

UGANDA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT LINK (UYDEL)

Best Practices of in rehabilitation of victims of CSEC - UYDEL Case Study

JewelGirls Art Therapy: Jewel Girls art therapy is implemented as part of the psycho-social support activities and group counseling program for girls who have gone through various traumatic situations and challenges including sexual exploitation and abuse, trafficking and HIV/AIDS. Supported by a social worker, the girls participate in friendly, supportive and informal discussions on different issues that affect them including hygiene, HIV, relationships, past experiences, future goals, sexuality and dealing with abuse among others. The children gain confidence and self-esteem by creating beautiful objects, share experiences and support each other to overcome difficult situations as they make beads and necklaces out of recycled paper. JewelGirls primary objective is to use jewelry making and other crafts as a form of art therapy for adolescent girls who have been trafficked, sexually abused and/or exploited. Jewel Girls group is very empowering as it helps girls speak out in a friendly space and gives them the opportunity to make unique jewelry out of their own creativity using cheap materials. The necklaces made are marketed in the USA and this not only helps us get money to meet individual needs but also is a source of pride that we have the ability to make something appealing to the international market.

Street Smart Model: Street smart model consists of ten (10) sessions (eight two- hour group sessions, one individual session and a group visits to a community health resource), exposes children/youth to information regarding HIV/AIDS, drug abuse, condom use, personalized risks, negotiating safer sex, recognizing and coping with feelings and self. The majority of the sessions address improving young people's social skills, particularly assertiveness and coping with difficult situations through exercise that teach them to identify their emotional and behavioural reactions and unrealistic expectations in situations with potential risk for HIV transmission. Developmental changes in behavior, cognition (thinking), affect (emotion), and social norms must be considered as essential elements in risky behaviour and effecting change. Building coping skills among victims of CSEC and providing access to resources is another essential element because Street Smart intervention links thoughts, feelings and attitudes to behavioural change; beliefs about the consequences of behaviour and perception of self-efficacy are key determinants of effective behavioural change. The goals of Street Smart are: Practice safer sex, Get in touch with your feelings, Get rid of thoughts that are self-defeating, Take control of your life, Feel confident about your ability to act safe, Know where to go when you are in trouble and need help, Know your patterns of risk, Make friends who can help you to stay safer and have fun while changing behavior.

Sports and talent identification: Sports is used as a medium of reaching out to young people. Sports activities are popular and highly valued among 11-24 years age group and if appropriately organized, many young people can be reached with life skills and HIV Prevention messages. Sports have a potential to promote health seeking behavior, reduction in juvenile crime and promotes social behavior which results in less delinquency and school drop outs. During sports activities, the children have skills-building workshops prior to each sports game and Masooli vocational skills centre has a big sports ground for football/soccer, volley ball, & netball. In addition, in door games such as luddo, chess, snakes and ladders are also promoted.

Music, Dance and Drama (MDD): MDD is used as an avenue for disseminating life skills and HIV prevention messages to the children by promoting resilience, behavioural change education, combined with accessibility to youth friendly services to cover STD/STI treatment and VCT promotion; which blends utilization of child friendly services and referral messages to attract more vulnerable children to adopt health-seeking behaviors. The messages are spread through poems, plays, songs, skits, dances and this is complimented by social workers who moderate healthy seeking discussions and respond to pertinent issues depicted in the plays.

Shelter: The shelter is Masooli Vocational Skills Training and Rehabilitation Center where children and young people are accommodated temporarily during the rehabilitation period. This shelter offers accommodation to victims of trafficking, sexual abuse, commercial sexual exploitation, and others engaged in risky behaviors.

Vocational skills Training: This is a strategy for withdrawal and rehabilitation including livelihood employment skills training especially business/entrepreneurship and vocational skills placement. Vocational skills training/Apprenticeship approach is a progressive withdrawal strategy of young people from survival and causal sex as well as promoting acceptable alternative survival strategies without which can lead one to having multiple sexual partners and use of drugs as co-factors leading to high risk sexual behavior. Vocational skills placement completes the cycle of rehabilitation, withdrawal and integration, which enables children and young people to live a meaningful successful life. After the training period, youths are provided with tool kits / resettlement kits to enable them start their own businesses and integrate in society.

Parent Support Groups (PSGs):

The objectives of forming PSGs are to involve the communities in UYDEL activities and to have effective behavioural change among the children under rehabilitation. These PSGs, mainly act as referral systems in the community, they also help in community mobilisation and sensitisation about HIV/AIDS and other risky behaviours. The PSGs are equipped with skills on how to create good-friendly relationships with their children and how to generate income in order to give the children a bright future. The Parent Support Group members are trained in business skills, savings and micro credit management and encouraged to establish viable business ventures and form savings schemes from where they raise money to provide basic needs to their children. In addition, PSGs regularly monitor the progress of the child protection activities in the community and what gaps that need immediate attention. These groups promote ownership and sustainability of the activities since we work hand in hand with them to effect behavioural change among the youth.

Networking and referral;

UYDEL works closely with other service providers and government institutions at local and national level, to increase accessibility to resources and services to children. For example increase access to STD/STI treatment, group and individual counseling services, undertaking regular HIV counseling and testing (VCT). UYDEL will also strengthen the already existing referral network with the NGOs offering psycho-social services for street and slum children and out of school youths for those offering services not provided by UYDEL but may be needed in the prevention and rehabilitation of the hard to reach children at risk of contracting HIV/ AIDS and to cater for the increasing numbers of the hard to reach youth who might come seeking for services.