



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

**EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMITTEE REPORT ON THE STATE OF
CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS IN THE COUNTRY**

**OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO PARLIAMENT
PARLIAMENTARY BUILDINGS
KAMPALA
UGANDA**

APRIL, 2023

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ACRONYMS

CDO	Community Development Officer
CRC	Convention on the Rights of Children
CRVS	National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
DLG	District Local Government
EOC	Equal Opportunities Commission
GBV	Gender Based Violence
GOU	Government of Uganda
HC	Health Centre
MAAIF	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MDAs	Ministry Departments and Agencies
MoE&S	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoFPED	Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economics Development
MOGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MOH	Ministry of Health
MoIA	Ministry of Internal Affairs
NIRA	National Identification and Registration Authority
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PWDs	Persons with disabilities
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education
USE	Universal Secondary Education
WHO	World Health Organisation

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Committee on Equal Opportunities derives its mandate from Article 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and it's established by Rule 183 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Uganda. It is inter-alia mandated with monitoring and promoting measures designed to enhance the equalization of opportunities and improvement in the quality of life and status of all peoples including marginalized groups on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them (Rule 183).

2.0 BACKGROUND

The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda puts children and all the vulnerable Ugandans in the prime light. Chapter four of the constitution which stretches from Article 20 to 58 makes various provisions aimed at empowerment of Women, Children, Persons with disabilities (PWDs) and ethnic minorities among others.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda recognizes the rights of vulnerable and marginalized groups and provides the basis for the enactment of Laws and development of Policies that address their concerns. Chapter 4 of the Constitution guarantees rights of children, women, older persons, persons with disabilities and the right to culture. In addition, it outlaws discrimination and obligates the State to take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalized on the basis of sex, age disability, tradition or any other reason created by history in order to redress the imbalances which exists

The Children Act Cap. 58 defines a child to mean a person below the age of eighteen years. It's the duty of a parent, guardian or any person having custody of a child to maintain that child and, in particular, that duty gives a child right to; Education and guidance, immunization, adequate diet, clothing, shelter and

medical attention and any person having custody of a child should protect the child from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect.

Almost half of Uganda's population is children from the ages of 0 to 14 at 46 % of the general population, representing one of the youngest populations in the world (World Bank, 2021). Although poverty reduction has been significant over the past three decades going down from 56.0% in 1993 to 21.4% in 2016, Uganda still remains a country that struggles with poverty and therefore affects the provision of services in the country.

Although there have been additional efforts to ease and better children's lives such as; programs and legislation to increase school enrollment, decrease child mortality, reduce maternal mortality and adopt the Children Amendment Act, many children still cannot get the full benefits of these. This is because many children cannot get adequate health care, education, or social care and are subject to increasing amounts of violence and harmful traditional practices (UNICEF, 2017).

3.0 SCOPE

The Conceptual scope of the Committee was to;

Assess the State of Children's Affairs in the country that is; Child Labour, Child Abuse/ Children rights, child protection, Violence against children, Teen age pregnancies and marriages, Birth registration, access to social services like education, health, shelters, food and other basic needs, Social protection, Children with Disabilities, Juvenile Justice for children, children in contact with the Laws, detention and rehabilitation among others.

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4.0 METHODOLOGY

4.1 Field visits and Meetings

The Committee visited and held meetings with the following entities;

Kampiringisa Rehabilitation and Detention Centre, Naguru Remand Home, Naguru Reception Centre, Kigangazi Health Centre II, Lukango Seed Secondary School and Bukomansimbi District Action Centre.

Committee delegation visited the following places;

- i. Phelang Special needs school and Dominican school for the Deaf, in Pretoria, South Africa
- ii. Kabete Remand Centre (Rehabilitation/ Approved school for boys), Compassionate Hands for the disabled Foundation, Kabete Children Rescue Centre, Machakos Girls Rescue centre and children's remand home and Directorate of Social Assistance in Nairobi, Kenya.

4.2 Review of Documents

The Committee studied and made reference to various documents including;

- i. The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended).
- ii. The Children Act,
- iii. Situation analysis of Children in Uganda, UNICEF
- iv. The Births and Deaths Registration Act, Cap 309
- v. The National Council for Children Act, Cap 60
- vi. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
- vii. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948

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5.0: FINDINGS, OBSERVATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following key Findings, Observation and Recommendations have been identified for immediate action.

5.1: Existing Legal and Regulatory Framework Governing the Rights and Protection of Children:

The following were some of the Laws, Regulations passed for the protection and promotion of Children's rights;

1. The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended).
2. The Children Act, Cap 59 (as amended in 2016).
3. Domestic Violence Act, 2010.
4. The Education Act 2008, Cap 127;
5. The Penal Code Act, Cap 120;
6. The Births and Deaths Registration Act, Cap 309
7. The National Council for Children Act, Cap 60
8. Prevention of trafficking in persons Act, 2009.

Uganda is also a signatory to many Regional and International instruments on Children's matters which were necessary in promoting the welfare of children and has gone ahead to ratify the same.

These include;

1. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989.
2. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948
3. The Hague Convention on Jurisdiction for Protection of Children 1996
4. African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child 1990.
5. African Children's Charter.
6. The European Convention on the Adoption of Children 1967.
7. Convention on the Rights of the Child
8. Optional Protocol on the Sale of children, child prostitution and child Pornography.
9. Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict.

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5.2 Children Rights

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 (Constitution) recognises the rights of the child and specifically provides for children's right to health, right to education, and right to protection from exploitation under Article 34. The Constitution also states that a child offender who is kept in lawful custody or detention shall be kept separately from adult offenders.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995 under Article 34 further provides that subject to law enacted in their best interests, children shall have the right to know and be cared for by their parents or those entitled by law to bring them up.

In Uganda children have the same general human rights as adults and also specific rights that recognise their special needs. Children are neither the property of their parents nor are they helpless objects of charity. They are human beings and are the subject of their own rights.

Uganda Amended the Children Act, Cap.59 in 2016 to;

- a. Reform and consolidate the law relating to children
- b. provide for the care, protection and maintenance of children
- c. provide for local authority support for children
- d. Establish a family and children court
- e. provide for children charged with offences and for other connected purposes.

It is pertinent to note that the definition of a Child is provided for under Section 2 of the Children Act Cap 59 as amended to mean a person below the age of eighteen years.

The Act also under section 3 provides for the welfare principle which is to the effect that;

that;

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Whenever the state, a court, a local authority or any person determines any question with respect to:-

- (a) upbringing of the child or
- (b) The administration of a child's property or application of any income arising from it, the child's welfare shall be of paramount consideration.

The implication of the above provision is that the welfare principles is of paramount consideration in children's matters.

The Children Act, Cap, 59 under Section 4(1a-i) and paragraph 4 of the 1st schedule passes into national law, the rights of the child and the associated protections, duties and responsibilities contained under Article 34 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (as amended).

In line with Article 34 of the Constitution, Section 4(1a-i), paragraph 4 of the 1st schedule of the Children Act, Cap 59 and other international conventions. The Rights of the Child are as follows:

a). No discrimination

All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, what language they speak, what their religion is, what they think, what they look like, if they are a boy or girl, if they have a disability, if they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are or what their parents or families believe or do. No child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

b). Basic Necessities

A child has a right to grow up in a peaceful, caring and secure environment, and to have the basic necessities of life, including food, health care, clothing and shelter.

c). Best interests of the child

When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children. Governments should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents or by other people when this is needed. Governments should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

d). Life survival and development

Every child has the right to be alive. Governments must make sure that children survive and develop in the best possible way.

c). Name and nationality

Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the government. Children must have a nationality (belong to a country). Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

d). Having a family

A child has the right to know who his or her parents are and to enjoy family life with them and/or their extended family. Where a child has no family or is unable to live with them, he or she should have the right to be given the best substitute care available.

e). Respect for children's views

Children have the right to express an opinion and to be listened to, and, to be consulted in accordance with his or her understanding in decisions which affect his or her wellbeing.

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f). Right to Health

A child has a right to have his or her health protected through immunisation and appropriate health care, and to be taught how to defend himself/herself against illness. When ill, a child should have a right to receive proper medical care.

g). Child with disability

A child with disability should have the right to be treated with the same dignity as other children and to be given special care, education and training where necessary so as to develop his or her potential and self-reliance.

H). Protection from harmful practices

A child has the right to refuse to be subjected to harmful initiation rites and other harmful social and customary practices, and to be protected from those customary practices which are prejudicial to a child's health.

i). Protection from violence

Governments must protect children from violence, abuse and being neglected by anyone who looks after them.

j). Access to Education

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free. Secondary and higher education should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Discipline in schools should respect children's rights and never use violence.

k) Rest, play, culture, arts

Every child has the right to leisure which is not morally harmful, to play and to participate in sports and positive cultural and artistic activities.

l). Protection from harmful work

A child has the right to be protected from doing work that is dangerous or bad for their education, health or development. If children work, they have the right to be safe and paid fairly.

m). Protection from sexual abuse

A child has a right to be protected from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, including by people forcing children to have sex for money, or making sexual pictures or films of the

n). Armed conflict

A child, if a victim of armed conflict, a refugee, or in a situation of danger or extreme vulnerability, should have the right to be among the first to receive help and protection

The Committee however noted that despite the strides made by Uganda through ratification of international conventions and enacting corresponding laws meant to improve the well-being of children in the country, more efforts are still required to ensure that all children enjoy their rights.

The daily reality for millions of children across the country is still in sharp contrast to Uganda's commitments under the laws and conventions specifically the Convention on Children Rights; many children still live in poverty; face major threats to survival; lack opportunities for quality education; lack adequate health and social care; many are victims of various forms of violence - they are forced into early marriages and have to endure harmful traditional practices.

The Committee further noted that tracking and monitoring the welfare of Ugandan children who are placed under foster care abroad remains a challenge since Government has not yet ratified the Hague Convention on Adoption.

The objective of the convention, developed by the Hague Conference on Private International Law and came into force on 1st May 1995, is to establish safeguards to ensure that inter country adoptions take place in the best interests of the child.

It also sets up a system of cooperation amongst contracting countries to ensure these safeguards are respected and thereby prevent abduction or trafficking of children.

Recommendations

Committee Recommendation

- i. Government should ratify the Hague Convention on Inter Country adoption.***
- ii. MOGLSD should ensure that the laws promoting and protecting children rights are properly implemented so as to improve the welfare and wellbeing of children in Uganda.***

6.0 BIRTH REGISTRATION

Birth registration is every child's first right, Children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognized by the Government. Children must have a nationality (belonging to a country). This is among the first rights that are enjoyed by a child at birth. Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

Children have the right to their own identity, an official record of who they are which includes their name, nationality and family relations. No one should take this away from them, but if this happens, governments must help children to quickly get their identity back.

The Registration of Persons Act 2015 provides birth, death registration and national IDs under the National Registration and Identification Authority (NIRA). This law provides for the recruitment of registrars, initially at district level, to exclusively register births, deaths and national IDs. These are positive steps towards a

The Committee further observed that the national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system should be strengthened through capacity development and equipping of NIRA, districts LG and health facilities. NIRA should be supported to develop and implement an evidence based and comprehensive Civil Registration Policy and costed national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) Strategic Plan to access birth certificate.

The Committee appreciates the efforts by UNICEF in scaling up of birth registration services and issuance of birth notifications for children under 5 years, in few districts. It should be noted that children birth registration is every child's right, as well as an important factor in providing access to other rights such as education, health, justice for children among others. Children can only receive services like education grants, fast tracking of court cases and stopping of child marriages as a result of their parents having secured birth certificates. Its absence remains one of the obstacles to protecting children against violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Members observed that registration also enables government to budget for and provide services as and where they are needed.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that:

- i. Government of Uganda should ensure that every child is registered by enforcing the existing Laws.**

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- ii. **Ministry of Internal Affairs (MOIA) should sensitize the community and make it compulsory for every parent to register their children.**
- iii. **NIRA should simplify the birth registration process and reduce complicated registration and certification processes.**
- iv. **GOU should ensure that Registration of Persons Act Section 28, is implemented to ensure that birth registration is free, further more fees under section 39 should be waived unless it is a replacement for a birth certificate**

6.1 Violence against Children

Violence against children includes all forms of violence against people under 18 years old, whether perpetrated by parents or other caregivers, peers, or strangers.

The Ugandan Constitution provides for protection of life, liberty and the family. Children are exposed to physical, sexual and emotional violence, which is often condoned by society or considered culturally acceptable based on gender inequalities and power relations between adults and children

In Uganda, most children have experienced some form of violence and abuse. Many children are considered to be vulnerable to harm. Sexual abuse was the most common form of violence, with gender as a major risk factor. Every day, around 26 girls were defiled. Rape was on the increase, rising by 30 per cent (UNICEF)

Children continue to face violence and abuse at schools, homes and places where they are supposed to be safe and protected. This violence often poses grave danger and sometimes death for the children involved.

Children with disabilities are even more at risk of mental, physical and sexual abuse because of discrimination, isolation and lack of access to services. Other groups of acutely vulnerable children include children living on the street, orphans and refugee children.

In Uganda, many children were orphaned and many Ugandan families have had to foster orphaned children, survivors of sexual violence, separated or unaccompanied children who urgently need protection.

Most violence against children occur at different stages in a child's development due to the following;

- Maltreatment (including violent punishment) involves physical, sexual and psychological/emotional violence; and neglect of infants, children and adolescents by parents, caregivers and other authority figures, most often in the home but also in settings such as schools and orphanages.
- Bullying (including cyber-bullying): this is unwanted aggressive behaviour by another child or group of children who are neither sibling nor in a romantic relationship with the victim. It involves repeated physical, psychological or social harm, and often takes place in schools and other settings where children gather, and online.
- Sexual violence includes non-consensual completed or attempted sexual contact and acts of a sexual nature not involving contact (such as sexual harassment); acts of sexual trafficking committed against someone who is unable to consent or refuse; and online exploitation.
- Emotional or psychological violence includes restricting a child's movements, denigration, ridicule, threats and intimidation, discrimination, rejection and other non-physical forms of hostile treatment.

It is pertinent to note that when directed against girls or boys because of their biological sex or gender identity, any of the above types of violence amounts to gender-based violence.

Violence against children has lifelong impacts on health and well-being of children, families, communities, and nations which include; death, severe injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Members observed that violence against children is preventable. Preventing and responding to violence against children requires that efforts systematically address risk and protective factors at all level (individual, relationship, community, society).

Members noted that violence against children leads to increase in the number of children in the streets and reception centers. In Bukomansimbi, the incidences of children reporting crimes against them at the District Action Centre was at 47 per month. For instance the Senior Probation Officer informed Members that a mother of a child rejected her child because she wanted to remarry and the father of the child also rejected the child leaving the child homeless.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends;

- i. MOGLSD should ensure that violence against children are prevented through sensitization and counseling*
- ii. MOGLSD should strengthen probation offices across the country*

6.2 Teenage Pregnancies and Marriages

Teenage pregnancy has existed in Uganda for several decades. According to the most recent Uganda Demo-graphic and Health Survey (UDHS 2016), 34 per cent of young women between 20 and 24 years old were either married or in a union before the age of 18, while 7 per cent were married before the age of 15. The numbers are equally alarming for teenage pregnancy, with approximately one-quarter of all Ugandan girls between the ages of 15 and 19 having already begun bearing children. In 2020, there was an increase in teenage pregnancy mainly in the period between March and September 2020 (when schools were partly closed due to Covid-19 lockdown). This period registered a 366 percent increase in pregnancies among girls aged 10-14 years. The numbers of teenage pregnancy were highest in districts of Wakiso (10,439), Kampala (8,460), Kasese (7,319), Kamuli (6,535), Oyam (6,449)

(UNICE,2021).

It is pertinent to note that teenage pregnancy is a top cause of death among young girls in Uganda. The country's Maternal Mortality Ratio stood at 336 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2021, of which 17.2 per cent of the deaths were among those aged 15-19 (UNFPA 2021).

The Committee noted that girls between the age of 15 and 19 years are twice (28 per cent) as likely to die during pregnancy or child birth compared to women in their twenties; whereas those under the age of 15 years are five times more likely to die. The Committee also learnt that Teenage pregnancy accounts for 22.3 per cent of school drop - out among girls aged between 14 to 18 years and that only 8 per cent of the girls that drop out of school are given a second chance to re-enroll (MoES, 2020).

Teenage pregnancy has far reaching implications not only for the girls themselves but also on their children, their families and society at large. It denies the girls their right to life (due to high mortality rates during child birth), right to a happy childhood disrupts their education, limits opportunities, increases their risks of violence and abuse and has profound effects on the health and lives of young women.

Child marriage and teenage pregnancy are inter-related and closely linked. While child marriage is often a precursor of teenage childbearing, pre-marital pregnancy may also put girls at risk of being married off prematurely. Young girls are forced to marry the fathers of their babies even where the child is conceived as a result of defilement (sexual violence). This is done for purposes of sparing their families the stigma associated with an unmarried pregnancy.

The Committee learnt that whereas boys and girls who marry in childhood do not face the same risks and consequences due to biological and social differences, the practice is nonetheless a rights violation that cuts short the normal childhood of both sexes.

Globally, 115 million boys and men were married before age 18 (UNICEF 2021). Child marriage has significant negative effects on boys' achievement in different capability domains. Similar to child brides, child grooms are forced to take on adult responsibilities for which they may not be adequately prepared. The union brings early fatherhood and result in additional economic pressure in the form of providing for the household; it also constrains the boy's access to education and opportunities for career advancement, enjoying optimal health, bonding with others of their own age.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that;

- 1. Government should implement the laws that were passed to protect children from early marriages and pregnancies.***
- 2. Government should support law enforcement agencies to address cases on child marriages and teenage pregnancies.***
- 3. Ministry of Local Government should support the various district administrative units to develop ordinances and by-laws to effectively and completely outlaw child marriages and teenage pregnancies***
- 4. MoGLSD should conduct sensitization and awareness campaigns aimed at eradicating child marriages and teenage pregnancies.***
- 5. MoGLSD should also establish rehabilitation centers for victims of early marriages and pregnancies to assist them re-integrate into school and society.***

6.3 Child Labour

Child labour is a common feature of life for extremely vulnerable children. Many children were working in exploitative conditions in Uganda, with many rural children believed to be engaged in commercial or subsistence agriculture working in gardens from morning to evening without breakfast/food. This conditions is unfair to children, since they should be given work according to their age. Members

noted that the minimum age of employment of a child of sixteen years was not being enforced by the citizens.

Members observed that a child should not be engaged in any activity that may be harmful or hazardous to his or her health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development. Such work includes exposing a child to physical, or psychological torture, sexual abuse, work underground, work at dangerous heights, in confined spaces, dangerous machinery, equipment and tools or manual handling or transportation of heavy loads, work with chemicals and dangerous substances, work under extreme temperatures, high levels of noise, or working for long hours or any other form of child labour which includes servitude, trafficking in persons, debt bondage and other forms of forced labour, forced recruitment for use in the Armed conflict, prostitution, pornography and illicit activities.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that;

- i. MOGLSD should ensure that children are protected from harmful employment**
- ii. MOGLSD should enforce the employment age of children (sixteen years).**
- iii. MOGLSD and MOLG should carry out regular inspection at work places like mining areas, plantations, factories and construction sites among others to ensure that children are not subjected to exploitative labour.**
- iv. MOGLSD should pursue strategic partnerships with other Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), United Nations agencies, faith-based organizations and other civil society organizations to eradicate harmful child labour.**

6.4. Juvenile Justice System.

The Committee observed that, children in contact with the law being put into prison should only be a last resort and for the shortest time possible. However, this basic

right, as enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, is all too frequently ignored in Uganda.

Vulnerable children, such as those living on the streets, are particularly likely to be arrested and detained for a wide array of minor or 'status' offences such as petty theft or use of abusive language. Beating during arrest and confinement was common. Because of the lack of birth certificates and proof of age, children are often detained when they are under the age of criminal responsibility (12 years).

Despite increased awareness of the necessity to separate children from adults in detention, the lack of separate holding facilities in many police stations puts children at risk of physical and sexual abuse. Many have no access to legal representation and are denied visits from parents or relatives. Bail conditions are stringent and not easily accessible to children.

In other parts of the country, children are tried in open adult courts, creating an intimidating atmosphere. Magistrates use the same procedure for children as for adults, which does not take into account the best interests of the child. The Children Act Section 13, provides that there shall be a court to be known as the family and children court in every district, and any other lower government unit designated by the Chief Justice by notice in the *Gazette* and a magistrate not lower than Magistrate Grade II shall be assigned to preside over the family and children court.

6.5 Children in contact with the law

These are children offenders who commit crimes and have attained the age of criminal responsibility (12-17 Years) as per the Children's Act Cap 59. The law provides for establishment of the Family and Children's Court in every district of Uganda. The Committee noted that in Bukomansimbi district the Magistrates Court sits as the family and Children's Court in matters concerning children which are not capital in nature.

Members also observed that Juvenile offenders are increasing day by day majorly because of the breakdown of the family institution and the duty of parenting. Children commit all sorts of crime for instance aggravated robbery. There are cases where children invaded a road and robbed travelers. The most common offences committed by children in Bukomansimbi were child to child sex and theft.

The law mandates the Probation Officer to carry out social inquiries and make a report in all matters involving children, attend all court sessions in that regard and guide court about the appropriate action regarding the child.

The Probation Officer is therefore responsible for placement of the juvenile in the institution where court sends the children. Members were informed that most children were sent to Naguru Remand Home or Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre as decided by court.

Despite the many juvenile offenders Bukomansimbi District could afford to facilitate placement of only six juveniles in a financial year as compared to an average of 45 juveniles that are normally sent to reformatory school. Members were informed that facilitation to Probation Officers excludes support to carryout social inquiries and attending court.

The following challenges were observed by Members in the management of children in contact with the Law;

- i. Abuse of some children by their parents for instance; defilement, aggravated assault, neglect and others.
- ii. Withdrawal of cases from courts of law by the survivors upon reaching a consensus with the perpetrators when the parents are given an incentive like money for defilement cases instead of the punishment stipulated under the law. This affects the children's' right to access justice.
- iii. Failure to report some cases due to family ties especially in cases of incest.
- iv. Some case files get mismanaged in the process while in the Police Station, DPP's Office, and Courts due to corruption.

- v. Lack of resources to follow up cases, support witnesses to attend court and placement of survivors for alternative care.

6.5.1 Detention

The Committee observed that prison should always be the last resort and only for the shortest possible time. Children in prison should have legal help and be able to stay in contact with their families.

Most crimes committed by children are; theft, breaking and entering of houses, malicious damage to property, fraud, burglary and murder. Children accused of breaking the law have the right to legal help and fair treatment. There should be lots of solutions to help these children become good members of their communities.

The Committee visited Naguru Remand Home, Kampiringisa Rehabilitation and Detention Centre.

6.5.2 Kampiringisa Detention and Rehabilitation Centre

The Committee visited Kampiringisa Rehabilitation and Remand Home. Members were informed that Kampiringisa Rehabilitation and Remand Home is a government owned institution which was established in 1952 and it was for only male juveniles. The Children Act 1997 established the girls section.

Members were informed that the centre had 216 children, 209 boys and 7 girls from all over the districts in the country from 12 to 17 years and the major/ common offences committed were theft, child to child sex, murder, assault, attempted murder, robbery and drug abuse.

The Committee observed that Kampiringisa Rehabilitation and Remand Home had the following mandates;

- Reform character of the juvenile that is behaviour change, identify what went wrong and reform the child.

- Vocational training for self-reliance after completing remand period and the maximum year of remand was three (3) years. This empowers the children so that they don't go back to commit another offence.
- Simple modern farming for home agricultural practices
- Education services were provided to the children mainly as day scholars with few in boarding schools. It was noted that, few students were performing well, while others got support from Children Justice Initiative and other NGOs.
- Some children were not accessing any education services and were therefore redundant.
- Vocational training was also available although there was inadequate equipment for instance the centre only had two sewing machines and no fabric.
- Reintegration is mainly provided through Local Councils by Probation Officers and parents.
- Some social support like counseling was provided to help them one on one basis or group discussion.

Members observed the following achievements;

- Resettlement activities; children that completed their period for rehabilitation were reintegrated and resettled in the communities.
- Isolation Centre was created during the COVID 19 pandemic and no positive case was recorded at the detention Centre

Members noted the following major challenges;

- i. Inadequate funding to the Detention Centre and therefore most activities were not implemented.
- ii. The structures were dilapidated and required major renovation especially the dormitories. The buildings were almost collapsing on the children and the dormitories did not have wash rooms and children had to bathe from outside at night. The children's personal hygiene was wanting.

- iii. Budget cuts on food items and non-food items from UGX. 1.3bn to UGX. 600m and the reduction rate keeps going up each financial year. Each quarter UGX. 500,000 was being released as office imprest. This amount was inadequate for the Detention Centre.
- iv. Members were informed that the Detention Centre had received some donation of food items from office of the Prime Minister and appreciated the efforts.
- v. The Detention Centre used electric water pump/ motorized water, therefore incase power goes off, water cannot be pumped.
- vi. Vocational workshops were available for skilling but lacked the equipment and children could not be rehabilitated with skills.
- vii. When electricity goes off, the Detention Centre has no alternative power source.
- viii. The institution had 224 acres of land but no tractor for cultivation. It should be noted that children cannot work as labourers for long hours. In case they are to work, they should only do it for a few hours. Farming could be done to supplement on food supply.
- ix. Members were informed that 50 acres were given by MOGLSD to Ministry of Agriculture, Animal industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) which affects the food security at the Centre.
- x. The Detention Centre had no vehicles and therefore had to hire vehicles for transportation of the children for reintegration.
- xi. The Detention Centre was not fenced.

A collection of handwritten signatures and initials in black ink, scattered across the bottom half of the page. Some are clearly legible, such as 'G-2', 'CA-5', 'M', 'NG', 'CD', and 'CN'. Others are more stylized or scribbled, including 'B-1', 'J', 'P', 'M', 'NG', 'CD', and 'CN'.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that;

- i. GOU and MOGLSD should develop a Child friendly and responsive justice system and if possible use virtual Court proceeding to prevent children from missing their court dates due to transport challenges.
- ii. GOU should establish family and children's court in all the districts of Uganda
- iii. MOGLSD should ensure that Children courts are available in all districts of Uganda and court cases completed within a period of two or three months.
- iv. Children who are accused of breaking the law should not be killed, tortured, treated cruelly, put in prison forever, or put in Prison with adults.
- v. The MOGLSD should develop a Policy where detention is a last resort for children in conflict with the law.
- vi. MOGLSD should budget for intensive renovation of the dormitories in the Rehabilitation Centre immediately.
- vii. GOU should establish Sub-Regional Remand Homes and Rehabilitation Centers.
- viii. MOGLSD should ensure that National water is extended to the Detention Centre immediately.
- ix. MOFPED should increase funding for food items and non-food items, including equipment for vocational workshop.
- x. MOGLSD should provide farming equipment/ inputs such as tractors for cultivation since land was available.
- xi. GOU should ensure that no child is detained with an adult person especially at Police Cells.
- xii. Children should be given startup capital (equipment) after completion of their rehabilitation.
- xiii. MOGLSD should provide solar energy as an alternative power source.

6.5.3 Naguru Remand Home

The Committee visited Naguru Remand Home and noted that it is a government owned institution which was established in 1954 by Save the Children. It was later handed over to government through an act of Parliament and was later placed under the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social development in the department of youth and children.

The Committee observed that the categories of children admitted to the Remand Home were children in conflict with the law from Central and neighboring regions.

Below is the summary of the situation at the Remand Home as at 11th to 16th December 2022.

No.		Number
1	Total Number of Juveniles	145
2	Number of boys	141
3	Number of girls	04
4	Capital offences	88
5	Non capital offences	57
6	Weekly admissions	21

The Committee was informed that Naguru Remand Home serves; 63 Magisterial courts and 07 High courts

The Committee was further informed that the Remand Home conducted the following activities;

- Preparing and accompanying juveniles to courts of law.
- Counseling and guidance.
- Tracing and family reintegration of released juveniles.
- Admitting, interviewing and registering of new juveniles.
- Recreational activities such as; indoor and outdoor games (sports).
- Small scale mixed farming for instance growing vegetables and rearing of rabbits among others.

The Remand Home had skill development activities that were initiated by the in-charge of the home to change the children's mindset for constructive thinking in order for them be better citizens of the country. These activities include; hair dressing Tailoring, liquid soap making, agricultural activities (Poultry, Rabbit rearing), computer lessons, reading & writing and mushroom growing.

The Committee observed the following under Welfare of Juveniles in the Remand Home;

- i. Health and hygiene: The general health of the juveniles in the institution was good, complicated cases were taken to a nearby hospital (China/Uganda Friendship Hospital, Naguru) for treatment and further management. Non complicated medical illnesses were treated within the Home.
- ii. Beddings: Children had Mattresses, blankets and bed sheets but need to be replaced from time to time.
- iii. Uniforms: Through the tailoring class, children were able to make their own uniforms with the help of an Instructor within the Home and Member observed that the children were smart.
- iv. Recreation activities: The Juveniles were engaged in indoor and outdoor activities like football, volley ball, Aerobics, watching TV programs, playing cards, Mweso, Ludo, music, dance and drama.

Members were informed that Naguru Remand Home also receives support from the following NGOs;

- i. Legal Aid Service Providers: Provide free legal aid services to the children at both Magisterial Courts and High Court level.
- ii. Free Child Uganda (FCU) legal representation
- iii. Uganda Law Society (ULS) legal representation
- iv. Legal Aid Clinic (LDC) legal representation
- v. Children Justice Initiative (CJI) Supplements on medical supplies
- vi. Companionship of Works Association (COWA): It helps in Skills develop

vii. Religious Groups: Provide Moral and Spiritual Development to the juveniles.

Members noted the following achievements at the remand home;

- Juveniles had attended various courts regularly which resulted into many of them to be released, and resettled successfully with their families.
- Uganda Law Society (ULS), Legal Aid Clinic (LAC) and Free Child Uganda (FCU) had always supported legal representation of juveniles in all courts of law.
- They had always conducted High court sessions at Kampala, Mukono, Mubende, Mpigi, Jinja and Masaka High Courts where juveniles had received justice.
- The Home also received the NITA internet connection system with support from MoGLSD.
- They have been able to introduce new skills development activities in the Home that is Mushroom growing, rabbit rearing, agriculture, Hair dressing and Tailoring
- UNICEF in partnership with MoGLSD provided furniture for the in-house court at Naguru Remand Home thus easing Juvenile justice.

Despite efforts made to put the institution to a desired standard, below were the major challenges at the Remand Home;

- The Remand Home requires fuel and transport to various courts. There was need for fuel and transport to manage the big number of courts in Central region and the neighboring districts. The Home had one van managing all the activities which causes irregularities in court attendance.
- Remanding Juveniles on minor/petty cases like stealing small amounts of money and attending clubs leading to congestion.
- Children commits all type of crime as adults such as smoking opium, chewing miraa and other psychotropic drugs, among others, leading to arrest and detention, therefore leading to congestion.
- Inadequate resettlement funds / non-allocation of funds to resettle released juveniles in time and inadequate funds for operation.

- Magistrates demand the presence of the juveniles' parents in court in order to release their children, yet sometimes it is very hard for the staff of the Remand Home to trace and get some of these parents, this leads to overstay of children on remand because Magistrates keep adjourning their cases.
- Age verification was still a problem, despite having the Police Form 24, Police surgeons deliberately continued to send adults to the home.
- Staff houses were dilapidated and had asbestos which is a health hazard to human lives.
- Skills development had challenges such as inadequate learning materials as well instructors who volunteer.
- Some juveniles attempted to break out of the Remand Home when electricity went off since it had no solar power.
- The home has no fire extinguishers which puts the lives of the children and property at risk in case of fire outbreak.

6.5.4 Kabete Remand Centre (Rehabilitation/ Approved school for boys)

Committee delegation visited Kabete Rehabilitation School, Nairobi, Kenya. Members were informed that the centre was started by colonial government for youth who were arrested from the streets during rebellions and demonstrations who had failed to produce identification. They were trained as labourers in fields such as; tailoring, mechanics, road contractors among others.

The Children Act of the Republic of Kenya, 2020 mandated Kabete centre to rehabilitate of boys between the ages of 12 to 14 years. The rehabilitation was meant to last for shorter periods depending on the reform of the child with a maximum of 3 years. In case a child reformed within a year, as per his monthly assessment and treatment, the child was integrated back to the community.

Members were informed that most of the offences committed were; stealing, burglary, theft, defilement among others.

Members were further informed that Rehabilitation Centers were classified according to risk level of the child, for instance; low, Medium and high risk. Kabete centre was for medium risk crime. Rehabilitation was done taking into consideration the best interest of the child, treatment plan. These plans were discussed with the child, for instance; a child charged with failing to go to school was talked to about the importance of education.

Members were also informed that children were trained in different fields such as; vocational and rehabilitation programs. These programs include activities like; technical, mechanical, carpentry, mansion, tailoring (fashion and design), solar installation and maintenance, ICT (Computer), Bakery (cake, biscuits, bread, samosas, mandazi and doughnuts. This training is equivalent to G1, G2 and G3 (Kenyan education grading system).

Members noted that the rehabilitation centre and remand homes in Uganda need to be prioritized and facilitated in order to improve the livelihood of children so as to make them responsible and self-reliant.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that;

- i. ***MOGLSD should procure additional vans to ease transportation of children to various courts of law and resettlement because justice delayed is justice denied.***
- ii. ***MOGLSD should renovate unfinished old staff houses and remove asbestos which is a health hazard to human lives.***
- iii. ***MOGLSD should increase the amount of office imprest & funds for fuel/ transportation and timely disbursement of such funds for regular attendance of courts. This will enable the juveniles especially those from distant courts to stop missing Court sessions.***
- iv. ***MOGLSD should provide adequate funds for;***

- **Reintegration / resettlement of released children.**
- **Procure solar system to maintain lights in the Home when power goes off.**
- **Put in place fire extinguishers in case of fire outbreak.**

v). MOGLSD should recruit instructors to train the juveniles in skills development activities.

vi). MOGLSD should increase funding for the continuity of the projects at the Remand Home such as agriculture, poultry, mushroom growing, rabbit rearing, tailoring, hair dressing among others. These projects aim at providing an independent living for the juveniles after remand home hence reducing on crime rates and recidivism.

vii). GOU should strengthen institutional and technical capacity of the justice sector especially the Juvenile Justice system.

vii). GOU should create more remand homes at sub-regional levels and expand the existing homes.

viii). Ministry of Internal Affairs (MoIA) should carry out sensitizations in the communities on the consequences of crime so as to reduce the occurrence of crime amongst children.

7.0 ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICES

7.1 Health and Water

Children have the right to the best health care possible, clean water to drink, healthy food and a clean and safe environment to live in. All adults and children should have information about how to stay safe and healthy. Water is life and every child can grow up healthy with safe water.

Uganda has made good progress in reducing child mortality and increasing life expectancy. A child born in Uganda today can expect to live to the age of 63 and the under-five mortality rate has gone down from 90 per 1,000 live births in 2011 to 64 per 1,000 live births in 2016 (UDHS, 2016)

The Committee appreciates GOU for the efforts to provide free health services in all government health facilities and effort for elimination of mother to child transmission (eMTCT). There is significant reduction in the rates of mother-to-child transmission of HIV in the country from over 20 percent in 2000 to 2.8 percent in 2021. (MOH, 2021). The UNAIDS 2021 Spectrum estimates indicated that there were 5,500 new childhood HIV infections in Uganda due to mother-to-child transmission, with half of those infections occurring among infants born to mothers who stopped HIV treatment during pregnancy and breastfeeding. According to the 2018–2023 Ugandan National Elimination Plan II, mother-to-child transmission of HIV accounts for 18 percent of all new infections in Uganda and was the primary source of infections among children.

Members noted that immunization is a proven tool for controlling and eliminating life threatening infectious diseases among children and infants. Members appreciate the tremendous achievements in immunization coverage which has contributed to the reduction of death of children under five. For example, the under-five mortality rate in Uganda has, over time , reduced from 76.3 per 1000 live births in 2010 to 43.3 per 1000 live births in 2021 (UNICEF, 2022).

7.2 Kigangazi Health Centre II

The Committee visited Kigangazi Health Centre II in Bukomansimbi district and the Health Centre was serving thirteen (13) villages, the Health centre was founded by local residents due to the demand for health care services. The centre began as an immunization post in 1994. The facility provides the following services, OPD, ANC, immunisation, laboratory services, ART services, post natal care, HCT services and youth services.

The major challenges were; lack of staff houses, no land for expansion not even for construction of another pit latrine and patients find it very difficult to pick urine and stool for laboratory testing since there was no toilet. The health centre was using rain water and there was no other source of water. During the dry season the health centre runs out of water.

Children taking ARVs are many and are in need of counseling services and more staff. The health centre had also recorded an increase in the number of teen age pregnancy due to COVID 19 lockdown. There were also difficulties on referral of cases to other health facilities. The building had no ramp for persons with disabilities. These were not considered while building the structures. The Committee also noted that the HC was over crowded.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that;

- i. GOU and Ministry of Health should upgrade such health centers like Kigangazi Health Centre II to Health centre III**
- ii. GOU should review the Policy on distribution of ARVs by Health Centre II**
- iii. MOH should support Kiganganzi HC II to purchase land for expansion.**

7.3 Food, Clothing, a Safe Home

Children have the right to food, clothing and a safe place to live so they can develop in the best possible way. Government should help families and children who cannot afford this. In general food security in Uganda has improved, however there are wide regional variations. Food security is often assessed by measuring levels of under/malnutrition and whether or not children have three meals a day. Uganda's high levels of under nutrition, especially among children, is due to inadequate diets.

Members noted that children that do not feel they are safe or protected at home tend to leave without knowing where to go and end up as street children or even criminals because they are very vulnerable. It is therefore the responsibility of Government to take care of children that do not have homes. Probation Officers employed in every district are mandated to provide safe custody for such children.

Members further noted that the number of street children in the city centre has drastically increased over a period of time especially children from Karamoja sub region and the major causes were; poverty, poor parenting habits, domestic violence, children who have no parents and guardians (family disintegration), children from displaced families due to land eviction, floods and landslides (lack of shelter), famine, draught and cattle rustling activities in the Karamoja area, and peer pressure from other children(rural – urban migration).

Street Children spend their days (and sometimes their nights) on the streets. Children who sleep on the streets often huddle together for warmth and protection. While on the streets during the day, common activities for children include: searching for food in the garbage, begging, searching for pieces of scrap metal that can be sold, finding small tasks to do in exchange for food or money. Some examples of the tasks include carrying luggage for people at the bus depot, sorting beans in a market stall, sweeping and doing laundry.

Members observed that street children should be provided with shelters, food, counseling, medical care, clothes and access to education.

Children should be given food which is necessary for their growth and enough food on a daily basis, however malnutrition is widespread in many places especially in hard to reach places and in slam areas within the urban settlement.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that;

- i. GOU should ensure that every child should always have a home to stay and should reintegrate street children into their families with a vision to become productive and self-reliant citizens
- ii. GOU should ensure that children have access to food and that no child should die of hunger.
- iii. GOU should scale-up highly effective child nutrition interventions such as exclusive breastfeeding, supplementation, de-worming and treatment of severe acute malnutrition, with a focus on the first 1,000 days of a child's life.

7.4 Access to Education

Every child has the right to an education. Primary education should be free and compulsory. The committee appreciates GOU for Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE) and Higher Education Student Loan Scheme, however this should be available to every child. Children should be encouraged to go to school to the highest level possible. Disciplining of children while at schools should respect their rights and never use violence.

The Committee observed that, the cost of education has increased over a period of time especially in private schools. This increase has also affected the cost of education in government aided schools. As a result most families are struggling to take children to schools. It was also noted that UPE and USE schools were charging highly in terms of; feeding, school uniforms, extra learning especially during weekends, study tours among others.

The Committee noted that children's education should help them fully develop their personalities, talents and abilities. It should teach them to understand their own

rights, and to respect other people's rights, cultures and their differences. It should help them to live peacefully and protect the environment.

Members also observed that Early Childhood Development (ECD) is key to a full and productive life, however only limited number of children between 3 to 5 years are enrolled in formal pre-primary education. Pre-primary schools were predominately owned and managed privately; most of them were located in urban areas, and others were managed by untrained volunteers. This leaves out children in rural areas that have no access to pre-primary education services.

Investing in early years of learning is not only in the best interest of children, it is also key to developing human capital. Uganda's future as a middle income country depends on providing the tools for upward mobility and building an educated and skilled workforce. ECD is the most efficient way to accomplish this goal.

7.5 Bukango Seed Secondary School

The Committee visited Bukango Secondary School, a community school in Bukomansibi district and noted that Government through Ministry of Education and Sports had constructed classrooms, Laboratories and Library. The school had one hundred and eighty eight (188) students (112 girls and 76 boys).

Members noted that the school faced the following challenges;

- i. Lack of a certificate of title for the land on which the school sits.
- ii. Lack of a sign post indicating its location and ownership.
- iii. Library was empty with no furniture or books for references.
- iv. Laboratories were empty with no equipment, chemicals or apparatus therefore the teaching of science subjects was not possible.
- v. Teachers were working on voluntary basis with no payment.
- vi. The school required fencing for safe custody of Government property
- vii. The Land was donated by the former Area Member of Parliament and the land agreement was in her names.

- viii. The school uses rain water and in dry season there was no alternative source of water.
- ix. No provisions like proper infrastructure and learning aides for persons living with disabilities like ramps and walk ways.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that;

- i. GOU should effectively implement the policy which provides that primary education is free and compulsory.
- ii. Ministry of Education should ensure that every child has access to quality education especially by strengthening UPE and USE infrastructure, teacher to student ratio and constant inspection by the relevant authorities.
- iii. GOU should reinstate student/pupils councils within primary and secondary schools to address children's issues.
- iv. GOU should provide early childhood development programmes and not leave it solely to the private sector.
- v. The Committee reiterates its earlier recommendation that the Students Loan scheme should be strengthened and district quota system introduced to enable districts get equal number of students benefiting from the Loan scheme.
- vi. Technical education should be prioritized to enable self-reliant citizens. Every county should have a technical school as per the Government policy.
- vii. MOES should ensure that secondary and higher education is accessible to every child.
- viii. MOES should ensure that fire drill exercises are conducted in every school.

8.0 CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

Children living with disabilities are the most disadvantaged groups in society, and are particularly at risk of experiencing multiple forms of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation. The most common preventable causes of disability for children aged 2 to 17 years were congenital (from Birth) or because of sickness such as malaria and measles.

Members observed that children with disabilities were among the most marginalized people in every society. Children with disabilities were often less able to access services such as education, health care, participate in social activities like games such as football, athletics and others to fulfill their potential.

The Committee noted that children with disabilities face persistent barriers to education stemming from discrimination, stigmatization and the routine failure to address exclusion in school like; creating separate wash rooms, ramps, and walk rails among others. As a result, they were likely to be out of school. Many PWDs miss out on opportunities to learn and develop skills for employment, independent living and full participation in their communities. Government should support inclusive education as the most effective way for all children to go to school, learn and develop the skills they need to thrive.

Members observed that the parents of children with disabilities as well as Government should take appropriate steps to examine children as early as possible to establish the extent and nature of their disabilities. The children with disabilities should consequently be offered appropriate treatment, afforded facilities for their rehabilitation and equal opportunities to education.

Members noted that GOU should ensure that children with disabilities and their families have access to all the services and support they need in their communities. There is need to advocate for disability-inclusive policies and legislation, along with adequate funds to put them into practice.

Members further noted that children with disabilities were at risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation compared to their peers. MOGLSD should work to make child protection systems inclusive and accessible, including in humanitarian crisis, so that children with disabilities were protected from harm and discrimination.

Committee delegation Visited PhelongLsen, Dominican Hammanskarakal schools for disabilities in Pretoria, South Africa and Compassionate Hands for the disabled Foundation (CHDF), Nairobi, Kenya

8.1 Phelong Lsen School (Pretoria, South Africa)

Members had a benchmarking visit to PhelongLsen is a special needs Education Centre; it's a public institution from Kindergarten to Grade Five (5) situated in Tshwane Metropolitan Municipality, Pretoria.

The school is for severe cases of disabilities like Down syndrome, Epilepsy and other form of disabilities. The school also conduct outreach programme/ awareness, extra curriculum activities like net ball and football.

The Committee observed that such schools guide and advice people with disabilities on how to plan and manage their careers, transitions as well as finding career information. It should be noted that Career development for person with disabilities requires specialised knowledge, skills, attitude and values. Class assistants are always in class to assist students during lessons. Learners with disabilities require high support from teachers, for instance; when a child could not draw, the teachers had to draw for the child and leave coloring to the child.

The society at large have low expectations for people with disabilities, this should not be the case with career development practitioners because of a better understanding of the benefits life-long learning. The Committee is of the opinion that there is need to encourage persons (learners) with disabilities to focus on their status as students and not on their disability.

8.2 Dominican School for the Deaf (Pretoria, South Africa)

Members had a benchmarking visit to Dominican School for Deaf Children is a public Catholic school that caters for Deaf learners from 3–18 years, across the country. It was established in 1962 by the Irish Dominican Sisters. It was noted a large percentage of learners have a Secondary barrier.

Dominican School for the Deaf, Hanmans Kraal, Preparatory, Primary and secondary school, had Grade R, Grade one to twelve. it is a boarding school for both boys and girls. The mission of the school is to offer the deaf an opportunity to acquire knowledge and life Skills, as well as to impart a solid Christian Formation.

The school also provides extra curriculum activities such as netball, soccer, table tennis, volleyball, chess, drama, choir/music, dancing (traditional, ballroom and Latin American), gymnastics, drum majorettes and others.

The delegation noted that there was no university that catered to the needs of deaf students. They joined any university or tertiary institution however they do require interpreters or guide. The team was informed of a success story of a former student who had become a doctor (veterinary) through the use of an interpreter.

The delegation was further informed that all persons with disability received monthly disability funds of 1900 Rands to enable them meet their basic needs.

The delegation was informed that, sexual abuse by abled persons was on the increase because they believed that the deaf persons could not report them due to communication barriers. This caused emotional abuse to the victims.

8.3: Compassionate Hands for the Disabled Foundation (Nairobi, Kenya)

Members had a benchmarking visit to Compassionate Hands for the disabled Foundation (CHDF), Nairobi, Kenya was founded by Ms. Anne Njeri for support to

children living with disabilities who were rescued by children officers, government officials, social workers, well-wishers, family members, Police and community.

She informed members that admission depends on availability of vacancy, in case of availability of vacancy, the board is notified concerning the new admission and if there is no vacancy, advise on alternatives in the community that can assist the child.

She further informed the members that requirements were; medical assessment forms dully filled, physiotherapy report, social workers report and educational assessment from Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE).

Members noted that organisation had placement plan, according to Organisation Placement Policy the child is placed in either one of the four categories;

i). cerebral palsy; such children requires physiotherapy, rehabilitation, palliative care, corrective surgery, health care plan.

ii). Physical Disabilities; children with physical disabilities were being given special education, vocational training, corrective surgery, individual education program and health care plan

iii). Autism; such children were given individual education program, health care plan and vocational trainings

iv). Mental handicaps; children with mental handicaps were given rehabilitation, individual education program, health care plan and vocational trainings depending on their mental issues.

Members observed that after rehabilitation and empowering them, they were integrated back to the family and society as they can sustain themselves, set up plan for empowerment through various income generating projects to enable them be self-reliance and therefore require minimal support.

In case none of the above was possible Compassionate Hands for the Disabled Foundation would make their lives dignified and meaningful.

Recommendation

The Committee recommends that;

- i. Government of Uganda should construct a school for deaf learners in Uganda, at Regional level**
- ii. Government of Uganda should introduce sign language as a subject in schools**
- iii. GOU and MOGLSD should prioritise funding and implementation of programmes for Children with special needs for instance Bushenyi Primary School.**
- iv. GOU should give monthly social assistance grant to households with children with special needs.**
- v. GOU should ensure full implementation of policies to enable children with disabilities reach their full potential.**
- vi. GOU should strengthen the capacity of national institutions to coordinate immediate response to emergency situations, and ensure that children with disabilities affected by emergencies receive appropriate care and support for instance Salama school for the Blind in Mukono where some children got burnt and 11 pupils reportedly died.**

9.0 CHILD PROTECTION

Child Protection refers to interventions aimed at preventing and responding to violence, exploitation and abuse against children, with the aim of ensuring children's wellbeing and happiness.

Article 34(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and Section 42 (A) of the Children Act, Cap 59 obligates any person having custody of a child to protect the

child from discrimination, violence, abuse and neglect. The Constitution under Article 34(7) specifically requires that the law accords special protection to orphans and other vulnerable children.

Furthermore section 42 (C) provides for the right of children to access protective services which include; services aimed at supporting the proceedings of children court and implementation of court orders, services relating to prevention of and early intervention of child care services, integration of children, the placement of children in alternative care and adoption of children among others.

The formal systems for child protection are based on statutory mandates and obligations which include a range of governmental structures, institutions and actors from local to national level across a section of sectors namely social welfare, education, health, as well as law enforcement structures.

The Informal system is based on and driven by traditional values of shared responsibility for the wellbeing of children. It is largely composed of voluntary actors such as family and communities.

The informal child protection structures are constituted by family unit, cultural system, community members and groups.

The Committee observed that laws and policies were in place, however Uganda still faces challenges in ensuring adequate protection for all children in light of the varied violations and abuse that they are exposed to.

The committee also noted that there were gaps in service delivery to prevent and respond to violence and abuse for instance, District Action Centre (Bukomansimbi) where rescued children were temporarily being kept. Many children were still not registered at birth, leaving them excluded from support, protection services and unaccounted for in policy decisions.

Limited funding for child protection activities exists at all levels including; Districts where Probation officers and Community Development Officers(CDO) were not

properly facilitated in terms of transports, allowances and other incentives, therefore, child protection activities which were largely dependent on local resources were not implemented.

9.1 Naguru Reception Centre

The Committee visited Naguru Reception Centre and noted that; the centre was established in 1959 by Save the Children UK funds and Government took over in 1972. It's a national reception centre managed by a probation and welfare officer under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development. It's the only Reception Centre managed by Government with the mandate to provide temporary care and protection of neglected or abandoned children.

The children were from two (2) to 17 years of age and the centre provides a temporary care and protection. At the time of the visit the centre had 96 children; 66 boys and 30 girls. Most of the children in the centre were from Central Uganda and street children who migrated from Karamoja sub region. There were 24 staff and most of them were women. Members were informed that 23 children were special needs children with Epilepsy, intellectual Impairment, dumb/deaf and living with sickle cells.

The Committee noted that the Children at the Reception Centre were either abandoned, street children taken by traffic officers, children whose parents were in Prison, parents with mental health and children rescued from child abuse.

It was further noted that the centre offers children access to basic needs that is; shelters, food, clothing, guidance, medical care and counseling at Butabika Mental Hospital and Mulago National Referral Hospitals, and involve them in praise and worship. The centre also provides technical advice to the parents of the children and encourage child participation on issues that affect them. Members visited the small scale farming done by the children (photos in the Annex)

The objective of the centre was to improve the situation of vulnerable children and reunite them with their parents and communities. It was noted that primary education services were being provided at St. Jude Primary School and few were in secondary school. Members noted one success story of a child that was at Kyambogo University on Government sponsorship and support from well-wishers.

The major challenges were;

i). Limited budget; Government funding only covers food items, few non-food items and no budget for emergencies. Members noted that KCCA and traffic police officers in September handed to the centre 43 babies from the streets of Kampala and there was no emergency fund to provide services to additional children.

ii). no provision for special meals for the children for nutrition or balance diet, members were informed that the children were given only beans and posho throughout the year, on lucky days there is rice and beans. It was noted that meat was only provided on big days that is Easter and Christmas day unless a donation from well-wishers is obtained like support from Rotary Club of Kololo and Children Justice Initiative, members further noted at the time of the visit that some children were severely malnourished.

iii) The environment was very unfriendly for the children especially for walking, running and playing. The compound was not leveled, no playing items, no ramps for person living with disabilities.

iv). Special needs children were not easy to be resettled with families and they were growing up. The reception centre was completely stacked with the grown up children. Where a child is unable to return to his or her parents, or to go to foster parents or has no parent, he or she is encouraged and assisted by the approved home, the probation and social welfare officer to become independent and self-reliant.

v). There was no gazetted place for playing and playing items were not provided, which hampered proper growth of the children, making them docile.

vi). The Houses were dilapidated and there was need for renovation and construction of new buildings.

vi). No washing machine available, the person in charge of washing clothes handles it manually.

Recommendations

The Committee recommends that;

- i. **MOGLSD should either relocate or expand the Reception Centre to accommodate the facilities required for the children.**
- ii. **GOU should increase funding for Naguru Reception Centre for renovation, construction, purchase of clothes and feeding.**
- iii. **MOGLSD should lobby for more funding for Naguru Reception centre; construct a play area and purchase play items to engage the children.**
- iv. **GOU and MOGLSD should improve on the nutrition of the children since most of them come when they are already malnourished.**
- v. **MOGLSD should provide washing machines for Naguru Reception Centre.**
- vi. **GOU and MOGLSD should recruit or employ a specialist to attend to special need children and care givers be given additional skills like sign language.**
- vii. **MOGLSD should provide a settlement place for grown up children that cannot stay in Naguru Reception centre**
- viii. **MOGLSD should empower the children to become self-reliance through skilling like vocational training, tailoring and fashion design, baking, welding among others.**
- ix. **GOU should create Reception Centers at Regional level and set an age limit for each Centre and consider grouping of children according to age brackets for instance 0-6 years, 7 to 12 years and 13 to 17 years.**
- x. **GOU should consider Guardianship, Fostering and Adoption through a court proceeding at the Reception Centre.**

- xi. GOU should create awareness among the public on the option of Guardianship, Fostering and Adoption from Reception Centre.**

9.2 Kabete Children Rescue Centre (Kenya)

Members had a benchmarking visit to Kabete Children Rescue Centre in Kenya. They were informed that the centre was a government facility and was made operational in 1982 for children whose parents have been imprisoned/incarcerated, children who have been abandoned or neglected by the parents and communities, children rescued from being trafficked and lost children who could not trace their families. Children were admitted to the rescue centre through a court system.

The court system involves Police taking details/ records of the child. The court proceedings were virtual. The centre provides the basic needs for the survival of the children such as shelter, food, basic education (Kindergarten) for 0 to 6 years old children and the maximum period of stay is six (6) months.

He informed members that within 6 months government should have completed tracing of the parents of the child, court process is done and re integration of the child to the community, adoption or guardianship through court process.

Members were informed that within 6 months there should have been a solution for the child. In case of a child whose parent has been imprisoned that child continues to stay for more than 6 months. When he or she reaches 6 years before the parent is released, the child is therefore moved to another government facility.

Members were informed that all sub counties had children's offices and in case of issues of guardianship, recommendation is made and each case is handled depending on the circumstances. For instance a lady who gave birth and abandoned the child in the hospital, where the officers had to find out why the child was left in the hospital and the need for counseling & other support to the mother of the child.

9.3 Machakos Girls Rescue Centre and Children's Remand Home (Kenya)

Members had a benchmarking visit to Machakos Girls Rescue Centre and Children's Remand Home which is a government institution with a Vision of "A Society where children enjoy their full rights responsibly" and the Mission is to safeguard the rights of all children in Kenya through effective implementation of relevant policies, coordination and partnership for delivery of quality services.

The core values are child friendliness, integrity, accountability and professionalism. The rescue centre had the core principals of best interest of the child, child participation, non-discrimination and maximum survival.

Members observed that the rescue Centre had children including teenagers and children with disabilities. The major issue was Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). However, the cases of FGM had reduced due to enactment of the law prohibiting the practice. Other cases included defilement, domestic violence, abuse within the family and orphans.

The centre provide psycho-social support especially where the child was rescued before the act was committed. Negotiation would have taken place in case of child marriages, counseling to reduce the trauma and enrolling the child to attain basic education.

Members were informed that a child committed to the centre was for a period not more than 3 years and at the time of the visit 68 rescued girls were at the centre, after rehabilitation, a child was given economic empowerment to be self-sustaining.

On the side of the Children's Remand Home it had few children because most of the children were always given bond. It's only in a situation where a child is a danger to themselves and to the community that is when they are kept at the remand home for safety while court cases were ongoing.

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Recommendations

The Committee recommends that;

- i. **MOGLSD should strengthen the implementation National Child Protection Policy and Strategic Planning Framework.**
- ii. **MOGLSD should ensure proper coordination of multi sectoral prevention and response programme on child protection at both national and sub national levels.**
- iii. **MOGLSD should establish child protection structures at Lower Local Government**
- iv. **GOU should increase funding for child protection services.**
- v. **MOGLSD should develop Community based prevention and response systems for child protection policy.**

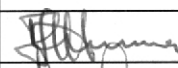
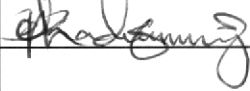
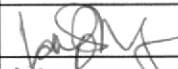
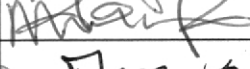
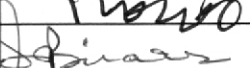
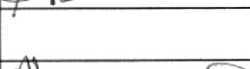

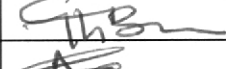

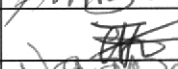

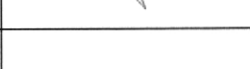
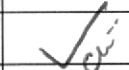
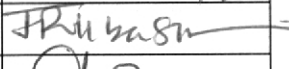
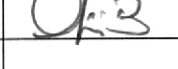
10.0: CONCLUSION

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and other relevant laws provide for the promotion of equal opportunities and affirmative action in favour of the marginalized and vulnerable groups. The Committee appreciates the efforts by the Government of Uganda to improve the livelihood of children through immunization, UPE, USE, skills training among others. Nevertheless, a lot remains to be done to improve provision of and access to social services, welfare of the children, opportunities for the vulnerable and marginalized groups such as children, women, youth, PWDs, the poor, older persons and minorities.

It is our prayer that the recommendations contained in this report be adopted by this August House.

I beg to report.

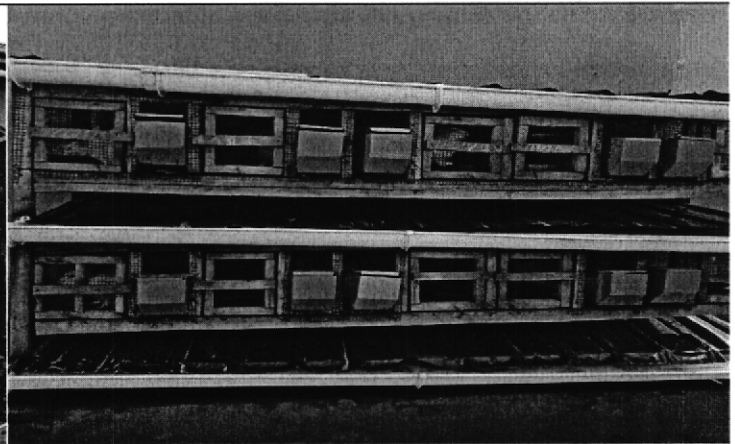
SIGNATURE FOR MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ON THE REPORT ON CHILDREN AFFAIRS IN THE COUNTRY

No	NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY	SIGNATURE
1	Hon. Alyek Judith	Chairperson	NRM	
2	Hon. Acen Dorcas	V/Chairperson	NRM	
3	Hon. Bigirwa Norah Nyendwoha	Member	NRM	
4	Hon. Lubega Seempa Bashir	Member	NRM	
5	Hon. Laker Sharon Balmoyi	Member	NRM	
6	Hon. Ssentayi Muhamad	Member	NRM	
7	Hon. Ogwal Moses Goli	Member	NRM	
8	Hon. Biraaro Ephraim Ganshanga	Member	NRM	
9	Hon. Bwiire Sanon Nadeeba	Member	NRM	
10	Hon. Kunihiro Agnes Abwoli	Member	NRM	
11	Hon. Bainomugisha Jane Kabajungu	Member	NRM	
12	Hon. Otukol Sam	Member	NRM	
13	Hon. Agasha Juliet Bashisha	Member	NRM	
14	Hon. Chelangat Alinga Solomon	Member	NRM	
15	Hon. Reuben Paul Chelimo	Member	NRM	
16	Hon. Ezama Siraji Brahan	Member	NRM	
17	Hon. Kabahenda Flavia R.	Member	NRM	
18	Hon. Lamwaka Catherine	Member	NRM	
19	Hon. Mutiwa Geofrey Eric	Member	NRM	
20	Hon. Kintu Alex Brandon	Member	NRM	
21	Hon. Katali Loy	Member	NRM	
22	Hon. Kayogera Yona	Member	NRM	
23	Hon. Nyakikongoro Rosemary	Member	NRM	
24	Hon. Joram Ruranga Tibasiimwa	Member	NRM	
25	Hon. Thembo Gideon Mujungu	Member	NRM	
26	Hon. Komol Emmanuel	Member	INDEP	

27	Hon. Musa Noah	Member	INDEP	
28	Hon. Were Godfrey Odera	Member	INDEP	
29	Hon. Mukhaye Miriam	Member	INDEP	
30	Hon. Nantaba Idah Erios	Member	INDEP	
31	Hon. Apolot Stella Isodo	Member	FDC	
32	Hon. Businge Joab	Member	FDC	
33	Hon. Isabirye David Aga	Member	FDC	
34	Hon. Okot Peter	Member	DP	
35	Hon. Mukasa Aloysius Talton Gold	Member	NUP	
36	Hon. Nakabuye Juliet Kakande	Member	NUP	
37	Hon. Kabuye Frank	Member	NUP	
38	Hon. Nandagire Christine Ndiwalana	Member	NUP	
39	Hon. Sekabira Denis	Member	NUP	
40	Hon. Kangwagye Stephen Rwakanuma	Member	INDEP	

ANNEX 1

A. Pictorials showing various activities at the remand home



Juveniles during the construction of Rabbit cages



Juveniles during the construction of Rabbit cages

AP

Bing

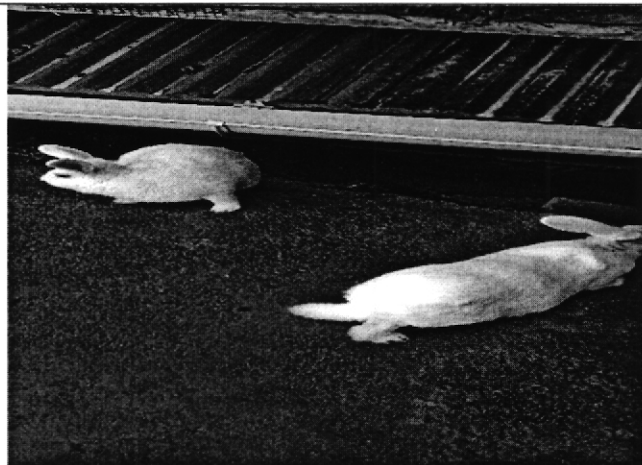
Thomas

Thomas

Natasha

Darius

Priscilla



Rabbits in the cages



Juveniles during the rabbit class training



Juveniles Planting Corn Flower and Cabbages









A garden Corn Flowers and Spring onions



Juveniles planting Cabbages and Sukumawiki



Garden of straw Berries

Prunsi

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]

[Signature]



Juveniles with their instructor in the garden



main office



Infront of the administration Block



Marking

AP

Ben

Shuman

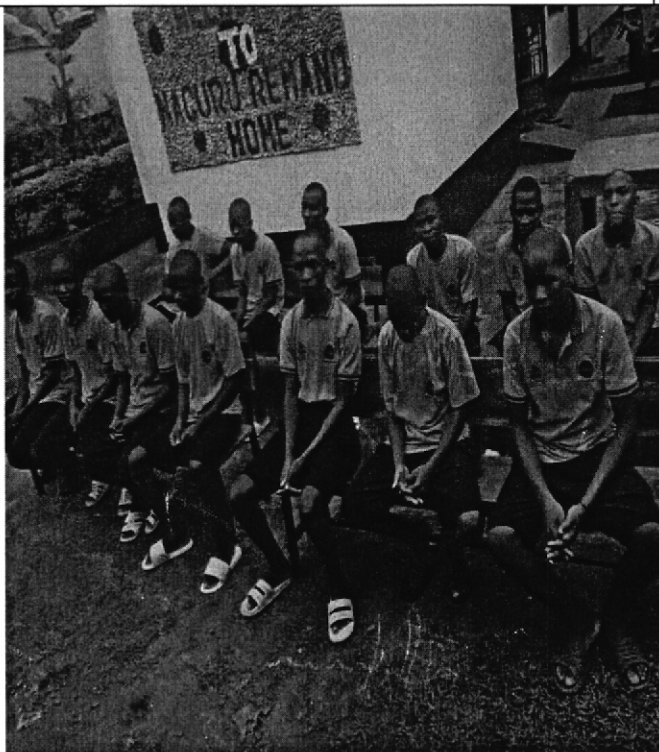
J. R. Shuman



Juveniles during Horticulture DIT Exams



Land has been cleared and planted

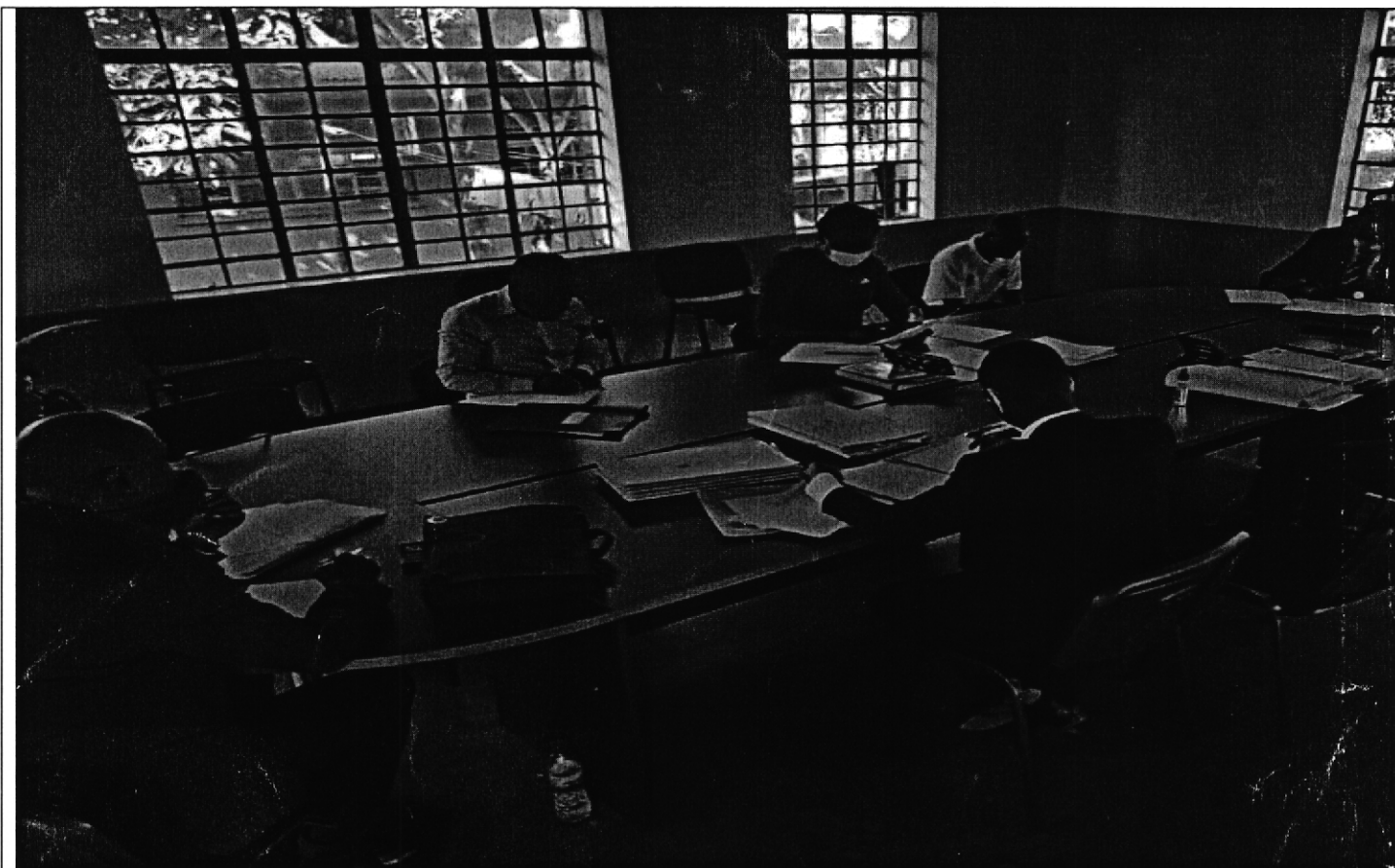


Juveniles being prepared for High court at Naguru Remand Home



Parents during the High court session

Muni *[Signature]* *[Signature]*
Nahar *[Signature]*



High court proceeding at Naguru Remand Home

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Huma AS J Rubashin's
Mubashir