



**Endline Evaluation of OVCs Households Development Project in Kanungu, Uganda
(2015-2017)**



Kyamagote group members showing the benefits from OVC household development project

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Summary of findings

OVCs' Households Development Project Kanungu has been implemented for two years – from 2015 to 2017. It was a community development initiative funded by Civil Society in Development/Fund targeted to benefit households of vulnerable people including Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children, women and men in Kanungu town council in Uganda. It was hoped that by the close of the project, the beneficiary vulnerable households would be able to earn a consistent income to reasonably meet their basic needs of food and clothing, and to some extent afford education for the children and medical care for the household. Based on the baseline study that was done in the preliminary stages of the project, this evaluation study provides an assessment of the project performance in view of the set objectives related to economic strengthening, food and nutrition security and awareness creation about rights of OVCs.

A total sample of 180(30 percent of primary beneficiaries) households was selected representatively from the four parishes/wards of Kanungu town council local government. Data was gathered by use of structured questionnaire administered to caregivers of OVCs in the household, and data analysis was done using advanced spreadsheets. Views of a number of key informants were solicited to supplement the findings from caregiver interviews. Relevant secondary data sources were also consulted including project planning and implementation documents and previous assessment reports.

The core findings of the study included the following:

Household social and demographic characteristics

- The average number of vulnerable children in a household stands at 4 persons.
- Caregiver representation stands at 21 percent male and 79 percent female.

Economic strengthening

- Agriculture remains the main source of income/livelihood; and in the last two years, the number of the OVC households dependent on agriculture has increased by about 8 percent to 79 percent.
- 63 percent of the households were able to earn at least UgX 150,000 as compared to 6 percent who were able to earn the same amount of money before project intervention.
- 73 percent of the household earning as little as UgX 50,000 before were able to make a saving despite their appalling insufficiency.
- The three major household expenditure lines remained food, education and health in that order of importance constituting 93, 83 and 75 percentage points respectively – an average increase of 5 percent in the last two years.

Food security and nutrition

Remarkably, in the last two years:

- The number of households surviving on one meal a day reduced from 26 percent to 10 percent

- The number of households living on two meals a day reduced from 57 percent to 38 percent
- The number of households depending on three meals a day increased from 17 percent to 52 percent.
- 37 percent of the households depend on home-grown food, 60 percent usually bought the food, 2 percent depended on donated food, and only 1 percent casually labored for it.

Knowledge of the rights of a child and legal support systems

- In the case of abuse of the rights of a child, 82 percent of the caregivers asserted that they would report the abuse for legal action to the local legal authorities
- 10 percent and 5 percent of the caregivers asserted that they would respectively “talk to a neighbor” and “negotiate with the offender” in a bid to keep peace and avoid further bad neighborliness.
- 94 percent and 96 percent respectively think that beating or hitting a child and withholding meals from them is not an appropriate means of disciplining a child.
- Slightly over one-third of the caregivers think that use of abusive/harsh language as a disciplinary action is appropriate.

1.0 Introduction

OVCs' Households Development Project Kanungu was a two-year initiative planned and implemented by *Mend the Broken Hearts Uganda* (MBHU), a Civil Society Organization operating in Kanungu district in western Uganda and funded by the Civil Society in Development (CISU) Denmark. MBHU envisions a socially and economically empowered society that was once vulnerable. The project was targeted at vulnerable households for Orphans and Other Vulnerable Children (OVCs) in the 4 parishes of Kanungu town council in rural Kanungu district. The four communities are fairly homogenous in all aspects of life.

The project aimed at achieving the following targets by the end of its 2 years life (2015-2017), namely;

1. OVC caregiver and members of the community in general are aware of OVC rights and actively engaged in protecting them.
2. All the project targeted OVC households in the 4 parishes are able to earn a consistent income to reasonably meet their basic needs of life including food, and clothing, and to some extent afford children's education and household medical care.

The project made use of strategic partnerships for purposes of technical backstopping, legal and psychosocial support, awareness creation, and project community ownership and sustainability. The partnerships include lower local administrative governments in the district, district police child protection unit, district and town council community based services department and health office, and local political councils. Generally these partnerships have been pivotal in all the projects/programs of MBHU.

2.0 Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

The purpose of the Endline evaluation was to determine the relevance, impact and sustainability of the project.

Relevance entails the extent to which the project interventions have met the needs and priorities of the target groups; *Impact* entails the change the project has had on the lives and livelihoods of the primary beneficiaries; and *Sustainability* is concerned with change that has occurred (livelihood sources and knowledge) consequent to the project that will support project deliverables beyond the project period

The Evaluation sought to achieve the following objectives:

- Assess progress made toward the achievement of the project objectives and expected results as outlined in the project design; i.e., the extent to which they were achieved and the contributing factors affecting the achievement of the intended results.
- Determine the overall impact of the project on improving livelihoods of OVC households in the project area
- Provide learning lessons for MBHU and CISU and other stakeholders to inform future related projects

3.0 Evaluation methodology

3.1 Sampling criteria

The evaluation parameters are based on a purposive and systematic sample based on the total population of vulnerable households benefiting from the project. We aimed at a sample size of 30 percent of the total number of OVC household beneficiaries (600) distributed fairly based on population therein as follows: 49 household from across Eastern, Northern and Southern wards, and 33 households from Western ward (making a total of 180 households). The consultant, in consultation with MBHU, designed the data collection tool and subsequently trained 3 enumerators on the methodology for 2 days. The questionnaire was also piloted during this time. Data collection took 5 days.

3.2 Data management

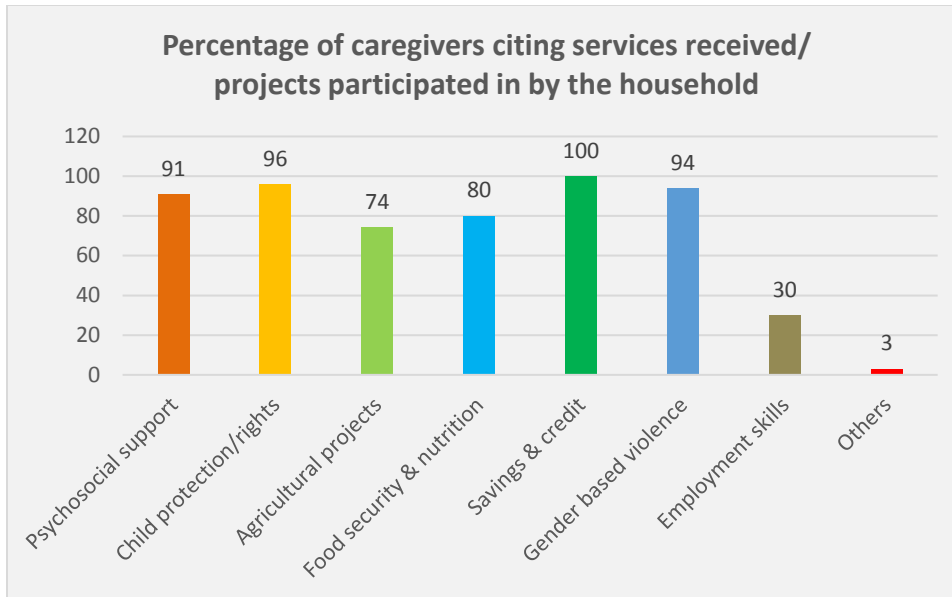
Methods employed during evaluation data collection and analysis include: (1) review of the key project documents particularly the proposal, budget and monitoring log-frame, past monitoring reports and review; (2) engagement with key informants including the office of the Kanungu district Gender and Community Based Services (Community Development Officer and Probation Officer), political head for Kanungu town council and the Child Protection Unit of Kanungu police station; (3) administration of questionnaire strictly to the caregiver in a beneficiary OVC household and; (4) analysis of collected data/information using advanced spreadsheets followed by interpretation and synthesis of the same.

4.0 Project outcomes and discussions

This section details the findings from the evaluation study, organized under the following broad themes: 1) project areas of intervention, 2) income and food security, and 3) OVCs rights protection and legal support. Specifically, the findings are concerned with, a) selected household social and demographic characteristics, b) household incomes, expenditures and savings, c) household food sources and consumption patterns, and d) knowledge of the rights of a child and legal support systems.

4.1 Project areas of intervention

The MBHU has been implementing a number of interventions through the project, aimed at achieving the set objectives targeted at household economic strengthening, food security and protection of vulnerable children. When asked to mention the services and or projects the households have received or participated in during the project life, caregivers gave a number of responses as summarized in the figure below.



The lead interventions for OVC household economic empowerment cited included savings and credit, agricultural projects, food security, and employment skills; and those concerned with promotion and protection of children’s rights and welfare include services related to psychosocial support, children’s rights, and gender based violence. Evidence of the impacts of the mentioned interventions is accounted for in the subsequent sections of this report.

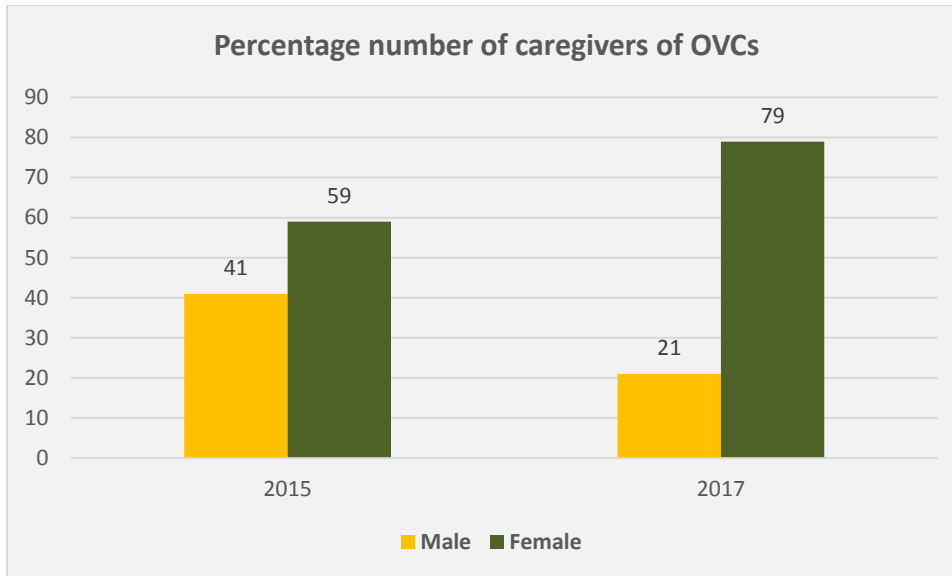
4.2 Household social and demographic characteristics

4.2.1 Average number of OVCs in a household

On the average household characteristics are similar across the board, and have not changed through the project life. The overall average household size for the parishes stood at 5 members as provided by the baseline survey. The evaluation study was rather much interested in the average number of vulnerable children in a household – and the study puts the number at 4 persons.

4.2.2 Caregiver-household head/breadwinner paradox

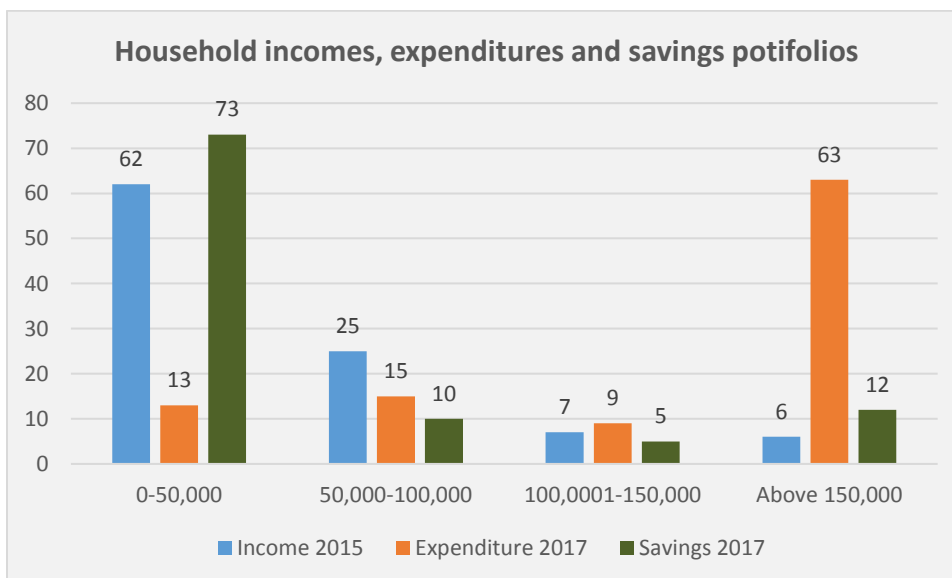
The baseline study paid attention to the household head assumed to be the breadwinner, but the evaluation put emphasis on the caregiver. It was found out that the household head may not necessarily be the breadwinner – and more important the caregiver for the vulnerable children in the household – due to cultural dictates about social organization. Of the total surveyed households generally across the 4 wards/parishes of the project area, the baseline survey put the number of household heads (culturally presumed to be the breadwinners and so believed to be the OVC caregivers) at 40 and 59 percent respectively represented by adult male and female. The evaluation study has, however, established that the caregiver representation stands at 21 percent male and 79 percent female as shown in the graph below.



From the graph above, it can be deduced that 79 percent of the caregivers are female (as opposed to the earlier apparent 59 percent); and only 21 percent are male.

4.3 Household incomes, expenditures and savings

In 2015, the survey study found that about 62 percent of the OVC households earned not beyond UgX 50,000= a month whereas only about 6 percent earned above UgX 150.000¹. The evaluation based on household savings and expenditure (or consumption) as proxy measures of income (in principle, you spend part of what you have earned and you save the 'surplus') to assess impact of the project on the beneficiary households.



¹ Note that \$1=UgX3.500 and UgX3.600 in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

The study found out in the last two years all the households were able to earn and save some money from their projects. Using consumption (expenditure) as a proxy measure of income, most remarkably 63 percent of the households were able to earn at least UgX 150,000 as compared to 6 percent who were able to earn the same amount of money before project intervention. A seemingly hard working man in Eastern Ward testified as follows:

Through financial support from MBHU, I have engaged in piggery project. The project has been very profitable: I sell piglets at competitive prices, and for instance in this month I was able to save UgX175.000 ...

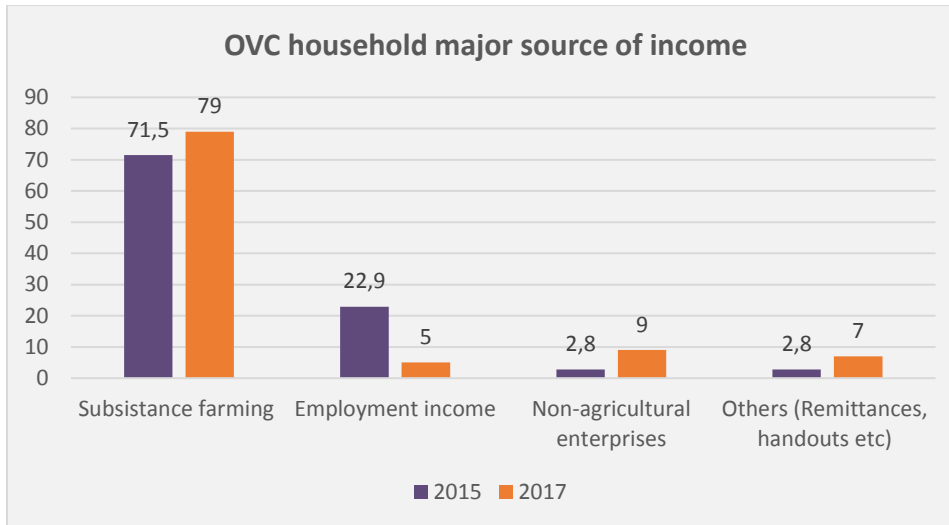
Another notable outcome is the 73 percent of the household earning as little as UgX 50,000 that were able to make a saving despite their appalling insufficiency. A woman subscribing to a group in Northern ward supported by the project had this to say:

Compulsory saving with our association has helped me in a way I never anticipated. We save through member contributions into a pool every week, and I must work harder to raise the money required. In the last month, I was able to save UgX60.000. And whenever I have a financial crisis, I can borrow from the pool at a very friendly interest...and whenever a member loses their dear ones the group meets much of the due expenses to cushion him/her.

A saving culture has been evidently inculcated in the beneficiary communities by promoting saving and credit mechanisms and encouraging investing in non-agricultural ventures to diversify sources incomes.

4.4 Household sources of income

Agriculture remains the main source of income/livelihood; and notably in the last two years, the number of the OVC households dependent on agriculture has increased by about 8 percent. The implication is that some households that earlier depended on employment income (especially casual labor and unprofitable informal employment) are now engaged in agriculture consequent to the project. This partly explains the decline in employment income from about 23 percent to 5 percent.

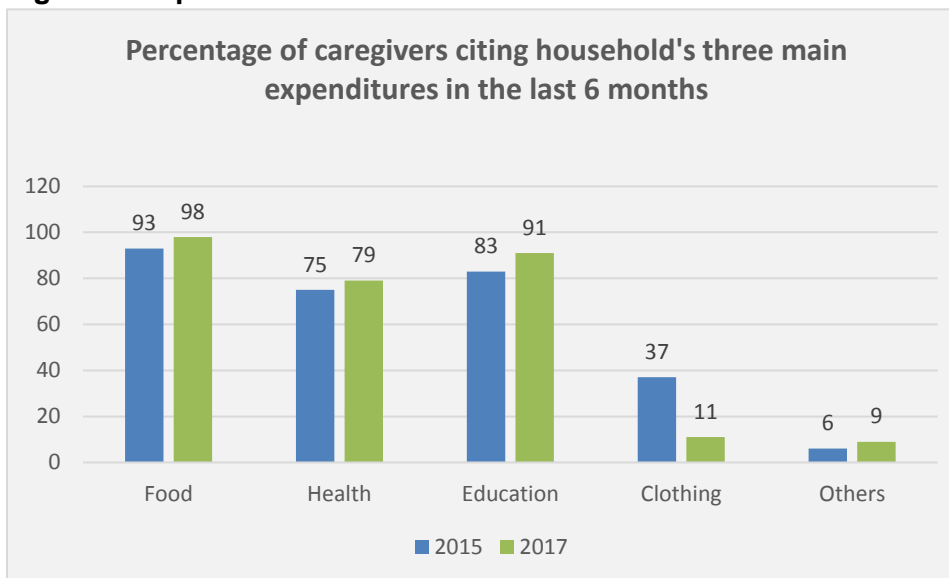


Engagement in non-agricultural enterprises (such as retail trade, groceries, etc.) increased from about 3 percent to 9 percent. This has been apparently explained by the savings-and-credit facility supported by the project to enable OVC households to access microcredit for investment.

4.5 Household consumption/expenditure lines

Before the project began, the three major household expenditure lines were food, education for children and health in that order of importance constituting 93, 83 and 75 percentage points respectively.

Figure 7: Expenditure lines for households in the last 6 months



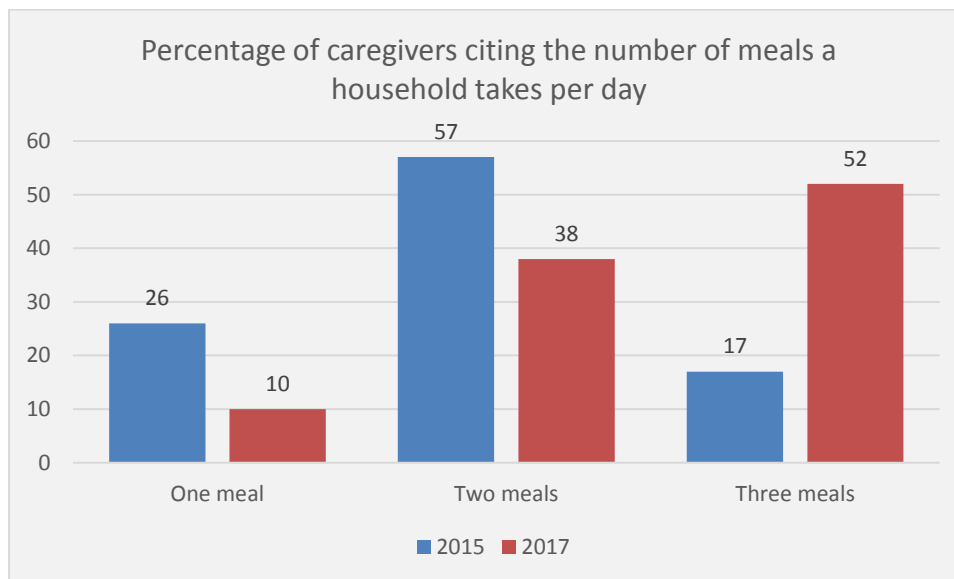
The three remain the respective lead expenditure lines for the households at a slightly increasing average rate of 5 percent. Any transformative intervention therefore, should pay attention to the three basic needs. Much as clothing is equally an essential need it can be foregone for the sake of the aforementioned needs, thus scoring less on the scale. The category of others constitutes expenditures on things like tragedies such as burial expenses.

4.5 Household food sources and consumption patterns

Food (and perhaps nutrition) security is one of the greatest success stories registered in the last two years of the project. Remarkably, the number of households surviving on one meal a day has reduced from 26 percent to 10 percent; those living on two meals a day reduced from 57 percent to 38 percent; and the number of those depending on three meals has increased from 17 percent to 52 percent. An apparent poor lady living a poor dwelling with her family attested as follows:

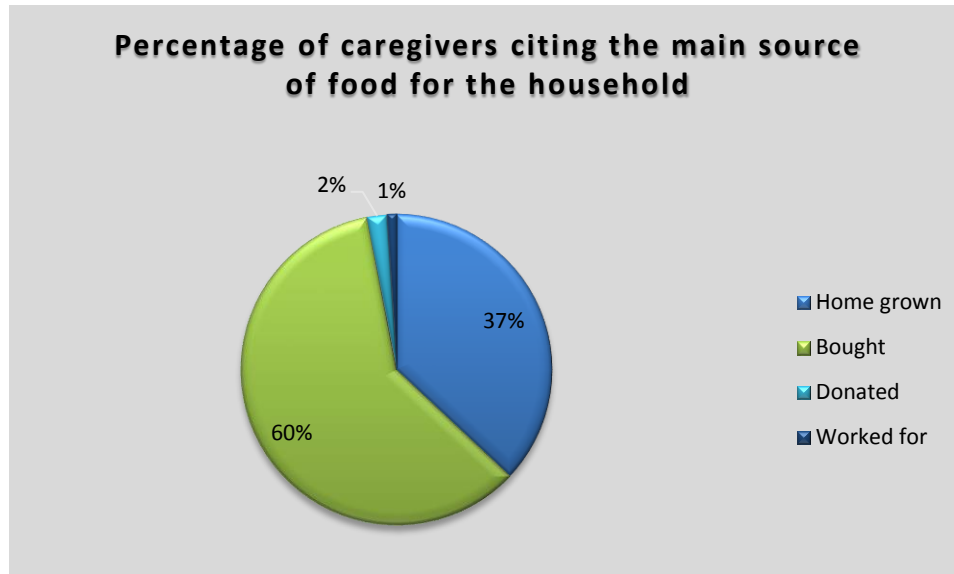
Through this project [while pointing at a small poultry farm] and good harvest from farming consequent to intervention from MBHU, I have been able to save monthly through our group, and also to have enough food for my family most times throughout the year. Most of the times nowadays, we get three meals a day, which was never the case before.

Undoubtedly, the OVC Households Development Project has transformed food consumption patterns through supporting agricultural projects and promoting a culture of saving in the communities.



At this success rate, if similar interventions were implemented in the next two years, hunger would be completely eliminated from our beneficiary communities.

The study also established the main sources of food for the households in question. It was found out that 37 percent of the households depended on home-grown food, 60 usually bought the food, 2 percent depended on donated food, and only 1 percent casually labored for it.



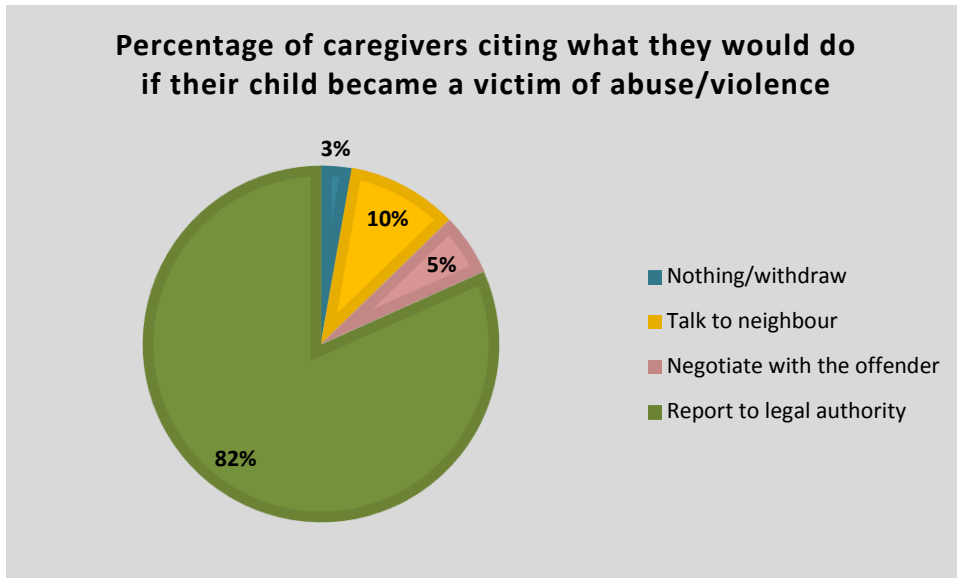
The 60 percent who depended on bought food is a clear indicative of the improved incomes secured from projects to meet the basic needs of life including healthcare and school requirements for the children.

Through the last month, much of the food we consumed was bought because of transient famine that has ravaged the communities for the past months; otherwise we usually depend on the food from our gardens

It, thus, ought to be noted that bought food would be supplemented by home-grown food since the majority of the household have access to land. It is also vital to note that food consumption patterns and food sources factually depend on seasons as some seasons are generally of abundance while others are of scarcity.

4.6 Knowledge of the rights of a child and legal support systems

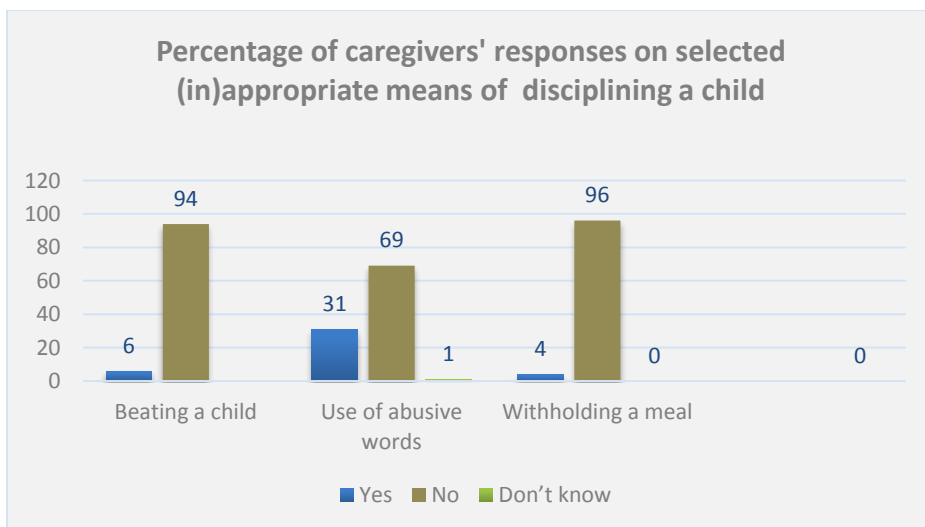
The evaluation sought to establish caregivers' knowledge of the rights of children and formal local systems that can give immediate legal help in case of abuse of the rights. 82 percent of the caregivers posit that they would report the abuse for legal action to the local legal authorities including police, probation office, local political council, court of law, and a civil society organization. Only 3 percent said they would "do nothing/withdraw", and so expressing ignorance of the law. 10 percent and 5 percent of the caregivers asserted that they would respectively "talk to a neighbor" and "negotiate with the offender" in a bid to keep peace and avoid further bad neighborliness.



When asked what she would do in case her child was beaten by a neighbor, a humble woman in Western ward had this to say:

If my neighbor abused my child, I would first establish what happened. If I find that my child was beaten because he misbehaved to him, I would just apologize and move on.[...and in case of sexual abuse], I would negotiate with the offender to settle the matter informally to avoid unpleasant hostilities.

The study endeavored to establish how the caregivers specifically and the home environment generally treated the children in relation to appropriate measures of child discipline, paying attention to the culturally/traditionally common ways of instilling discipline in an African child: beating a child, withholding meal(s) from a child, and using abusive words/ hash language. These famous traditional means of child discipline have been condemned by both national and global child-rights policies and laws.



The study found out that indeed a lot has been done in awareness creation about children's' rights and social welfare. 94 percent and 96 percent respectively think that beating or hitting a child and withholding meals from them in not an appropriate means of disciplining a child. However, slightly over one-third of the caregivers think that use of abusive/harsh language as a disciplinary action is appropriate. When asked why she says she sometimes use harsh language to her children, a seemingly enlightened but poor widow responded thus:

It is unavoidable to talk harshly to an errant child, but I think some parents really take it too far to abuse children by, say, hurling insults and curses...and these utterances soon or later impacts negatively on a child in many ways: becoming social misfits and irresponsible citizens among others.

The project has generally registered greater success in sensitizing beneficiary communities on how to bring up the vulnerable children to become responsible future citizens. Knowing the good to do in and outside home guaranteeshope for the future of the OVCs.

4.7 Voices of selected key informants

Name/contact/designation	Remark(s)
<p>Nicholas Kato (0772434890) The Community Development Officer (CDO), Kanungu Town Council Local Government</p>	<p>MBHU generally has become our major social and economic development partner. In all our development planning processes – including programs inception and design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – MBHU has always actively participated; and consequently, we have not only avoided duplication of community development work but also saved resources for other important programs pertinent to the development of the town council. We receive periodic reports about their development work.</p> <p>Specifically with the OVC Household Development Project, the Town Council has immensely benefited from the project in a number of ways.</p> <p>First, the caregiver groups that have been formed and supported by the project have become an existing structure through which government future community development projects will be managed. In addition, income generating projects for OVC households is a clear indication of supporting the government itself in its duty of meeting the development needs of its citizens – amidst inadequate resources.</p> <p>Second, OVC concerns have been largely excluded by other development agencies in Kanungu district, and more so supporting their livelihoods and advocating for OVC rights. MBHU is so far the only known organization that is engaged in programs of OVC households' income and food security and child protection/legal support. It is the only organization that has registered tangible result with little resources to the satisfaction of the town council and perhaps the district at</p>

	large.
Christopher Namara (0772514850) The District Community Development Officer (DCDO), Kanungu Town Council Local Government	<p>MBHU has been our key partner in OVC programming and support in Kanungu district. It is our databank for OVC issues concerning Kanungu Town Council. Our wish is that the organization would extend its OVC services to cover the whole district. The organization has also provided technical support in our efforts to address OVC related concerns, for instance it has been fundamental in our OVC case management and reporting systems.</p> <p>MBHU has also supported us logistically and financially in our efforts to address some of the concerns that require immediate attention. Sometimes we have received victims of domestic violence amidst very scarce resources like transport to remand homes and institutional care facilities – and in such crises, the organization has proved to be very supportive.</p>
Betty Hakusuma (0773820605) Head, Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU) for Kanungu Police Station	<p>The CFPU section of the police in Uganda is generally poorly facilitated and yet it handles core community issues related to family and child welfare. Generally MBHU has supplemented our work greatly through collaboration with us in our community outreach activities, in addition to actively involving us in their development programs especially those pertaining to OVC care and support.</p> <p>The organization, through its OVC programs, has specifically supported us in the following respects;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material (such as food, shelter and medical care) and financial provision during circumstances of “lost and found children” • Logistical support and technical backstopping in our community outreaches for community policing and domestic/gender-based violence cases management. • Legal support: during family court proceedings and following up cases to have them resolved.
Godfrey Karabenda Mayor/Chairperson Kanungu Town Council Local Government	<p>As the [Kanungu] urban council, we have saved considerable resources following development interventions by MBHU in our communities. They are very much visible throughout the urban council, steadily transforming households socially and economically. We need to deeply engage in our common planning processes for more impactful developments. We highly recommend their effort and gratefully appreciate the donor community that financially facilitate their development plans. Undoubtedly, MBHU is a fundamentally an upcoming transformational ingredient to Kanungu district and beyond.</p>

5. Conclusions and recommendations

A household head is culturally presumed to be the breadwinner. As a consequence, the baseline study had assumed that the household head doubled as the OVC caregiver in a household. However, the evaluation has established that the caregiver is not necessarily the head of family and more so the breadwinner. Traditionally, the man in a household is the household head but the caregiver function is literally played by the woman in the very household. In households where, for any reason (death or otherwise) there is no the man (traditionally head of family) the female triples as household head, breadwinner and caregiver. This demands that future OVC related programs should underscore the significance of the female figure in a household.

A saving culture has been evidently inculcated in the beneficiary communities by promoting saving and credit mechanisms and encouraging investing in agricultural and non-agricultural ventures to diversify sources incomes. The OVC Household Development Project model has proved pivotal in ensuring income and food security in the beneficiary communities. This model should be scaled up throughout the district and beyond. Development partners including government, the civil society and private sector should carefully study and proactively employ this model for community socio-economic transformation.

Food, education and health remain the three respective lead expenditure lines for the households. Any transformative intervention, therefore, should pay attention to the three basic needs – for instance a health insurance for the OVC households would address health related concerns for such poor category of the population.

Awareness about rights of vulnerable children has been created, being manifest in the way caregivers understand how to appropriately reward and punish the children and how to legally handle child abuse cases. However, the challenge that remains is twofold: (1) the local legal authorities to which child abuse cases are reported are usually inadequately facilitated to effectively execute their mandate, and (2) some aggravated child abuse cases such as defilement, forced teenage marriages, aggravated physical harm do not come to their logical conclusions largely because of lack of legal infrastructure (such as reliable family courts and advocacy systems) within the geographical reach and financial means of the vulnerable households. This challenge has resulted into withdrawal of some serious child abuse cases and destructive negotiations between the offender and the victim's family, "to keep peace and avoid further hostilities" – just as one of the caregivers asserted. Therefore, for the rights of OVCs to be meaningfully protected, the relevant legal authorities need to be actively engaged and facilitated accordingly, and there is need to institute legal representation for OVCs so that cases of child abuse are logically concluded. In addition, an equipped children's facility (with accommodation, food, first aid) to handle emergencies would supplement the named efforts.

Much as income and food security have been minimally achieved and a saving culture inculcated in the households for OVCs, expenditures on the basic needs such as medical care, education for the children and clothing remain growing high. In addition, it was observed during the study that housing conditions of over 90 percent of the OVC households are much wanting – largely semi-permanent dilapidated congested structures. The solution to the poor housing would be a low-cost housing facility for every household.