

NATIONAL LEARNING EVENT ON CHILD WELL-BEING 2017

Uganda has a Robust Legal and Policy Frame Work for children which has been in place for over two decades following the 1990 Ratification of the United Nations convention on the rights of the child and the African Charter on their Rights and Welfare of the Child ratified in 1994. However, there are still many challenges in implementing the Legal and Policy frame work which have undermined the achievements made so far in the improvement of the well-being of children in the country.

According to UNICEF report on children 2015, key findings are that Child survival has improved but under nutrition persists, stunting is at 33%, there remains limited access to clean water and sanitation, and AIDS is now the leading cause of adolescent mortality. Improvement in health-seeking behaviour through addressing social norms (particularly for adolescent girls) and engaging at community level across the continuum of care frequently emerge as crucial areas of intervention. Children's right to protection continues to be a critical challenge given that 8% of children are critically vulnerable and 43% are moderately vulnerable; still only 60% of children are registered within a year of birth hence an alarming situation to be addressed in order to improve the well-being of children in Uganda

It is against this that, the department of Youth and children affairs-Ministry of Gender Labour Social Development (MogLSD) organized a learning event to discuss priorities aimed at improving children well-being under the theme **"Applying Legal and policy framework for improved Child wellbeing"**. For the success of the event, the ministry partnered with development partners that deal with matters pertaining children well-being namely: AfriChild, TPO-UGANDA, Save the Children, PLAN International, World Vision, REPSSI, USAID and 4Children for financial and technical support. The event attracted over 50 National NGOs that focus on child welfare and these included the National Association of Social Workers. Others in attendance included: Ministry of Health staff, Ministry of Education and sports staff, political and technical staff from local government, the media, Community Based Organisations and most importantly the children.

The two (2) days learning event that started on 25th-26th October 2017 included presentations and group discussions. The key note address made by officials from the National Planning Authority focused on Relevance of legal and policy frameworks in Human Capital development: Children aspects in National Development Program II.

- 1- Relevance of legal and policy frameworks in Human Capital Development Children aspects in NDP II-National Planning Authority (NPA)
- 2- Existing national laws and policies on children-**Jane Stella Ogwang** PPWO/Ag Asst. Commissioner for Children Affairs#
- 3- Experiences with application of Children laws and policies- **Helen Edemu** (J4C Coordinator)-Gulu, **Susan Alamai** (PSWO)-Tororo, **Fortunate Natukunda** (CSA) Nakivale refugee Settlement and **Acia Marino** (DEO) Arua

4- Social Development Sector: On-going Interventions by Angella Rubarema (Uganda Child Helpline), Sam Acodu (National IECD Policy), Ms Lydia Wasula (National VAC Survey). Issues of systems national strengthening where NASWU is working in partnership with 4children were discussed under this domain

5- On-going Interventions- Justice and law sector, Health sector and education sector.

The National Association of Social Workers of Uganda (NASWU) was represented by members, staff and some of the members of the National Executive Committee (NEC) were among the active participants that contributed to the discussions of the learning event.

“When we talk about issues of children, then there is need to consider professionalism. Key findings have proven that children concerns are being handled by people who are not professionally qualified to do the job. So we need to recruit the right people who have child related trainings to manage children matters if we are to move faster.” Said Mr. Charles Draecabo, NASWU President in preliminary discussions during the event. The National Coordinator Mr. Andrew Luyombo urged the participants to make use of the Skills audit report prepared by NASWU and the national training curriculum for Para Social Workers to enhance the potential of Para Social Workers who are at the face of child related issues

The events that was well coordinated by renowned social workers in the MoGLSD under the leadership of Mr.Mondo Kyateka Ag. Commissioner, Youth and Children Affairs was graced by the minister of state for Children affairs Hon. Nakiwala Florence Kiyingi. In her opening remarks, the minister applauded the good work done by the government and the ministry in particular and the development partners towards making children’s demands a priority in the country since tomorrow’s Uganda is for the children today. She also thanked other stakeholders like the local government structures and grass root organisations for



Hon. Florence Nakiwala State minister for Children affairs posing for a photo with participants during the learning event

supporting the government efforts in regard to children well-being.

In her bid to support the subsequent activities, Hon. Florence Nakiwala further concurred with the

participants that the national learning event should be an annual event. *“With the reports*

about the brutal and unfair treatment of children, I think there is need for constant sensitization of the public about the rights and needs of children; and we can always achieve this through these kinds of gatherings. Therefore I would like this to be an annual event with many district leaders in attendance.”

Mr. Mondo Kyateka, Ag, Commissioner Youth and Children affairs officially led a team (ACAO-Tororo District and LCV Chairperson Buikwe District) to officially close the learning event. “We are starting to plan for next year’s national leaning right now” says Mr. Mondo as he wished participant safe journey to their respective places of work and duty stations.