

Improvement of school environment to combat Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) challenges to Stop Adolescent Girls' School Dropouts in Uganda project

Gender Awareness Session

Date: 17th/04/2017

Venue: Kibalinga Primary School (11:00am - 1:00pm)

Lwawuna Primary School (2:00pm - 5:00pm)

Date: 03rd/05/2017

Venue: Precious Child Learning center

Background

Majority people believe that everyone has equal rights regardless of sex, religion, tribe, race, family background; each individual is born free and is supposed to enjoy equal rights. However, in reality, especially in economically challenged communities, the existing social-cultural belief creates gaps between male and female. Most of the traditional beliefs favors males than females and this explain why women/girls still lag behind. The social-cultural norms continue to promote gender imbalances between male and female, these cultural beliefs limit females from accessing equal treatment and privileges like males. The following are some of the social/cultural beliefs that put females inferior to males.

- Girl children's education considered to be time wasting since girls are seen as acquiring wealth in form of getting dowry.
- Female having little or no access to property and inheritance.
- An adolescent girl getting her first menstrual period she is considered to be ready for marriage.
- It is the sole responsibility of women /female to give birth to children and being fertile, and they cannot play other important roles in the society

Some teachers at school use negative words and language especially to adolescent girls that sometimes discourages/demoralizes them, with that pupils need to know the different gender roles and responsibilities. (International journal of innovation, management and technology by Dr. Anita L. Allan)

According to one on one counseling sessions conducted by SORAK, some adolescent girls expressed their concern on the type of languages some teachers are using. Teachers as changing agents they need to know about gender issues and sensitivity in order to keep girls in school and create a good learning environment. They should mind about the language they use in class and

outside classroom activities.



Girls and boys attending gender awareness training attentively at Kibalinga Primary School

Training objective:

The following were the objectives of the training;

1. To raise awareness on the prevailing gender issues both in schools and even in societies at large.
2. To train pupils on how to deal/address social and cultural norms arise as a result of gender differences.
3. To help pupils understand the different gender roles and responsibilities Males and Females play.
4. To help participants to understand existing gender differences between Males and Females.

Facilitators:

1. Nakayi Florence-Executive Director JOYI-Uganda
2. Muhamad Kyeyune-Executive Director SORAK Development Agency
3. Nnakiruuta Hadijah-Program Officer SORAK Development Agency
4. Muhumuza Adolf-Program Officer SORAK Development Agency
5. Clare -Executive Director Vitiligo Association of Uganda (special gest for Precious Child Learning centre)

Training participants

Pupils from primary four (p.4) to primary seven (p.7) were selected to participate. The age bracket was between 10-16 years. Each school's number of participants basing on gender below,

<Kibalinga Primary School >

Boys 138, Girls 142, Male teachers 4, Female teachers 5



Attentive and interested adolescents who participated the session at Kibalinga Primary School

<Lwawuna Primary School>

Boys: 132, Girls: 165, Male teachers 3, Female teachers 5



Adolescent participants, teachers and Moslem religious leader listen attentively during gender awareness session at Lwawuna P/s

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Boys; 28, Girls: 53, Male teachers 5, Female teachers 6



Proud beneficiaries of the Gender awareness training at Precious Child Learning center

Methods of Training

- Brain storming/ Questions and answer techniques
This involved asking and answering questions to participants (pupils).
- Case story profiling
Here facilitators and participants provided case stories related to the topic for more understanding and reflection.

Topics covered

The following were the content covered during the training
(See the reference 'Gender Awareness Training Manual')

- ◆ Difference between Gender and sex
- ◆ Examples of Gender characteristics
- ◆ Gender discrimination in academic/school setting
- ◆ Roles of Teachers as changing Agents
- ◆ Gender roles and responsibilities
- ◆ Social/cultural Gender norms
- ◆ Causes of gender based violence

Training outcomes

The following were the training outcomes

<Kibalinga Primary School >

- Participants could name and mention the gender differences between Males and Females.
- Participants were able to mention the different gender roles and responsibilities of Female and Male
- Pupils were empowered on how to deal with the unfair social/cultural norms that limit girls from accessing Education, right to inheritance, reproductive health rights among others.
- Teachers were able to mention their roles and responsibilities in the promotion of gender related issues at school.



Kibalinga P/S being a Centre school, pupil from other schools benefited.
Girls from another school posing for a photo after the training in plate 1 above



Messages displayed in our project schools showing appreciation of gender balance

<Lwawuna Primary School>

- Participants understood some of the gender differences between Males and Females and some of the differences include the following, women are expected to take care of family or domestic duties and remain close to home, all men are expected to work and earn money for the family, Boys are better in Mathematics than girls, Boys never cry, Girls are very emotional among others.
- Participants could mention the different gender roles and responsibilities females and males play in the community.
- Pupils were empowered on how to deal with the unfair social/cultural norms that limit girls from accessing Education, right to inheritance, reproductive health rights among others. With the sensitization, they could tell where to refer cases like early marriages.
- Teachers were able to mention their roles and responsibilities in promotion of gender balance as changing agents and some of their roles include, constantly be aware and mind of his/her actions, behaviors, attitude perception, approach, manner that can help in shaping a child's gender role, they must use strategies to ensure that students have equal opportunities to ensure that they can all achieve their goals.



Pupils and teachers listening to roles and responsibilities in promoting gender equity at school above at Lwawuna P/S



Rehema aged 13 shares her experience during the training about her grandmother burning her clothes she was using during her menstrual periods

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- Participants could name and mention the gender differences between Males and Females.
- Participants were able to mention the different gender roles and responsibilities of Female and Male
- Pupils were able to mention where to report, deal or refer the existing gender related issues that promotes gender imbalances.
- Teachers were able to mention their roles and responsibilities in the promotion of gender related issues at school.

“I have taught for 5 years now but I haven’t been keen on the language am using....., with this training am going to be sensitive and mindful on the nature of words I will be using”.
 Thank you SORAK Najjuuko Jane senior woman teacher PCLC



Left : Male teacher beneficiary of gender awareness training with selected beneficiary boys

Right; same teachers with a female teacher and adolescent girl in the middle pointing at male teacher for alleged misunderstanding of gender issues that affect girl child learning and education attainment



Community liaison Officer Mubende telling children and some parents how lack of information on gender issues fuels gender based violence in the community



Miss Claire Executive Director of Vitiligo Association of Uganda sharing her experience of gender issues among women and girls affected by Vitiligo

Recommendations and way forward

- Gender is something very wide it cannot be covered in just one day. Future interventions will need at least to cover this topic in 3 days in order to fully exhaust it
- Education system needs to be gender sensitive and gender friendly. Boys were so reluctant and uncomfortable to be mixed with girls. This was witnessed at Kibalinga P/S where Girls and Boys could not seat together.
- Education sector need to provide refresher courses on gender issues such as the training that helps teachers to know the kind of words they must use that promotes gender sensitivity.
- School-parent partnerships need to be strengthened in order to identify and address gender issues at homes and in Education institutions. This will help to address or deal with acts that promote gender imbalances among parents and guardians who always promote gender imbalances at home and those who think that children should be treated differently according to sex. Some parents are promoters of gender imbalances in their homes, some parents don't consider the value of educating a girl child, and traditionally girls are always prepared for marriage. Strengthened partnership between parents and schools/teachers will help to address gender related issues that exhibit.
- Based on the previous recommendation, gender trainings must be ~~must also~~ better provided to parents and teachers. They are among the perpetrators/promoters of gender imbalances for example denying girls education, teachers giving them little attention among. In other way, parents and teachers' sensitization meetings should be organized in order to address gender imbalances.
- Gender sensitivity counseling must be made available for students, staff and parents.
- Gender trainings must be better provided to administrators and local officials. Since they are the decision makers and implementers, this will also help to make ordinance and bylaws which are gender sensitive that can promote gender equity regardless of any difference.
- Education authorities and schools must be provided with a suitable budget to promote and sustain the gender sensitive a gender. This can be facilitated through the gender training to officials and administrators, mentioned above.



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Gender Awareness Training guide

What is Gender? Is it the same as sex?

Sex refers to Biological and physical characteristics that define men and women.

Gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, attributes and activities that a given considers appropriate for men and women

Examples of Gender characteristics

- Women are expected to take care of family or domestic duties and remain close to home.
- All men are expected to work and earn money for the family.
- Boys are better in Mathematics than girls.
- Boys never cry.
- Girls are very emotional.

Gender Discrimination in academic /school setting

- Girls spend more hours doing work outside nonacademic/school setting than Boys. On average girls spends 4.5 hours on non-school work every day while Boys spend 2.5 hours.
- In Southern Malawi Girls spend 70% of their time in domestic work on average while boys spend 38% , boys spend 41% of their time playing and in other leisure activities while Girls spend 13%.
- Some teachers treat boys differently than girls identifying them more readily to learn and giving them more attention.

Roles of Teachers/Educators as changing agents

- Teachers must choose resources and materials they use carefully to avoid promoting and propagating preconceived gender roles.
- Being serious and also activists and promoters of the gender related issues at school/academic setting.
- Teachers must be constantly aware and mind of his/her actions, behaviors, attitude perception, approach, manner that can help in shaping children's gender role.
- Using multiple strategies to ensure that students have equal opportunities to ensure that they can all achieve their goals.
- They are required to be kin and sensitive on the Gender issues.
- Serving as role models for the students.

The different Gender Roles and Responsibilities

Both men and women have multiple work roles and these work roles are divided into the following;

1. Productive roles
2. Reproductive roles
3. Community roles

1 . Productive roles

These are the activities, which contribute to income and economic welfare of the household and the community. Both men and women perform a wide range of productive roles and women's productive role includes the following;

- Care of livestock like poultry keeping, piggery etc.
- Food processing for sale.
- Cottages/home based industries.
- Waged/formal sector employment.

Men's productive roles include the following;

- Providing labor to big factories and industries.
- Formal sector employment.
- Cattle rearing.

2 . Reproductive roles

Reproductive activities are those activities carried out to reproduce and care for the household.

The following are some of the women's reproductive roles

- Pregnancy.
- Child birth
- Breast feeding etc.

3 . Household and Community service roles

Those are services which must be carried out daily to meet the family's and community's' basic needs. These include the following;

- Collection of firewood and Providing fuel
- Education of children
- Health care
- Food processing and preparation
- Fetching water
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