respectively. Though the project managed to reach to up to 43 and 53 girls (an extra of 16 girls) in the first and second half respectively, the need was not satisfied.

Best practices

The project worked very well with the community especially the local leaders, the business mentors, local government, partner organisations and the community opinion leaders. This approach enabled the project to benefit from the community support

The project integrated several approaches such as IT skills training, BCC, life skills development, individual and group counselling, life skills development, financial literacy and numeracy which ensured a complete range of support to the young women.

In addition, motivation workshops, speakers and facilitators who were sometimes former beneficiaries inspired the participants to become more focused. Former beneficiaries for example become role models to the participants contributing to the success of the project. They participated in the identification process, supported IT trainings, conducted BCC sessions and facilitated workshop.

The project offered the young women an internship opportunity for one month. This opportunity exposed the worth of those young women that had been stigmatised by the community and in a way boosted their confidence and esteem. The business tours on the other hand inspired the participants.

The literacy and numeracy program enabled very many young women who had not got a chance of training in formal schools understand the different dynamics required in the job market. The program built confident among the girls that they could reach out to even bigger offices in search for jobs.

The graduation ceremony and awarding of certificates allowed the students to penetrate the community. The ceremony brought in a number of potential employers who reach out to the organisation to recommend the best students to their businesses. On the other hand the certificate did not only bring joy to girls and young women who had never dreamt of getting any academic paper but was also used to seek for jobs.

The documentation process of activities made it easier to follow up the progress of the project. This also called in for project adjustments to ensure the achievement of goal and objectives.

Conclusion

The evaluation established that the Somero Uganda was successful in empowering young women with IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment. There was increased knowledge and demonstrable skills in the utilisation of computer applications especially in all MS Office packages. The young women were also enabled to acquire financial literacy skills, BCC, life skills and knowledge about Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health (ASRH).

List of figures

List of acronyms

AFFCAD: Action For Fundamental Change and Development.

AIDS: Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome.

ASRH: Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health

BCC: Behavioural Change Communication.

CSEC: Commercial Sexual Exploitation Children

FGD: Focus Group Discussions

HCT: HIV Counselling and Testing

HIV: Human Immune-deficiency Virus

ICT: Information Communication Technology

IT: Information Technology

KCCA: Kampala Capital City Authority

KII: Key Informants Interview

STDs: Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

UYDEL: Uganda Youth Development Link

UYWES: Uganda Youth Development Link

Acknowledgement

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The evaluation team extends its gratitude to all the local government officials, Somero Uganda partners, local leaders and the community who shared their experiences and provided valuable insights about the project work.

Most importantly, lastly, we would like to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the beneficiaries of the project, the girls and young women, for unreservedly accepting to share their experiences into the services they received from the project.

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Introduction

This report provides findings of an evaluation of the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project implemented by Somero Uganda, a community based organization in Kawempe division of Kampala Capital City Authority between July 2012 and June 2013. This project was co-funded by the German Government through Nord Sued Bruecken and Somero Germany, a Somero Uganda partner organisation.

Background of the project

The Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda is a one year project that was implemented by Somero Uganda Kawempe division of Kampala City. The overall goal of this project is the personal and professional empowerment of 80 girls and young women. These project targeted girls and young women in Kawempe/Kampala (Uganda) between the age of 16 and 25, who are at risk or involved in commercial sex and in danger of sexual exploitation. In addition, the target group has little or no computer skills and is motivated to find regular work. Throughout the project the young women shall acquire the necessary professional and personal skills to prevent and withdraw them from commercial and survival sex, alcohol and drug abuse and exploitative work in bars, lodges and brothels among other jobs that expose them to a risk of being sexually exploited and which are a hazard for their health.

The specific objectives were:

- To equip 80 girls and young women at risk or being involved in commercial sex with information technology skills.

- To equip 80 girls and young women with administrative skills necessary for regular work.

- To provide psychosocial support to the identified girls and young women and by working through past experiences stabilize and strengthen them.

- To improve the psychosocial situation of the participants by a holistic support, such that they gain self-confidence and are able to lead a healthy life.

- To train the awareness in dealing with modern communication technologies in order to enable the participants to search for important information in the internet and to get into contact with others.

Purpose of the evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess and document the impact of the project on girls and young women and their psychosocial wellbeing and identify best practices and lessons that can inform future interventions.

The specific objectives of the evaluation were:

- To assess the impact of the project on children and the community.

- To assess the relevancy and effectiveness of the project design, monitoring and implementation of the project.

- To identify and document best practices and lessons for sustainability plans and future interventions

- To document challenges and suggest viable recommendations.

In order to achieve the objectives of the evaluation, the consultants were tasked to:

- Collect information on the impact of the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project on girls, young women and community.

- Collect information to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the project design, implementation, and monitoring in addressing interests of the girls and young women and the community.

- Identify and document best practices and lessons for sustainability plans and future interventions.

- Document challenges and suggest viable recommendations.

- Evaluation methodology

Introduction

The evaluation teamed employed different tools to ensure active participation of all the project stakeholders. The stakeholders that participated included the girls and young women, business mentors, internship supervisors, local leaders, the community development officer (CDO) - Kawempe division Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), project staff, and collaborating organizations for referral services. These tools, used in this evaluation, included key informant interview guide, focus group discussions guide, observation and questionnaire. The tools enabled the evaluation team to identify impacts, lessons, case studies and best practices. The team also analyzed some available project documents.

Pre-field consultations

The evaluation team had 3 meetings with the staff of Somero Uganda comprising national coordinator, senior programs manager, IT specialist, the accountant and social workers to discuss the terms of reference, level expectations and discussing the processes of implementing the evaluation exercise.

Selection of respondents

The evaluation team managed to select respondents using a systematic random sampling technique from the two lists of girls and young women that had graduated from the two phases of the project. The other respondents were decided upon by the team and together with the management of the project. All the stakeholders for the project including the young women, partners, business mentors, the local leaders and the community were interviewed.

Key informants interviews

The evaluation team conducted 15 Key informant interviews (KII) to collect in-depth views regarding the impact of the project on girls and young women and community. The respondents in the KII included project staff including the national coordinator of Somero Uganda, the senior programs Manager, IT specialist, and Social Workers, the CDO, local leaders, business mentors, internship supervisors, and the director of AFCAD a partner organization.

Observation

The evaluation participated in direct observation of some of the beneficiaries as a means of gathering assessing the level achievement of the project objectives.

Focus Group Discussions

Three Focus groups discussions (FGD) were facilitated by the evaluation team. These FGDs were managed by a moderator and a note taker with a group of 5 girls and young women in each. The discussions were guided by pre-set questions that were used during the analysis of the

information gathered. Table 1 below shows the different categories of people that participated in the evaluation.

Document review

The evaluation team reviewed some documents related to the project including project proposal, project work plans, the developed data based and progress and activity reports to generate relevant information in line with evaluation objectives and to inform the design of evaluation instruments.

Table 1: table showing the respondent who participated in the evaluation

No	Category of respondents	No
1	Beneficiaries - Young women who completed training	40
2	Key Respondents(2 local leaders, 1 Community Development Officer(CDO),1 Mentor, 1 partner organization, 3 Employers, and 2 Internship supervisor	10
3	Project officers(national coordinator , Social workers, Instructor, Accountant)	5
4	3 Focus Group Discussions with beneficiaries - Young women(5 people each FGD)	15
	Total	70

Literature review

Only 56 % of the Ugandan population has gone through primary school, twice as many Ugandan women as men cannot read nor write, and only one fifth of all girls starting with primary school remains at school for at least five years. In particular girls are often denied access to education, either for financial or for cultural reasons. These girls belong to the most vulnerable groups of the 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 CSWs, but female street workers as well as the typically underpaid housemaid also have to endure sexual harassment. Often enough they become unintentionally pregnant, despite being still children themselves. This is an additional hazard to their health and financial situation. In addition, in case of pregnancy, many are abandoned or trafficked away, because they are not able to continue the work they are supposed to do. In most cases they cannot rely on help from their families or other social networks as these girls and young women are stigmatized by the society and often excluded from community life.

In addition the CSWs are highly exposed to the HIV/AIDS pandemic and other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs). The lack of knowledge about the diseases and how to prevent transmission among CSWs and their clients' means that condoms are rarely used, increasing the risk of infection. The consequences of these diseases not only affect the CSWs themselves, but also their children if they have any: one of two million orphans in Uganda has lost their families as a consequence of HIV/AIDS. An increased risk of infection for girls and young women is also found by studies conducted in Uganda: According to the Uganda demographic and health survey 2006", the national HIV-penetration rate in Uganda is 6.4 % with more than 70 % of the persons concerned in the most productive ages between 15 and 49 years. By the end of the 90s, the pregnancy rate of teenagers was the highest all over the African continent. Currently, the HIV-infection rate is rising amongst the 15 to 19 years-olds and has its maximum amongst the 20 to 24 years-olds. Due to the above mentioned socio-cultural aspects, girls are affected more frequently than boys.

Furthermore, in difficult situations the girls cannot seek the protection of the police or other institutions, since commercial sex work is illegal in Uganda.
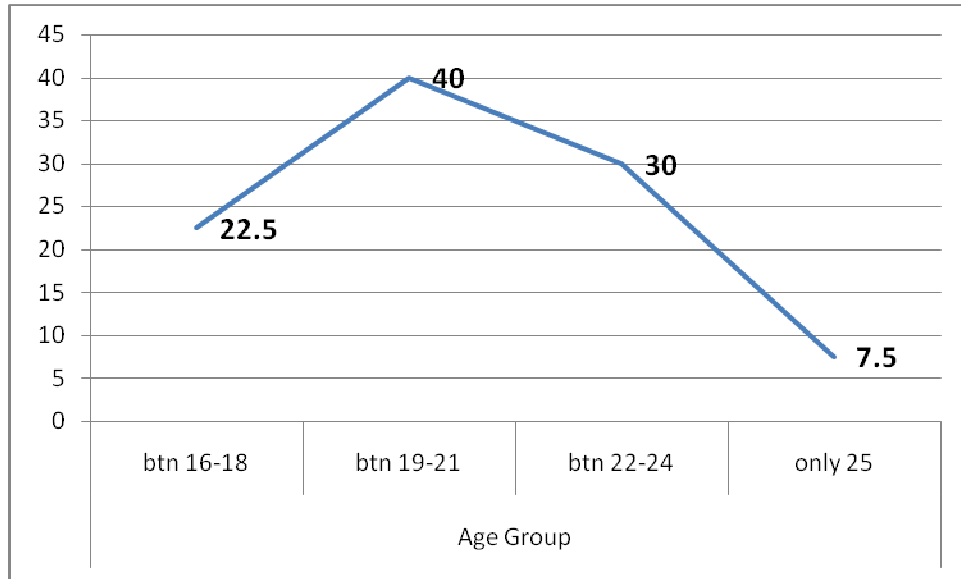
Findings of the evaluation

This evaluation assessed the evident positive changes in the wellbeing of the girls and young women and community that were brought about by the teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project, intended or unintended, within a period commencing July 2012 to June 2013. Specifically, the evaluation assessed the impact of the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda in terms of its impact of the project direct beneficiaries and the community.

Demographic characteristics of the respondents

All the 96 young women that the project targeted were between the age group 16 and 25. By the time of evaluation only 5 of them had changed places of residence. The reasons for the change were related to employment, that is, getting closer to the work place and or relocating to permanently stay at the school were she found employment, and only one left with the entire family from a former place that used to flood a lot.

Fig 1. Percentage age group distribution of the young women

According to the evaluation, it was established that 40 percent of the beneficieries of the project were between the agegroup of 19 and 21 followed by agegroup 22 and24, agegroup 16 and 18 and lastly between agegroup only 25 with 30, 22.5 and 7.5 percent.

Fig 2: Percentage distribution of education Background of the beneficiaries
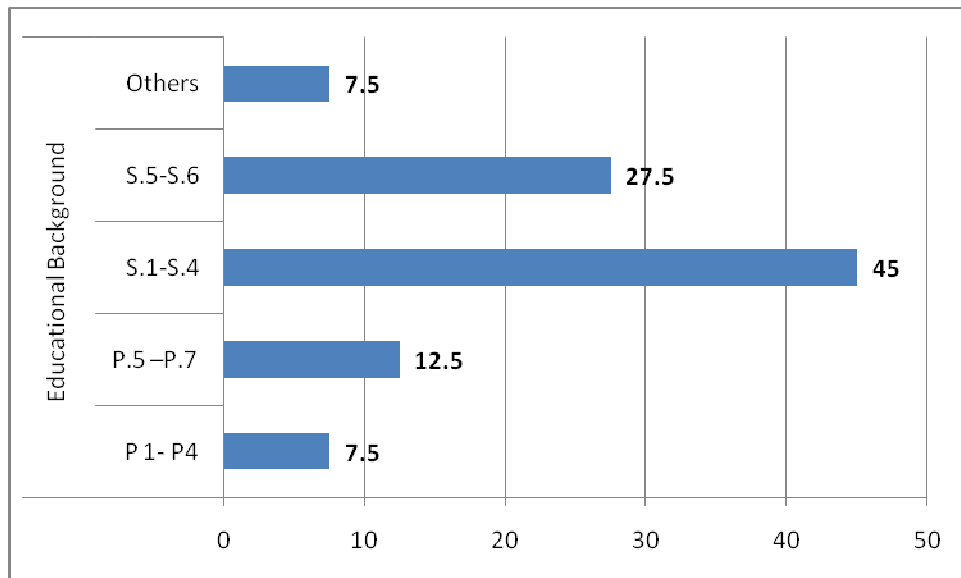
Figure 1 indicates the education background of the 40 girls and young women that participated in the individual interviews during the evaluation. 45 percent of them had dropped out of school in between senior one and senior four, 27.5 percent had dropped out in between senior five and six, three have only attained education between primary one and primary four and the other respondents had tried vocational training but did not finish.

Figure two below shows the percentage marital status of the girls and young women at the time of the evaluation. Interstingly most (85 percent) of the young girls and young women were still single and the others had a partner were not sure if the had a partner or single.

Fig 3:Percentage distribution of marital status of the beneficieries

Fig 4:Percentage distribution of person girl and or young woman stays with

The figure above indicates the percentage on who the beneficieries stay with. 62.5 of the beneficieries stayed with their parents, only 2.5 percent (one person) stayed by them selves, while 12.5 stayed with their partners and 22.5 stayed with other persons including relatives, friends and employer.

Impact of the project on girls and young women

The project implemented several activities such as IT training, life skills sessions, BCC, literacy and numeracy, and financial literacy, aimed at the personal and professional empowerment of girls and young women. Throughout the project the girls and young women acquired the IT skills and life skills, necessary professional and personal skills to prevent and withdraw them from jobs where they were at risk of being sexually exploited and which are a hazard for their health. The key activities included training in IT including computer applications, maintenance and soft ware installation, sharing BCC messages on adolescent sexual reproductive health issues, provision HIV Counseling and Testing (HCT) life skills training, business skills development and general counseling on several psycho-socio-economic issues.

Improved skills in IT

The evaluation established that 96 young women were trained and demonstrated IT skills in using Ms Word, Excel, Power point, Access and using the internet, graphic as a means of self empowerment. 43 and 53 of these young women, after successful completion of the IT training, were passed out and certified by Somero Uganda in January and June 2013 respectively. From the individual interviews and FGDs the girls and young women alluded confidently that they had mastered skills in using the computer and its different accessories from the training and the internship exposure. As noted in one of the FGDs: *"... I did not know anything about a computer, can you believe I thought a computer was another kind of modern TV! ... Now, after training, I have practical experience using the computer especially when working with word, power point, excel and the internet. I also learnt how scan, print ad photocopy during internship..."*

Behavioural change

The evaluation established that the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project contributed to improved sexual reproductive health for ACSWs. The girls and young women had relationship and sexuality concerns that were even making them vulnerable to exploitation by patrons in the community. They were always presenting with concerns that needed more information and knowledge in managing social issues. The project contributed positively to behavioral change among the girls and young women. The evaluation established that majority of these girls and young women have benefited from the different session and were more confident about the sexual reproductive health especially to negotiate for safer sex, family planning and general health and also had a positive

attitude towards life despite the challenging conditions they were experiencing. In on of the interviews, a young woman confessed:

" ... I was not able to share with any one about my challenges .... But after sometime at the center, I got relieved when I shared with Irene about my relationship problems with my partner, she counseled me and from that time onwards I am confident to talk about what I want with my partner... I also learnt about how to support other young women in the community to practice safe sex and family planning ..."

The evaluation team established that during BCC sessions, the girls and young women shared experiences and learnt about ASRH issues sometimes with less support from the social workers and the invited facilitators who were always invited from the community and partner organizations such as RHU, UYDEL, UYWES and KTC/KCCA. Individual counseling and BCC were reported by the girls and young women to have contributed to their behavioral improvement generally and in their different communities. For example their language changed from being vulgar/obscene (abusive), more responsible in terms of how they conduct them selves, respect for self and other, modest dressing among others. In one of the FGD a young woman noted: *"....I feared no one and felt that I was brighter than every one in the community. If some one could not realize that, I could just show them were they belong! I could abuse even a woman fit to be my mum with ease. ... but when I started coming to Somero and go new friends, I choose to stop doing some of those things and also changed how I dress to fit with the others ..."*

Job search skills

From the different interviews and FGDs with the girls and young women, the evaluation learnt that these beneficiaries had attained skills related to job searching. All the 55 young women attested to having learnt how to come up with a good application letter and how to develop and up date their curriculum vitae and presenting it. They were also confident to meet an employer and seek a job. Irene noted that before the project, most of the young women lacked the skills in writing a basic profile about them selves. She remembered that when facilitating this session, the young women expressed a lot of interest to learn more about how to express them selves when they meet an employer. From the interview, a young woman claimed *"... I always want to update my curriculum vitae, am confident to make application to any company and to go for an interview.... I believe that I will get the best job when I gain experience"*

Health information promotion

The evaluation established that health promotion was integrated as part of the program. In collaboration with the Kawempe Teenage centre (KTC/KCCA), the project increased awareness about ASRH among all the girls and young women every week on Friday and this was supplemented by individual counselling about the same and peer support amongst the young women. The young women always choose topical issues about their reproductive health that they

shared among small and bigger groups. These sharings had a significant and lasting impact on the young women who continued to practice what they had learnt from the facilitators and their peers. From a FGD it was agreed among the young women:

"we have learnt a lot of good things about our reproductive health especially our sexuality, family planning, pregnancy, condom use, about HIV/AIDS and STDS, and drug abuse...we can now also teach about these issues in our community such that other friends do make silly mistakes that will lead them to problems that some of us went through stupidly "

Life skills development

The evaluation established that the all the young women were enabled to develop life skills that they needed to function very well in their communities. These included skills of living and staying with one self and others and skills of making effective decisions. The young women were exposed to different activities to develop their awareness, confidence, esteem, assertiveness, skills in peer resistance and friendship formation, and how to make effective decisions. Many of the young women noted that they were not aware of there strengths and weaknesses and this made them vulnerable to exploitation by the different individuals and the community at large. They attribute the life skills trainings to their ability to make health and informed decisions in their daily lives. In one of the interviews when talking about other skills, knowledge and services received from Somero Uganda, a young girl expressed that; ... *this project helped me to understand myself very well, am now proud of myself. People thought that am a failure but with the IT skills I have learnt, I will prove everyone at home and work that am good at what I do...*

Financial literacy

The evaluation established that the design integrated financial literacy in the program. The young women, as part of the program, were enabled to attain financial literacy skills. This included the business tour and business skills training sessions. The young women were facilitated to move around in their community to look at the different businesses related to computer and IT. They were also challenged to identify and talk to a business owner about how they manage their business, what particular skills are required, why they choose that business location, what their business plan were, and how they run their business on a daily basis. In the FGD with the young women it was noted by one of the participants*: "... the business tour was really interesting; I got to learn about the different businesses that I can do with my skills in computer. I only thought that I can only work in a secretarial bureau but I saw that I can do very many businesses like in a studio, video library, secretary, cahier in a grocery and super market among others...even if I have not found a job, I will continue to look around until I find one or even start my own job."*

Literacy and numeracy

From the different interviews and the FGD, the evaluation team learnt that the young women especially those that lacked the literacy and numeracy skills, about 20 percent of the beneficiaries, were empowered with these skills. Every Wednesday and on an ongoing basis, individually, the young women were helped to acquire skills in basic literacy and numeracy as this was a pertinent requirement for the success as IT students. These skills were demonstrated in their ability to construct meaningful sentences in their class, ability to write application letters and other assignment that required comprehension of the English language. More still, the young women confessed that in any business, it is a requirement to have knowledge of literacy and numeracy because sometimes, during internship, they were required to write and calculate what they had done and spent on that day and balance this at the end of the day and or week. In one of the interviews with the young women, one of the respondents remembered *"... I don't know how to tell you this, I could not make a good sentence in English but Somero Uganda exposed me to this and I am really excited about speaking in English. My uncle has promised to introduce me to a friend whom I will work for in her office assistant."*

The program enabled very all the girls and young women to understand how to manage their problems. Majority had confidence and esteem problems related to relationship and sexuality mainly survival, transactional and commercial sex, other young women had family and or concerns especially about their boyfriends related to their children's care and support, and there were some who needed general counselling and guidance. The team established that the project empowered the young women with support to respond to their psychological, emotional, social and behavioural problems at personal, family, and community level. It was agreed in one of the FGDs that all these young women at one point had a serious problem and needed a person to talk to who was readily available and most time accessible at the centre during the time they were at the centre.

Internship

Almost all the girls and young women, that is, 95.5 percent (37) that were individually interviewed and 93.3 percent (14) of those in the FGDs, had an opportunity to practice the skills they had learnt at Somero Uganda for one month during internship. It was established that they these young women were given introductory letters and requested to identify internship positions in any business and or organisation that can practically contribute to their IT skills improvement. The young women used their friends and relatives to help them identify potential internship vacancies in the community. Most of them identified internet cafes, groceries, secretarial bureaus, supermarkets, photo studios, video libraries and offices among others. However the evaluation established that many of these young women were challenged to identify an internship position because most of the places required them to pay a particular fee for the time they would spend there. Among the other challenges were rude supervisors, sometimes lack of

work to do, lack of typing speed, feeding and transport costs during the time they spent for internship.

The evaluation team also established that the young women were not given sufficient support during the internship period as some were visited only once and other were not visited by the staff during the internship period.

On the other hand the internship supervisors and the mentors were very appreciative of the work that these young women did when they were undertaking their internship. The supervisors commended the out put of these young women and requested some of the young women to stay promising them payment after probation and or whenever they utilise their services. Some of the visited supervisors acknowledged that they gave the young people a job because they had had demonstrated the required skills for the job during internship. One of the KII respondents commented: *"I did not think mercy (not real name) could do any thing, but I gave her a chance because their teacher had personally called me to seek an internship position for her. I was surprised that she could do most of the things especially typing very well and my customers appreciated her. I trained her on things like scanning and printing which was really easy for her to learn!"*

Employment and Job placement

The evaluation established that some of the young women had found Jobs in line with their attained skills. Of the 40 young women interviewed plus the 15 who participated in the 3 FGDs, 27.3 percent (15) had managed to find a job in the IT related business, 32.7 percent (18) were still working where they did their internship on a voluntary and or when called basis. However their employers would facilitate them with a small allowance to cover their transport and meals costs. 5.5 percent (3) of them had gone back to school, that is, 3.6 percent (2) in formal school and 1.8 percent (1) in vocational training pursuing fashion and design. Interestingly 3.6 percent (2) of the young women had started their own charcoal making business from skills they had acquired during a session they had learnt about how to make charcoal.

Referral and collaboration

During the implementation of the project, it was realised that the young women required extra services that Somero Uganda could not offer under this project. This brought about the need to collaborate and refer these particular cases both internally in the organisation and outside to other organisations that had capacity and competence to offer such services such as, family planning services, screening and treatment of STDs, micro credit schemes, revision books among others. These young women were always referred to UYDEL and UYWES for vocational skills training, to RHU, Mulago hospital and KTC/KCCA for ASRH services and Barclays and centenary bank for financial services. The evaluation team, however, could not get hold of any record of how many girls and young women that were referred and to which place for a particular service.

Project relevance, effectiveness and sustainability

Relevance

The evaluation team assessed the extent to which the project targeted the needs, including the personal and professional empowerment, of the girls and young women using feasible approaches and strategies that were relevant to their context. One of the key strategies for the implementation of the project was community mobilization and consultation of with key stakeholders, that is, the girls and young women, local leaders, CDO, parents and the entire community. Community members especially the local leaders were instrumental in identifying and referring the vulnerable girls and young women, especially those who are commercially and sexually exploited, trafficked and adolescent parents, to Somero Uganda. Community mobilization enabled the project implementation staff to interact with community members and build rapport for collaborative work. Some community members, especially the local leaders always visited the centre to support the project implementation through mentorship, advice and counselling, follow up and referral of girls and young women.

The project is located in the one of the hotspots of commercial sexual exploitation of children a vice that is a push and pull factor for very many other social problems that have made children and young women vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and child trafficking. Kawempe division is characterised with a high rate of adolescent sex workers in Kampala-34.2% according to Ministry of Health 2009, high illiteracy levels especially among the young women and girls, and unemployment. The Somero Uganda national coordinator and the social workers noted that most of the girls were sexually active and confessed to having more than one sexual partner. This coupled with other factors makes them vulnerable to survival sex and the sex trade. The project's activity through the weekly BCC sessions and life skills training and consequently IT skills training empowered the girls and young women with the necessary skills to cope with employability challenges thus minimising on their vulnerability.

Additionally, the Somero Uganda centre is established in place that the girls and young women consider safe and friendly as a result of the services provided. During the interviews the girls and young women noted that the social workers, IT instructor and the literacy facilitators were skilled enough and used sometimes their local language to ease and ensure their understanding during the trainings. During the IT, BCC and literacy sessions, the young women commended their facilitators for being patient with them all the time, allowing them to have an equal opportunity to participate like the other learners who were equally were not exposed to this kind of learning activity.

More still, the girls liked the project for treating them with respect as most of the time they were consulted on all the topics to be discussed such as the topics they discussed in every BCC

session. The girls and young women were always actively involved in the planning and implementation of programs during there time at the centre.
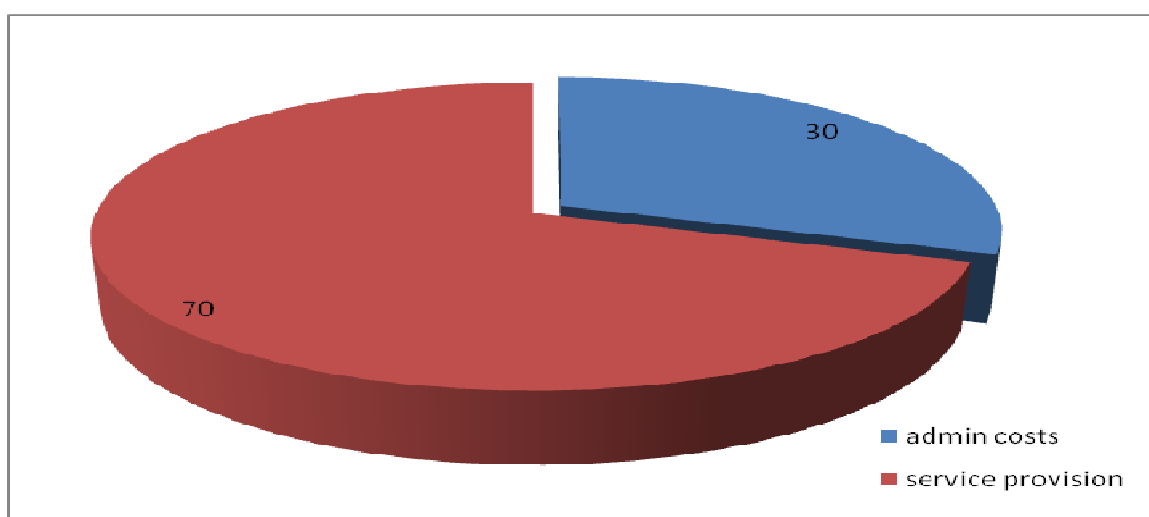
Finally, the project employed a combination of various approaches to address the needs of the young women especially in professional and personal skills development to ensure high impact of the project. Participatory approaches such as community mobilisation, dialogue, and group sessions in all the services like IT, counselling, literacy and ASRH were promoted to greatly improve the girls and young women access.

Effectiveness and efficiency

The effectiveness of the project was assessed by looking at the extent the project outputs and outcomes had been achieved. The evaluation established that most of the planned activities and outputs of the project had been achieved. At the time of evaluation, the project had achieved a 120 percent were 96 girls and young women, that is, 43 and 53 in the first and second phase respectively were reached unlike the targeted 80. According to the national coordinator and the other staff observed that the available resources were utilized maximally to meet the overwhelming number of girls and young women that were identified and supported to train in IT skill, literacy and numeracy and social and financial literacy.

It was noted from the national coordinator and the project accountant that more than 70 percent of the project budget was allocated to service provision and purchase of equipment meant to deliver services to the beneficiaries and only 30 percent was allocated to staff and other administrative costs.

Fig 5: Percentage expenditure of the project

Since most of the project targets were achieved, that is, 96 girls and young women were reached 16 more than the planned number, the evaluation concluded that the project effectively and

efficiently allocated and managed project resources. Discussions with the different stakeholders revealed that the project implemented most activities including the orientation meeting, BCC, internship; purchase of equipment (generator, internet serve, and projector among others) IT training, literacy and numeracy, business tour, internship program, and graduation within the project period to the satisfaction of project beneficiaries.

The evaluation team also noted that the adoption of innovative approaches for providing ASRH services in partnership with other service providers like RHU, KTC/KCCA, and UYDEL to young women through community mobilization and participatory approaches brought about the successive implementation of the project activities. These partnerships in turn ensured the holistic and continuous provision of the whole range of services needed by the beneficiaries and thereby avoiding duplication of services and effective utilization of the limited project resources.

The evaluation reviewed the human resources input including coordination, training and leadership for the project; utilization of local capabilities and skills; community mobilization; and capacity building in the implementation of the project which indicated good utilization of both technical staff employed by the project as well former beneficiaries supported the effective implementation of project activities. The project staff could, through weekly, monthly project focused meeting and work plan review meetings, keep track of outputs, budgets, beneficiaries and timeframe of program and project implementation; however it is the opinion of the evaluation team that Somero Uganda develops a monitoring and evaluation system to progressively track the successes of the beneficiaries to maintain tracking the record.

Sustainability

Sustainability was assessed in terms of Somero Uganda being able to ensure continuity of project activities and benefits to young women and the community members.

Evaluation established that the project had acquired several equipments like the projector, generator, laptops and a printer that could be utilized to train more vulnerable young women in the community. This has been further supported by the creation of 2 volunteer positions for trained young women to come back and support the training of other young women in the community.

The project established relationships with some organizations that provide various services including vocational skills, HCT, STD screening and treatment, and other ASRH services, to young women like UYDEL, RHU, UYWES and KCCA. These good collaborative relations with the different agencies will be utilized by the young women to who will continue receiving services from these Somero Uganda partners. However, the evaluation noted that the collaboration between the project and these organizations was informal since no memorandum of understanding had been signed between Somero Uganda and any of them. The project needs to

formalize its working relationship with these organizations in order to ensure easy access of services to the young women.

Somero Uganda has a fully fledged IT facility with more than 20 computers, photo copier, printer, projector and a generator. This facility in the community will ensure continuity of opportunities for equipping young women IT skill and psycho-social support.

Good practice

The evaluation noted some good practices adopted by Somero Uganda to ensure young women access to IT skills and psychosocial support in a sustainable manner. The evaluation established a number of good practices that needed to be documented and inform design to future programs and activities. These included integration of approaches, internship for the young women, financial literacy and numeracy, community participation and mobilization, the strong peer to peer network, IT and life skills training and referral to other service providers.

Community participation and mobilisation

The project worked very well with the community the local leaders in Kawempe division especially 4 local councillors and 2 chairpersons of Jambula and Lufula zones in Bwaise II parish where CSEC is predominant. This was as an opportunity for the project to map out the hot spots of commercial and sexual exploitation of children in the area and also lobby support for the project activities. The project also worked with all the persons that offered the beneficiaries internship opportunities such as business mentors and the community opinion leaders. This approach enabled the project to benefit from the community support during the implementation process and this further helped in the identification of the right group of people to benefit from the project activities. This was because the community knew very well what the project was about, its target and intended purpose.

Integration of approaches

The Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project benefited from the integration of several approaches for example, BCC, life skills development, individual and group counselling, life skills development, financial literacy and numeracy among others. These approaches ensured a complete range of support to the young women who after training were better positioned to utilise the IT skills but also having a rich set of other skills required to function effectively in the community when reintegrated back.

Peer to peer network

Commercial sex workers are a very hard group to penetrate mainly because of stigma in the community. These young people have chosen to create a community of their own to cope up with stigmatising community. Somero Uganda is one of the very few organisations with staff who associate freely with these young people. However this is because the strong peer to peer

system the organisation employs. The peers who are mostly former beneficiaries were involved in the project right from the planning stage, through identification, implementation monitoring and have worked with the evaluation team during the evaluation of the project. This has also been boosted by the fact that the staff have grown up and or lived in the area so they relate with fellow young people.

Internship

The project offered the trainees an opportunity to undertake a one month internship. This to most of the young women was an opportunity to show the world what they had they can equally deliver a services in a skilfully. The internship period exposed the worth of those young women that had been stigmatised by the community and in a way boosted their confidence and esteem. During this period, the young women who also benefited from the appreciation from their customers and this enabled them to realise that they can engage in gainful employment; actually, many of the young women after internship had already concluded on what they want to do.

Literacy and numeracy

The literacy and numeracy program enabled very many young women who had not got a chance of training in formal schools understand the different dynamics required in the job market. This particular program developed the skills of such girls and young women to acquire writing and presentation skills, in curriculum vitae writing, attending a job interview, manipulating calculations and business planning among others.

Notwithstanding the above good practices have been critical to the success of the project and have great potential for the sustainability of project activities, they need continuous refining and adaptation to meet the changing interests of young women in the community which they live.

Challenges

The evaluation revealed that whereas IT services were conveniently taught in an understandable language but the young women felt they missed out on some of the vital IT skills such as publisher graphics, photo shop and photography, scanning, printing, and laminating, photocopying and internet. These components were not taught/ not taught effectively and thus the girls and young women could not use the machines related to photo copying, still photo and video coverage, and binding which are required by most businesses and also enable the girls to compete favorably in the current job market. Additionally the software-(Picasa and Pinacle 9) used for some programs such as photo and video editing was easy to understand but not widely used in the field. Majority of the businesses are using adobe soft ware which made it difficult for the young women to integrate easily.

Though internship placement is very crucial for the successful integration and employability of the young women, the time was too limited for them to learn and thus missed out on this

exposure opportunity. The business mentors, for this case, the internship supervisors advised that the young women need to get at least 6 weeks of internship to get exposed to the different components in the business such as customer relations, record keeping, the real IT work that they do, and the real business interactions.

While Somero Uganda has established itself very well in the community where it works, it has to raise a lot of sensitisation about the different vulnerabilities of the girls and young women. This will address the issues of stigmatisation that some of the girls and young women have face as a result of the community dubbing the centre a place where prostitutes congregate. This alone brought about drop out of 3 young women and irregularities in attendance of another 5 who felt not protected enough to come to the centre to seek services.

Though Somero Uganda mobilised a lot of support for the project in the community, the male counter parts as part of the stakeholders were not targeted a lot to support their female counter parts through the project time. This brought about challenges where male counter parts competed for time with the project. For example 4 of beneficiaries' sexual partners discouraged them from coming for training as they thought they were wasting time and needed them to engage in other businesses like hawking, selling food stuff at the road side which also exposes them to more vulnerability and male dominance.

Although there were efforts to follow up girls and young women during their internship to support them, this was a onetime activity and to some not any follow up was done. This was insufficient considering that the girls and young women had insufficient knowledge and skills required to penetrate and get absorbed and integrated into the employability system.

The project did not have a component of home visits which is a very important aspect of understanding the different interests of the girls and the young women. Some of the young women interviewed confessed that they could not come because of challenges with their families especially when they had no one to leave their children with and not knowing how they would survive in the night and the following morning. To such cases a home visit would be important to understand the particular interests of such beneficiaries and assess how the project can help.

The BBC topics/sessions were very informative but the design of the project presented some challenges. In the first case, the sessions were provided jointly, in the mid morning and thus the young women that had afternoon classes had to join students of the morning class. The evaluation revealed that some of the girls missed out on some topic mainly because their convenient time to come to the center was during the afternoon.

More to that, the sessions revealed a desire for the girls and young women to seek health services especially STI and HCT but the project design did not provide for such services. It's true that the networking hoped to have bridged this gap however the stigma and cost attached to service in these health centres scared away the beneficiaries.

Additionally the girls and young women developed the desire to reach out to fellow youth with ASRH information but lack competent peer education skills and support from the organisation.

Administratively there were an overwhelming number of girls and young women seeking services compared to the equipments available. This made the assessment process very difficult for the staff. 65 and 71 girls were identified in the first and second half of the project respectively. Though the project managed to reach to up to 43 and 53 girls (an extra of 16 girls) in the first and second half respectively, the need was not satisfied.

Conclusion and recommendations

Conclusions

The evaluation established that the Somero Uganda was successful in empowering young women with IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment. There was increased knowledge and demonstrable skills in the utilisation of computer applications especially in all MS Office packages like word, power point, access and excel; internet and other computer appliances like the scanner, printer, and photocopier. These skills were noted as employability opportunities among the young women trained because among the 45 girls interviewed, 15 had found jobs in IT related businesses, another 18 still working were they did their internship on either voluntary and or as is basis, and 2 had started their own business.

The evaluation established that the young women were, after training, more aware about ASRH issues such as protection against STIs and HIV/AIDS, voluntary counseling and testing for HIV/AIDS, and family planning. The project significantly increased knowledge on access and utilization of ASRH services among the young women and also greatly improved their health seeking behavior. The project profoundly contributed to behavioral change among the young women who realized the importance of family planning; need to avoid risky behavior that can expose them to several health risks like multiple sexual partners, unwanted pregnancies, abortions, sex work, and drug abuse.

The project was successful in addressing the interests of the young women in the community. With the different characteristics of the young women in Kawempe division, the project addressed the employment needs, the literacy issues, the social concerns and the inclusion esteem concerns among the young women in the community. The design of the project ensured that the young women are completely transformed through the IT skills acquisition by targeting the young women's complete wellbeing that is their health and socio-economic needs.

The evaluation also established that the packages offered by Somero Uganda need to be diversified to include as much packages that their can be in the IT related business identified in the business tour. During this tour, the young women identified different businesses including photo studios, video libraries, super markets, schools, offices, internet cafes, business centers,

television and radio stations, movie making companies, among others. As suggested by the young women, including topics such as Movie making, graphics, photo shops would enable them to access the job market very easily.

The evaluation however established some inadequacies in collaborations that are not formal with most of the partners which compromised young women acquisition of services through referrals to these particular organizations. Young women were always referred to UYDEL, AFFCAD, UYWES, RHU and KTC/KCCA -Kawempe health center IV for other services such as vocational skills training, entrepreneurial ship and health related services but could not easily seek these services as no note and or referral card was written to a particular officer at this organization and when the contact person known to them was missing, then the young women could leave the health facility minus a service. The director for AFFCAD observed that it would be important for Somero Uganda to establish partnership with several other organizations like to offer the young women with a comprehensive range of services.

Recommendations

There is need to include more IT packages when teaching IT to ensure that the young women can have a lot to choose from when they go out to search for jobs and also enable them compete very well when they are out in the job market.

There is also need to integrate the more services to meet the complete range of needs and interests of the young women. This is important as these needs are not static and are bound to be different from one person to another.

There is need for more follow up on the young women during internship and when they finally graduate and leave the program. Further still, Somero Uganda needs to establish a monitoring and evaluation system to track the progress of the young women undertaking IT skills training.

Somero-Uganda needs to formalise collaborations with the other service providers it refers young women for services. They need also to sign memorandums of understand to ascertain how they collaboration shall be managed and sustained.

The organization needs to mobilize more resources to support more young women undertaking IT skills training at the center and also consider committing resources to cater for an additional instructor at the center. This will be essential for promoting learning and reducing overload by the one instructor.