

Rights and better livelihoods for women and girl domestic workers in Uganda

Summary

In Uganda around 3 million young women - including girls who have not completed their schooling - are employed as domestic workers in the homes of the better-off families. Although the income is much needed by poor families, these young women are hidden away and are therefore vulnerable to exploitation and abuse and often have limited opportunity to further their education or careers. This three year project will work with 5,000 women domestic workers, and their employers, in the capital Kampala, to improve their working conditions, provide legal protection services, access to health care, schooling and other training, and encouraging savings. It will also run a public information campaign through the media to reach 3 million households concerning the plight of domestic workers and the obligations of their employers.

The Need

Domestic workers are among the most vulnerable, marginalised and lowest paid workers in the informal sector. The 'invisibility and hidden nature' of their work and cultural biases against women and girls have relegated them to conditions of exploitation. They face long working hours, restricted mobility, lack of privacy and no access to information. They earn low incomes, lack health care, suffer economic, sexual and psychological violence; with 4 out of 10 facing verbal and physical violence. They also lack the capacity to negotiate employment terms due to lack of education and are ignorant about human rights.

The Project Aims

- To prevent and protect domestic workers from gender-based violence and related abuses.
- To enhance the ability of domestic workers to secure improved working conditions and their future prospects through opportunities for savings, education, training and mutual support groups.

Project Activities

There will be community awareness, media and text message campaigns and educational materials targeting domestic workers and employers. Local leaders and law enforcement agencies will be trained on human rights, recruitment agents and bureaux will be trained to monitor abuse of domestic workers. 60 domestic workers will be trained as 'peer educators' to offer support and referrals to at least 450 workers. Legal aid will be provided to 5,000 domestic workers. Access to basic education/literacy and vocational training will be facilitated. The formation and strengthening of 60 mutual support groups of domestic workers through peer educators will be promoted. Lessons learned, experiences and best practices will be identified, documented and shared.

Outcomes of the Project

By the end of Year 3 **5,000** domestic workers will be experiencing improved treatment and/or less abuse from their employers; they will have increased awareness of their human rights and the support services and institutions from which to seek redress when faced with exploitation or abuse.

3 million households where domestic workers are employed will have increased awareness of the rights of domestic workers and there will be evidence of better treatment of them as a result of this.

At least **450** domestic workers will be less isolated and vulnerable to abuse through links to other domestic workers including a 'peer educator' for mutual support, links to other service providers and/or savings mobilisation in informal groups.

We are implementing this project with our partner organisation Platform for Labour Action (PLA), a Ugandan NGO with legal expertise and good experience of supporting vulnerable workers, including the prevention of child labour. PLA will take responsibility for day to day management, following plans agreed with APT. The capacity of PLA will be strengthened in areas where they have little experience to date (self help group formation and sustainable livelihood support for very disadvantaged) through attendance on appropriate training courses/capacity building workshops, exchange visits to other APT partners in East Africa with relevant experience, on-the-job training and mentoring by APT staff during technical support visits.



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