

CONCERN - SPAU Rubaga Project: 2005 – 2008

Statement from SPAU Executive Director

Single parents face immense challenges in bringing up their children and earning money to cater for their basic needs; this lack of income and capital, combined with inadequate nutrition, education, shelter and health contribute towards a cycle of extreme poverty that causes many single parents to have mental and sometimes emotional breakdowns. In addition, many have to also contend with loneliness, stigma, and lack of information about how they can claim their rights and improve their lives. For their children, the profound trauma of losing a father, mother or even both parents places devastating and sometimes long-term implications for their well being and development. In the long run, this not only affects the stability of the communities, but also the nation at large.

A baseline survey commissioned during this project period revealed that of the single parents in the project area, 60% relied solely on petty trading in the informal sector for their income; 66% lived on less than \$1/day; 37% had no other income other than the single parent head; 51% were widows whose husbands had died of AIDS-related illness; 38% of single parents' school-going aged children do not attend school and only 49% of single parents had access to their own land. These reflections could as well serve for the entire nation, and of course would be much higher for northern-Uganda.

This project has been targeting the poorest group of people -single parents and their households- living in one of the poorest divisions of the city, Rubaga division. Strategies used include linking the communities to direct service providers, empowering communities with practical skills to implement marketable income generation activities,



A single parent household receiving day-old chicks for a poultry project in Lubyia zone

supporting single parents with direct capital to implement individual IGAs, complementing support given to single parents living with HIV/AIDS and empowering single parents with knowledge on their rights and responsibilities.

Through the CONCERN-SPAU partnership, we have seen at least 1,000 single parents in the project area access a better and closer service, to enable them move another rung up the

socioeconomic ladder of their lives. Whereas on the side of SPAU as a service deliverer, our institutional capacity has been built to such a level that I am proud to say we can better respond to, and support the priority needs of our single parent clientele. In a nutshell, I can say that this partnership has greatly enabled the realisation of the vision that we had for SPAU when it was birthed in December 1999, *"to overcome poverty and stigma among single parents and help create a society that recognises; respects and accepts them as equal members of the community who can contribute to its socio-economic development"*.

It is almost inconceivable that we have come to the end of the project so soon, as to me, it feels like only yesterday when we were meeting the first single parent group in Lubyia and discussing various possible strategies

CONCERN - SPAU Rubaga Project: 2005 – 2008

Statement from SPAU Executive Director

to combat that nemesis, poverty and its twin in sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS. I shall always have such strong but soft memories of this project. As we wind up the project, I would like to mention special appreciation to my project team: staff and community volunteers of SPAU; area local leaders; and management and staff of CONCERN Worldwide, for the enormous support that all of them have provided towards the realisation of this project from paper to concrete action over the past twenty-seven months in the 18 villages targeted in Rubaga division. Out there has been an actual life touched. A physical human being.

Paul Lwanga

PAUL LWANGA

Director –SPAU

