



Bringing hearts and minds
together for children

Community Based Child Protection Mechanisms: The case of traditional institutions

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Presentation Outline



- 1. Introduction, Current situation and Response to VAC in Uganda**
- 2. Community Based Child Protection and Traditional Child Protection Systems – The Role of Cultural Institutions – The Case of Tieng Adhola Kingdom, Uganda**
- 3. Key Approach, Interventions & Value addition,**
- 4. Key Achievements, challenges and recommendations**

- In any caring community the importance of child welfare cannot be overemphasized because the future welfare of the entire community, its growth and development depend on the health, well-being and proper upbringing of its children”.
- I believe that is why you are participating in this meeting today.

Introduction

1. Uganda ratified the UNCRC 1989, optional protocols I&II; ACRWC, ILO Convention 138 &182 on child Labour. **OP3 not yet ratified.**
2. **Child protection is enshrined into national laws eg:** 1995 Constitution of Uganda; Local Govt Act; Local Council Regulations Act ; Children's ACT, Penal Code Act; Domestic Violence Act & many others.
3. Despite all the above, level of VAC remains high among families, schools, child care institutions & communities in Uganda.

VAC in Uganda

- 2006 UN study on VAC Reported cruel and humiliating punishments against Children
- **Uganda participated in this study**
- Uganda Human Rights Commission Reports 2012, 2013; Uganda Police annual crime report 2013 / 2014 and UNICEF SiTA of state of Uganda's Children 2015, indicates that VAC is still high despite moderate improvement.
- Uganda was ranked 16th among the 25 countries with highest rate of child marriage. That 46% marry before 18 years (Uganda Population Council report 2015)

Current Response to VAC in Uganda

Responses implemented through three main inter-connected approaches:

1. **Formal national child protection systems** (*relies on gov't statutory instruments and Institutions for protection of children*)
2. **Community based child protection systems** (*relies on voluntarism of community structures to fill gaps in national child protection systems – its Informal*)
3. **Traditional Based child protection systems** (*based on oral traditions, cultural norms, beliefs & practices by members of particular society*)

National Child Protection Systems: Challenges

- Limitations in implementation of laws, policies and legislations (technical, financial & human)
- Reliance on assumption that “where there is law there is order, people will obey” is a fallacy if respect for the law is not promoted
- Impact of poverty & poor access to survival, development & protection services for children
- Weak coordination and low prioritization

Community Based Child protection Systems: challenges

- Community based child protection systems: over rely on voluntarism – not easy to sustain
- Lack of defined minimum standard to guide national and community based child protection systems, limiting effectiveness of prevention & response
- How to strengthen linkage between informal and formal national child protection system (eg CHL 116)
- Moving from informal to formal systems: When? How?

Traditional Based Child Protection Systems (TBCP)

- Based on oral tradition, cultural beliefs and practices of a given society carried from G2G.
- Not based on law but naturally respected, valued, strongly believed and accepted by the people of that society.
- Some are in conflict with the law, deeply rooted in culture and very difficult to address eg. FGM, “Rape and Marry”, 3 Fingers & forced child Marriage

Current TBCP Response in Uganda

- Uganda is a republic headed by the president governed by Art 5 of its 1995 Constitution.
- Art 246 Provides for the existence of traditional or cultural institutions and its leadership in Uganda.
- There are 15 Gazzetted Kingdoms in Uganda eg: Buganda, Tooro, Tieng Adhola, Teso, Busoga, Lango, Ker Kwaro Acholi etc
- They work to promote and preserve their cultural values and traditions from G2G.

TBCP – The case of Tieng Adhola

- Founded in 1897, headed by His Royal Highness The Kwar Adhola, has a cabinet led by Rt Hon Prime Minister (myself); has approximately 950,000 subjects
- One of the main goal is: Promoting protection of children and women in the Kingdom.
- Uses pronouncements & bye-laws –**respected**.
- Works with all 15 gazetted traditional institutions Gov't and selected NGOs.

Key Areas of Interventions

- Promoting protection of women and Children through fighting SGBV, neglect, torture, etc
- Fighting Harmful traditional practices like FGM, Child Marriage, Bride price and refund of bride price: **All these demean women in society.**
- Promoting children's education, cultural identity, welfare, Family cohesion and general Dev't of the Tieng Adhola community.

Key Achievements of Tieng Adhola

- In partnership with MIFUMI, TDLG, UNFPA, Plan International & WVI spear headed banning payment and refund of bride price in 2005. Upheld by Supreme court ruling banning refund of bride price in Uganda on August 6th, 2015
- Together with all other cultural institutions banned FGM. Now supported by an Act of parliament. (some still escape to Kenya)
- Promoted involvement of children in Governance at family and school level supported by Plan International.

Added Value of Traditional Institutions

- Traditional beliefs and practices are naturally respected, valued & accepted by people of that society.
- Its easier, faster, cost effective and more sustainable in addressing negative cultural practices through oral traditional approach
- Cultural institutions are unique, respected as alternative dispute resolution mechanism by courts in Uganda – (land conflict, domestic Violence, etc).
- **more effective – in conflict resolution**

Key Challenges

- Break down in extended family, communal or traditional child protection systems due to civil conflicts, globalization, Population growth, technology (internet, telephone, Facebook etc) and impact of poverty.
- Education systems that ignore role of culture
- Blanket Fight against traditional culture creating resistance and limited support from traditional institutions. (need to promote goods ones as we fight the bad ones)

Recommendations

- Conduct more research and sero behavioral studies on the role of traditional child protection systems. little is documented about its effectiveness yet it is playing a very important role in society on child protection.
- Improve collaboration, partnership, training and capacity building for traditional institutions.
- Promote positive oral traditional child protection practices (folk songs, fire place story telling, cultural dances, games etc)

Some Reflections:

- The role & voices of traditional institutions appear to be missing in most studies and recommendations addressing VAC.
- VAC based on traditional beliefs and practices are more difficult to address without the support of traditional institutions
- **Are Traditional Institutions in your agenda for this meeting today????**

Afoyo Matek

Thank you

Merci

Asante Sana