

REPORT FOR MOTHER'S INITIATIVE 2015



Mothers attending a weekly meeting at Nafasi.

Nafasi Welfare Home is an independent Ugandan non-profit organization working for children in need. The aim of Nafasi Welfare Home is to ensure a safe home in a permanent family situation for children aged 0-5 years. Using the 'dare to care' model Nafasi Welfare Home ensures that every abandoned child is placed in a family within three months.

Nafasi believes that children belong in families not institutions. As part of its child post placement program, Nafasi trains teenage mothers whose children are in temporary care at Nafasi in craft making, candle making and kitchen gardening.

Lianne Dieters is a volunteer from the Netherlands who helped set up this program. She continues to support the mothers' post placement program.



Lianne Dieters on a field visit to the home of one of the children supported by Nafasi.

A number of activities have taken place to date and these include weekly meetings with the mothers, learning exchange visits with the mothers and craft making.

For each mother there is a different story to tell. What binds them is motherhood at an unexpected time in their lives. Motherhood should be celebrated but for many Ugandan girls teenage pregnancy is a SILENT KILLER. Teenage mothers and their families continue to face financial stress as they struggle to cater for the health care of the mother and baby and also find themselves at more risk in becoming victims in the country's high infant and maternal mortality. This makes teenage pregnancy enormously expensive and it is a phenomenon which has caught many families within the vicious circle of poverty.

The mothers' initiative is empowering vulnerable teenage mothers with life skills and these will in turn pass on the acquired skills and knowledge to other vulnerable teenage mothers in crisis situations. The teenage mothers are involved in a number of income generating activities which will enable them ably care for their children.



Planned Activities

The table below outlines the planned activities for the mothers' program.

Work Plan Task or Objective	unit cost (Ug shs)	unit type	# units	Project Budget(Ug.Shs)
Empowering vulnerable young mothers		Vulnerable young mothers (12-22yrs)	5	3,000,000
ITEMIZED PROGRAM TASK BUDGET				
Training in Craft making(includes training materials)	200,000	Vulnerable young mothers (12-22yrs)	5	1,000,000
Learning Exchange visits	50,000	"	5	250,000
Candle making(includes training materials)	50,000	"	5	250,000
Kitchen gardening		"		
Learning visit to Camp Green	20,000		5	100,000
Practical sessions(includes pots and seeds)	30,000		5	150,000
Mentoring classes(Uganda women network, FIDA, Center for domestic violence prevention, Enterprise Uganda e.t.c)	100,000	"	5	500,000
Counselling sessions	50,000	"	5	250,000
Community sale/exhibition	Includes hiring stalls, Making banners, brochures and public address system			500,000
Project Grand total	3,000,000			

Activities carried out

A shop has been identified for which rent has been paid three months in advance at 200,000 uganda shillings per month. The shop will be a permanent exhibition center in the community for the mother's craft items and also will be an income generating avenue from the sale of snacks and beverages. Also, it will be a

meeting place for the mothers where they can share experiences, have training activities as well as mentoring workshops.

From the learning exchange visits, different mothers have shown different interests. For a start the mothers are being equipped with skills that can enable them work from home and for those that are already working away from home plans are underway to have a day care facility for their children while they are at work.

Learning Exchange visits

The mothers have visited different projects in a learning exchange visit. Some of the projects visited include jewellery making, tailoring and hair dressing projects.

The purpose of these learning exchange visits is to expose the girls to a variety of projects from which they can get ideas on how to implement and run their own projects.

Many of the proprietors of the projects visited are young women some of who are mothers.



Tailoring and jewellery making projects



The girls during a Hair dressing trial session



Issues raised from the field.

The mothers were quite excited about the different projects and were eager to learn everything. Liz Joy one of the instructors told the girls to individually make decisions about the projects they would like to engage in. She told them that initially it would require patience on their part for them to be able to earn from their projects. She encouraged them to do something that they have a passion for and also told them that they can succeed at anything that they put their mind to.

Kevin another instructor encouraged the girls to be creative and engage in more than one project at a time. She told them that they should acquire more than one skill because some projects do not bring in daily income while others like paper bags could earn one daily income and it did not require a lot of initial capital to start.

Counselling sessions.

For many of the mothers surviving their experiences is a daunting task. A number of sessions have been held with the mothers encouraging them to be the best they can be for their children. The social workers at Nafasi have encouraged the mothers to make preparations for their children while the children are at Nafasi so that when their children return to them they are in better position to take care. The girls were also advised to delay involvement in other relationships and also use family planning methods to avoid unwanted pregnancies. The Nafasi Welfare Home social workers will provide ongoing counselling.

Meet some of the mothers benefiting from the program.

Jackie Tusanyuke is a mother of three girls aged three and eight months. Her passion is hair dressing. She is the oldest of the girls on the program and she has shared her experiences with the other girls on the program.

"I could not complete my primary school education due to lack of school fees so I asked someone to find me a job. When I was ten years old I worked as a housemaid for an elderly woman who had a daughter that was due to give birth. I later went to take care of the elderly woman's daughter when she gave birth to her baby. The elderly woman's daughter was not a good employer; she kept me locked up and for two months I did not have any contact with people outside my employer's house. I later had to leave the job because the situation became unbearable. I later did a few menial jobs for a small fee and eventually got a job as a housemaid for an Indian man. He told me that I was beautiful and he promised to take good care of me if I became his girlfriend. My naivety at the time got the better of me. I got pregnant with twins and when he found out that I was pregnant he disappeared.



For the sake of my children I had to work hard and there were times when I washed people's clothes until my hands got blisters. I also dug people's gardens for a fee. I did not decline any job offer as long as it put food on the table and a roof over my head.

I encourage all the mothers here to work hard for your children. I have had a tough life and I know that it is only by working hard that my children will not have to lead the same way of life that I have lived. They should be able to celebrate childhood; laugh, play and study for a bright future."

Marion is sixteen years old. She got pregnant when she was fourteen years old, the father of her child was a classmate. When Marion and her sister visited the boy's family to tell them that she was pregnant they accepted responsibility and promised to support Marion and the baby. However, a few days later when Marion visited the home of the father to be and his family she was told that they had moved house and their whereabouts were unknown.



Marion had to leave school and her mother disowned her. She told her never to return home and that if she did it would be at her own risk. Marion stayed with her sister until Patience was born and now six months later; Patience is thriving, Marion will be able to earn a regular income and mother and daughter will finally be home again.



Hilda Mukebezi had her baby when she was seventeen. She was abandoned by her mother when she was two years old and she was then raised by a step mother. She dropped out of school due to lack of school fees. She was in primary six and was fifteen years old at the time. Hilda's step mother encouraged Hilda's father to sell the family land to buy a car which his children objected to. Hilda's father sent his children away from home and Hilda found her way to Hoima seeking employment. Unfortunately for Hilda instead of finding employment she was left pregnant and homeless in

Hoima. She found refuge for her baby in Nafasi and is making efforts to be reunited with her daughter. Hilda intends to make paper bags because they do not require a lot of capital to start a business .

Mary Goretti could not find a place to stay with her sons after they were born because they are twins.

For some tribes in Uganda, there are a lot of myths associated with twins. It is believed that when a mother has twins there are some rituals that have to be performed by the father and mother of the children. If these rituals are not performed, the children are considered a curse to the family. When Goretti could not take her children to her mother they were given temporary shelter at Nafasi.



Mary has returned to school and has promised to work hard to ensure that her sons' future is secured.

Conclusion:

According to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics, one in every four teenage girls between 10 and 19 was found pregnant. Lack of information and poverty are the leading causes for early pregnancies. With the support of friends and partners in Uganda and abroad, Nafasi through this empowerment program for young mothers, will ensure that motherhood continues to be celebrated and that for each mother a new pregnancy will be the beginning of a new journey of life.