

SLUM AID PROJECT'S WOMEN'S PROGRAM (SAPWOP)



Since inception in 1991, SAP has combined direct services to women, children and other slum dwellers; legal research and analysis, public outreach, and policy advocacy with government and the international community to improve the lives of women living in the slums. Our goal is to give women, children and other slum dwellers a dignified life through raising the standards by which they are treated in Uganda and beyond.

Women's Programs

Violence against women. (Gender based violence)

Women and entrepreneurship

Women and Agriculture

Women and Politics

Women and decision making

Violence against women

Gender Based Domestic Violence can be extremely harmful both to the victims and the Perpetuators. It has also been proved to have effects on 'secondary victims' like the children in domestic settings where the parents are involved in domestic violence. It is often offensive, frightening, painful and abusive to the victims.

Many women have often been forced to leave their homes or walk out of relationships to avoid the sad and painful experiences which usually result into serious physical, psychological, health and social implications.

Gender based Violence in Uganda

According to the country's National Demographic and Health Survey report 2006, Sixty eight percent (68%) of women in Uganda have experienced some form of domestic violence. Many of these women - and those worst affected are disproportionately poor, poorly-educated and disadvantaged, they are unable to rely on the state to protect them from the harm they suffer perpetuated by intimate partners. There is neither a law nor a legal definition of domestic violence.

Violence against women should not be looked at as isolated acts happening to a few women and girls as indicated by the media reports in Uganda but as an entire societal problem that has been entrenched due to notions of masculinity which promote male dominance. Country wide acts of violence against women continue to happen, we cannot forget the recent acts of violence against women which led to deaths on April 11th 2009 where the Deputy Police Commander of Mukono killed his wife and he kept in hiding for over a week(*New vision newspaper dated 12th April 2008*), then again another story which appeared in the Monitor news paper of May 20th, “**Man held over hacking lover**”

Several stories have appeared in Ugandan papers and no month elapses without a woman being badly hurt because of domestic violence in Uganda. For example between 2003-2006, 80% of High court sessions country wide were of defilement, 34 cases being reported everyday, 3 cases per hour. Since 2002, cases of rape have been increasing country wide from 465 (2002) to 932 in 2006. Reports of domestic violence reported to police have been increasing over the past 10 years. (*New Vision News paper dated 26th May 2008, Pg 24 women parliamentarians.*

Perpetuators of domestic violence are usually charged with other offences like murder, assault, rape, defilement and child neglect among others.... if they are charged at all. Sometimes police or court officials send the women back home saying "that's a family affair, there's no case".

On the positive side however, society is increasingly getting interested in curbing out the vice and starting to realize that the problem is real able to drastically effect all primarily involved and the secondary victims. Still however, there is a very long way to go to make people fully understand the problem, its causes, consequences and extent.

Gender based violence in Urban slums

Gender based violence against women living in the slum areas has been existent for a long time, just as old as the slums themselves. Many women living in the slum areas are undergoing this terrible torture but cannot come out to talk about it so as to combat it from their communities where it is very rampant. Urban slum areas are highly transient, people come in and go away. Fighting domestic violence becomes a necessary activity at all times

Gender Based Domestic Violence is a wide spread evil not restricted to urban slums. It touches the lives of female persons generally, to around 80 to 85% of all the female populace in slum areas and about 20 - 30% of male, usually young males (boys and young men in relationships with older women referred to as sugar mummies). *SAP KIWAB community report 2003*

In spite of the growing interest in fighting this social evil, no explicit measure is in place or sight to completely curb it out of existence “There is no week that passes without hearing of a strong where a woman has been battered or assaulted in some way around” (A local councilor II, Wabigalo parish)

More interesting is the fact that in women headed homes of the Wabigalo Parish, where women are the sole bread earners, the men friends or said husbands still find the audacity to assault them. This surprises many on the slum leadership council and the many people who over time have given their time to the study of domestic violence. Many questions arise on the gender characteristics that may exist to influence the players to bring about these encounters.

Domestic violence is viewed as a social problem which has over time been entrenched firmly to the extent of becoming part of a social culture, accepted in some cases, by both the Perpetuators and victims.

- **WHAT IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE**

There are two key words to consider here; domestic and violence. Simply looked at, ‘Domestic’ refers to anything, related to a home or family, ‘violence’, on the other hand, is any force,

passion or intensity used with intention to cause violation, destruction, hurt or pain. This then makes it clear that Domestic violence refers to force, passion or intensity intended to hurt, destruct, pain or violate someone's rights in a home or family setting. There are however some forms of violence which cannot be explicitly pinpointed and may amount to harassment which simply means 'annoying by repeated, attack, trouble or worry.

Though domestic violence may take the form of harassment, people may have diverging views on what it constitutes. Definitions may vary from verbal harassment of sexual innuendos, crude or suggestive remarks, casual touching, and coercion to blackmail especially in cases involving female house hands. Some forms are even 'innocent' like starting, 'friendly' comments and touching. Whatever form it takes any way, as long as it humiliates, offends, distresses, annoys, tortures and interferes, in any way, physical, or psychologically, it still amounts to domestic violence.

Any of the above examples may represent domestic violence. In all cases, the victim suffers and it is the consequences and not the intentions that count. The extent of the violence is to a greater degree based on the impact of the suffering the victim experiences. Thus in a relationship where one of the players has more power than the other (s) and abuses it to coerce, force or cunningly harm the other, it would still mount to a case of domestic violence as it so happens in cases involving house maids and the male members of the employing family. In relationships where two adults 'consent' to carry out violence on each other, the practice must be stopped because it is not the intentions but the results of 'consent' that matter.

Domestic violence is one of the vices of today's societies especially in densely populated urban areas. This study, therefore, intends to investigate the cases of domestic violence in slum areas with particular reference on Wabigalo parish – Makindye Kampala District.

Slum Aid Project has developed various programs to fight GBV in the slum areas. Human rights advocates have also been trained, these handle DV cases at the community level

SAP's resource centre provides materials on DV to help people understand its magnitude

Women and entrepreneurship.

Slum Aid Project has since Inception worked towards improving women's welfare. Poverty has been mentioned as one of the

Women and Microfinance

Urban poverty is one of the ever present causes of GBV in Uganda. Our people do not seem to understand the subjects of saving and investment. This has worsened their wellbeing especially that of women who are faced with catering for the immediate family needs.

While many banks and microfinance institutions provide valuable services to the poor in Uganda, they are mostly successful in economically dynamic urban or peri-urban areas, which is not the situation in the urban slum areas. Many of the people living in the slum areas in Uganda are, however, grappling with ways of achieving a saving culture so as to be able to handle their unknown future.

Many of the people engaged in income generating activities and living in the slum areas have accessed at least one financial service as directed to them either by NGO's, Micro finance Institutions, self own groups (Nigiina) or government related programs. In Katwe we have the Katwe cooperative savings scheme which was formed by women and organized by the Slum Aid Project AGA chairperson who is also the parish women chairperson.

Many people have also tried to tap micro finance institutions funds like Equator Bank, Pride Micro Finance, Finca, etc. Some have been able to pay back but some are still struggling with these loans. Some others who joined a community financial organization called BLARK in Kibuli and Wabigalo ended up with their house hold properties being confiscated.

Although Slum Aid Project has not been directly implementing slum related financial service programs, we have been facilitating these programs on the ground. Our communities have been referred to most of these institutions for assistance especially in starting up new businesses. The Katwe Savings program was also a SAP initiative which started as an aftermath of the domestic violence program. The program started with very few women coming together to save and then borrowing at some stage. Many women joined such groups at some time but were frustrated by general lack of knowledge. The Woman chairperson, using her acquired knowledge on savings from SAP then started training women on a one by one basis. Today the program has over 200 people. We have various groups that have come up to save in the slum communities, many of these groups do not have adequate information on how to successfully run a community savings/loans scheme

Slum Aid Project has developed programs to help the slum dwellers access loans. Sensitization and trainings have been conducted to improve on the people's knowledge of Micro finance in Uganda.

Women and Agriculture

Urban agriculture has been limited due to lack of land. Slum dwellers, however engage in agriculture especially in swampy areas near the towns. In Kampala you find that urban dwellers have used up all un used land to at least plant some few food items. Although many of the slum dwellers do not practice Agriculture in the gardens, they participate in the marketing of the agricultural produce , most of which ends up in the urban markets.

More than 50% of the urban dwellers income comes from marketing agricultural produce.*SAP report 2004* . This participation makes slum dwellers valuable and very important actors in the agricultural industry. It is, however, absurd that government has not designed any programs to address this engagement. Much of the farmers produce ends up in urban markets to be sold by the urban dwellers.

SAP has designed programs to improve on the markets involvement. This focuses on all stakeholders, farmers, middlemen and the final sellers. SAP runs sensitization and training programs to help all stakeholders earn their worth.

Women and Politics.

Slum Aid project runs programs on sensitizing women and helping them manage their roles as leaders in the community. The representation of women at the district councilor level 3 has greatly increased.

Women have to participate in management positions if the equal opportunity slogan must be fulfilled. We need to start walking the talk of women empowerment by women being part of the leaders at the community and national level. Although various factors still persist, slum women are determined to compete with men at all levels in leading their own people.

Women and decision making

At the community level, SAP has trained women as community advocates, these continue to participate in decision making at all levels. Women human rights advocates, however need to be sensitized to better their performance as they serve their colleagues. Women need to participate in decision making at all levels in society.