

PROGRESS REPORT FOR THE SAFEGUARDING RESPONSE FOR FABIOS' CYCLE TO SCHOOL PROGRAMME



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PREAMBLE

FABIO has been implementing its Cycle to School programme in Butagaya for a period of 3 years until the outbreak of the COvid 19 Pandemic which put many things to a standstill. In a bid to safeguard people against the Pandemic, the Government of Uganda put in place quite a number of measures among which was the Lockdown and Closure of Schools. However, as a result of the containment measures, many young people resorted to hawking, boda boda riding, housekeeping maids, sugar cane cutting, among other things. This made them fall prey to sexual abuse among other child abuse forms particularly the girl child where by June 2021, 196499 girls had been defiled and impregnated - according to the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development reports.

By the time the Government officially opened schools from the lockdown, many of the young girls had already dropped out of school, some were at the edge of dropping out due to teenage pregnancies and some were not sure of whether they should proceed with education since they assumed they had grown to be in school.

It should be one of FABIO's beneficiaries fell prey to the men tricks which almost lured her into early Marriage. In a bid to help the victim, FABIO realized that there could be other similar cases in the different beneficiary communities that required intervention.

Its against this background that FABIO embarked on a safeguarding response that intended to render help to the case in scenario but also to sensitize the other young people not to fall victims of the similar circumstance.

Objectives of the Response

- To respond to the immediate safeguarding case reported.
- To develop a stronger safeguarding culture, safety & security in and around schools, leading to a conducive environment especially for girls.
- To raise Community awareness on the need for safeguarding and encouraging new community based approaches to address issues of child abuse.



Introductory Session on Safeguarding/Beneficiaries understanding of Safeguarding/facilitated by FABIO Programs Manager.

THE SAFEGUARDING RESPONSE

The response comprised of various activities namely: Follow up on the case in scenario/current students case, counselling session for the parents, engaging cycle to school beneficiaries, media awareness, developing & distributing of IEC materials, Formation of safeguarding committees and a stakeholders engagement. So far, FABIO has been able to implement the following activities:

i. Follow up on the current student case

FABIO was able to follow up on the case . However, the medical exercise was administered by the Uganda police doctors to avoid interference into the case by external partners.

despite requests from FABIO to carry out the medical check and these did not agree to share with FABIO a copy the medical results though disclosed that the girl was ok health wise basing on their medical report.

In addition, the perpetrator was arrested and after a couple of weeks was released on bail on conditions that he would commute from home with court hearings .

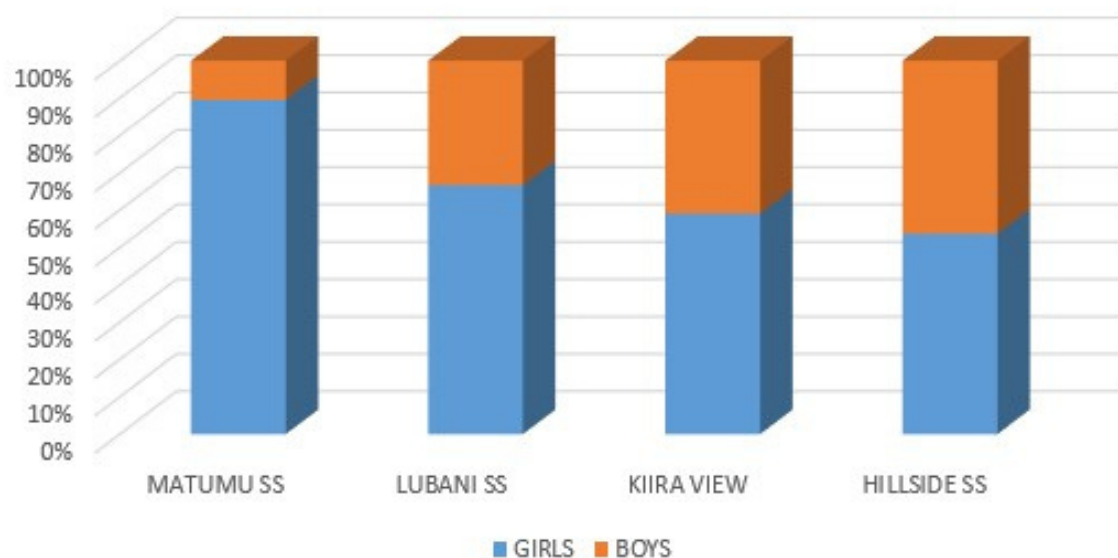
It is imperative to note that the whole medical process/checkup was facilitated by FABIO. The results were said to have been negative although the medical report was retained by the police to see the case to its logical conclusion. To enable the girl settle back in school, a counsellor was hired to give parents and the girl emotional and physical support and apparently she went back to School and reports from her psychological teachers indicate that she is doing well.

ii. Engage Cycle to School Beneficiary Schools.

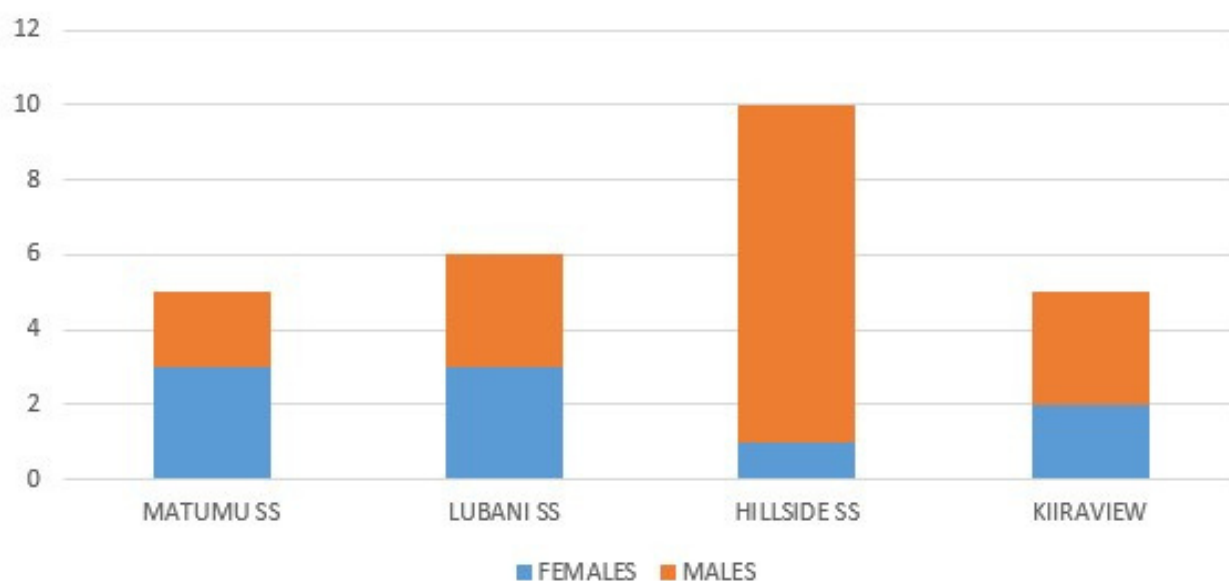
This involved engaging Students in the categories of all Students Leaders, and School administrators through awareness sessions in the areas of Sexual Reproductive Health, the Safe guarding Policy, the relevance of Safe guarding and Child abuse. This awareness was conducted in all the Cycle to School beneficiary Schools : Hill Side, Matumu , Kiira View and Lubani Secondary Schools in Butagaya Subcounty, Jinja District and in total we were able to reach 224 students and 30 administrators.

The following were issues that emerged during the various trainings:

STUDENTS' ATTENDANCE DURING SAFEGUARDING TRAINING



ADMINISTRATORS' PARTICIPATION IN SAFEGUARDING TRAINING





A photograph taken during the safeguarding training in Matumu

Forms of Child Abuse in Communities and Schools

1. Defilement and Rape.
2. Child Neglect especially fathers refusing to buy sanitary pads for their Children which forces them to accept small gifts from men hence luring them into sexual harassments
3. Corporal Punishments by Parents especially the drunkard fathers and some teachers.
4. Denial of Education & Medical Care
5. Child Sacrifice.
6. Child Labor and this was said to have been very common during the Lockdown where Many young people were said to have turned into the bread winners for their homes . i.e. Hawking vegetables, cutting sugarcane and the girls we were turned into housemaids in the urban centers.
7. Selling young girls in exchange for money especially by their own parents.
8. Poor Feeding and many young girls confessed that many of their friends have dropped out of school due to the desire to have some good food.
9. Bad touches by some teachers in Schools

Human Rights Abusers of Children

- 1. Parents (fathers)**
- 2. Teachers.**
- 3. Relatives (Uncles, Brothers & Sisters).**
- 4. House Helpers.**



"When a teacher asks for a question and you are not able to give the right answers, he tells you that you are dull because all your family spirits sit on your head"

This was a confession by one of the students during the students awareness on Safeguarding". Said one of the students during the training

STUDENT'S EXPERIENCE DURING AND AFTER AFTER ALONG LOCKDOWN

- 1.Many parents were said to have tortured their children both Physically and Emotionally .i.e. beating them, denying them food and emotionally through abusing them.
- 2."We experienced many of our parents fight infront of us and this forced us to run away from home to look for refugee since our very own families had turned into battle fields. Said one of the students during the Safeguarding Training in Matumu". Said the Students during the Safeguarding training.

"My mother used to call me her co-wife and tortured me psychologically in that at some point i wanted to run away from home. I was happy when government announced the opening of schools ". Said one of the students in Matumu Secondary School during the Safeguarding training



Students of Matumu Senior Secondary School during the safeguarding training

"Every day was a nightmare for us. At home your parents abuse us, they use all sorts of names including saying that we eat a lot but again outside home was horrible. Men in the trading center used to say that "I have grown up and am fit for marriage, these could wait for me in the trading center every day" . Said one of the girls during the Safeguarding training in Kiira View Secondary School".

"At our Neighborhood, a father disowned his son of 16 years because he impregnated a girl of 15 years. He was told to either Marry the girl or leave home. The Boy decided to leave home and resorted to cutting sugarcane to earn a living" Said one of the students in Hillside Secondary School during the Safeguarding training

"Sometimes I feel like am wasting a lot of time in School. During the lockdown, I had started my small chapatti business and generally throughout class time, I think about making money ". Said one of the Boys in Matumu Secondary School during the Safeguarding training.

Throughout the Safeguarding engagements across the four beneficiary Schools, Students confessed that surely they needed awareness on how best they could guard themselves against the dangers and experiences that had occurred to them and their friends during the lockdown . These therefore indicated that the training was timely since it was something they had yearned for long time.

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCE AFTER ALONG LOCKDOWN

1. Some students reported in class without books as if they had not come to learn.
2. Other student's reported with long and crazy hair which is against our code of conduct for students. They know very well that they are supposed to have short hair.
3. We had to spend a lot of time talking to them and counselling in order to bring them back on board.
4. Some student's came back with very bad morals like they no longer want to be guided, as teachers are guiding to them, they start exchanging words and behave as if they want to fight their teachers and this very common among the Boys.

Three girls at the age of 15,16,& 17 were discovered after the general girls medical checkups conducted by the beneficiary Schools of Matumu and Hill Side Secondary Schools.

Unfortunately , one of the three was caught aborting because she wanted to continue with her education. According to the Senior Woman teacher Matumu, they are willing to support her recover and settle back in School.

Safeguarding Measures to be adopted by Schools

Practical Actions to be taken with Immediate Effect

- 1.Introduce Counselling and guidance sessions in Schools especially for those who didn't have any in their School programme. 2.out 4 had these sessions , however these hadn't conducted any since the Schools resumed.
- 2.Introducing life skills sessions to their daily time table.
- 3.Holding Children's Human Rights abusers accountable in terms of seeking Legal redress.
- 4.Introducing Peer to Peer talks among students and for the Schools like Kiira View secondary school already has this program will only ensure its implemented.
- 5.Introducing a parenting program i.e. Every teacher owns between 10 to 20 Students that they can give time for Counselling and guidance and frequently follow-up on them . This was specifically suggested by Kiira View Secondary School.
- 6.Ensuring continuous Medical check ups for the girls to ensure they safe Health wise .
- 7.Ensuring Confidentiality especially whenever students share their private matters.
- 8.Ensuring regular School roll calls to establish the attendance of Students from Morning to Evening.
- 9.Training Students to be each other's keepers and report whenever something wrong happened to a fellow Student without the knowledge of the teacher.
10. Plan to have a safeguarding Policy in place to guide implementation of Safeguarding in School.

- 1.The information prefect at Matumu will be reading News regarding Safeguarding to the general Students Assembly and She will be supported by the Student Leadership and the Safeguarding Committee.
- 2.Holding Safeguarding discussions using the students clubs in Schools.
- 3.Using the debating platform to discuss on Safeguarding .
- 4.Creating a talking environment that has sign posts that speak about Safeguarding.

**"Out of the 4
Schools, only
Kiira View
Secondary School
already had a
Safeguarding
Policy and
Safeguarding
Committee in
Place".**

SCHOOL'S SAFEGAURDING COMMITTEES (SSGC)

These Committees were formed in Schools which did not have one in place. These were selected amongst the teachers and students during their trainings on Safeguarding. For students, semi non Candidates were given the first priority since they still have time in School as opposed to these candidate classes

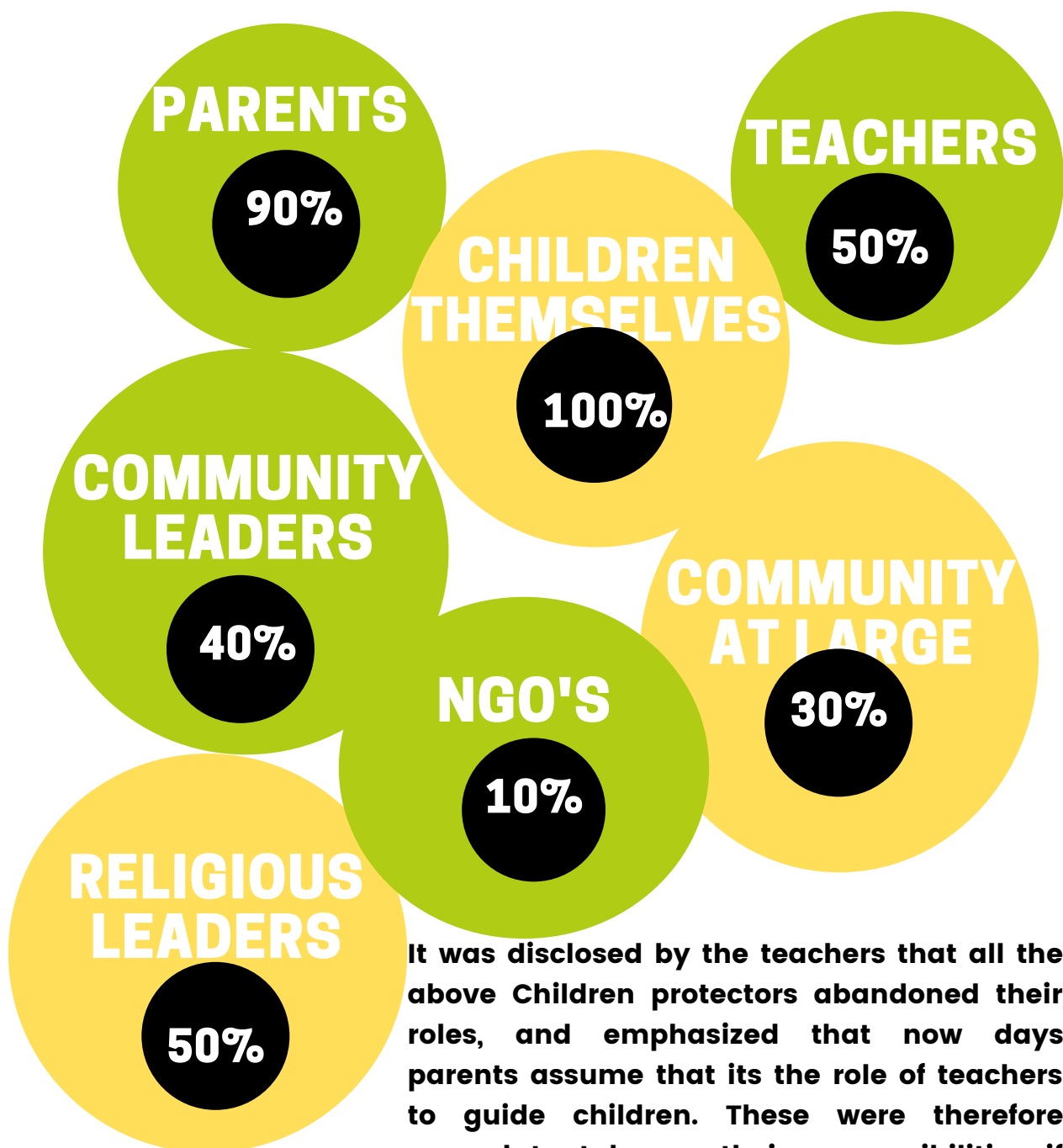
TEACHER'S SGC

- 1.Senior Woman Teacher-Chairperson
- 2.Senior Male Teacher - Vice Chairperson
- 3.Deputy Headteacher - Secretary

STUDENT'S SGC

- Assistant Head Girl-Chairperson
- Information Prefect - Vice Chairperson
- Assistant Head Boy - Secretary

STUDENT/CHILDREN'S PROTECTORS & PERCENTAGE OF THEIR ROLES



It was disclosed by the teachers that all the above Children protectors abandoned their roles, and emphasized that now days parents assume that its the role of teachers to guide children. These were therefore argued to take up their responsibilities if they are to have a safe and productive young generation. In addition, Children were said to have 100% role of protecting themselves because this is their life and they should learn for fight for themselves like saying No to bad touches and Sex before finishing their education.

iii. Community Awareness

This basically targeted the surrounding Communities of the beneficiary Schools and these were attended by Parents, Local leaders, Police, Opinion Leaders, Boda Bodas among other participants.

These were taken through the cases of Child Abuse & their effects on the future of the Children, relevancy of Safeguarding Children, Sexual Reproductive Health and the abusers of Children's Human Rights.

A Community Safeguarding Committee was formed and this was responsible for ensuring safety of Children.

COMMUNITY SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE

1. OC Police - Chairperson
2. Opinion Leader - Vice Chairperson
3. Religious Leader - Secretary

iv. Media Awareness Campaigns

FABIO has already designed messages on Safeguarding/Reproductive Health **(the safer the children, the brighter the future and the stronger the generation, please keep children in school and its everyone's responsibility).**

These have been distributed on three Radios of NBS, Busoga One and OP FM to support the adverts. In addition, these messages have been recorded and distributed to the Community gramophones to reach the target groups that may not have access to radios. Last but not, FABIO has held two Talkshows 5 & 6/4/2022 on safeguarding and the topics discussed included:

Child Abuse

- Relevance of safeguarding children
- Who is responsible for safeguarding children/role of parents, teachers and children in ensuring their safety
- How to deal with child abuse cases in communities

OUTCOMES OF THE SAFEGUARDING TRAININGS

"Much as we have been aware that its important to keep Children Safe, we admit that we have not done much to ensure our children's safety. However we now feel energized to put right what could have gone and we shall begin with creating a conducive environment for Children to freely open up to us especially whenever in danger"

Remarks made by Kiira View Headteacher

"This should not be the last time you come to speak to us about such wonderful topics, please come again, we want to hear this over and over, that will help us secure a bright a future and it will reduce on the number of young people who get pregnant due to not knowing what to do"

Remarks made by the Head Girl Lubani Secondary School.

CONCLUSION

During the various engagements with schools under safeguarding response, FABIO realized that schools/students need to be engaged frequently in order to build their capacities to hold similar meetings on their own. . And now FABIO plans to include safeguarding in its annual operation plan to ensure sustainability.