SOMERO UGANDA

TEACHING AND LEARNING - IT-SKILLS AS A MEANS OF SELF-EMPOWERMENT FOR YOUNG WOMEN IN UGANDA

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION REPORT

February 2015

Executive summary

The gaps identified in implementing the first phase of the project "IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda" 2012 led to the designing of the second phase of the project October 2013-December 2014. The project still funded by Somero e.V. /Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken involved the different stakeholders, right from the designing, implementation and evaluation.

The project was flexible enough to allow new innovations and solicited funds and expertise from other donors and partners to support its successful implementation. In terms of coverage the project was designed for Kawempe division Kampala district. More still there was more concentration on specific Villages which harbors the most vulnerable youth in the division. Interventions were specific for this area given the unique character as compared to all other division in Kampala district and the other parts of the country. Kawempe division is the largest slum area in Kampala with the population mainly dominated by female youth. Majority earn out of risky behaviors including commercial sex which renders them directly victims of sexual exploitation among others. There is community stigma towards these girls. The project considered involving their male counterparts as major stakeholders into consideration during the design so as to break the chain of stigma. The project was designed to reach out to 100 girls and young women at risk or involved in commercial sex work.

Evaluation of the project was designed to be a process evaluation. A team of evaluators led by Ms. Akello Betty was contracted right from the beginning of the project. In the sixth month of the project the team was joined by Ms. Janna Rassman and Mr. Karlheinz Niescken from Somero e.V. who worked together for three weeks.

The periodic evaluation process presented the gaps identified and made recommendations that were considered by the organization management. One month after the successful implementation of the project, a final evaluation has been carried out to assess the impact of the whole project. This report therefore presents the team's independent findings and conclusions of the project from the evaluation exercise.

Background

In 2012, the Somero Uganda received a grant from Somero e.V/Nord Suid Brucken to implement the project "Teaching and learning" - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda. The one year project was implemented from June 2012 –June 2013. In June 2013 an Evaluation was conducted www.somero-uganda.org to assess the impact of the project to the beneficiaries and communities of Kawempe division where the project was implemented.

The gaps identified in the project evaluation report June 2013 led to the designing of a 15 months scale-up project from October 2013-December 2014. The project has also been funded by by Somero e.V. /Stiftung Nord-Süd-Brücken.

The project was implemented by Somero Uganda in Kawempe division, Kampala Capital City Authority. The overall goal of the project was the individual and professional empowerment of girls and young women, aged between 16 and 25 years, through computer skills training 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; assess the relevance and effectiveness of the project design, monitoring and implementation systems of the project and document the best practices and lessons learnt to inform sustainability plans and future interventions; and also document challenges, and suggest recommendations.

The project was implemented in partnership with Reproductive Health Uganda, the National Child Labor partnership committee and the National council for children. The project was also boasted by a sexual reproductive health project "Keep it Real" implemented by "Action for Community Development" (ACODEV), funded by Save the Children and the "IT entrepreneurial skills development" project implemented by Somero Uganda funded by the ILO Youth to Youth fund.

Summary of findings

Good practice

Conducting Preparation activities at the beginning of the project provided ground for the project to be implemented effectively. The community understood the project and gave it full support right from the beginning. Also the project being designed in a flexible manner enabled views from the community members to be integrated which made them own it.

ICT employable Skills is a unique approach in the community. Its curriculum employs specialized classes to allow professionalism. These provide an opportunity for the beneficiaries to gain professional skills, get focused and easily allow room for upgrading with other educational institutions.

The integration of financial literacy, business skills and internship programs in the training prepares the beneficiaries for the entrepreneurial and employment skills. The culture of saving towards setting up own business is developed on top of searching and maintaining jobs.

Process documentation of the project is a key strength that the project highly made use of. Periodic reports, production of Basic computer and financial literacy training manuals were developed.

Networking and referral, integrating sexual reproductive health, Development of community art murals by the beneficiaries, carry on peer activities in communities and schools and awarding of certificates during the graduation ceremony also developed esteem among the beneficiaries.

Challenges

The center has one computer lab with only 20 laptops which does not accommodate all the specialized skills at ago. This also makes practice very difficult.

There is limited space for the youth both male and female to   interact and share issues concerning their own lives.

 51.6% of the young women reached out to by the project are young mothers. These had to carry their babies to classes which did not only affect the studies but the entire classes. The evaluation also found out that the same young mothers are getting problems finding jobs as many employers

do not want to work with mothers yet they do not have enough money to hire child care helpers as they go to work.

There was only two staff to provide computer basic lessons and at the same time the three specialized classes. On top of this, these same staff was expected to deliver other duties including community activities. The effectiveness of the staff was compromised.

The period of internship is too limited for providing all the skills needed and to develop entrepreneurship skills.

There is 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.

There was a number of health services needed by the beneficiaries including treatment of STIs and provision of family planning methods that could not be provided by the project or the partner due to lack of budget to finance the activities.

Suggestions on how to improve the computer programs at Somero

There is need for more computers preferably desktops than laptops with bigger capacity to accommodate up to date soft ware. The organization also needs to get a more spacious place within the slums that could cater for all the specialized classes. There should also be specific trainers hired to handle the specific classes for effective learning.

There is need to setup a youth corner in the community to provide a safer place for the youth both male and female to interact freely as they both support each other towards development.

The young mothers however wished to have a room set with toys and beds for their children to play and rest as they continue with their education or go for work.

There is need to increase the period of exposure to practicum without increasing the period of the training. Also Somero Uganda needs to design an approach that could help the beneficiaries get startup capital to help majority start their own businesses.

More projects are needed to cater for the increasing number of beneficiaries. These should also cater for treatment of STIs and provision of family planning methods.

Conclusion and recommendations

The evaluation established that Somero Uganda was successful in empowering young women with IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment. The different approaches employed are very relevant to the 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.

Table of figures and tables

List of acronyms

ACODEV: Action for Community Development

AFFCAD: Action For Fundamental Change and Development.

AIDS: Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome.

ASRH: Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health

CBO: Community Based Organization

CSWs: Commercial Sex Workers

CV: Curriculum Vitae

FGD: Focus Group Discussions

GLEN: Global Education Network

HIV: Human Immune-deficiency Virus

HUYSLINCI: Huys Link Community Initiative

ICT: Information Communication Technology

ILO: International Labour Organization

IT: Information Technology

KII: Key Informants Interview

NGO: Non Government Organization

RHU: Reproductive Health Uganda

STDs: Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

STIs: Sexually Transmitted Infections

Y2Y: Youth to Youth

Acknowledgement

Somero Uganda would like to extend her gratitude to the evaluation team led by Ms. Akello Betty Flora who worked so much to ensure that this documentation is in order.

The evaluation team conveys sincere thanks to all those persons that have made the Teaching and learning - IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment for young women in Uganda project evaluation a success. Our thanks go to Mr. Nsubuga Geofrey, the National coordinator, and Janna Rassmann and Mr. Kalheinz Niescken of the Somero e.V. for their technical assistance. We are also grateful to Ms. Sanyu Ruth the IT specialist, Ms. Irene Nakakande, the senior programs manager, Ms. Najjuma Lydia the Accountant, Mr. Olweny Arthur, the community programs officer, Ms. Sarah Nandawula, the communication officer and Ms. Nambuusi Linda, the youth leader for their unwavering support during the evaluation exercise and their insights and experiences about the project.

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

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1. Evaluation methodology

1.1. Introduction

This project evaluation was not a onetime activity but rather a process evaluation throughout the project implementation. The design of the approach kept changing with new interventions brought on board by different partners. The evaluation team has been present right from the beginning of the project engaging different stakeholders at all levels including the community leaders, the project beneficiaries, the male counterparts, the business mentors, internship supervisors, project staff, and collaborating organizations for referral services. In March 2014, the team was joined by Ms. Janna Rassman and Mr. Karlheinz Niescken for 3 weeks. In June 2014, a mid project evaluation was conducted.

A month after the project-end Feb 2015, the team conducted the final evaluation process. The overall aim of the evaluation was to assess and document the impact of the project on their psychosocial wellbeing, to identify best practices and lessons that can inform future interventions. 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 the community, Collect information to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the project design, implementation, and monitoring in addressing the interests of the girls and young women and the community as a whole, Identify and document best practices and lessons for sustainability plans and future interventions and Document challenges and suggest viable recommendations.

This report therefore provides the general overview of the project evaluation as carried out right from the beginning of the project to the end. The team designed tools to gather information and these were used during the evaluation process, these included key informant interview guide questions, focus group discussions topics, observation and questionnaires. The tools enabled the evaluation team to identify the impact, discover lessons, case studies and best practices of the project.

1.1.1. Consultative meetings

The evaluation team had regular consultations and feedback meetings with the staff and the management team to orient them about the project for better understanding of the project, provide feedback and discuss the processes of implementing the evaluation exercise.

Meetings were also held with the community leaders, the project beneficiaries, the male counterparts, the business mentors, internship supervisors, project staff, and partners.

1.1.2. Selection of respondents

The evaluation team managed to interview all the direct beneficiaries of the project at the beginning, during and after the project. Also all the staff, volunteers and internship students were interviewed. The other respondents were decided upon by the team and together with the management of the project basing on their participation in the project.

1.1.3. Key informants interviews

The evaluation team conducted at least two Key informant interviews (KII) with the 100 direct project beneficiaries throughout the project implementation period. KIIs were also conducted with the project staff, volunteers and students interns and partners including Child Protection Officer (Police), the National Director, Children of Uganda (NGO), a donor representative of Stichting 10% (Donor), the director, HUYSLINCI (NGO), the director of Studies Makerere Adult School, the Director Saint Elizabeth Girls Center (NGO), the director of AFFCAD (CBO).

1.1.4. Observation

Throughout the project, the evaluation team also participated in direct observation of some of the beneficiaries as a means of gathering and assessing the level of achievement of the project objectives.

1.1.5. Focus Group Discussions

3 Focus groups discussions (FGD) were facilitated by the evaluation team. These FGDs were managed by a moderator and a note taker within the groups of 10 local leaders, 30 male counterparts, 21 former beneficiaries, 30 peer educators and 09 members of staff. The discussions were guided by pre-set questions that were used during the analysis of the information gathered.

1.1.6. Document review

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

2. 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 housemaids 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 not accepted in Uganda.

3. Findings of the evaluation

This project evaluation assessed the intended and unintended impact of the project in line economic empowerment and wellbeing of the girls and young women and community at large. The following was captured

3.1.   Demographic characteristics of the respondents

A total of 100 children and young women were successfully trained and followed to discover how effective the Somero IT program was, in empowering them. These were trained in two intakes, the January –June 2014 intake and the June –December 2014 intake

Table 1 Number of direct project beneficiaries.

Intake	N0	%
January-June (1st intake)	58	58%
June-December (2nd intake)	41	41%
Drop out	1	1%
Totals	**100**	**100%**

One among the a hundred beneficiaries dropped out as a result of change in residence. This girl is not included in the rest of the documentation.

3.1.1. Age groups

Out the 99 young women who were successfully trained and followed after the training period, 3 were children according to the Ugandan constitution with one girl aged 16 and 2 aged 17 years, while the rest were from the age of 18 years to 27 years

3.1.2. Provenience

The young women trained in the year 2014, a percentage of 50% of the beneficiaries were basically coming from Bwaise-Kazo and their surrounding areas of Nabweru, Makerere, Kawanda, Kyebando, Nansana and Nakulabye, the remaining 49% trekked from the slums of

Kawempe division, and its surrounding areas of Kagoma, Kawanda, Kawaala, Katooke, Mbuya, Maganjo and Kanyanya

Table 2 Areas of provenience in percentage

Areas of provenience	Percentage (%)
Kawempe and surrounding areas	49.5%
Bwaise- Kazo and surrounding areas	50.5%
Totals	100%

3.2.   Impact of the project on girls and young women

The project successfully implemented several activities. These were categorized into 5 major blocks including;

1. Sensitization of community and preparation of the project, in this category, qualified and skilled staff were contracted, oriented and held periodic meetings to ensure the project kept on truck. The project oriented community leaders including local council leaders, the religious and cultural leaders.Through wokshops, the Networking organizations were also oriented to strengthen collaboration and referral. Most importantly the male counterparts were reached and oriented to empower them to support their female counterparts who were the beneficiaries throughout the project life. In preparation of the project, the computer classes were equipped with all the necessities needed for the smooth running of the project.

During the Orientation of Community leaders about the project

2. ICT employable Skills development. There were major changes in the deliverance of the ICT skills development that arose as a result of the evaluation of the first phase of IT project June 2012. This project was designed to cater for IT specialized skills to allow participants develop professionalism. The six months training called for all participants to first go through computer literacy classes for 2 months and then select one employable IT skill among Graphic designing, Secretarial, or Photo and Videography. The specialized classes go on for 3 months and there after internship for one month.

   Other activities under this category included the launch of the project, Orientation, motivation workshops and career guidance for the beneficiaries and safe IT skills training

3. Business Skills development was another category introduced in the second phase of the project. A lot of emphasis was put on this category to ensure that the beneficiaries gain entrepreneurial skills. Here classes in accounting and finance were held every week, Business skills development workshop, business tours, and internships were conducted. The project alone could not however provide all that was needed to train the beneficiaries into entrepreneurs. Fortunately, the project was boasted by the "IT entrepreneurial project" June-December 2014. The ILO Y2Y funded project trained the beneficiaries in skills on how to start and maintain a business, how to access loans and supported them to legalize their businesses.

The beneficiaries during a business tour   *A workshop on formation of Savings and Loan Associations*

4. Psychosocial Support provided Life skills building workshop, home visits, Peer to peer activities, Workshop on reproductive health and family planning, Behavioral change and communication sessions and Community mobile clinics. There was a strong network between Somero Uganda and Reproductive health Uganda-Bwaise clinic. More still the category was boasted by the "Keep It Real" a sexual and reproductive health project implemented by ACODEV, funded by Save the Children

Peer to peer activities in St. James S.S Lugoba

5. Somero Community Networking and Advocacy allowed the beneficiaries to attend International day celebrations, Development of community art murals, carry on peer activities in communities and schools and awarding of certificates during the graduation ceremony. Also a number of documentations were held including Compiling an IT training manual, compiling the financial literacy manual, and now the project evaluation report.

The evaluation found out that these activities created a lot of impact in the lives of the beneficiaries as discussed below.

The evaluation established that the project received a strong community support right from the beginning, during and up to the end. The community at large appreciated the implementation of the project and asked to extend it not only to commercial sexual workers but to include all out of school slum girls and some male counterparts. The community members including the local council leaders, the religious and cultural leaders, and the business mentors were still following up the progress of the beneficiaries by the time the evaluation was conducted.

Bringing on board male counterparts was a unique design of the project. Acording to the young women, their boyfreinds provided them with full support throughout the project. As one of them narrated*; "......he even helped with house chores and meet some transport to the center,"* it shows how far the male can go to support female conterparts if sensitised. Interviewing the males who were part of the project, we found out that they saw the project as an oppotuinty to increase income to their families. Still even when some of the young women had not got jobs yet at the

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time of the last evaluation, their male conterparts still had hope that they will get jobs soon, given the skills they have unlike before.

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The evaluation found that the design of the classes led to effective learning. The beneficiaries appreciated the orientation and career guidance workshops.

As a result, 99 young women were successfully trained and demonstrated IT skills with 28 gaining skills in graphic designing, 31 in secretarial studies, and 40 in photo and video editing.

**Table 3 Number of young women by skill trained**

Skill	Number of girls	Percentage (%)
Secretarial studies	31	31.1%
Graphic designing	28	28.2%
Photo and video editing	40	40.4%
TOTALS	99	100%

From the different interviews with the girls and young women and business mentors, the evaluation learnt that the beneficiaries had attained skills related to job creation.

This was as a result of the business skills activities, financial literacy with a combination of business language and numeracy. The business tours, workshops challenged the young women to also be entrepreneurial. Given Low levels of education with 52%, 32% and 16% with a Primary, Ordinary and high school level, financial literacy proved to be very helpful to the beneficiaries at their workplace.

Figure 1 **Level of Education**
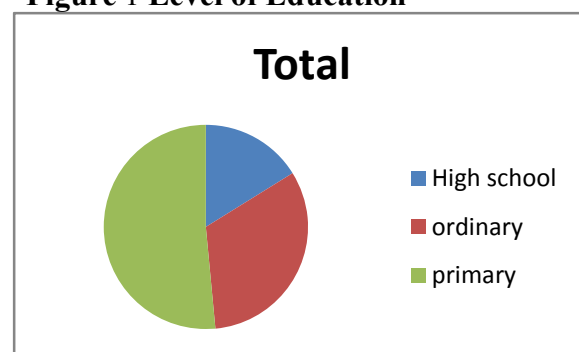
More still, the young women confessed that it has been a necessity for them to write and calculate what they earn, spent and purchase not only at work but with social life as well.

The business groups

The evaluation established that all the 99 beneficiaries joined business groups during the project implementation. The groups had 8-10 members, where they were encouraged to save to raise capital. By the time the evaluation took place however, 6 of the 10 business groups were still active. 8 of the participants had joined group business and 7 had setup individual businesses with the raised savings.

Employment

The evaluation also found out that the beneficiaries earned job seeking skills. They were confident to write an own profile, application and take on an interview among others. Though not all had got jobs by the time of an interview, all beneficiaries appreciated the skills. By the time of the interview 47 had successfully got jobs and employed in different fields.

The graduation ceremony created a great impact to the beneficiaries as many were identified by potential employers and it's here that they got jobs yet others were retained and employed as a result of the internship program

Table 4 Working and not working beneficiaries

Categories of the followed young women beneficiaries	Total No. working	Kind of work		Percentages (%)
		Computer related work	Other kind of work	
	62			
Employed		56 %	06 %	62.6%
		90%	**10%**	
Unemployed	37			37.3%
Totals	**99**			**100%**

It was discovered that 62 of the young women followed were either employed, group employed or self employed. 56 of these working young women worked in computer related businesses that included secretarial bureaus selling stationery, typing, printing, photocopying, doing graphics designing, editing and producing still photos or videos, guiding customers on internet access and

safety as well as training basic computer application skills to customers in computer cafes. Some young women, 6 were found working in jobs outside the computer field especially in shops as shop attendants, hair dressers, market venders and also running craft making businesses. 37 of the girls and young women followed had not yet got jobs by the time of data collection, but were hopeful of finding job opportunities in a short while.

It was established that the employed young women did not take them too long to get jobs which shows the relevancy of the program. On average, Job acquisition lasted between 1- 6 months, of which 28 girls got their jobs in less than 1 month. This was possible due to factors including internship placement where girls (35.48%) were employed after the internship period, 34% with the profiling and application workshops which exposed the girls to making CV and applied and got jobs, 19.35% through a bigger network of friends got from Somero Uganda who connected them to relevant jobs.

Though all the young women were in saving groups, it was had for them to raise enough capital to setup own business. However 8.0% of the employed young women managed to raise capital to setup joint business while 3.2% started their own businesses.

By the time of the internship however, majority of the working beneficiaries were still on probation. It was established however that all the working beneficiaries were earning an allowance on a weekly or monthly basis. This was meant to cater of their transport and meals at work. Those who earned transport earned between 20,000 shs - 35,000 shs per month and allowances for lunch ranged 1,500 shs-2,000 shs per day. However, those who got paid at their work, earned between 50,000 shs and 380,000 shs per month. Some of these still earned allowances.

Psychosocial Support
The evaluation established that the Psychosocial Support activities built esteem among the young women and trimmed their future. The beneficiaries confessed that the Somero center become a safer place where they could freely talk about issues of sex, sexuality, and relationship, general health, develop life skills, and discuss employment opportunities The project contributed positively to behavioral change among the girls and young women.
In collaboration with the Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), 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 Keep It Real project funded by Save the Children also introduced the e-learning lessons which also boasted the learning. As a result of all the information attained the young women formed a peer group -the inspirational dancers- which employs modern dancing to sensitise fellow peers about risky behaviours.

Somero Community Networking and Advocacy

The evaluation established that networking with other organizations helped the project to provide services that Somero Uganda could not offer. Working with these partners created continuity of the project even after the implementation. It was established that the beneficiaries were still receiving services from the different partners even after the project.

Some of the organizations connected or provided jobs to the beneficiaries. Besides some networking organization saw it as a need to plan projects together with Somero Uganda which boasted the project.

Table 5 Funding partners with their contributions

Period of implementation	Funder	Project Name and funding	Project contribution
	Stifiting 10%	The Role model project	The project equipped the 100 girls and young Women through skills development workshops in making briskets. This provided a diversity of skills for the young women to earn a living
	ILO Y2Y fund managed by HUYSLINC	The ICT entrepreneurial skills development project $8321	The project equipped 50 beneficiaries who had started businesses with entrepreneurial skills in business management, marketing and legalizing their businesses.
	Save the Children	Keep It Real project (Donations and expertise)	The Sexual reproductive health project strengthened the component of psycho social support. The project also donated 12 computers and solar panels

			which boasted the IT trainings.

Table 6 Local partners and their contributions

Partner	Contributions
Uganda Women's efforts to Save orphans	Expertise and trainings on business groups formation and maintenance
Federation of Uganda Employers	Expertise and facilitation on starting a business, management, taxation, and business mentorship
Reproductive Health Uganda Bwaise Clinic	Training and facilitation on Reproductive health and Behavioral Change.
National council for Children	Technical Adviser; National issues.
Action for Community Development (ACODEV)	Technical Advisor; Keep It Real sexual and reproductive health project.

4. Good practice, Challenges and suggestions

4.1. 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 documentation of the training manual, integration of approaches, partnership, and internship for the young women, financial literacy and numeracy, community

participation and mobilization, specialized, IT and life skills training and referral to other service providers.

1. Preparation activities at the beginning of the project provided ground for the project to be implemented effectively. The community understood the project and gave it full support right from the begging. Also the project being designed in a flexible manner enabled views from the community members to be integrated which made them own it. The community also monitored the project on a periodic basis and they also organised quarterly meetings to provide feedback of what they think of the project. It's through the strong involvement of the community that Somero Uganda started working on the Save the Children funded project-Keep it real.

2. ICT employable Skills is a unique approach in the community and that as compared to the traditional vocational skills development provided by other service providers in the community. The approach also supplements these vocational skills as many employers irrespectively of the field are using computerized equipments. The curriculum also stands chances to be shared as it calls for 70% practice lessons.

3. The specialized classes also allow professionalism. They provide an opportunity for the learners to gain professional skills, get focused and easily allow room for upgrading with other education institutions.

4. The integration of financial literacy, business skills and internship programs in the training prepares the beneficiaries for the entrepreneurial and employment skills. The culture of saving towards setting up own business is developed on top of searching and maintaining jobs. This gives the beneficiaries a number of choices for a better future.

5. Documentation of the project is a key strength that the project highly made use of. There has been process documentation of the project which has helped the project to get evidence to solicit for supplementary funds to enhance the implementation. Periodic reports, production of Basic computer and financial literacy training manuals, and finally the works toward the production of this report shall always leave trace of how to implement, maintain and improve on the activities.

6. Networking and referral, integrating sexual reproductive health, Development of community art murals by the beneficiaries, carry on peer activities in communities and

schools and awarding of Graduation ceremony also developed esteem among the beneficiaries.

4.2.   Challenges

- The center has one computer lab with about 20 laptops. The trainers reported that many of the laptops could not support the new IT software including adobe suites which they would like to teach the beneficiaries. The business mentors also complained of the old software that Somero Uganda uses to train young people, which makes it hard for the them to integrate easily into the market.

- The one computer lab was also used to train all the three specialized skills. This meant that the beneficiaries had to wait for one group to get out before the other went in. As one of the beneficiaries narrated, *"…….practice became hard with the limited computers and time. Even during the days set for personal practice as per the timetable, some trainers fixed lessons so as to catch up with the content*." More still the costs of maintaining the laptops were increasingly high than expected.

- The involvement of the male counterparts bought an even more overwhelming number of youth who could assess the center on a daily basis but the space at the center is not enough to cater for these youth. In supporting the young women, the male counterparts devoted time to visit them, walk with them to and from and some also carried meals as the young women continued with their training. Though Somero Uganda provides space and some board games for the youth to play as they wait for their female counterparts, the space at the center was too small to cater for a friendly environment.

- Over 51.6% of the young women reached out to by the project are young mothers. These had to carry their babies to classes which did not only affect the studies but the entire classes. The evaluation also found out that the same young mothers are getting problems finding jobs as many employers do not want to work with mothers yet they do not have enough money to hire child care helpers as they go to work.

- There was only two staff to provide computer basic lessons at the same time the three specialized classes. On top of this, these same staff was expected to deliver other duties including community activities. The effectiveness of the staff was compromised.

- 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 2 months 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.

- Though the project helped to develop entrepreneurship skills, the beneficiaries failed out due to lack of start-up kits and monetary capital. This made it very hard for most of them to start own businesses.

- 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.

- There was a number of health services needed by the beneficiaries that could not be provided by the project could not support or the partner. There was no budget for treatment. Even when the mobile clinics were held in the community, the services provided did not have enough drugs to cater for the treatment, especially of STIs. More still there was a high demand of family planning services but the project could only provide condoms.

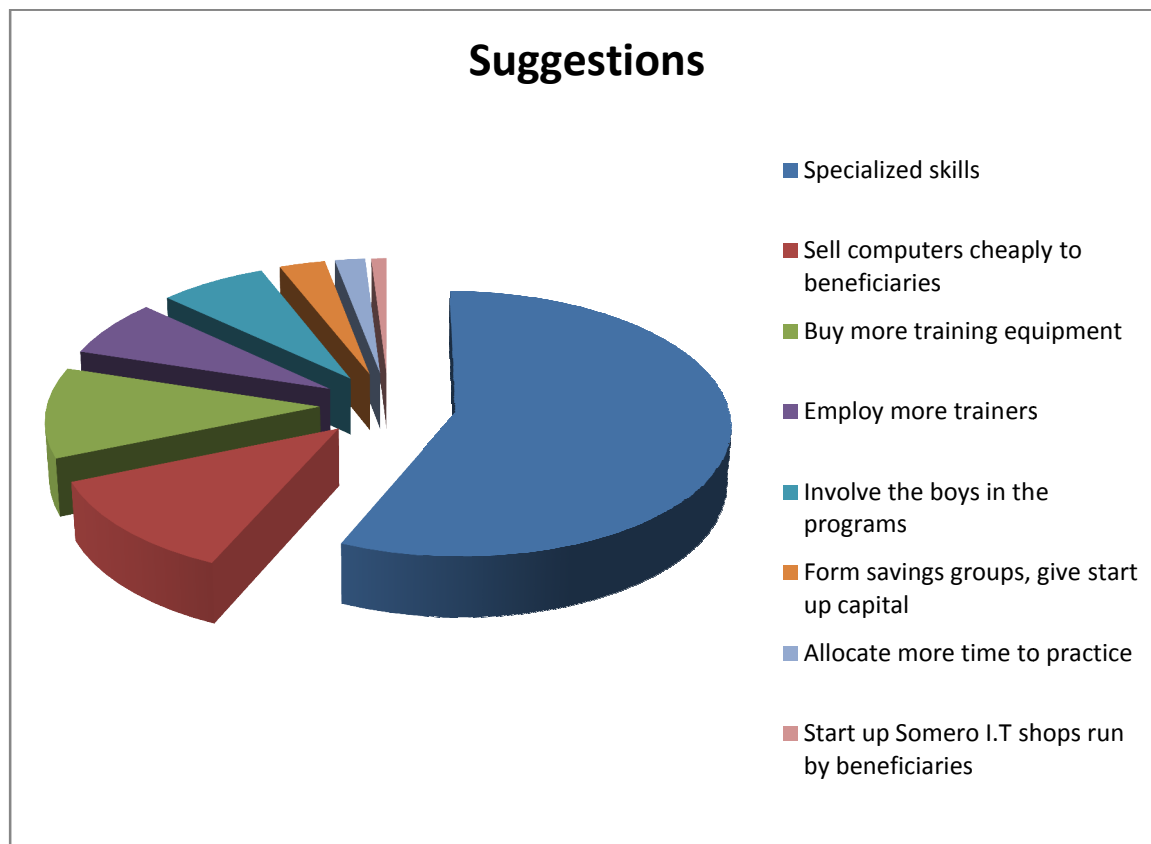## 4.3. Suggestions on how to improve the computer programs at Somero

By the time the last evaluation was conducted, the organization had already started working on some of the challenges foreseen; however these suggestions written here are as gathered by the evaluation team.

- There is need for more computers preferably desktops than laptops with bigger capacity to accommodate the up to date soft ware. The organization also needs to get a more specious place within the slums that could cater for all the specialized classes. There should also be specific trainers hired to handle the specific classes for effective learning.

- There is need to setup a youth corner in the community to provide a safer place for the youth both male and female to interact freely as they both support each other towards development. Dreaming of this place one of the male counterpart said, *"……..a place*

for sports activities, a Television set to watch football, with friendly social workers who can help us solve family issues."

- The young mothers however wished to have a space set with toys and beds for their children to play and rest as they continue with their education or go for work.

- There is need to increase the period of exposure to practicum without increasing the period of the training. Also Somero Uganda needs to design an approach that could help the beneficiaries get startup capital to help majority start their own businesses.

- More projects are needed to cater for the increasing number of beneficiaries. These should also cater for treatment of STIs and provision of family planning methods.

- From the findings, the young women were more interested in learning the hands on skills that could be applied as soon as taught to make money, considering that they really had to fit into the alternative for their former livelihoods that kept them getting money whenever they needed it.

Such skills were described by some of them as quick skills which did not have to wait for the training to end before one could apply them to make money and included making paper beads, designing seasonal cards, business cards, taking and printing photos, using the different secretarial bureau machines, designing logos, and posters. And the main reason why most of the young women suggested to Somero to sell computers freely to the beneficiaries was to increase their chances of perfecting their skills while outside the centre as they produce items for customers where ever they get stationed.

Figure 2 Other suggestions

Suggestions

- Specialized skills
- Sell computers cheaply to beneficiaries
- Buy more training equipment
- Employ more trainers
- Involve the boys in the programs
- Form savings groups, give start up capital
- Allocate more time to practice
- Start up Somero I.T shops run by beneficiaries

4.4.   Conclusion and recommendations

The evaluation established that Somero Uganda was successful in empowering young women with IT-Skills as a means of self-empowerment. The different approaches employed are very relevant to 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 essence of the Somero Uganda IT training does not only prepare the young women for the formal employment sector, but to empower them to also be able to start their own jobs, to

strengthen their social economic wellbeing as well as ensure health promotion for better personal growth and development as young entrepreneurs.