Child Protection in Crisis Uganda:
March 2012 Learning Retreat

Livelihoods, Economic Strengthening, and Child Protection in Western Uganda

Inbal Alon, Uganda Coordinator
Bantwana Initiative

With Christine Kiiza, Bantwana Initiative
Shariff Muhammed, Kabarole Research and Resource Center
Partnership between CPC PLG, Columbia University, and Bantwana Initiative

Recognizing the limitations of current child protection systems, how can livelihoods programming be leveraged to improve the security and well-being of children and youth?

We don’t have enough for example my child wanted to go for tour but I couldn’t get money easily...we had to get maize from the garden. We dried it in order to get some money for him and at last we managed to get some money and paid for his trip and I think he will be happy even is happy now.
Study questions

• Does a household livelihood status predict protection from risks or well-being of children?
• Do certain household livelihood strategies predict child protection and well-being?
• Does receipt of services predict child outcomes?
Western Uganda Bantwana Programme

comprehensive, household-based, child-centered since 2008 in Kabarole, Kasese, Kyenjojo, and Kyegegwa

• Household level IGAs, community-level VSLA, collective marketing and value addition
• Household level PSS, and community sensitization
• School-based child protection activities, household level awareness, and community level work on reporting systems
Study Design and Methods

• Household survey with primary caregivers to capture assets, income, livelihood strategies, caregivers attitudes, and perceptions of child protection and well-being

• 246 households who have/have not received services (by 2 CBOs)

• Caregiver interviews and child focus groups
Key Preliminary Findings

• Positive association between number of working hours of adults and adequate provision of basic needs
• Increased working hours associated with fewer signs of emotional distress (enterprise selection is key!)
• Increased hiring labour associated with increased provision of basic needs
• Livestock ownership associated with improved basic needs (differences in types of livestock)
• Increase working hours associated with caregiver perceptions that children are safer in the community
Economic Strengthening Activities
...My children don’t get enough food, even getting treatment when sick, it’s very difficult...I have to run up and down to get or borrow money from people and later work to pay them back. My children also feel sad and hurt when they see me run up and down to help us survive, the old children are concerned about my health and having to work so hard so that’s why they also join me...we work especially during the holidays but I also feel disappointed sometimes because I have failed to support my children and they have nowhere else to run to...my children have really suffered especially after the death of their father. They feel hurt and sad seeing other children happy with their families...
Income and Child Outcomes

• Households with lower incomes are likely to have more frequent shortages of food, less protein in children’s diets, and more difficulty in the provision of basic needs.

• Children in lower-income households are at greater risk of abuse and exhibit more signs of emotional distress, often related to school drop out.

• Higher income households were also more receptive to the importance of child rights.
What is Working?

- Diversification of livelihood activities
- Higher household income
- Improved provision of basic needs and nutrition
- More hours of play for children
- Payment of school fees and materials
- Access to child abuse response mechanisms
Key Gaps and Challenges

• Limitations of the study:
  – Difficulty to measure child protection
  – Sample size
  – Comprehensive interventions make it difficult to focus on single interventions

• Challenges in Child Protection:
  – Limited access to child protection response services (lack of awareness among caregivers/ reporting is not timely)
  – Lack of trust in service providers
  – Economic threshold for improving protection is high
  – Cultural barriers/ Stigma and concealing information
Suggestions for follow up

• All livelihood interventions should mainstream child protection messages

• Work with government to improve response systems at district level, and reach down all the way to the village level (LC1)
  – Clarify roles & responsibilities, especially concerning awareness and outreach
  – Assess capacity of stakeholders and improve as needed
  – Remove financial barriers to accessing legal services

• Work with schools, health centers, VSLAs, and other community mechanisms to incorporate child protection and response (capacity, enforcement of policies, incorporation of CP issues into education and health monitoring systems)
Thank you