



COFCAWE 2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Overview

COFCAWE is addressing the economic needs of teenage mothers out of school through the provision of vocational skills, entrepreneurship skills, provision of start-up equipment for self-employment and income generation. In addition, COFCAWE has also supported teenage mothers in formation and management of saving and credit schemes to facilitate them access finances to boost their tailoring and hairdressing businesses. Also, COFCAWE has conducted community sensitisation and training of children, parents- (as couples) and other stakeholders to respond to the community's need for protection of children from abuse, risky behaviours and moral decay in targeted communities. COFCAWE has formed and strengthened capacity of community-based structures like parents and children's clubs plus safeguarding committees to protect children from abuse of their rights through monitoring and reporting of cases of child's rights abuses to duty bearers.

With regard to internal Organizational Development (OD) aspects, COFCAWE

has met some of the planned activities as per the OD plan that was developed at the beginning of the Strategic plan implementation. This is particularly in the areas of enhancing governance and leadership capacity (training of the ED and some key staff in leadership by EASUN) as well as strengthening of systems, processes and development of policies. COFCAWE has strengthened working through systems, procedures and processes; this is seen through institutionalisation of organizational procedures for example requisitions and retirement of funds used during activities, procurement processes, a monitoring and evaluation framework, an upgraded accounting system and consistently carrying out annual financial audits. Capacity building for staff in specific areas has also taken place for example in monitoring and evaluation, finance for non-finance staff and leadership training for key staff.

ACHIEVEMENTS IN THE YEAR

COFCAWE has established good collaboration with FABIO in training of targeted communities in delivering emergency relief as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This partnership has potential for further collaboration because activities of both organizations have aspects that are complementary.

In relation to sustainability at institutional level, COFCAWE has acquired a piece of land on which it plans to put up a multi-purpose building that will provide vocational skills training space to the teenage mothers and other vulnerable girls in

the community and also include its office premises and apartments for rental. COFCAWE regards this as a sustainability measure which will lessen its sole dependence on donor funding.

The community and parents of the trained teenage mothers in Kamuli initiated the idea of having a graduation ceremony for their children after training in vocational skills during which function, 19 teen mums were passed out and received their start-up kits. By carrying out this celebration, the parents noted that this would motivate the trained teen mums and also add value to their achievement. This initiative was community driven where they mobilised meals on their own, invited guests from the district education department and only involved COFCAWE at a level of supporting with certificates of attendance to the beneficiaries. COFCAWE feels that this community ownership of the program will lead to sustainability of the program in the community when it exits.

The biggest challenges included;

The Covid 19 which negatively affected implementation of some COFCAWE's programmes due to governments' restriction on movement and congregation of people in targeted communities. The closure of schools and the overstay of children at home due to Covid 19, worsened the social evils that COFCAWE is endeavouring to address like high rates of teenage

pregnancy, child marriages and poverty of parents in targeted communities.

Poverty: Some targeted parents are poor and without a clear source of income which they can use to acquire basic needs and support the education of their children. Poverty is limiting some parents to put into practice the knowledge and skills acquired from sensitisation and training events provided to them.

The inadequate budget has made it difficult for COFCAWE to provide start-up equipment to all teenage mothers that completed vocational training courses in targeted districts. This has limited the number of trained teenage mothers who have started their businesses, self-employed and generating income to enable them to meet their basic needs. This has also caused discomfort in the groups with some members feeling that others are favoured over them. In addition, the skills attained from the training may not be fully utilized as those that are not supported with start-up may lack the capital to start their own enterprises.

The small number of programme staff limited the speed of implementation because they could not concurrently implement and make follow-up on several activities in different places. Furthermore, some of the planned activities require hiring of specialised skills outside COFCAWE staffing. This is

not sustainable and also implementation of such activities is dependent on the availability of the service providers.

REFLECTION ON YOUR WHOLE 5-YEAR STRATEGY PERIOD

Mobilisation and sensitisation of parents on children's rights and positive parenting skills. This has contributed to a positive change of attitude of some parents to be supportive of education and to provide basic needs of their children at home.

Provision of start-up equipment for use in tailoring and hairdressing businesses to the trained teenage mothers. This start-up equipment has facilitated such teenage mothers to put into practice vocational skills acquired to start their businesses for purposes of self-employment and income generation.

Formation of teenage mothers' savings groups and boosting these saving groups with seed grants (funds). This has facilitated such trained teenage mothers with access to cheap funds which they can borrow to boost and sustain their tailoring and hairdressing businesses.

Formation and training of community-based structures (behaviour change clubs in schools, parents' clubs, child safeguarding committees). This facilitates community mobilisation, sensitisation, monitoring and reporting cases of child abuses to duty bearers.

Working through existing local government and religious structures such as district and sub-county local governments, primary schools, LC

leaders and church and mosque leaders. This has facilitated community mobilisation and follow-up of beneficiaries on the progress made in the utilisation of support provided after implementation.

The strategy of sensitising and training both parents has leveraged collective family support in looking after children as well as enabling children to grow up in a healthy environment where parents are working together and treating each other well.

Prioritising implementation of certain aspects of the OD plan (particularly those critical to governance, leadership and program implementation) has enabled COFCAWE to operate effectively.

EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS

COFCAWE is effective in implementation of its programme activities. This is because most set programme targets have been achieved except those that were affected due to the nationwide lockdown resulting from the COVID 19 containments measures such as school clubs and change agent activities.

With regard to internal Organizational Development (OD) aspects, COFCAWE has met some of the planned activities as per the OD plan that was developed at the beginning of the Strategic plan implementation. For instance, COFCAWE has strengthened working through systems, procedures and processes; this is seen through institutionalisation of organizational procedures for example requisitions and retirement of funds used during

activities, procurement processes, a monitoring and evaluation framework, an upgraded accounting system and consistently carrying out annual financial audit.

The effectiveness of COFCAWE programmes could be enhanced by addressing a major contextual issue of poverty which has the potential to undermine COFCAWE's efforts in supporting children who belong to the Behaviour Change Club groups. Parents have noted that much as they would like to keep children in school, protect them from abuse, and teenage pregnancy, they lack consistent and sustainable income to provide for them even their basic needs. Hence COFCAWE should explore economic empowerment of parents of children who belong to these groups through opportunities for low interest loans to enable them generate income to support their children in school; targeting other vulnerable non-teenage mothers, girls and boys out of school who are unproductive in targeted communities; and improving the learning environments of some targeted schools especially those without water facilities and sanitary facilities for girls at school among others.

SUSTAINABILITY

Most results delivered so far by COFCAWE in targeted communities have the potential to continue in the community even after implementation. Some parents and children beneficiaries sensitised will continue to use

knowledge acquired to enhance positive parenting, protection children's rights, adoption of acceptable behaviours and prevention of sexually transmitted infections. There is a high likelihood that supported vulnerable teenage mothers will continue to use vocational and entrepreneurship knowledge and skills acquired to set up and operate their tailoring and hairdressing businesses and saving and credit schemes. It is because some teenage mothers have already set up these enterprises and saving groups which are facilitating them to boost their businesses. Some community-based structures especially the behaviour change clubs in targeted schools have a chance to continue after implementation because they are part of the school system and have teachers who can continue to guide leaders of these clubs in school after implementation.

COFCAWE has further put in place several strategies to ensure the sustainability of its programme results after implementation like provision of knowledge to parents and their children (children's rights, SRH, life skills and positive parenting); formation and strengthening capacity of community-based structures which it can continue to use in sensitisation, monitoring, reporting and engaging duty-bearers on child protection issues during and after implementation. COFCAWE is also providing training to vulnerable teenage mothers with vocational and entrepreneurship skills, provision of start-up capital equipment to enable them set up and operate own businesses for self-employment and

income generation purposes. COFCAWE in addition supports vulnerable teenage mothers to establish and operate saving and credit schemes that can continue providing them with access to cheap finance during and after implementation. COFCAWE has established good cooperation with district and sub-county local government officials especially CDOs that can continue to monitor and provide follow-up support to beneficiaries during and after implementation.

At institutional level, COFCAWE has acquired a piece of land on which it plans to put up a multi-purpose building that will provide vocational skills training and also include its office premises. COFCAWE regards this as a sustainability measure which will lessen its sole dependence on donor funding.

VULNERABLE GROUPS INCLUSION

The direct beneficiaries are in five categories: children-in and out of school, teenage mothers, religious leaders, and parents. COFCAWE has a well-established presence in the districts, and is a trusted stakeholder in the community. COFCAWE leverages these relationships and works together with teachers, community and religious leaders in the selection of beneficiaries. This ensures that the most vulnerable are identified as beneficiaries. COFCAWE goes into these engagements with specific criteria based on own learning which is discussed and agreed with key

stakeholders: for in-school children, a key criterion based on COFCAWE's own learning is to ensure that children who are able and willing to pass on the messages from trainings to other boys and girls is important for the sustainability and scaling up of awareness interventions at school level. Girls and boys both in and out of school-focused interventions targets those from poor households – those living below the international poverty line. The girls from these households are especially vulnerable to exploitation due to gender norms and beliefs, poverty and lack of education, which in turn puts them at risk of forced early marriage, contracting HIV and early pregnancy. For teen girls who are already pregnant or have given birth, they are often ostracized and even more vulnerable as they are unable to finish school and lack vocational skills to earn an income. For every category of direct beneficiaries, consideration is given to PwDs.

1. NUMBERS OF DIRECT BENEFICIARIES

Total # of primary individuals <u>18+ years</u> DIRECTLY benefitting:				Total # of primary individuals <u>17 years or below</u> DIRECTLY benefitting:			
ACTUAL (Male)		ACTUAL (Female)		ACTUAL (Male)		ACTUAL (Female)	
<i>MALES 18+ benefitting directly for the first time this year</i>	<i>MALES 18+ benefitting directly both this year <u>and</u> in previous years</i>	<i>FEMALES 18+ benefitting directly for the first time this year</i>	<i>FEMALES 18+ benefitting directly both this year <u>and</u> in previous years</i>	<i>MALES 17 OR BELOW benefitting directly for the first time this year</i>	<i>MALES 17 OR BELOW benefitting directly both this year <u>and</u> in previous years</i>	<i>FEMALES 17 OR BELOW benefitting directly for the first time this year</i>	<i>FEMALES 17 OR BELOW benefitting directly both this year <u>and</u> in previous years</i>
Parents and leaders-69	216	91	256				
School children				40	90	98	190
Out of school children-4	12			10	26		
Teenage mothers		5	23			21	83
Emergency response Intervention--128	242	390	566	141	244	2662	2813

FACTORS THAT ENABLED OR HINDERED IMPLEMENTATION OF ACTIVITIES

- Timely disbursement of funds from All We Can is a factor that has helped COFCAWE implement the planned activities according to schedule. Availability of these resources also helps COFCAWE to hire trainers with expertise in the area of VSLA management through networking with other likeminded organisations.
- The commitment of program staff towards the organisational mission and the support from the board members in providing supervision helps in implementing activities as planned.
- The relevancy of the program activities in meeting the priority needs of the communities motivated participants to willingly attend each of the planned activities. This is further strengthened by the good working relationship with existing community structures such as the local councils, CDOs and school heads who are very cooperative in working with COFCAWE to mobilise participants for the planned activities.

Some of the factors that prevented the implementation

of activities according to schedule included;

- Covid 19: The outbreak of this global pandemic reduced the speed and limited implementation of some planned activities due to the government's total lockdown of the country, restriction on movement of people and congregation of people in big numbers.
- The inadequate budget also made it difficult for COFCAWE to provide start-up equipment to all teenage mothers that completed vocational training courses in targeted districts. This has limited the number of trained teenage mothers who have started their businesses, self-employed and generating income to enable them to meet their basic needs. This has also caused discomfort in the group with some members feeling that others are favored over them.
- The small number of programme staff limited the speed of implementation because they could not concurrently implement and make follow-up on several activities in different places.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

We have been conducting follow-up meetings with the formed clubs for children, parents and the teen mothers. During this activity we have reflection exercises where club members respond

to questions such as what did we learn during the training, how has it helped you in your life/family? what was not clear during the training? what have you been doing as an individual/club about what you learnt? What challenges have you been facing in reaching out to others? How would you want COFCAWE to support you to do better? What recommendations do you have for COFCAWE to improve her programming?

In addition, each club elects a leadership committee which is responsible for reporting to COFCAWE about the progress of club activities. Report templates have been shared with the different clubs and data is collected on a quarterly basis.

The safeguarding committees also serve as a feedback structure for COFCAWE at community level. These have a responsibility of reporting safeguarding issues to the police and COFCAWE so that cases are followed up to the end to ensure that justice prevails. We have conducted feedback meetings with the safeguarding committees to get information on Safeguarding issues in the community and the challenges faced in dealing with these issues. During lock down when COFCAWE could not access communities, leaders of respective committees particularly safeguarding and parents' clubs would call COFCAWE

staff over the phones to report any issues that concern their responsibilities and in case of child abuse for support and consultation on how to handle the matters.

SAFEGUARDING

One COFCAWE staff and one board member underwent a safe guarding training by All We Can. At staff level, all staff and volunteers have signed commitment to child protection as they interact with beneficiaries in the community.

During training of children and parents, the staff share their telephone contact with beneficiaries for easy reporting in case child abuse occurs.

COFCAWE in particular, has been providing a safe space for girls and boys to freely express their fears and concerns and to talk through any possible solutions to their challenges during trainings. In addition, COFCAWE constitutes safeguarding communities in the communities where it serves that are based in the community and charged with the responsibility of handling and reporting child abuse cases committed in the communities and these work hand in hand with COFCAWE to ensure that justice prevails.

NETWORKING

COFCAWE and FABIO jointly implemented an emergency response aimed at reducing the risks and social impacts of the school closures on the wellbeing of vulnerable adolescent especially girls and boys as well as parents of school going children living in the rural communities of Kamuli, Jinja and Mayuge. COFCAWE and FABIO benefited from each other's skills from the different areas of their expertise. For example, FABIO drew on COFCAWE's experience in successfully running girl safe-spaces, conducting SRH training among young people/parents while COFCAWE drew on FABIO experience of successfully developing community consultative processes for emergency responses, as well as working directly with girls using their Cycle to School program.

COFCAWE is a member of the network of CSOs working in Mayuge district and through this network, COFCAWE was identified to participate in the review of the child rights violation tracking tool designed by UGANET.

COFCAWE involves the Community Development Officers (CDOs) of targeted sub-counties in the implementation of some activities such as selection of beneficiary teenage mothers, training and sensitisation activities and monitoring, reporting and follow-up cases of child rights abuse reported to the police. The CDOs are aware of COFCAWE's activities and have indicated a willingness to continue

monitoring, reporting and follow-up of cases of child abuse. These stakeholders have further showed a willingness to continue supporting teenage mothers above 18 years to register their groups at the sub-county, and during the process of their applications to access available youth funding opportunities at the sub-county and district local government level.

Case study1

Nambi Sulaina, a 20 years old mother stays with her parents, Mr and Mrs.Balamya in Busota. She noted in an interview that "COFCAWE has supportive staff who routinely visit to check on our progress. They were even there during the time when I lost my baby."

Sulaina narrates that after getting pregnant, she went through tough times, the man responsible had run away and she lived at the mercy of her parents who were also not well off.it was hard for me **to** get basics during that time.

Sulaina came to know about COFCAWE during mobilisation for teenage mothers that were to be trained in vocational skills in Busota, southern Division, a programme area in Kamuli. Sulaina was one of the vulnerable teenage mothers spotted during the screening exercise and she went through the six months skills training(tailoring), training in financial literacy, group dynamics, and received sanitary pads and Vaseline during the recently concluded emergence response intervention. She was also given a sewing machine and is also part of the VSLA group.

Sulaina shared that she is able to meet her needs as a person. She was able to buy a goat from her savings and her plan is to accumulated more goats to exchange them for a cow. She adds that "My family especially parents are now proud of me because I add value especially when it comes to provision of basic needs at home."

Sulaina shared that the most significant moment was that time when she started the tailoring course." I was very sure that when I complete, that knowledge would enable me reach greater heights."

Sulaina further noted that the change in her status is very important because she is valued at home because of her contribution "I am seen as important as others at home."

Sulaina hopes to start a training workshop where she will train young girls of her age "My desire is to see young girls focus on academics if there is still support by their parents."

"I have learnt the importance of saving and to avoid unnecessary expenditures."

For anyone who finds themselves in my situation, "I would counsel them and train them in tailoring if they were interested or connect them to COFCAWE directly."

Case study 2

Twelve-year-old Babirye Prudence Mary, a primary seven pupil in Busota Village started sharing information to fellow children after the children's training.

"I came to know about COFCAWE when we were mobilised to attend children's training during the lock down. We were taught various topics including challenges faced by boys and girls, personal hygiene, dangers of engaging in early sex and the different STD's among others. 'The visual aids about the different STD'S challenged me a lot and so I felt it necessary to share with my friends."

Prudence revealed that before the training, young girls and boys had become a nuisance in the community. One of her friends had told her that having sex is okay even at her age as long as boy does not impregnate her. Indecent dressing and early sex had become a normal practice especially during the period of COVID pandemic.

"After the training, I and my friend realised that starting sex early was bad as it would expose us to risks like unwanted pregnancies and STDs. I decided to delay sex and we started reaching out to others with similar messages, it started in a joking way but it become serious." We used to share information from home once in two weeks and have been able to reach ten children (8 girls and 2 boys) and we have realised that some girls have changed. I still have hope that even those that have not turned away from their bad deeds will at one-point change.

Prudence appreciated COFAWE for the deliberations and promised to continue with the sensitisation among fellow peers.