|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Danish organisation | Seniors without Borders |
| Title of the intervention | Reduction and empowerment of young female dropouts in Soroti District, Uganda, Phase II |
| Partner name(s) | Community Integrated Development Initiatives (CIDI) |
| Amount applied for | 999.998,00 |
| Country(ies) | Uganda |
| Period (# of months) | 1. December 2021 – 30. November 2023 – 24 months |

1. **Objective and relevance (the world around us)**

* **What is the main purpose with the intervention, including challenges that need to be addressed?**

**Objective of the Intervention.**

**Project Title:**

Reduction and empowerment of young female dropouts in Soroti District, Uganda, Phase II.

**Time frame**

1. December 2021 – 30. November 2023

**Long term objective:**

To build a community that promotes reduction of the socio-economic consequences of young female school dropout and supports the girls in exploring their full skill potential.

**Short term objective:**

1. To strengthen the capacity of the community advocacy groups to advocate for child rights, teach conflict management and offer psycho-social support of young female dropouts in the communities and schools.
2. To strengthen socio-economic resilience of young female dropouts through sustained skilling in the necessary and relevant education and vocational skills. Further to form an Association of Teenage Mothers that will serve as a pinnacle that spearheads initiation of strong, independent and self-supporting young female dropouts.

**Relevance of the project**

An assessment done at the start of the pilot phase of the project as well as the subsequent activities implemented have validated the relevance of the project.

The project area in Soroti district is very poor and simple hunger is a problem, which may lead to the young girls being tempted into accepting offers from boys and men (sex for food). Furthermore, it is a male dominated society which prioritize boys´ possibilities of education. Even the girls at school face the problem of menstruation, which means that once a month they stay at home for several days. Because of missed school days they have difficulties catching up with homework, which again leads to dropout.

However, several young female dropouts have been inspired to come out and speak openly about their vulnerabilities/plight. Many have been victims of socio-economic injustice and rights abuse. They have been objects of mistreatment, abandonment, abject poverty, diseases, as well as domestic and gender-based violence. All that notwithstanding, the pilot phase has exhibited among the young girls that there can still be a ray of hope in their lives. They can organize, tap into their resourcefulness and open new opportunities for a bright future.

**Achievements of the pilot phase**

The two-year pilot phase of the project has reached out to 100 teenage mothers that are school dropouts and to eight school communities in Awoja parish of Gweri sub county in Soroti district and tremendous achievements have been made during implementation.

**Advocacy groups**

The optimism founded among the young girls during the pilot phase is what this proposed extension phase is building on. Critical stakeholders at grassroots level have been brought together by the desire to pay particular attention to issues affecting the young girls. Advocacy committees have been formed among eight village communities where the young girls come from. The committees have been mandated by their local communities to be the drivers of the campaign against teenage pregnancies and school girl dropout. These committees will become registered CBOs. Their membership includes: secretaries for children and youth affairs from the village council, secretary for women, mothers/guardians of the teenagers, retired educationists in the area, teachers resident in the communities, local role model girls that have gone successfully through education (or dropped out and got back to school), teenage girls’/mothers’ peer leaders (referred to as “peer advisors”), Trainers of Trainees (ToTs/Advocacy champions and psychosocial counsellors), selected advocacy champions and other notable opinion leaders. Additional members of the advocacy groups include local youth parliament members, members of area school management committees, group members, local council persons and school advocacy club patrons.

Through their organized advocacy work the committees have shown ability to engage with and deliver their advocacy message(s) to the duty bearers from government, civil society organizations, religious/faith institutions, and private sector players. Already, the pilot phase has established an advocacy platform where the teenage girls and their communities advocate to engage government and other service providers on issues affecting the teenage girls. The collaborations that have been built are planned to be strengthened through this intervention, and they include: Teso Peace Actors, Teso Women Peace Activists, Health Systems Advocacy Forum, Center for Women Accountability and Development, Action Against Child Neglect and Abuse, Girls Not Brides Project, Youth With a Mission, National Youth Advocacy Platform, Partners for Children World Wide, World Vision Uganda, Soroti District Probation and Welfare Office.

The advocacy work realized during the pilot phase and all future advocacy work have been and will be strategically planned to be sustained through further organization and strengthening of the mentioned structures. Advocacy groups are to be strengthened into registered community-based organizations (CBOs). The teenage mothers and school dropout girls are instead to be organized into a registered Association/Cooperative of Teenage Mothers. Both structures will jointly be instrumental in sustainably increasing awareness campaigns and participation in Young People’s Forum/Parliament.

Cumulatively the project reached 3,177 people (1,309 male and 1,868 female) through the activities of the community advocacy groups. An additional 3,600 people were indirectly reached through various advocacy interventions such as media engagements. This has created community dialogue among the duty bearers with positive responsiveness. Awareness on and advocacy for girl child rights is progressively taking root both in schools and communities.

**The results of the skills training and the income generated in the pilot phase**

The implementation of the pilot project has successfully equipped 100 girls with the necessary and relevant education and skills of their own preference. Those included 67 teenage mothers and 43 young school dropout girls.

Generally, as a result of the intervention, beneficiary dropout girls have been able to start their own income generating projects. Unlike previously when they were largely dependents, they have now grown to be more independent in meeting their basic needs, those of their born children, and in some cases, they have been able to help their families. They feed their children on nutritious meals, provide clothing for their children and are able to buy clothing for themselves, sanitary needs and other personal self-requirements. There are girls that have moved on and left their parent’s residences. They are able to acquire their own housing and live independently. Used to have a meal a day, they can now afford adequate nutritious meals for themselves. They have learnt to change/balance their diet and can afford to do so. They have built confidence in financial literacy and now go for credit because they believe in themselves and their ability to invest the loans and earn an income. They have been able to build their self-esteem and are taking up leadership positions even outside their groups. They have enrolled in other community social groups and are able to save twice being members of two VSLAs. Their social interaction across various social groups and status including opinion formers and cultural leaders has improved tremendously. Evidently, there is growing social recognition and acceptance of teenage mothers and dropout girls as a very resourceful group in the community.

The dropout girls and teenage mothers were divided among the four vocational skills as follows:

**Tailoring:** 30 girls (23 teenage mothers and 7 dropout girls) have been skilled in tailoring and garment cutting. These have enrolled 3 other teenage mothers that are being trained in tailoring. One of the girls (Alabo Rebecca) has been able to buy her own tailoring machine at Ugx. 450,000 and has opened up her own tailoring enterprise that runs from home. She was able to do that after selling some of her chicken at Ugx. 320,000/- and getting a credit of Ugx. 130,000/- from their VSLA group. Together with her other ToT teenage mothers skilled in tailoring are supplying their community with face masks that they sale at Ugx. 1,000/- each. That way, besides earning an income they are contributing to covid19 prevention in their community by supplying affordable face masks. Two other girls have borrowed money from the VSLA group and are trading in used clothes to earn income to sustain themselves.

**Hair dressing:** 30 girls (17 teenage mothers and 13 dropout girls) have been skilled in hair dressing. After their training they have enrolled 4 other teenage mothers that are being trained in hairdressing. 3 of the 13 dropout girls have started their own hair salons in the neighboring trading centers. One of them got credit from the group VSLA. The other 2 were provided with startup capital from their parents. They were each also supported with hair drying machines by the area member of parliament. Averagely each of the girls’ saloon project is estimated at a capital cost of Ugx. 370,000/=.

**Catering:** 20 girls (14 teenage mothers and 5 dropout girls) were trained in catering. One of the trained dropout girls has started a restaurant that she runs jointly with her mother in Naukot village in Awoja. 5 girls (3 teenage mothers and 2 dropout girls) were successful in securing employment at restaurants in Soroti town after their training. At the end of every month they are able to take home at least Ugx.90, 000/=. There are another 5 teenage girls (1 teenage mother and 4 dropout girls) that run a restaurant as a joint venture and additionally provide outside catering services. They have been identified for mentorship as ToTs in catering. Those are currently able to get Ugx. 45,000 income every month. There is great potential that their earning will increase as their business develops. Another group of 10 catering girls are involved in bakery.

**Crafts and crotchets:** 20 girls (15 dropout girls and 5 teenage mothers) are skilled in crafts making and crotchets. Two of the teenage mothers have trained 2 other dropout girls in their community. One of the girls has trained her own mother, who was her caretaker. They make bathing sponges, baby caps and stockings, craft shoes, handbags, and knit sweaters. One of the teenage mothers (Sarah) that excelled in crafts and crotchets has got a joint contract with their trainer, where she makes sweaters for 2 schools (1 primary and 1 secondary school).

**Achieved self-esteem and community social support of the teenage mothers:**

As a consequence of the pilot project interventions the acquired self-esteem resulted into 18 dropout girls and 6 teenage mothers returning to school. Another 2 pregnant girls were able to sit for Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) while an additional 4 pregnant girls managed to sit for Uganda “Ordinary” Certificate of Education (UCE) - and passed. Those success stories provide good role-models. They offer inspirational and motivational talk to fellow teenage girls. They urge those in school to stay at school and those that have dropped out to consider going back. The experiences of the girls that went back to school has earned them social respect and acceptance. They have become influencers that advocate for issues and concerns of the school dropout and other vulnerable girls and children. They have become community advocates for responsible parenthood. They are receiving excellent reception in government offices. They have become recognized as change agents for teenage girls. This is providing sustained perseverance of the project achievements.

Generally speaking more schools allow teenage mothers to go back to school, and advocacy groups successfully mediate reconciliation between teenage mothers and their parents/fathers. Since the teenage mothers are represented in the advocacy groups (referred to as “peer advisors”), girls outside the project also benefit.

Initially, a detailed child rights abuse and young female dropout assessment was conducted in the project area, Gweri Sub County. All project interventions and approaches undertaken have addressed the identified challenges. There are 15 villages in Awoja parish of Gweri sub county that have been reached out to by the eight advocacy groups that were formed around eight school communities under the project. The advocacy groups are much involved in promoting girl child rights protection and advocating against teenage pregnancies and young female dropout in Gweri Sub County. Complementary eight advocacy clubs were formed that are promoting the same in eight schools (six primary + two secondary). Consequently, among the eight schools and across their surrounding communities, the girl child school dropouts and teenage mothers are receiving psycho-social support, counselling and sexual education from those organizations. Evidently, teenage girls reached by the project have become vigilant on preventing themselves from becoming victims of teenage pregnancy and girl child school dropout as well as associated effects*.* Like the community-based advocacy groups the school based advocacy groups will become CBOs in phase II.

Their vocational training of the girls has been coupled with financial literacy and basic financial management training including Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs). VSLA is an integrated activity where the participants save regularly and can take out small loans from the savings. Progressively, the young female dropouts and teenage mothers are utilizing the acquired skills to establish their own income generating enterprises.

**Two case stories illustrate the odds these girls have to fight:**

**Aguti Demita** is 18, a former primary seven dropout and mother of two children from Teso community. Her father, a traditionalist, didn’t believe in girls’ education, and she rotated among different homes of relatives for care; a maternal uncle sent her to school, but in primary seven another uncle took her out, and for one year she lived as a prostitute in his house, forced to have sex with elderly men. At 15 she got pregnant, was chased out of the uncle’s house and after giving birth ended up as a real prostitute. Until she got pregnant again and was no good in the trade. She returned home to live alone with her alcoholic father – seven younger sisters were married off at the age of 15. She was stigmatized and deeply traumatized because she could not take proper care of her children. Finally, her grandmother took care of her and enrolled her in the CIDI project for teenage mothers. The grandmother herself joined an advocacy group. Today Aguti is executive treasurer of Awoja teenage mothers’ club and part of the girls’ parliament, representing the girls at the National Youth Advocacy Platform.

**Ichodu Lucian** is 12 and one of the youngest girls in the project. She is from a village in a very poor area with illiteracy, criminality, violence, alcohol and drug problems. At the age of five she was sent away from home in order to make money for the family. She became a babysitter for a female teacher, and once a month her parents came to collect her pay (about 45 DKK). They were waiting for her to become 12-15 yrs. when they would be able to marry her off and receive bride price. However, the female teacher was a good person, she recognized that Ichodu was a bright girl and encouraged her to attend classes when the baby slept. Ichodu stayed in her house, and when CIDI started information meetings in 2019 the teacher mediated contact to the parents, and they were persuaded into recognizing girls’ right to education.

Today Ichodu is in class 6 at a boarding school, she is a prefect in her class and doing extremely well.

**Major challenges**

The pilot phase did not have plans for particular interventions aimed at addressing conflicts of gender-based and domestic violence related to teenage pregnancies and girl child school dropout. In phase II of the project training of the advocacy groups in conflict prevention as well as gender and domestically based violence management will be integrated. This has been a critical gap observed during the pilot implementation of the project. Teenage pregnancies/mothers and girl child school dropouts have been noted to be associated with serious conflicts as well as domestic violence. Many conflicts arise from disagreements around teenage pregnancies, forced marriages, compensation fines and no compliance with the law.

Another challenge is to take care of the girls living positively with HIV on Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) and give them access to ART counsellors and clinics.

**New objectives, strategic approaches and target groups**

The phase II is an extension of the previous Citizen Participation Intervention ending 31.05.2021 (3 months’ extension granted because of Covid19) in order to link to the achievements registered in the pilot phase, but also to address the observed challenges and gap areas, which are backgrounds for new objectives, strategies and target groups:

* Gender and domestically based violence
* Girls living with HIV/AIDS
* Strengthening advocacy groups into community based registered organizations (CBO)
* Organizing the teenage mothers and school dropout girls into a registered Association/Cooperative of Teenage Mothers
* Training of trainees (ToTs)/advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors
* ToTs from the four trade groups
* Income Generating Activities (IGAs)
* Increasing awareness campaigns and participation in Young People’s Forum/Parliament
* Including school going young boys, community members and stakeholders in the primary target group

The anticipation is that when those gaps are addressed, the project will realize better sustained impact/change among the teenage mothers and school dropout girls.

**The Context of the intervention:**

Soroti district and Teso sub region are generally highly affected by the problem of teenage pregnancies and girl child school dropout. In approaching the problem in Soroti CIDI has prioritized to consolidate activities in one area most affected, register meaningful success/change and use that as learning for advocacy, replication and adoption in other areas. In view of that the intention of a phase II is to geographically expand to the newly formed Awalwal sub county, which at the start of the project was among the parishes forming Gweri sub county. The assessment done by CIDI during the current phase of the implementation recorded Awalwal as the second most affected area by teenage pregnancies/mothers and girl child dropout. This is mostly because of its remoteness and illiteracy level. It also has the fewest schools, which exacerbates the problem.

In the new Awalwal sub county CIDI intends to cover Awalwal parish and one extra village of Abelet in Gweri parish. These have been prioritized because they are badly affected by the problem of many teenage mothers and other young female dropouts. They are also the closest areas to the current area of project coverage (Awoja parish/new Aukot sub county). Already more than 100 teenage mothers and other dropouts have been registered.

The project will be implemented in Gweri sub county. The area is across the Mbale-Lira highway route. The problem of teenage pregnancies and school dropouts is widely reported in that area. The proximity of Gweri Sub County to Soroti municipality creates both an opportunity and a risk for teenage girls. They are exposed to the good side of urban life, but also to its temptations and ugly sides. They suffer teenage pregnancies, are expelled from home, if not married off at that tender age. For lack of alternative livelihoods some become traumatized and resort to prostitution as an alternative source of survival. At the same time the community still has rigid cultural traditions, for instance forced and early marriages and bride price.

**Covid19**

Covid19 has changed the context of the project because for several months now, Uganda has experienced an almost total lock-down. This has caused livelihood vulnerabilities for many families and caused a breakdown and collapse of the social support system. Domestic violence has increased, and the closed schools have rendered especially teenage girls susceptible to this violence, often in the form of sexual harassment, rape and pregnancy. There are well-founded fears that some teenage girls will not return to school when they open again.

All these factors create cause for project intervention.

**UN Goals**

Phase II of the project has been developed geared towards contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals: SDG1: Ending poverty, SDG3: Ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all at all ages, SDG4: Ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all, SDG5: Achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, SDG10: Reducing inequalities within countries and SDG17: Partnership for development.

* **Describe how this intervention will strengthen civil society organising to advance social justice (realisation of people’s rights, reducing inequality and fighting poverty, participation in decision-making processes, equal access to resources, and just institutions).**

The project is designed and destined for implementation guided by an all-inclusive approach. The intervention aims at engaging the target beneficiaries, communities where they come from, the leadership (political, religious and cultural), as well as the relevant local government departments at every specified stage and aspect of the project. Fundamentally, the project drive is on ensuring that the mentioned categories have their awareness and vigilance created in promotion of girl child rights and protection from the causes, effects and consequences of teenage pregnancies in schools and the community. Also, that they are welcoming and supportive of vocational training of young female dropouts, especially teenage mothers, in order to empower them economically and give them social respect and acceptance. The project design is also meant to have those actively involved make a deliberate effort to transfer their ideas and learning back to the community they come from, starting with their families.

The project also envisages causing mind-set change among local leaders, the men and young boys still at school and even citizens in the communities where the girls are located. They will appreciate that concerted efforts can contribute to the positive transformation of teenage pregnancies and girl child school dropout. There is going to be well focused knowledge sharing and learning experience dissemination events arranged with district, sub-county and local community leaders to follow the development of the project. Among them are gender related radio talk shows and articles on girl child protection, published testimonies from the beneficiaries. Material from the project will be published on Facebook and the homepage of Seniors without Borders (SwB). The content of the project is part of the development strategy of SwB, as the project has global relevance.

Uganda remains a signatory to global conventions and resolutions that aim to protect the rights and entitlements of young children and especially the girl child. Consequently, several child protection policies and guidelines that are in consonance with global conventions and resolutions have been put in place. The available political and legal environment framework in Uganda supports initiatives that address to end early child bearing. Such are as enshrined in the Constitution of Uganda (1995) that protects the rights of vulnerable children and encourage to implement effective policies that reduce the number of out-of-school children.

**What climate and environmental conditions do the partnership and/or the intervention need to respond to? And how have the partners responded to it? – in relation to the target group, the number of flights or activities of the intervention, and how these affect the environment or climate in the area?**

Soroti district, where the project is to be implemented, is characterised with climate and environmental challenges that range from drought, flooding, land degradation, depletion of the forest cover and associated climate change effects. Through her partnership with SwB and others CIDI is already undertaking interventions that aim at promoting environmental conservation, climate change mitigation and community resilience to climate change effects. Within the same communities as this proposed project the partners are also implementing sustainable environmental agro solutions projects, a disaster response and risk reduction project, land protection and conservation project, and a smart agriculture practices promotion project. CIDI purposes to link the teenage mothers to all those projects as a measure of getting them actively engaged in initiatives that respond to climate and environmental conditions. The project is going to engage the teenage mothers and their caretakers in climate smart agriculture practices.

In order to minimize SwB flight travels we plan to have regular quarterly online meetings and engagements as need shall rise. This will further enhance SwB’s ability to keep tab on the project implementation progress, more so as they would when on a physical monitoring visit to the project area. Arrangements are planned to have some online meetings with direct interactions with the beneficiary teenage mothers or other stakeholders as will be deemed necessary or considered important, given the subject issues on the set agenda for the online meeting(s).

**2. The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)**

**CIDI and its experiences in the subject matter and project area:**

Community Integrated Development Initiatives (CIDI) is a Uganda local NGO that has been operating in Uganda for the last 21 Years. CIDI is registered with the Government of Uganda (NGO) Board Certificate Number: 2715 and reference No. S-5914/2868. CIDI's vision is to have communities enjoy a decent life that is free of hunger, poverty and disease. CIDI’s interventions across all projects are as a standard guided by CIDI’s participatory approaches to address community needs and demands. In Soroti district where particularly this project is to be implemented, CIDI has operated for the last 18 years. Over the years CIDI has accumulated a wealth of experience reaching out to youths in schools and out of school in Soroti. Initially CIDI focused to promote youth engagement in conflict prevention and resolution as well as peace building within the communities. However, learnings from that initial implementation and others that followed have informed all CIDI subsequent projects and their implementation in Soroti. Therefore, CIDI has a rich understanding of the developmental challenges in the project area. As well, CIDI has vast experience working with the local communities in identifying their living challenges and together with them, coming up with practical solutions that can be undertaken jointly to address those challenges. Besides CIDI’s experience in the area, the organization has a pool of well trained, competent and experienced staff with a good understanding of the area.

Concerning the problem of the school dropouts and teenage mothers and the factors contributing to it, CIDI staff have experience with supporting communities to deal with them. CIDI staff team are a combination of diverse technical and professional expertise in agriculture and agriculture extension, education, social work, community development, project planning and management, monitoring and evaluation, and financial management. In Teso region, CIDI has a staff team of 20. At the regional office of Soroti there are 12 staff members, all of whom are highly experienced and competent with an average working experience of 7 years in the region. They are all grounded in CIDI’s culture and its belief in the core values of team work, professionalism, accountability and transparency, community participation and result orientation. All CIDI’s past success and achievements in the region have been a result of the team efforts and the work of these staff members.

Key program approaches applied by CIDI, which will also be applicable in this project include community/beneficiary participation in needs identification, priority setting, intervention planning and implementation. CIDI as well applies a rights awareness-based approach to service delivery and demand for good governance. Another approach CIDI uses is the evidence-based citizen’s led advocacy in beneficiary engagement with duty bearers. CIDI further values stakeholder engagement at all stages and level of project development, planning, implementation and review. All those will be adopted in this project. Gender mainstreaming and including people with disabilities is another key priority in CIDI program implementation.

From the pilot phase of the project four locally identified and well-trained ToT trainers were engaged in skilling the teenage girls. Under each of the vocational trade skills training at the teenage center, the trainers identified four girls that were given extensive mentorship for ToT. Those have now been earmarked to provide a locally available training resource at the teenage center. Their trainers will offer follow-up mentorship support of the ToT girls. No fees are to be charged. Only small facilitation for transport and lunch cost is to be provided every time the trainers come around to support. Already, each of the vocation enterprises trained at the center has been able to raise reasonable income/revenues to facilitate this arrangement. After all costs are met, they are able to make average profits of approximately Ugx. 300,000/ every quarter.

The implementing partner CIDI has long experience of up to 10 years working with youths on vocational skilling, income generation activities and advocacy in Soroti. Through those other initiatives that are still running, CIDI has built an available human and technical resource that will remain available to support the teenage center/girls. CIDI has already linked the girls to the National Youth Advocacy Platform that is a CIDI initiative that provides youths with a forum for presenting their needs to duty bearers and service providers. CIDI also had a network of farmers and youth cooperatives that have been skilled in income generation, VSLA, marketing and advocacy. As a Social Corporate Responsibility (SCR), CIDI has compelled those youth and farmers organizations to progressively support the teenage mothers and training center. This is particularly in the aspects of organizational capacity strengthening and good governance, income generation planning and organization, VSLA, marketing and advocacy. Through this locally well-established arrangement, a support structure for the continuity of the achievements from the pilot project is in place. That provides high potential for sustainability. Besides, CIDI’s technical staff on those other interventions will continue to provide follow-up supervision of the teenage girls and the training center.

The teenage girls have opportunities of further support beyond this project from other stakeholders. This has been a result of the good performance of the teenage girls’ training center as well as of their various advocacy engagements with those stakeholders. For instance, the teenage mothers’ training center has already recorded commitment for support in other areas/aspects of need not covered by the project. This commitment has come from:

* World Vision Uganda: offered to provide free training in making reusable sanitary towels and liquid soap.
* Girls not Brides Project: providing IEC materials on children’s rights for promotion and awareness creation.
* National Youth Advocacy Platform: committed to offer capacity building support in advocacy and linkages to youth platforms for advocacy on youth services.
* Area Sub- County and District Local Governments: ready to prioritize budgeting and resource allocation for the teenage girls’ needs.
* Soroti CSOs Coordination Forum: willing to create awareness among the service providers on the existence of the teenage mothers’ center and their needed support.

Those identified partners have a shared commitment with CIDI in contributing to the girl child’s well-being. Through their advocacy groups girls are able to voice their challenges to the duty bearers. As a sustainability strategy measure the project is integrating lobbying and advocacy training.

**The Danish organization Seniors without Borders**

Seniors without Borders (SwB) has implemented and is implementing psycho-social, educational and income generating projects in the eastern part of Uganda, Budaka, Jinja, Mt. Elgon and Soroti area. From several of these projects SwB has experience in working with vulnerable children and young people. Two successfully completed projects and one still running have included teenage mothers and other young female dropouts. These projects have been and are funded by CISU.

A project group consisting of four experienced female members has been put up in Denmark:

Erna Møller:

Educated as a social worker with experiences as development worker in Zimbabwe during 3½ years targeting HIV/AIDS affected children and youths and human rights issues with focus on children and women’s rights. Has since been working in the family unit under social welfare addressing vulnerable children and families. Is involved in three CISU projects in Uganda and one in Zimbabwe – all with children and youth issues.

Nina Fritsdal:

Employed as project manager making IT solutions in Denmark. Has participated in environmental and social projects in Uganda since 2014.

Ingefred Boesen:

Educationalist. 8 years’ working experience in Zambia and Botswana. Developer and teacher of pre-school teachers’ courses. All students were female refugees from various African countries. Training of primary school teachers in a slum area to make teachers ready to receive pupils who were unknown to basic education.

Aase Zeuthen:

M.A. During her 34 years as an upper secondary school teacher she was also student adviser dealing with all sorts of young people’s problems. Since the early 80s she has been active in development work: 2 years in Tanzania for M.S., shorter periods for Ibis in South Africa and for Axis in Peru. Member of SwB since 2011, coordinator of a CISU-funded FAL project at Mt. Elgon, which also involved teenage mothers and other young female dropouts. She was in Soroti in Sept. 2018 to assess the problem of dropouts and prepare the project in cooperation with CIDI. Now coordinator of this project.

The members of the project group feel very dedicated and based on experience from their work in other developing countries can contribute with professionalism and ideas. The members share a genuine sense of solidarity and interest in improving life for the young women in the target group.

**Development of the relationship and collaboration**

CIDI partnership with SwB started in 2018. After a successful reconnaissance visit to and subsequent capacity assessment of CIDI in August 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by CIDI and SwB to formalize the start of the partnership. Subsequently, CIDI and SwB got into a series of consultative meetings and discussions between the two and the potential direct project beneficiaries and stakeholders in Soroti and Yumbe. As a result of those initial partnership engagements in 2018, three projects were presented to CISU for funding and were approved. Those include the pilot phase in Bidi Bidi, SEAS project in Soroti and the pilot phase of this project, “Reduction and empowerment of young female dropouts in the Soroti district”.

Since then, CIDI partnership with SwB has become very strongly built on the basis of high professional capacity exhibited by CIDI in the implementation and management of the three projects. But as well, the partnership has been strengthened by a strong foundation of mutual respect for equal, respectful and tolerant participation in all key processes relating to the projects and the partnership. Critical among those have been program planning, decision making, management as well as evaluation included in the partnership. There have been three monitoring visits to Uganda done by SwB different working groups. The continuous follow-up and assessment from SwB-Denmark’s teams have been the center point upon which the partnership has strengthened. It is also the basis upon which ideas and interventions under this proposed phase II have been developed and built.

**Strengthening of the partners’ relations to other actors**

In the project area, CIDI is well networked and in collaborative relationships with key players in Soroti. They consist of local government political and technical leadership at Sub County and district level, as well as others that are of critical importance to the project and the subject matter. Those are the police, probation office, health service providers as well as other partner NGOs providing teenage services. Therefore, besides the internal resource that CIDI has to directly apply in the implementation of this project, there are other richly available resource partners that CIDI will collaborate with for the successful implementation of the project.CIDI has plenty of experience in successfully supporting youth as a specific target group in income generation and advocacy.

**Roles and Responsibilities.**

SwB has the overall responsibility for the project including the financial responsibility. The practical tasks of the implementation lie with CIDI, as well as relations with relevant national and local authorities critical for the implementation of the project. CIDI designates full time staff and assigns key staff responsible for the technical, financial and contractual oversight management of the project. Quarterly reports that include financial management are developed by CIDI and submitted to SwB. Based on the follow-up reports regular discussions and dialogue on the development and progress of the projects are held between SwB and CIDI.

CIDI has the competence and responsibility for the day to day monitoring. SwB has to make yearly monitoring visits, but due to the Covid19 situation we may have to find other solutions, e.g. Monitoring from a Distance (CISU’s guide). However, we also have very good experience from monitoring of the pilot phase when two young Ugandans from Makerere University made a very competent monitoring for SwB.

By obligation, any important information is and will continue being reported to the Board of SwB and to CISU.

Largely, since the start of the partnership, CIDI and SwB have worked together successfully in all the projects funded by CISU.

In order to administrate and implement the intervention there will be payroll costs, and CIDI must continue employing the Project Manager, Project Entrepreneurial Field Officer, M&E officer and an accountant all with experiences from CISU funded interventions.

3. Target groups, objectives, strategy, and expected results (our intervention)

**The primary target groups**

* 260 young female dropouts between 12 and 19 of age, victims of early marriage, teenage pregnancies, forced marriages or sexual and gender-based violence
* 200 school going young girls and boys at eight selected schools (25 at each school)
* 100 young female dropouts from the pilot phase
* 200 community members from the communities surrounding the eight schools
* 50 various players and stakeholders at sub county and district level

In detail, the primarytarget groups have been selected as follows:

In the pilot phase there were 210 teenage dropout mothers that did not manage to benefit from the project, even after having been identified. Phase II intends to prioritize selection of those as the primary target beneficiary group. From among them 100 teenage mothers and school dropout girls will be reached directly.

To tap into the achievements of the pilot phase beneficiaries, the project will directly reach another 160 teenage mothers and school dropout girls through the 16 elected ToTs. The four best performing teenage mothers from each of the four trades (catering, tailoring, hairdressing, bakery) will be given additional training as ToTs and through a contractual arrangement be obliged to train 10 other dropout girls each. In this way there will be 260 primary beneficiaries.

These will include: victims of early marriages between 12 - 19 years of age, victims of teenage pregnancies, victims of forced marriages and sexual and gender-based violence, as well as victims of other socio-economic conditions that have forced them to become dropouts. Generally, there will be an overlap between the four groups.

The other category of the primary target group will include 200 school going young girls and boys at eight selected school. These will be reached primarily through their school advocacy clubs that each comprises of at least 25 members. Those will include two that will be trained as ToTs/advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors. (Each of the eight selected schools will have one school advocacy club.)

The 100 young women from the pilot phase are still part of the project in the sense that they have access to the capital seed funds, VSLAs and the Teenage Mothers’ Association, and they have the possibility of seeking advice and support from CIDI.

Similarly, the project will have another category of the primary beneficiaries that will comprise 200 community members organized into and reached through their advocacy CBO of at least 100 members. Those will be from school communities surrounding the eight selected schools.

The last group of primary target beneficiaries of the project will include 50 various players and stakeholders at sub county and district level. Those will consist of local government technical staff and political leaders at district and sub county level, school administrators, teachers and parent leaders from the eight selected schools.

**The secondary target groups:**

Critical among the secondary target groups that the project has planned to reach are:

* Relatives of the primary target group
* Men in the project area as well as youth of the same age group as the members of

the primary target groups

Those are anticipated to provide the much-required social support, acknowledgement, acceptance and goodwill for the primary target group. The project is to reach them to create awareness and sensitize them so that they support the smooth running of the project, hence reducing chances of resistance. As well, to enlighten them and thus prevent continued occurrence of school dropouts and teenage mothers.

The project will also cooperate with other NGOs: UNDP, World Vision, WFP, Invisible Children, Child Fund, TASO, Children’s Hope Chest, Uganda Women’s Efforts to save Orphans. All those are involved in children’s affairs. They will be collaborated with to access services for the teenage mothers and school dropout girls. They will also be allies in advocacy engagements with duty bearers.

To obtain the anticipated objectives the participatory approach is used in every decision process and among all the target groups, primary as well as secondary. Workshops and sharing are used as tool/models.

**Objectives, strategy, and expected results (our intervention)**

**Short term objective:**

1. To strengthen the capacity of the community advocacy groups to advocate for child rights, teach conflict management and offer psycho-social support of young female dropouts in the communities and schools
2. To strengthen socio-economic resilience of young female dropouts through sustained skilling in the necessary and relevant education and vocational skills. Further to form an Association of Teenage Mothers that will serve as a pinnacle that spearheads initiation of strong, independent and self-supporting young female dropouts.

Strategy:

The design of the intervention corresponds with the Development Triangle as it contains:

* Strategic deliveries: Training of the young female dropouts in different trades and organic farming, new products, marketing and sale. Linkage with service providers in health and hygiene, mother and child care, and HIV/AIDS services.
* Organizational capacity building: Forming a Teenage Mothers’ Association. Participation in Young Peoples Forum/Parliament. Establishing ToTs/advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors.
* Advocacy: Training of local duty bearers in children’s rights, conflict management and reconciliation of families.

**Short term objective 1 related strategy:**

The advocacy groups have proved to be a worthwhile community resource. The strategy in phase II is to strengthen the advocacy groups by formalizing the groups into a CBO. Necessary organizational capacity strengthening will be provided for those groups. The intention is to spearhead child rights advocacy work and offer psycho-social support in the communities. Registration into CBO will provide more legitimacy, attract social acceptance and recognition of the advocacy groups[[1]](#footnote-1) in their work rendered in the communities. The work entails psycho-social support of the teenage mothers and other female dropouts, including their families, conflict resolution and peace building among families. Furthermore, awareness campaigns against teenage parenting and for go-back-to-school campaigns. They engage with relevant duty bearers and advocate for social support and protection of girl child rights and help identify cases of abuse. As a way of building coordination among the advocacy CBO, two people will be trained as Trainer of Trainees (ToTs)/advocacy champions and two as psycho-social counsellors. During the pilot phase, absence of community resource persons among the groups was observed as a gap area. The ToTs/advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors will provide stewardship among the advocacy CBO for specific and/or sensitive advocacy and psycho-social interventions. After training they will be facilitated with bicycles to increase mobility and enable them to coordinate their work. To secure that the registered advocacy CBO undertake well focused and well guided advocacy work, they will go through a participatory exercise to come up with an advocacy strategy. The developed strategy will define the processes to follow in identification and prioritization of advocacy ideas and themes. The same strategy will guide the respective duty bearers/stakeholders to be engaged in particular advocacy issues.

The pilot phase has performed well in schools, for instance school-community outreaches for experience sharing and learning concerning management of school dropouts, including issues of advocacy and psycho-social support. Further intervention along this line will therefore be realized during phase II of the project. School advocacy clubs will be supported to do advocacy work on child rights and teenage pregnancies through inter-school and inter-community outreach activities. Additionally, schools will be supported with promotional Information, Education and Communication materials (IEC) on issues related to teenage pregnancies and girl child school dropout.

Currently, the project has had a few radio talk shows conducted. Those have involved invitation of panelists of key duty bearers and representatives from the community to come to the radio station to discuss issues during the radio program. The radio talk shows have been widely received by the local leadership and the community as very beneficial. However, discussions around the performance of the radio talk shows have indicated that the radio talk shows can be enriched further by facilitating community outreaches. Such outreaches (community hall discussions) will enable wider community participation. It will also facilitate capturing of community voices on certain issues relating to teenage pregnancies, forced marriages, compensation fines and compliance with the law. CIDI therefore intends to undertake more regular radio talk shows (at least monthly) with a community outreach component embedded.

Under the local government framework, each sub county twice a year is obliged to conduct a Young People’s Forum/Parliament to debate issues affecting young people’s rights. Unfortunately, not much awareness is created among the communities and schools of the availability of this platform. As such, it is never utilized. Therefore, in phase II sub county leadership will be supported with activities that facilitate awareness creation and dissemination of the availability of such a platform. This will be coupled with advocacy engagement meetings that facilitate the identification of issues and forward them to the sub county at grassroot level.

The experiences from the pilot phase substantiate that this will lead to the expected results - the dropout girls and teenage mothers will be able to fend for themselves and their children, they will gain self-esteem and acceptance and respect from the community. Furthermore, being organized in the Teenage Mothers’ Association will lead to equal partnership with other organizations and institutions. And by knowing their rights they will be able to negotiate, demand and justify their position in the community.

**Short term objective 2 related strategy:**

Phase II of the project aims at supporting the socio-economic resilience of young female dropouts. Sustained vocational and livelihood skills training of young school dropout girls is planned to support that. The pilot phase directly reached 100 teenage mothers and school dropout girls out of the 310 that had been identified. Phase II will directly reach out to an additional 100 teenage mothers and school dropout girls. These are to be selected from Awalwal sub county that is a break-away local government structure from the current Gweri sub county, where the pilot phase has been implemented. In the current Gweri sub county the extended project will be implemented in Abelet parish. The following strategic interventions are planned in phase II of the project.

Teenage mothers and school dropouts in all four trades will be supported to form into one registered association/cooperative: Teenage Mothers’ Association. This association will be supported to integrate the VSLA component and facilitated with VSLA kits relevant for their work. The association will further be availed with a seed capital fund. The purpose of the seed capital fund is to enable the teenage mothers and other female school dropouts to cheaply access reasonable credit beyond their savings in VSLAs, so that they are able to boost their IGA enterprises. As the enterprises of the girls grow and get more established, they will require a credit source that appreciates their operations. The seed capital fund comes in to address this likely challenge.

To support a sustained and multiplier effect in phase II of the project, four teenage mothers from each of the four trades (16 in total) will be selected from the best performing and taken through a ToT training so that they can continuously train others. The 16 above will be availed with training materials to use to train others as well as facilitated with bicycles. Each ToT teenage mother will be engaged in a contractual arrangement to train 10 others. Ultimately the 16 ToTs will have trained 160 more teenage mothers in addition to those directly trained by the project training center.

Phase II of the project will maintain the current learning/training center for training new mothers from Abelet parish in Gweri sub county and Awalwal parish. Some minor replacement of equipment will be required. Secondly, the center will keep serving as a focal coordination point (formal address) for the proposed Teenage Mothers’ Association. To strengthen the functioning of the training center, it will be supported with a tricycle (three-wheeled motorbike with a carrier bed). The tricycle will be a multipurpose facility for the Teenage Mothers’ Association. It will provide transportation and facilitate bulk procurement of training materials. The tricycle will also serve as an emergency community ambulance to facilitate transportation of the pregnant teenage girls for medical antenatal care at the health centers. This subsequently will minimize the practice of pregnant teenage girls opting to go to the local (highly risky) traditional birth attendants that are closer. It must be appreciated that the pregnant teenage girls avoid going to the health centers for antenatal checkups largely because they are located at long distances from them.

It has been observed that a number of the teenage mothers reached by the project are living positively with HIV and on HIV Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART). This has subjected them to multi vulnerabilities of being teenage mothers, HIV positive, socially stigmatized and in other cases undergoing gender-based and domestic violence. Phase II of the project will support linkages for access to HIV/AIDS services for the teenage mothers living positively with HIV. This will include referring them to their ART counsellors and clinics and train them to conduct HIV awareness sessions among their peers. The proposed tricycle will be crucial in addressing some of these interventions.

As an additional activity in phase II the teenage mothers will be supported with complementary IGA skills such as making reusable sanitary pads and liquid soap, cosmetics and jewelry of recycled materials. There is local need and demand for such. Through their Teenage Mothers’ Association part of those products will be donated to other vulnerable girls in the community. Such an intervention is intended to inculcate a culture of social corporate responsibility among the supported teenage mothers. In so doing they will be engaged in addressing the very basic issues that lure many girls into sexual activities because they lack these things – which men can provide. The result of this has always been the teenage pregnancies.

This project intervention is geared towards deepening the achievements realized during the pilot phase.

The legal registration of the Teenage Mothers’ Association makes it possible to be considered for direct government support and as well to benefit from economic and development empowerment programs from the central government.

The young dropouts and teenage mothers will be guided into public leadership for the rights of the girl child. To facilitate sustained economic self-help the VSLA association that was initiated during the pilot phase will be supported with advanced capacity building to access cheap credit from formal service providers for boosting their enterprises. During the pilot phase, the savings culture among the young dropout girls and mothers greatly improved as a result of the intervention.

The project is going to support the target teenage mothers and their caretakers with additional skills in sustainable agronomic farming. This will complement their vocational skilling with potential for economic diversification to boost income generation of their households. Such will include crop farming, vegetable growing, piggery and poultry. The implementing partners (Seniors Without Boarders and CIDI) are already having agriculture related support initiatives in the area, and the girls will be linked to these projects.

Phase II intends to facilitate resourcing of the training and learning center. The resourcing will be both in terms of equipment and training materials as well as building network of vocational ToT trainers that continuously identify other young school dropout girls and train them.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Objective 1:**  **To strengthen the capacity of the community advocacy groups to advocate for child rights, teach conflict management and offer psycho-social support of young school dropout girls in the communities and schools.** | | |
| **Outputs** | **Indicators** | **Activities** |
| * 1. (a) Advocacy groups in Gweri have been formed into registered Advocacy CBOs promoting child rights, gender, and conflict management.   **1.1.** (b) 8 project-trained ToTs/advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors have provided counselling, coordinated and promoted advocacy for child rights, conflict prevention, resolution and management as well as gender and domestically based violence management including psycho-social support of young school dropout girls in the communities and schools.  **1.1.** (c) Local Leader and project-trained ToTs/advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors have worked with communities in identification of issues and forwarded them to the young people’s forum/parliament at the sub county for planning and resource allocation. | 1.1.1 At least one Community Based Organization of young school dropout girls, advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors has been registered. | **1.1.1.1:** Conduct an Inception meeting with the district and sub county stakeholders to introduce the project and have them on board.  **1.1.1.2:** Support advocacy groups to formalize into structured community- based organizations.  **1.1.1.3**: Conduct organization capacity strengthening trainings for the formed advocacy community -based organizations. 1.**1.1.4:** Support the formed advocacy CBOs with other promotional materials for their work (e.g. Identification and visibility items/materials that facilitate their work. Such would include branded T-Shirts, backpacks, and stationaries for recording their work. Including simplified IECs on policies on Child rights).  **1.1.1.5:** Conduct training of at least 2 people as ToTs/advocacy champions and psycho-social counsellors from each advocacy group to spearhead coordination.  **1.1.1.6:** Conduct training for the advocacy groups in conflict prevention, resolution and management as well as gender and domestically based violence management related to teenage pregnancies and girl child school dropout.  **1.1.1.7:** Conduct community outreach radio talk shows on issues related to child rights, conflict prevention, resolution and management as well as gender and domestically based violence management including psycho-social support of young school dropout girls in the communities and schools.  **1.1.1.8:** Conduct advocacy trainings of local council leaders to plan and allocate resources for young people’s forum/parliament in order to debate issues affecting young people’s rights.  **1.1.1.9:** Facilitate project staff to work with the advocacy CBOs to engage communities in the identification of issues for onward forwarding the young people’s forum/parliament at the sub county. |
| **1.2: (a)** Schools and neighbor communities have undertaken joint advocacy activities on child rights, gender, as well as conflict management and psycho-social support of young school dropout girls in the communities and schools.  **1.2.** (b) The formed CBOs have been well equipped with theatre kits and IEC materials and used them for awareness creation and advocacy work on child rights and teenage pregnancies.  **1.2.** (c) Pupils/teenage girls have made reusable sanitary pads after acquiring training on the same from the project. | 1.1.2: At least 75% of the young female dropouts  - have changed sexual  behavior  - have become aware of their  rights  - have returned to school  - are now self-contained | **1.1.2.1:** Facilitate/support school-community outreach activities (meetings, dialogue, reviews) for experience sharing and learning on management of school dropout girls including issues of advocacy and psycho-social support.  **1.1.2.2:** Support advocacy groups/CBOs each with a set of Music Dance and Drama kits to facilitate their advocacy work through theatre activities, MDD interschool competitions and school-community outreach with MDD activities on child rights and teenage pregnancies.  **1.1.2.3:** Facilitate theatre activities, MDD interschool competitions and school-community outreach activities on child rights and teenage pregnancies.  **1.1.2.4:** Develop and support school advocacy clubs with IEC materials on issues related to teenage pregnancies and girl child school dropout.  **1.1.2.5:** Conduct training for school clubs in making reusable sanitary pads as a measure to facilitate girl child retention in school. |
| **Objective 2:**  **To strengthen the socio-economic resilience of young female dropouts through sustained skilling in the necessary and relevant education and vocational skills. Further to form a Teenage Mothers’ Association that will serve as a pinnacle that spearheads initiation of strong, independent and self-supporting young female dropouts.** | | |
| **1.2: (a)** The skilled teenage mothers from the project have been formed into a registered Teenage Mothers’ Association  **1.2:** (b) The Teenage Mothers’ Association has been provided with the required leadership structure that is functional.  **1.2:** (c) The skilled teenage mothers have run a functional VSLA at the Teenage Mothers’ Association and members have been given access to cheap credit from their seed fund.  1.2: (d) The teenage mothers and/or their caregivers have learned sustainable agronomic farming that boost the income generation of their households. | **1.2.1**: A total of 260 teenage mothers from all 4 trades operate under a registered Teenage Mothers’ Association and have been given access to saving and credit accounts. | **1.2.1.1:** Support the teenage mothers in each of the trades to form into a registered association/cooperative of young school dropout girls.  **1.2.1.2:** Conduct groups dynamics and VSLA training for the formed Teenage Mothers’ Association.  **1.2.1.3:** Support the formed Teenage Mothers’ Association with VSLA kits to facilitate their work.  **1.2.1.4:** Conduct leadership and good governance training for the formed Association of Teenage Mothers.  **1.2.1.5:** Support the Teenage Mothers’ Association with a seed capital fund to give them cheap access to credit in order to boost their enterprises.  **1.2.1.6:** Support the teenage mothers and their caregivers with trainings on farming activities that can boost income generation in their households (e.g. sustainable agronomic practices, vegetable growing, piggery and poultry) |
| **1.3 (a):** The skilled young school dropout girls have organized a community network of vocational ToT trainers that continuously identify other young school dropout girls and train them to cause multiplier effect of the project.  1.3 (b): All the 16 ToT teenage mothers have been facilitated with a bicycle each. | **1.3.1.:** 16 teenage mothers have been trained as ToTs and have each trained at least 4 others that they have identified from their localities. | **1.3.1.1:** Identity 4 teenage mothers from each of the 4 trades (16 in total) to go through a ToT training.  **1.3.1.2:** Conduct a ToT training for identified 4 teenage mothers from each of the 4 trades (16 in total).  **1.3.1.3:** Support 16 teenage mothers vocational ToT trainers with quarterly training materials in their respective trades to use in training others. |
| 1.4: (a) The established learning/training center has been well facilitated to offer training of teenage mothers and function as a coordination office for the Teenage Mothers’ Association. The tricycle serves as means of transport for their operations. | 1.4.1: The training center is established and is providing training of the young teenage dropouts. | **1.4.1.1:** Procure equipment for replacement as required for the learning/training center.  **1.4.1.2:** Procure training materials for training the ToT teenage mothers and those that they will train. |
| 1.4: (b) The Teenage Mothers’ Association has established linkages with service providers in health and hygiene, mother and child care health services, HIV/AIDS services as well as menstrual management services in Soroti. | 1.4.2: The teenage mothers have access to complementary services. | **1.4.2.1:** Conduct collaborative meetings with area health facilities to access teenage mothers to medical antenatal care at the health center(s) as well as HIV/AIDS services to the teenage mothers living positively with HIV.  **1.4.2.2:** conduct HIV/AIDS awareness and linkage sessions with service providers for young school dropout girls.  **1.4.2.3:** conduct complementary training of young school dropout girls in IGA skills like making reusable sanitary pads and liquid soap, cosmetics/improved locally made body jelly and jewelry out of recycled materials. |

Long-term sustainability

Voluntary structures like the Teenage Mothers’ Association will strengthen the girls and become a lasting improvement of their life situation. The feeling of solidarity and togetherness is an important factor when dealing with severe challenges.

Creating the advocacy CBOs and the Teenager Mothers’ Association lends legitimacy to these organizations and make them equal partners among other NGOs and institutions.

The sustained skilling in the different trades, farming, produce, marketing and sale will secure their economic independence and lead to self-confidence and respect from the community, avoiding stigmatization.

The reinforced cooperation with other NGOs, the use of the ToT-model, and strengthening of the existing advocacy groups will lead to long-term sustainability, in the future lead to an exit strategy.

Risks

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Risk** | **Likely effect planned mitigation** |
| Covid19 | Since March 2020 Uganda has been struggling with handling prevention, control and management of covid19. To date the country has experienced total country lockdown twice. That and associated partial lockdowns have negatively affected the socio-economic and health set-up of individuals, families and communities. Covid19 is therefore a risk for the socio-economic resilience of young female dropouts. However, the national ministry of health and covid19 task forces will be in place to provide standard operating procedure that the project will comply to. |
| Overwhelming child care demands on the young dropout mothers | Some dropout teenage mothers get abandoned by the fathers of the children and their immediate and extended families. This may limit their ability to be caretaker of the baby when the dropout mother is required for training. The situation gets worse when the baby experiences health emergencies that have to keep the teenage mother away from the program for some time. That eventually poses a risk of the young mother dropping out or failing to acquire the needed skills in the project duration. To address this risk, the project has an inbuilt mechanism for strengthening social support of teenage mothers from group categories of the fathers of the children, their immediate and extended families including the communities they live in. That social support will enable them to overcome or withstand this risk. |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Repeated early (unwanted) pregnancies | Despite being teenage mothers, the continued stay out of school and associated livelihood challenges subject the young mothers to the risk of continued sexual engagement with men/boys. This in effect subjects them to a risk of repeated early and unwanted pregnancies, which again makes them more vulnerable. Often times in such instances they may get too ashamed to continue with the program, thereby risking their vocational skilling. The project has embedded continuous awareness, counseling and guidance, and provision of psycho-socio support as an integrated component of the vocational skilling project. That way, the young mothers will be empowered to avoid and overcome the risk. |
| Lack of goodwill and support from families and community for social, religious or cultural reasons | Despite the willingness the dropout girls and young mothers may have in joining the program, absence of goodwill from the fathers of their children and their immediate and extended families may prevent the girls’ joining the project. The social, religious or cultural factors that may have been the reason for school dropout or early pregnancies may persist when that goodwill is not realized. The project has planned to engage all stakeholders in the program right from the start, so that this goodwill and support is solicited. |
| Overburdening of the young mothers and dropout girls with family responsibilities after training | When the young mothers and dropout girls have been skilled and started earning incomes (getting economically empowered), they face a risk of being delegated a lot of new responsibilities. Eventually, the young mothers and dropout girls may get overburdened and overwhelmed by the demands being presented to them and feeling obliged to meet them and may end up dropping back into their vulnerable situations. The project has provided platforms where such challenges can be discussed, guidance and counselling provided to both the young mothers/ dropout girls and their families. |
| Excessive psycho-social trauma | Young mothers and dropout girls respond differently to the associated psycho-social trauma. Although the project is providing support, some girls may be affected gravely and require more specialized support than the project can provide. This may affect their self-esteem and ability to cope with the program. The project plans to ensure there is continuous counseling and encouraging sharing of individual experiences and life stories. There is also going to be linkages made with referral pathways in extreme cases of psycho-social trauma. |

Monitoring plan

SwB receives quarterly progress reports and reports on the financial management as a tool of monitoring along the way. Based on these reports there are regular discussions and dialogue on the development and progress of the project between SwB and CIDI.

Otherwise CIDI has the competence and responsibility for the day to day monitoring. SwB has to make yearly monitoring visits, but due to the Covid19 situation we may have to find other solutions, e.g. Monitoring from a Distance (CISU’s guide). However, we also have very good experience from monitoring of the pilot phase when two young Ugandans from Makerere University made a comprehensive and competent monitoring for SwB. A final external evaluation is also planned.

**Involvement of the target groups in the monitoring**

The project will adopt a participatory planning and monitoring approach that involve the target groups at all levels. At the start of the project inception meetings will be held with the local leadership and the target beneficiary group. They will be taken through the project objectives, approaches, targeted outcome and activities to be implemented. During these inception meetings roles and responsibilities will be concretized and agreed upon. Monitoring indicators will be discussed and agreed upon with the target groups. Through that process a participatory monitoring and evaluation matrix plan will be developed. This will provide the monitoring and evaluation tool that will be applied to assess progress and plan for subsequent actions. For the teenage mothers and young school dropout girls’ monthly reviews and planning meetings will be taking place at the center. Personal improvement plans will also be made and evaluated on a quarterly basis by each of the beneficiary teenage mothers and young school dropout girls. Joint stakeholders’ participatory project field visits and review meetings will be conducted on a quarterly basis. Those will serve the purpose of shared monitoring on progress of the project. Jointly agreed upon actions for project improvement and realization of set objectives will be drawn. Progress will be assessed at every other subsequent project review meeting.

If the situation allows it the monitoring plan can be as follows:

Project start: 1. December 2021

1. monitoring: April 2022: virtual meeting

2. monitoring: October 2022: monitoring visit (SwB)

3. monitoring: April 2023 virtual meeting

Evaluation: September/October 2023: external consultant

1. The work of the advocacy groups entails:

   Offering psycho-social support and counselling to the dropouts and their families.

   Offer conflict resolution and peace building services among families.

   Awareness campaigns against teenage pregnancies, teenage parenting and for end of arranged and forced marriages go-back-to-school for teenage mothers

   Engaging relevant duty bearers in identified advocacy issues.

   Offer inspirational and motivation talks to school children and girls on benefits of staying in school as well as having hope even after pregnancies.

   Advocating for social support and protection of the rights of teenage mothers/school dropouts + their families.

   Identification of girl child abuse cases and liaising with relevant offices to make referrals. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)