



THE UGANDA
**CHILD
HELPLINE
SERVICE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2015



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA



THE UGANDA CHILD HELPLINE SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT 2015



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA







TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION/FOREWORD 7

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015 8

OUR DATA 8

Telephone Response (116)..	8
Walk-In Cases ..	15
Media ..	16
U-Report ..	18
Online Child Sexual Abuse ..	19

OUR STORIES 20

Lost Child ..	21
Physical Abuse and Neglect ..	22
Child Neglect ..	23
Domesticated Child Labor ..	23
Child Custody ..	24
Attempted Defilement ..	25
Child Marriage. ..	25

OTHER ENGAGEMENTS 26

WRAP UP 28

Quotes from UCHL Beneficiaries...	28
Lessons learned .	29
Challenges .	29
Conclusion ..	29

ACRONYMS

ANNPCAN	African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect
CBO	Community Based Organization
CFPU/O	Child and Family Protection Unit/Officer
CCFP	Commissioner for Child and Family Protection
CPC	Community Protection Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DPSWO	District Probation and Social Welfare Officer
LC	Local Council
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labor and Child Development
NITA	National Information and Technology Authority
OCSA	Online Child Sexual Abuse
PLE	Primary Leaving Examinations
PSWO	Probation and Social Welfare Officer
RSA	Resident State Attorney
UCC	Uganda Communications Commission
UCHL	Uganda Child Helpline
VAC	Violence Against Children



INTRODUCTION/FOREWORD



**MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR
AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

It gives me great pleasure to share with you the Uganda Child Helpline (CHL) 2015 Annual Report, which sets out, for our partners and the general public, what we have achieved in the past twelve months and what our future plans are.

On every page of this report, you will be introduced to the true inner workings of the Uganda Child Helpline and why we choose to keep going despite some challenges. You will read stories of pain, hardship and determination; of joy and of people with passionate hearts, determined to help and protect our children from violence. In short, you will be reading about the day-to-day experiences of our children, unfortunately many of which stories still go unreported.

I can confidently state that the UCHL Service is now known by quite a number of people in each district as evidenced by the calls that were registered from all 112 districts in the country during 2015. The Helpline handled 239,430 calls during the year, of which 3008 were extreme cases of violence against our children. Through our work, we witnessed successes where children were rescued from child marriage and returned to school. We also witnessed other successes where some children were pulled out of abusive homes while others who had been trafficked to other countries were brought back with a smile. In all these cases, a number of perpetrators were prosecuted.

However as a country, there is need to pull away from the remedial services and to focus more on prevention. This will need devotion from each one of us right from the household level and through both formal and informal structures. After all, child protection is everyone's responsibility.

I would like to thank our staff and volunteers for their contribution. These young people, along with their colleagues in the districts including the Community Protection Committees (CPCs), Probation and Social Welfare Officers (PSWOs), Child and Family Protection Units/Officers (CFPU/Os), Local Councils (LCs) and partner Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have been supportive to the lives of countless children. Their skills and commitment have been contributory in achieving our desire to provide quality child protection services.

Lastly, we acknowledge contribution by partners including the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Plan International (PI) that have contributed to the funding of our operations at the National Call Center and in the districts. Our appreciation also goes to other international partners such as World Vision and Save the Children that have committed to support the districts as well as our local partners such as the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) who have helped us follow up cases on the ground. I call upon everyone to join us in the coming year as we work towards a violence-free Uganda for all children.

**PIUS BIGIRIMANA
PERMANENT SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOR AND SOCIAL
DEVELOPMENT.**

HIGHLIGHTS OF 2015 OUR DATA



The Orphans and Vulnerable Children Situation Analysis Report, 2009 estimated that up to 43% of all children (7.3 million) live in moderately vulnerable situations while 8 % (1.3 million) live in critically vulnerable situations. Although many vulnerable children in Uganda may have close relatives to look after them, often times the would-be protectors have become the abusers. This, however, is not limited to homes only because even in child care institutions such as schools and children's homes, children are not entirely safe.

The Uganda Child Helpline (CHL) call seeks to be a medium through which children's voices can be heard and relevant response given. This year, children's voices were heard through the adults that called on their behalf and the children that called in themselves. The calls came from every district in the country. Some were reporting cases, others were testing the line and yet others were requesting for information.

The Uganda CHL gave children a voice through the following services:

- Telephone responses (116);
- Walk-in cases;
- U-reports;
- Media (including social media);
- Online Child Sexual Abuse reports; and
- Community awareness raising campaigns undertaken, including visiting children in schools.

TELEPHONE RESPONSE (116)

a) Call center report

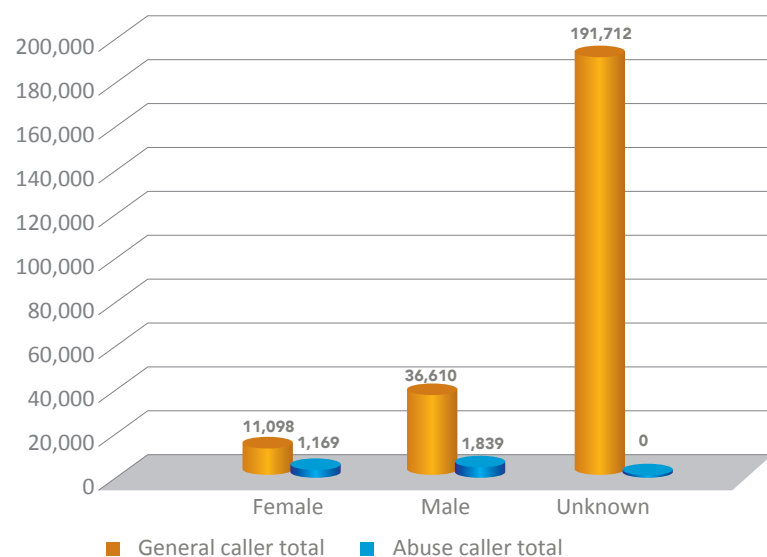
Majority of our callers were male. This may be attributed to a number of factors which are purely hypothetical since no study has been conducted in this regard. The following are some of the possible factors:

- Men control resources at household level and thus can afford to buy phones.
- Men have more access to information (through various media) than women.
- While women are engaged in a series of activities (household chores, income generation, etc), men have more time to interact with others and can easily hear of cases of child abuse, pick interest and report them.
- For fear of exposure, women are afraid to report.

Women however reported more in relation to child neglect cases where men were the majority perpetrators. The reason women reported more in this instance was because they had been left with the sole duty of upbringing their children, which in most cases they are not able to handle without support. They thus needed help in getting the men to perform their fatherly role.

Children constituted 0.85% (2029) of the total number of callers. The children initiatives were attributed to 3.6% of the abuse cases reported, 4.4% of the counseling cases, 3% of information/inquiry calls and 0.6% of others. The children featured higher in cases categorised as *others* mainly because they sometimes called in to test the line or to greet or even to prank.

FIGURE 1: TOTAL CALLS RECEIVED IN 2015, BY GENDER

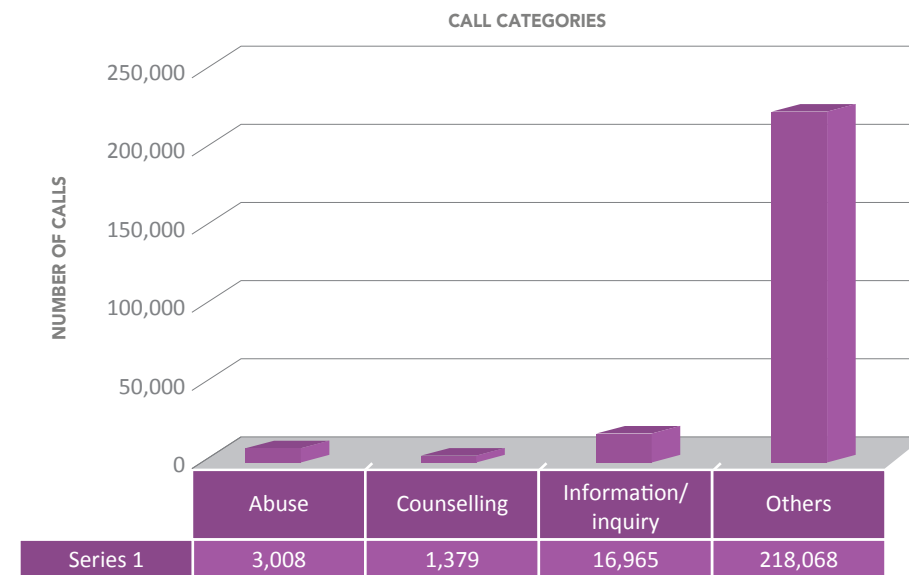


Total calls/cases received

The calls received at the CHL Call Center were handled in 4 categories:

- i) Calls to report a known or suspected case of abuse;
- ii) Calls seeking guidance and counseling services;
- iii) Calls seeking information and making inquiries on various services offered or not by the Child Helpline; and
- iv) Other Calls (including greetings, pranks, line testing and silence).

FIGURE 2: TOTAL CALLS RECEIVED IN 2015, BY TYPE



The majority of calls (91%) were registered under the *Others*¹ category, followed by *Information and inquiry* (7%). Abuse cases recorded 1% while *Counseling* cases accounted for 0.6%. The silent calls dominated the *Others* category but counsellors used this opportunity to pass on information about the child helpline. Most of these initial silent callers later called in to report cases of child abuse.

In line with the Uganda Police Force (UPF) and the Uganda CHL 2014 reports, this year’s report also indicates that child neglect was the main reason (47%) for which callers contacted the child Helpline; fathers were, unfortunately, the main perpetrators in this category. Child neglect was closely followed by sexual abuse (25%) which was mostly perpetrated by strangers while physical abuse came in third (17%) and was mainly perpetrated by family members. A number of children also died as a result of the abuse meted out mostly in homes but also in a few schools. Girls were the children most affected by abuse in general. They were mostly affected by acts of sexual abuse, child trafficking and physical

¹ This category includes greetings, line testing, prank calls and silent calls.

abuse while the boys were mostly affected by physical abuse and neglect. Interventions for any future programmes should, therefore, be strategic, taking into account that the different genders face different instances of abuse and experience it in different ways.

TABLE 1: CATEGORIES OF CHILD ABUSE, 2015

CATEGORIES	FEMALE	MALE	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
CHILD EXPLOITATION				
Child labour	54	38	13	105
Commercial sex exploitation	3	0	0	3
Sub total	108			
CHILD NEGLECT				
Child abandonment	92	106	24	222
Child maintenance	316	389	38	743
Child malnutrition	12	6	2	20
Denial of education	157	246	15	418
General	7	7	9	23
Sub total	1426			
CHILD TRAFFICKING				
Lost child	47	44	2	93
Abduction	44	15	7	66
Sub total	159			
EMOTIONAL ABUSE				
Witness to violence	3	1	1	5
Verbal attack	13	7	1	21
Bullying	1	1	0	2
Labelling	0	1	0	1
Sub total	29			

CATEGORIES	FEMALE	MALE	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
MURDER				
Abortion	3	0	3	6
Child death due to abuse	4	14	3	21
Child sacrifice	1	3	1	5
Poisoning	0	0	1	1
Attempted murder	0	2	1	3
Sub total	36			
PHYSICAL ABUSE				
Beating	191	207	23	421
Burning	12	16	3	31
Corporal punishment	18	18	4	40
Road accident	1	2	0	3
General	3	4	5	12
Sub total	507			
SEXUAL ABUSE				
Defilement	390	3	0	393
Child marriage	226	4	0	230
Sodomy	0	2	0	2
Teenage pregnancy	99	0	0	99
Child to child sex	15	1	0	16
Exposure to pornography	1	0	0	1
Attempted defilement	2	0	0	2
Sub total	743			
GRAND TOTAL	1715	1137	156	3008

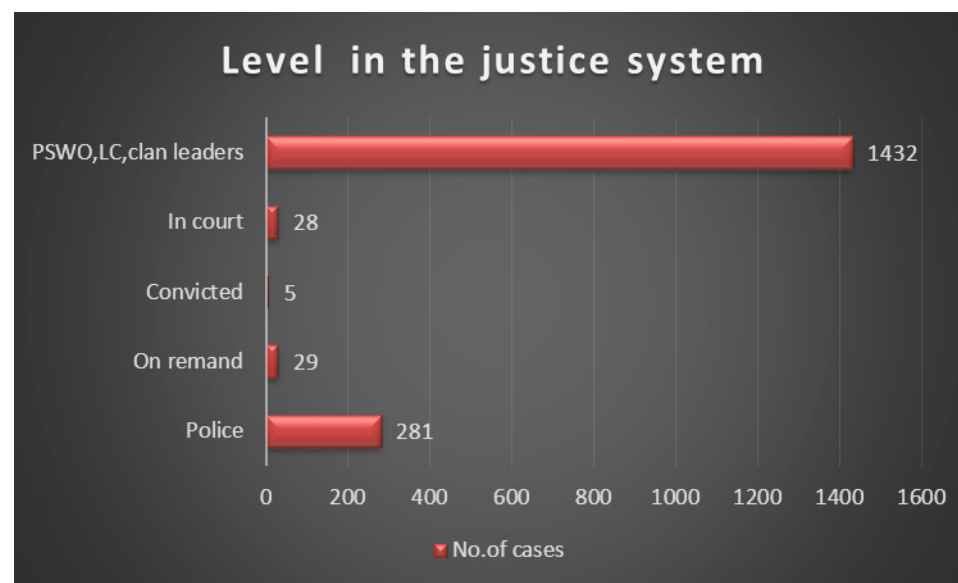
Unfortunately, as earlier mentioned, fathers were the worst perpetrators of Violence Against Children (VAC) and cited in 45% of all abuse cases reported. These were closely followed by unrelated adult males (13%) and by mothers (9.4%). Interventions aimed at child protection should, therefore, be targeted towards such groups, particularly the caregivers since these are in constant touch with the children.

TABLE 2: PERPETUATORS OF CHILD ABUSE, 2015

PERPETRATORS	CASES	PERPETRATORS	CASES
Aunt	66	Other family member-female	9
Boy cousin	10	Other family member-male	35
Brother	18	Other not related adult-female	37
Boyfriend	13	Other not related adult-male	380
Brother in law	2	Peers/schoolmates	1
Employer	10	Peer-not friend-male	12
Father	1348	Police officer	1
Foster father	3	Sister	6
Foster mother	1	Step brother	1
Friend of child-male	44	Step sister	4
Grandfather	13	Step father	23
Grandmother	31	Step mother	92
Girl cousin	5	Sister-in-law	2
LC chairman	1	Teacher-female	18
Mother	283	Teacher-male	74
Nanny	6	Uncle	75
Neighbor	85	Unknown	292
Worker in care facility	7	TOTAL	3008

With support from various governmental and non-governmental partners, 41% of the reported abuse cases were closed while 59% are ongoing. The ongoing cases are currently at various levels of the justice system. Although convictions have been attained in five cases, focus is currently on ensuring that the victims recover and return to normalcy, which explains the ongoing tag against these cases. Many victims, especially those of sexual abuse, often needed psychosocial support which unfortunately in our Ugandan setting is not appreciated and, therefore, neglected. Support structures for child victims of abuse in all districts need to be instituted, important among these being therapy in all forms.

FIGURE 3: PROSECUTION OF CHILD ABUSE CASES, 2015



Cases of VAC were reported from 111 districts across the country. Kampala and Wakiso districts in the central region, Kamuli in the Eastern and Apac in the Northern region registered the highest number of cases. Kibaale led the districts from the Western region but no case was reported from Koboko district. Generally, fewer cases were reported from West Nile and the Karamoja regions.

There is a need to continuously carry out community awareness raising campaigns so that people are encouraged to report. If this is undertaken, it is hoped that the UCHL Code 116 will ultimately become as popular as the police hotline 999.

The Uganda CHL, however, did provide **counseling** services to quite a number of children and their caretakers. Although this did help, it cannot be said to have been sufficient because often times the children or their caretakers did not call back to continue with the sessions and yet calling them back also requires a lot of resources which were not so readily available. This further accentuates

the need to have structures at community level where these children can access support services. The majority of the callers needed guidance and counseling on child custody and family issues. A significant number also required help regarding the resolution of property issues.

There were more male than female clients, although a noteworthy number of clients were tagged as unknown.

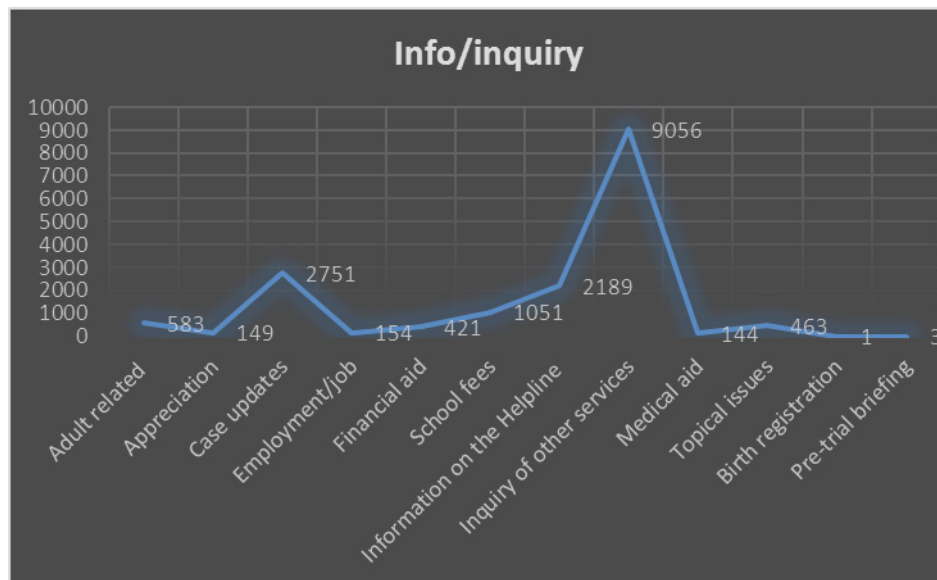


TABLE 3: DISTRIBUTION OF CLIENTS BY SEX, 2015

CATEGORY	MALE	FEMALE	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
Boy/girl	33	24	0	57
Career guidance	34	6	5	45
Child custody	152	152	9	313
Conflict with law	33	13	0	46
Differently abled persons	13	12	5	30
Family issues	128	82	33	243
Juvenile delinquency	53	8	1	62
Life skills	3	1	0	4
Marital issues	28	30	25	83
Orphans	30	10	5	45
Parent/child relation	62	30	4	96
Parental guidance	46	25	10	81
Peer influence	7	4	0	11
Property rights	63	35	14	112
Reproductive health	17	29	0	46
Runaway child	14	18	1	33
Street child	7	2	2	11
HIV counseling	2	8	0	10
Drug addiction	2	1	0	3
Loss and grief	1	3	0	4
Self esteem	2	1	0	3
Stress/depression	2	2	0	4
Student/teacher relation	20	13	2	35
Addiction to pornography	0	1	0	1
Addiction to masturbation	1	0	0	1
TOTAL	753	510	116	1379

From the information and inquiry section, quite a significant number of case updates were registered. The case updates were useful in providing the team with feedback on how previously reported cases were progressing or if a case needed to be closed or how effective/ineffective the referral network in a given case was. For the team, this was a basis for some of the lessons learned.

FIGURE 4: TYPES OF ENQUIRIES RECEIVED BY UCHL, 2015



b) Case management report

The UCHL cases are handled at 2 levels. Level 2 is for critical cases while Level 1 is for non-critical cases. When a case is tagged as critical, it will automatically be escalated to the casework/case management team because it is an emergency that needs immediate follow up on the ground. A non-critical case on the other hand will be retained at the call center and followed up at that level.

When the cases got to case management team, some were escalated to the various districts under the office of the PSWO, through the UCHL software system, email or by telephone, while others were retained and followed up by the team at national secretariat in Kampala, but working with the partners on the ground. At community level the team not only works with the child

victims but also with the perpetrators because it is important to understand what influenced their behaviour; and for that reason the team offered services such as counseling of victims, reporters, perpetrators and following up of cases at Police, with the PSWOs as well as making referral and follow up with other partners.

Of the total 3008 abuse cases reported through 116, 1609 cases were escalated from the call center to the various districts from where cases had been reported and these were categorized in to three categories; Abuse 1424 cases, 158 counseling cases and 27 information and inquiry cases². These cases were responded to through working in partnership with the various PSWOs, CFPUs, CSOs and CBOs.



² The figure of escalated cases and that in the narrative may vary due to data loss that occurred in the middle of the year and as such the team could not get the specifics of the cases but instead had the general totals.

TABLE 4: UCHL CASE MANAGEMENT STATUS, 2015

ABUSE

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	ONGOING	CLOSED
CHILD NEGLECT	Child maintenance	222	45
	Child abandonment	45	16
	Child malnutrition	6	3
	Denial of education	64	36
	General	4	4
CHILD EXPLOITATION	Child labour	31	11
	Commercial sex...	0	1
CHILD TRAFFICKING	Abduction/kidnapping	28	13
	Lost child	35	20
	General	1	1
PHYSICAL ABUSE	Beating	129	46
	Coporal punishment	14	9
	Burning	11	4
	General	2	1
SEXUAL ABUSE	Defilement	235	26
	Teenage pregnancy	62	13
	Sodomy	1	0
	Early/forced marriage	95	14
	Blank	1	0
MURDER	Child sacrifice	7	0
	Child death due to	10	4
	Accident	2	0
	General	3	0
EMOTIONAL ABUSE	Bullying	0	2
	Attacking	0	1
	Labeling	1	1
SUB TOTALS		1009	271

COUNSELLING

CATEGORY	SUB CATEGORY	ONGOING	CLOSED
CHILD CUSTODY	Paternal/maternal	38	5
	Institutionalised	0	1
	Adoption	1	1
	General	9	0
PROPERTY RIGHTS	Property grabbing	10	1
	Inheritance rights	5	0
	Family issues	5	1
	Child to child sex	5	1
	Child imprisonment	9	3
	Juvenile delinquent	4	4
	Street child	1	0
	Run away child	8	4
CHILD IN CONFLICT WITH LAW	Student/teacher	2	1
	Parent/child relations	3	1
	Boy/girl relations	1	0
	Loss/grief	0	1
	Peer influence	0	1
	HIV counselling	2	0
DIFFERENTLY ABLED	Physical disability	3	1
	Mental disability	1	0
PARENTAL GUIDANCE	Parental guidance	1	0
SUB TOTAL		99	29
INFORMATION INQUIRY			
	Topical issues,....	4	5
	Medical aid	1	0
	School fees	0	1
	Case update	5	1
SUB TOTAL		10	8

WALK-IN CASES

In addition to handling cases received through Code 116, the team also received cases from people who physically visited the Uganda CHL offices (walk-ins). Out of 62 cases received through walk-ins, 49 are still ongoing and being followed up while the team closed 13 cases. Most of the walk-ins were by people from the nearby districts of Kampala and Wakiso, although one came in from Iganga district. As with the cases from the call center, child neglect constituted the majority of walk-in cases handled. Forty-six of the clients (children) were female while 28 were male.



TABLE 5: WALK-IN CASES HANDLED BY UCHL, 2015

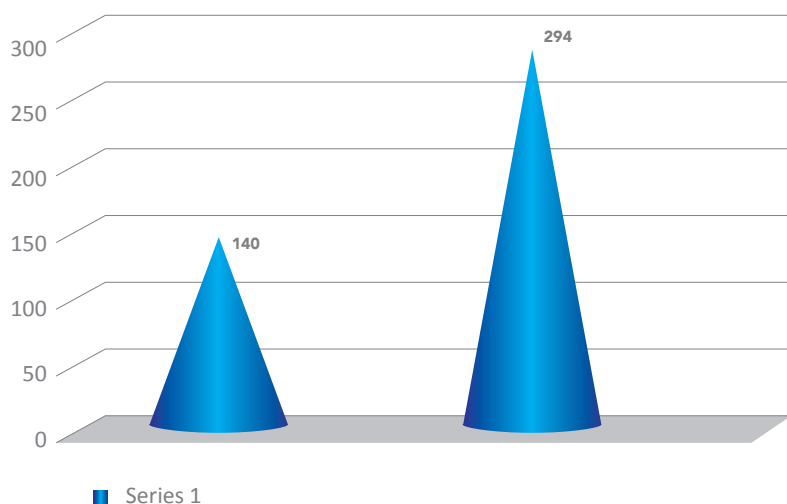
CATEGORY	STATUS	
	CLOSED	ONGOING
CHILD NEGLECT		
Abandonment	1	0
Maintenance	6	13
Denial of education	1	1
TOTAL	8	14
SEXUAL ABUSE		
Defilement	0	11
Child marriage	0	1
TOTAL	0	12
PHYSICAL ABUSE		
Beating	1	2
Corporal punishment	0	1
Burning	0	1
TOTAL	1	4
OTHERS		
Lost child	4	3
Child Labor	0	1
Disability	0	2
Child custody	1	9
Runaway child	0	2
Displaced children	0	1
TOTAL	5	18
GRAND TOTAL	14	48

MEDIA

The media in its various forms is an important tool for information dissemination due to the fact that it can reach a number of audiences regardless of social class or status. The UCHL team thus set up a desk at the national secretariat whose key role is to review all forms of media on a daily basis, pick up on cases of abuse reported and follow them up. The media sources included television, print media, radio and social media.

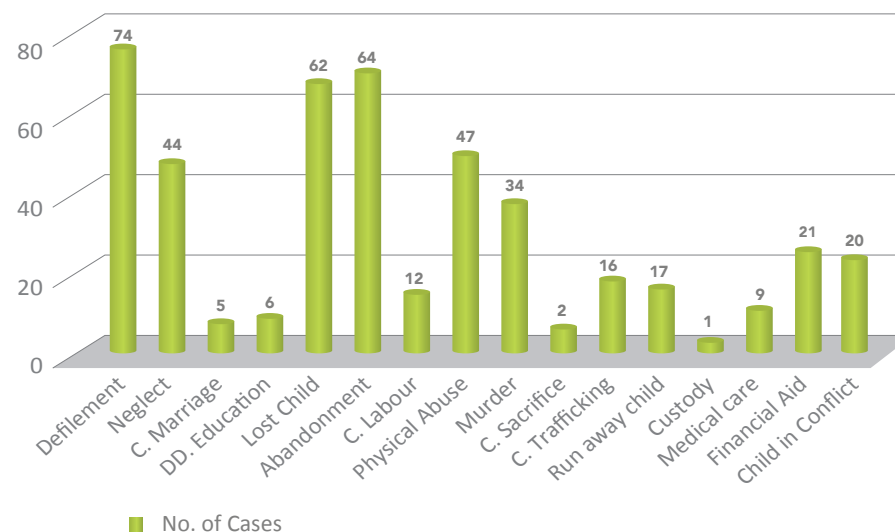
Subsequently, UCHL picked on 434 cases in total throughout the year. Of those, 282 cases were closed while 152 cases are still open and in the process of being followed up. The month of March had the highest number of cases reported and November had the least number.

FIGURE 5: CASE MANAGEMENT OF CHILD ABUSE CASES PICKED BY UCHL FROM MEDIA REPORTS, 2015



Defilement cases were the most reported about by the media. It is most of these cases that are ongoing. Child neglect and cases of lost children were cited in numerous media. Fortunately, when cases are reported through the media, some steps have usually already been taken in terms of follow up and the UCHL role was to basically pick up from where the media and local authorities had left off in order to ensure that the children are safe.

FIGURE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD ABUSE CASES PICKED BY UCHL FROM MEDIA REPORTS, 2015



The highest number of cases was reported through the print media, notably the *New Vision* and *Daily Monitor* newspapers. Ten cases were, however, picked up from Facebook, WhatsApp and other social media. Television stations also highlighted a number of cases. The advantage with cases reported in the media is that it led to more successful attempts at arresting perpetrators, including those that had been on the run from the districts where they had committed offences. The media, however, needs to be more sensitive in the course of their reporting so as not to commit secondary abuse of the victims. This is because some media houses still expose the faces of the victims and, sometimes, their private parts.

FIGURE 7: DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES REPORTED IN THE MEDIA IN 2015, BY MEDIA TYPE

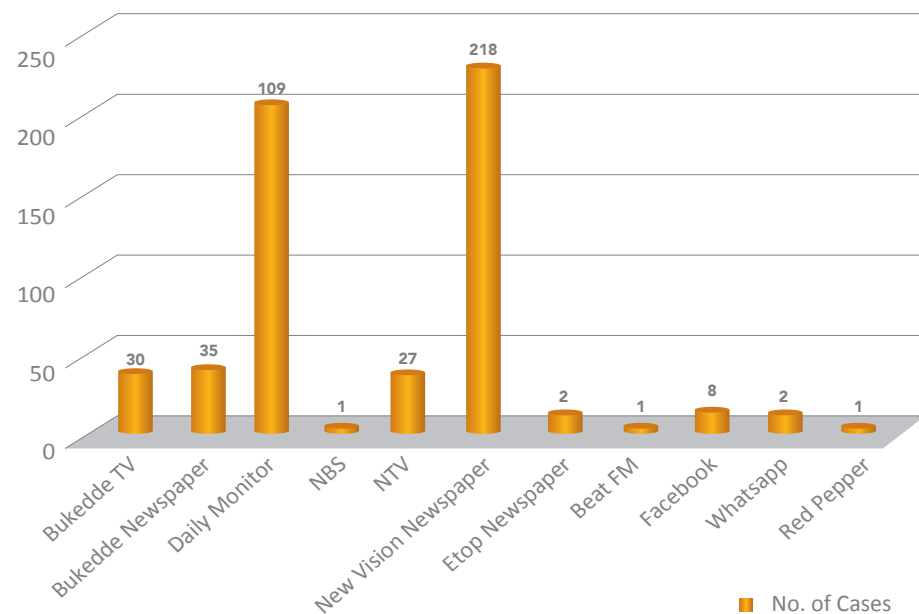


Table 6 shows that Kampala District had the highest cases of child abuse reported, followed by Wakiso District.

TABLE 6: DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES HANDLED BY UCHL IN 2015, BY DISTRICT

DISTRICT	NO. OF CASES	DISTRICT	NO. OF CASES	DISTRICT	NO. OF CASES
Agago	2	Katakwi	1	Mubende	9
Amuru	1	Kamuli	3	Mukono	10
Arua	2	Kamwenge	2	Nakapiripiti	1
Buikwe	12	Kanungu	1	Namayingo	2
Budaka	5	Kapchorwa	1	Namutumba	3
Bududa	1	Kibale	2	Nebbi	1
Busia	2	Kiboga	1	Ngora	1
Butalejja	1	Kibuku	2	Ntungamo	4
Bukedea	1	Kitgum	2	Nwoya	4
Bukomansimbi	1	Kiruhura	1	Oyam	2
Bundibugyo	1	Koboko	1	Pader	2
Bushenyi	4	Kumi	1	Pallisa	3
Butaleja	1	Kyenjo	1	Rakai	6
Butambala	1	Lira	6	Rubirizi	1
Buyende	2	Luuka	5	Rukungiri	3
Gulu	7	Luwero	5	Serere	2
Hoima	1	Lwengo	4	Ssembabule	1
Ibanda	3	Lyantonde	4	Soroti	1
Iganga	12	Manafwa	2	Tororo	10
Jinja	20	Masaka	5	Wakiso	32
Kabale	4	Masindi	1	Yumbe	1
Kaberamaido	3	Mayuge	9	Zombo	2
Kabarole	2	Mbale	4	Mpigi	8
Kalangala	3	Mbarara	3	Moyo	3
Kaliro	1	Mitooma	1	Kampala	155
Kalungu	1	Mityana	1	Kasese	4

U-REPORT

A total of 2979 messages were received through U-Report between June and December 2015. However after screening and eliminating the repeated messages, mostly from the same reporters, the total number of messages came down to 2576. Several ID numbers with possible child abuse cases were responded to and reporters were requested to call Sauti on Code 116 so that the cases could be followed up.

FIGURE 8: DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES REPORTED TO UCHL IN 2015, BY MONTHS

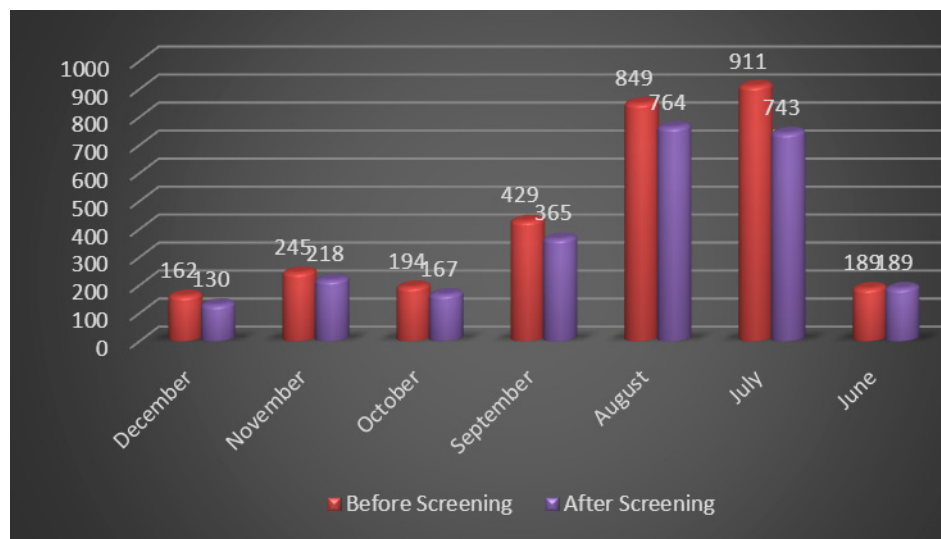
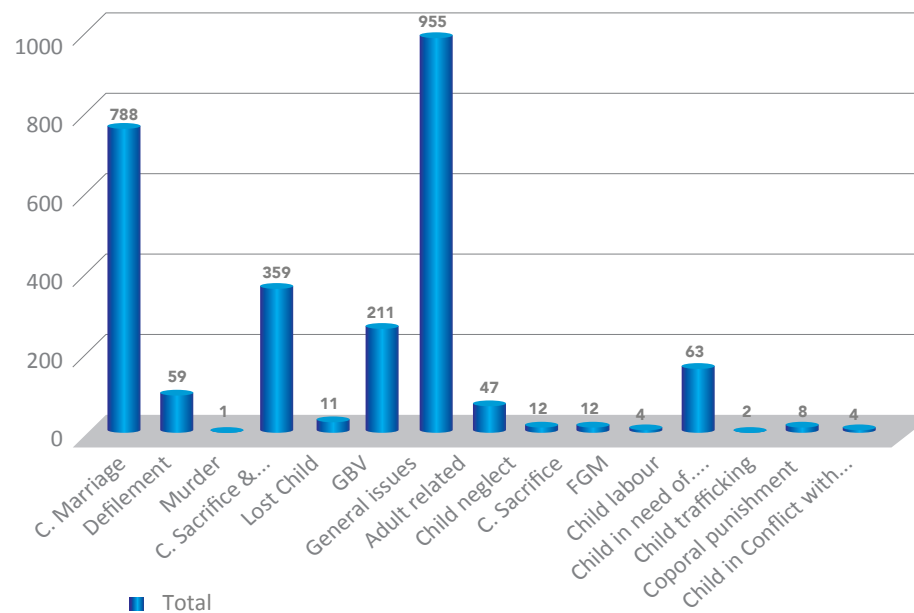


Figure 8 shows the variation in the number of messages received and confirmed after screening between June and December 2015. It also shows that there was no variation in June 2015.

During the year, a number of U-Reporters called to find out about Sauti in general. Other callers did so to report cases, particularly those they had earlier reported to Code 8500 as text messages. The cases reported from this platform to Code 116 are reflected in the telephone (116) report above.

FIGURE 9: DISTRIBUTION OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT CASES REPORTED TO UCHL IN 2015, BY TYPE



According to Figure 9, messages on general issues such as those in which people give their opinions about a specific topic were highest (995). Those were followed by messages on child marriage (788). The high number of such messages could be attributed to the massive sensitization that took place on the various media houses.

ONLINE CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

Online Child Abuse (OCSA) is a new project that came on board in the last quarter of the year. It is a relatively new area, especially in Uganda where new technology has of recent been easily embraced. Unfortunately not every user has good intentions and, as such, some people have already used this avenue to abuse children. It is for these reasons that Uganda has joined the global world to counter the threats exposed to the children through internet by forming a National Working Group (NWG) to spearhead the fight.

The NWG includes the National Information Technology Authority (NITA), the Uganda Police Force (UPF), the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development (MGLSD), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). Others are the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs (MJCA), the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MESTS), the International Police Organisation (INTERPOL), the Law Reform Commission (LRC) and representative of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) is the Coordinating Ministry while the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) represents the international community and is, therefore an Ex-Officio member of the NWG.

An orientation workshop was during the year held to build the capacity of the stakeholders and equip them with knowledge, skills and expertise for identification, prevention, detection and management of OCSA cases.

Awareness campaigns through various social media channels such as WhatsApp®, Facebook®, Twitter® were undertaken to disseminate information in regard to OCSA and encourage timely reporting of cases to the Uganda CHL through Code 116. This information was posted randomly but on a daily basis and it comprised of general knowledge for identification, prevention, detection and management of OCSA. In the coming year, schools (both local and international) and places of worship will be visited to raise awareness on the issue of OCSA..



OUR STORIES

A look at our statistics clearly shows that children and adults made use of the Uganda CHL. The following are a few of the stories behind the data:



LOST CHILD

A police officer contacted the Child Helpline in need of support for a 13 year old girl who had accompanied her sister-in-law to look for the latter's 'grandmother' but was stranded at a police station in Eastern Uganda. This was after the sister-in-law she had gone with to visit the grandmother run out of money to sustain their stay there yet the alleged 'grandmother' was nowhere to be seen. The child knew where she had come from but stated that her parents were dead and she had been living with an older brother. She wanted to go home but the police did not have the means either to search for her relatives or to transport her back to Central Uganda (Rakai district).

The casework team travelled to the police station, picked up the child and brought her to Naguru Reception Center while they embarked on a search for her relatives. Since the girl knew her village and sub-county of origin, the Community Development Officer (CDO) of that sub-county was contacted and given details of the child and the names of her brother and her deceased parents. When he did a thorough search, he discovered that the child had lied about the death of her parents and that she was not using her real name either. The child was counselled extensively and probed in order to understand her reasons for living home and lying about her parents. Further information revealed that she had been influenced by the sister-in-law.

Later, she was transported and reunited her with her parents in the presence of the CDO. The parents stated that the child had disappeared on the 21st of July and had been missing for 1 week and 3 days. They were astonished at her behaviour and the fact that she said they were dead. The parents too were counselled before the reunification.

Both the child and her parents were relieved and happy to see each other. But the parents were especially delighted because their child was back home, safe and sound.



The CDO handing the child back to her parents in the presence of UCHL caseworkers

PHYSICAL ABUSE AND NEGLECT

A caller contacted UCHL in May to report a case of child abuse. He had witnessed his neighbor beat her step son aged five years until she broke his forearm yet she had refused to take the child for medical attention. The reporter did not have many details since he was only working in the neighborhood, prompting the Call Center team to escalate the case to the case workers for further investigations and follow up.

The case workers immediately contacted the area Probation and Social Welfare Officer (PSWO) who connected them to the area Local Council (LC1) chairperson. He gave them permission to visit the home, which they did, escorted by the area police and rescued the boy. The child had several bruises, a broken forearm and scars that showed that he had been abused for quite a long time. The child was also malnourished. The father had left him with the step mother and gone to work in another district and he had not been back home for four months. The perpetrator was not arrested immediately because her employer requested that he first gets someone to replace her and for that matter she was arrested the following day.

The Helpline, Police and the Probation Officer worked together to ensure that the child is placed 'Heart of a Child', a children's home, while investigations continued. The organization provided care, feeding, shelter and medical treatment to the boy for the 40 days he was with them. They also provided psychosocial support to the boy to help him come back to a normal state of a child of his age as well as in the assessment and resettling of the boy at his uncle's place.

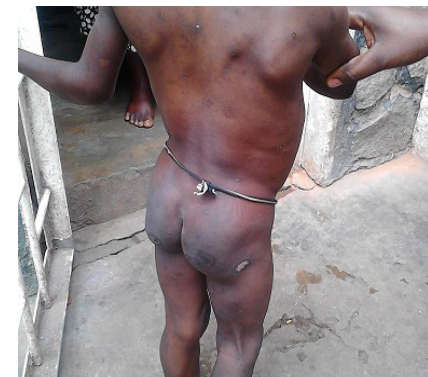
The Helpline provided the police medical examination fees for the boy. After the boy was temporarily placed in the children's home, the Helpline, in conjunction with the PSWO, then traced for his father and other relatives. Thorough assessments of each relative as well as their willingness to stay with the boy was undertaken.

An uncle who is both a the LC1 chairperson and a para social worker was eventually identified and expressed willingness take on the responsibility. The subsequent home assessment also showed that his home was conducive for the boy's growth and development. The Helpline, probation officers and the Home handed over the boy to the uncle two weeks after the home assessment. A social worker visited the home after a week to check on the child's progress and confirmed to the Helpline that he was doing fine.

An agreement was also signed where the boy's father committed himself to provide for the boy's education since he (the boy) had reached school going age. The father also committed himself to meeting his son's medical bills. After serving a brief spell in jail, the step mother too apologised for her misdeeds and was released. Three months later, the UCHL team followed up the child in the new environment and it found that the child had started going to school.

TOP: The child showing the broken limb and (center) the scars on his back; both photos were taken at the time of rescue from his step mother's home.

BOTTOM: the child being reunited with his father and the uncle who is his current care taker.



CHILD NEGLECT

A caller contacted the UCHL to report a case of a child that was being mistreated by an aunt at one of the police barracks in Kampala. The aunt is married to a police officer that works at the said police station and, according to the reporter, the boy was frequently beaten, out of school and subjected to a lot of domestic work. The case had been reported at the police station several times but nothing positive had come out of it.

The UCHL contacted the Child and Family Protection Officer (CFPO) of the police station, who indicated that they had tried to solve the issue but were frustrated by lack of cooperation from their colleague, the husband of the abusive woman. The CFPO requested for intervention from UCHL which in turn sought the help of the Inspector General of Police (IGP). As a result, the abuser/aunt was arrested. The Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) of the police station coordinated with the CFPU in Gulu to locate the child's grandmother. The grandmother was located and she expressed willingness to live with her grandchild. Consequently, the child was taken to Gulu where he currently lives. The initial reporter was contacted by UCHL and he confirmed that the child was indeed living with his grandmother in Gulu town and was happier.

DOMESTICATED CHILD LABOR

A caller reported a case about a child who is a son to the defense secretary in their village. Instead of the child attending school, he was being used by his father to graze cattle. At the time of the call, the child was grazing cattle in the rain and he could be heard crying in the background. The caller indicated that the child was poorly dressed. We requested the caller to go with the child to the LC but he was not willing to go, explaining that he fears conflicts. It was decided that he gets the LC's number and rings us back. The caller was also not willing to go to police but he later provided the contacts of the LC and abusive father.

The LC was contacted and informed about the child who was being mistreated. He promised to go to the home, find out more and then intervene appropriately. In addition, the child's father was contacted and he claimed that his son attends school and only goes herding cows over the weekends. He said his son is 8 years old and in Primary One (P1) at a Government funded primary school. He was cautioned about using the child to do such work during school time and in poor weather conditions. He insisted that he looks after his children well and thinks the call was political because of the impending elections in the countrywide. He was told that he will be monitored and if the abuse continues it will be handled as a criminal case.

Weeks later, the team contacted the initial reporter of the case. He noted that the child was no longer being mistreated and that he was attending school regularly. The caller sounded very happy. Indeed he indicated that he was impressed with the follow up made by the UCHL which he had originally thought to be ineffective.



CHILD CUSTODY

A despairing mother contacted the Child Helpline in desperate need of help to retrieve her eight month old baby girl who had been taken away by the father of the baby and his relatives. The baby's father claimed that the mother had abandoned the child. The woman stated that she had separated with her father's child three months earlier but retained custody of the child, adding that the father had agreed to take care of child maintenance and upkeep. One day, however, the child fell sick and the father was requested to settle the medical bills. He came with his relatives requested that he takes the baby to town for some shopping. This was the last time the mother saw her child as the baby's father disappeared with her. She claimed to have reported this case to different organizations in the district where she resides but she was had not been helped at all until she was advised by a friend to contact Code 116.

The Call Center team immediately escalated the case to the case work department which in turn contacted the CFPO of the district and requested for their immediate intervention. Armed with the appropriate reference number given at police when the case was reported, the CFPO moved to court to summon the abusive father who had refused to pay heed to police summons. The man still ignored the summons, prompting court to issue a warrant of arrest for him. The warrant was, however, presented to his local police station after expiry given that it had only been

valid for two days. The complainant, it turned out, did not have transport to travel in time to the offensive man's location in a different district. The UCHL, therefore, got in touch with the Resident State Attorney (RSA), who together with the magistrate processed a new but open warrant. Another attempt was made to arrest the culprit, but he resisted. He was eventually cornered and detained by the Regional CFPO. Despite being released on bond, the man refused to release the child.

Since the matter had failed at district and regional levels, the Helpline team decided to take matters to a higher office. Through the CFPO attached to the Helpline, the Commissioner for Child and Family Protection (CCFP) was contacted, who immediately asked the perpetrators to appear before her at the national police headquarters with the child. The child was brought the next day and the CCFP held a mediation meeting with the two parties since both are involved in the upbringing of this child. The child was then returned to her mother who happily went back home. After handing the child over to the mother, the Helpline team alerted the RCFPO and DPSWO to supervise and monitor the progress of the baby. The perpetrator was advised to use legal procedures to obtain the baby next time the mother abandons the baby as they had claimed.

TOP: The child's aunt handing her back to her mother **BOTTOM:** Mother & child finally together.



ATTEMPTED DEFILEMENT

A caller reported a case of a 13 year old child who got lost in Naguru. The caller said that the girl knocked at her gate asking for a job but that she looked so exhausted and hungry. The child stated that she had come from Kamuli district with a man who took her to his home in Banda, a Kampala suburb. The client informed the reporter that her grandmother whom she had been staying with in Kamuli had died two days earlier. She said after the burial of her grandmother, the girl's aunt handed her over to this man who had gone to the village for a burial. The man reportedly gave the victim's aunt one hundred and sixty thousand shillings (UGX160,000) as payment and brought the child along with him to Kampala. However, on the man reaching his home, he tried to defile her in the middle of the night and she ran away. She had spent most of the night walking and had ended up at the reporter's gate. The reporter called Naguru Remand Home to pick the child but she was referred to the UCHL.

When Code 116 received the call, the reporter informed the counsellor on call that she wanted to chase the girl away. The counsellor requested the caller to take the child and report the case to the nearest police station, which in this case was Nakawa Police Post, which she did. However due to lack of accommodation for the victim, the case was transferred from Nakawa to Jinja Road Police Station. At Jinja Road, the team interacted with the victim and realized she had no relatives in Kampala.

Upon being contacted, a partner organization, 'Retrak' collaborated with legal officers from 'Center for Justice' and the Jinja Road CFPO to transfer the client to.

Since the probation officer was on leave, the Labour Officer wrote the placement letter to Retrak where the child was taken. Retrak offered temporary accommodation, counseling and medication services as well as traced the child's parents. Retrak also facilitated the resettlement of the child. Unfortunately the child could not remember where the perpetrator's home was and as such he was not apprehended for the attempting to defile the child. The aunt was arrested and cautioned for having given the child away to a stranger in exchange for money then released.

CHILD MARRIAGE

A neighbour that works with a child focused CBO in his community, called Code 116 and reported a case of child marriage between a girl of 17 years and an 18 year old boy. The girl was already suspected to be pregnant and infected with HIV/AIDS. The case was reported to the LC1 who immediately went on the search for the father of the girl since he had orchestrated the marriage. The reporter was also referred to the Police and encouraged to share feedback on progress.

Follow up revealed that the case was peacefully handled with the help of police officers from Aboku police station and the relevant LC1 chairperson. He added that the officers met and counselled the two youths, gave them information on positive living as young people and the importance of education. Fortunately, the victims turned out to be neither pregnant nor infected with HIV. The case was closed after both teenagers agreed to go back to their parents' homes and to return to school. The girl sat for her Primary Leaving Exams (PLE) this year while her father was cautioned.

OTHER ENGAGEMENTS

In addition to receiving calls and handling child abuse cases reported through various media, UCHL undertook a series of other activities related to child protection as seen through camera lenses.





Official commissioning of Sauti premises



First call by Minister of state Youth and Children Affairs



Day of the Girl Child celebrations (2015)



First lady (Mrs. Janet Museveni) at the Sauti stall on the day of Girl Child



Children at Early Learning children's home

WRAP UP



QUOTES FROM UCHL BENEFICIARIES

"I DID NOT THINK THE HELPLINE ACTUALLY WORKS, BUT AFTER SEEING HOW QUICKLY THEY FOLLOWED UP AND HANDLED THE CASE I REPORTED, I AM SO HAPPY. I WILL ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO ALSO CALL AND REPORT". From an adult that called in to report a child labour case on behalf of an 8 year old child (Kyankwanzi district).

"I DIDN'T THINK THAT SAUTI WOULD OFFER TRANSPORT AND PAY MEDICAL BILLS FOR CHILDREN. I AM SO HAPPY ABOUT THE SUPPORT GIVEN TO MY FRIEND'S BABY-WE THOUGHT SHE WOULD DIE". Friend to mother of 6 months old anemic baby (Kampala district)

"IT IS A VERY FULFILLING EXPERIENCE WHEN SOMEONE (ADULT/ CHILD) CALLS IN TO APPRECIATE OUR INTERVENTIONS IN A REPORTED CASE. IT IS SUCH CALLS THAT KEEP US GOING DESPITE THE STRESSFUL NATURE OF OUR WORK". UCHL counsellor

"I AM HAPPY THAT I WILL BE SITTING FOR MY PRIMARY LEAVING EXAMS THIS YEAR. THE HELPLINE CALLED MY FATHER ON HIS TELEPHONE AND HE AGREED TO PAY MY SCHOOL FEES UNTIL I FINISH SCHOOLING" 14 year old girl (Kiboga district)

"THANK YOU FOR VISITING OUR COMMUNITY; SOME CHILDREN HAVE BEEN ABLE TO GET BACK TO SCHOOL AS A RESULT OF YOUR VISITS IN OUR AREA" Caller from Busia district

LESSONS LEARNED

- Communication and advocacy: The leaders appreciated the need for a multi- sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach on child protection issues in the district. The child protection issues should be addressed at the district technical planning committee level under the leadership of the district PSWO rather than at the community development level. This is because the technical planning committee is mandated to plan and allocate resources, receive reports and give feedback to section heads. It is an opportunity for joint planning, implementation that calls for peer support and evaluation.
- Engaging with the media in child protection work and scaling up UCHL services is a necessity. The team realized that the media is good as a mobilization tool because it reaches far more audiences.
- Child empowerment: working with children was key in the scaling up the UCHL services in Uganda children were given the relevant skills, information and tools to use in reporting, responding and raising awareness among themselves on the UCHL services. Children are very important agents of change.

CHALLENGES

- Case management is a very expensive venture and yet funds were not always available to provide timely interventions both at the Helpline secretariat and at the district levels.

- Technology: because technology keeps changing constantly, the software system on which the Helpline operates is out dated and crashed several times during the year, leading to loss of some data. This meant that at times the helpline could not be operational all the time. More districts could also not be added onto the software grid as action centers to in order avoid another system crash.
- Connivance by police officers and, sometimes, court officials with perpetrators led to miscarriage of justice for several child victims of abuse. This led to loss of trust by clients in these systems which made the referral process a bit difficult.
- The service provider's inventory is not updated and where the contact person was now transferred to West Nile and some contacts are never available.
- The community services department at district level needs to have a stand-alone budget. This will enable the department to deliver effectively and efficiently. This will go a long way in helping the decentralization efforts of UCHL by way of establishing fully functional action centers.
- For purposes of sustainability, UCHL needs to be fully integrated into the government service either as an authority or as part of public service. This is the best way to ensure that there will be budgetary allocation to care of needs such as technology upgrades and case management among others.
- The Private sector is also a key player in the issues of child protection. Efforts to bring these on board need to be stepped up beyond the meetings and into tangible outcomes.

CONCLUSION

For every call, there is story and for every story, there is a victim and a perpetrator. The Child Helpline, with support from our partners, is committed to answering each and every call regardless of the reason for contact. However our call is on all agencies, whether working in the line of Child Protection or not, to offer services for both victims and perpetrators. Remember today's perpetrators were yesterday's children that faced abuse. Therefore, let us all join efforts and commit to break the cycle of child abuse in every way we can.

For God and My Country





