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Report

CCVS-Uganda dissemination webinar 2020

November 5, 2020, 11am – 12.50pm

The Centre for Children in Vulnerable Situations (CCVS)-Uganda invited its colleagues, partners, beneficiaries and people who wanted to know more about the Organization's activities to partake in a dissemination webinar that took place on November 5, 2020 on Zoom. The webinar was attended by 43 participants.

The content of the webinar was in line with the previously planned dissemination workshops earlier this year (March/April 2020), which had to be demobilized because of the COVID-19 lockdown in Uganda.

This dissemination report provides an outlook of CCVS-Uganda's key achievements, lessons learned and future project planning during its first year (i.e., April 2019 to April 2020) of implementing its psychological rehabilitation project funded by the Trust Fund for Victims and CCVS-International.

We kindly refer you to the recorded webinar, the presentation slides and the CCVS-Uganda mental health needs assessment 2019 report for more information.

Opening and welcome remarks

In her opening remarks at exactly 11:05am, Leen De Nutte, Executive Director at CCVS-Uganda, welcomed all attendees, specifically, colleagues, partners and beneficiaries. The webinar was meant to communicate about the project implementation that was executed from April 2019 to April 2020. CCVS-Uganda was hoping to organize this dissemination activity sooner but because of COVID-19 the timing and format had to be revised.

Some communications were extended to the participants before starting the presentations. It was noted that an online event is not accessible for everyone as a result of factors surrounding network and access to communication devices. Although efforts were made to involve partners and beneficiaries, CCVS-Uganda shall disseminate the webinar report as widely as possible next to continuing conversations with partners and beneficiaries in the field.

Eunice Acen, Project Officer at CCVS-Uganda, and Pius Ogwal, M&E Officer at CCVS-Uganda, were introduced as co-presenters to the webinar. The webinar participants were also encouraged to share their questions, feedback and comments. Questions could be shared in the chat box and time was reserved to share any feedback or comments during the Q&A session at the end of the webinar.

Introduction of CCVS-Uganda

Leen De Nutte started off the presentations with an introduction of CCVS-Uganda.

Information was shared about CCVS-Uganda's establishment, project implementation areas, aim and vision.

CCVS-International, CCVS-Uganda's mother organisation, was introduced as an interuniversity research centre based onto the collaboration between three Belgian universities (i.e., Ghent University, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven and Vrije Universiteit Brussels). The aim and three main activities of CCVS-International were explained, including practice-oriented research in various countries in the South (i.e., Colombia, Bolivia, Uruguay, DRC, Uganda, South Africa, Palestine and India), mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) support services in Northern Uganda and Eastern-DRC, and dissemination of research and practice results.

Project background

Eunice Acen, Project Officer at CCVS-Uganda, linked the armed conflict in Northern Uganda to various societal problems and challenges and their interaction with mental health problems. Various common mental health problems were discussed.

The main project that CCVS-Uganda is implementing runs from 2019 up to 2024 and is funded by the Trust Fund for Victims. The overall project goals, specific project objectives and target groups of the psychological rehabilitation project were discussed.

Therapeutic approach, activities and process

Pius Ogwal, M&E Officer at CCVS-Uganda, connected the project background to therapeutic approach, activities and process (i.e., clinical part of the project). He started his presentation by emphasizing that CCVS-Uganda implements its activities using a systemic and collaborative approach. While linking his explanations to all the activities implemented at CCVS-Uganda, he further added that collaboration

allows beneficiaries to become experts in their own ways of living. In its collaborative approach, CCVS-Uganda works on the relationship between the client and the therapist to try and promote a positive change by working together, utilising both internal and external strengths and resources.

The various therapeutic approaches, ranging from sensitization and psychoeducation, individual, couple, family and group therapy, community therapy, community dialogues and play therapy were clarified. In a discussion on CCVS-Uganda's therapeutic process and outline, emphasis was put on client assessment and the therapeutic intervention.

Project implementation (April 2019 – April 2020)

In his presentation, Pius Ogwal elaborated on several key project achievements, including:

- Providing psychological rehabilitation services;
- Training community stakeholders and community therapy facilitators;
- Facilitating community therapy; and
- Increasing awareness and knowledge of the impact of war and armed conflict onto psychological health.

The key achievements were linked to several lessons learned and challenges experienced.

Mental health needs assessment 2019

In his continued presentation, Pius Ogwal connected CCVS-Uganda's need to expand its areas of operations with findings of a mental health needs assessment that was executed in December 2019 in Kitgum and Pader District.

The goal, specific objectives and methodology of the research were clearly outlined before going in to some of the key findings and conclusions. According to the findings from the assessment, there is a high need for psychological rehabilitation services in Kitgum and Pader Districts (see survey report attached).

Future project planning

In a roundup of the presentation by Pius Ogwal, discussions on some ways forward for future project planning were based on the achievements, lessons learned and challenges experienced while implementing the project from April 2019 to April 2020.

Q&A – Drawing lessons from partners

Various questions and comments were posted in the chat box, and were presented to the panel in the Q&A:

1. *Eddy Walakira: Do you have data to back-up these indicators (referring to the mental health problems discussed)?*

Leen De Nutte: We have two main sources that back up this information. First of all, we collect data through our project M&E framework, for example through client assessments, data that we collect during other activities such as community therapy and dialogues, and sensitization and psycho-education. Secondly, we get information from research conducted within the region, both from within CCVS-Uganda, such as the mental health needs assessment that was discussed, CCVS-International as well as other scholars and organizations.

2. *Rita Larok: At AVSI we are also seeing the impact of COVID-19 onto mental health problems.*

Leen De Nutte: CCVS-Uganda has set up a survey on COVID-19 and the COVID-19 lockdown on our beneficiaries and partners in September 2020 and we are currently drafting the report. We shall share this report as soon as possible.

3. *Rita Larok: Can you share more on the outcomes of the therapy and the follow-up assessments?*

Pius Ogwal: Positive behaviour traits were registered among participants in community therapy, such as forgiveness, resilience to live challenges, increased awareness and management of detrimental thoughts, where to go for support, etc. We work together and train various stakeholders on this as well. If you want to learn more about this, you can always reach out for more details.

4. *Winnie Kisakye: What is the best way to conduct group therapy?*

Leen De Nutte: CCVS-Uganda implements the trauma group approach from Judith Herman. This approach was contextualized by Center for Victims of Torture (CVT). We have piloted a longer version of this approach, including some sessions on support groups, but we are also exploring a condensed version of this approach given that we have lost a lot of time implementing our project because of the COVID-19 lockdown. We shall strictly monitor the outcome and impact of this adjustment.

5. *Simon Peter Okama: From your project implementation, have there been any issues of mental health problems related to poverty? If so, what interventions are you having in place to address this?*

Pius Ogwal: As you've seen in one of the slides, poverty is indeed also seen as a cause of mental health problems. CCVS-Uganda takes the effect of the war as the main entry point but we do recognize that there is a strong link between poverty and mental health problems. That's why we try and collaborate with other partners and make referrals to ensure that our clients are supported better. When UBOS performs household surveys, you see that the North is still very much behind and the major cause is the effect of the war but it is true that poverty is also there. CCVS-Uganda have specialized in providing MHPSS services and shall also continue to do so, while working hand in hand with community stakeholders, other organizations and partners.

Closure

Participants were encouraged to interact with CCVS-Uganda in case they still had any questions or feedback. We are very open to have discussions on our work and to see how we can set up partnerships.

Leen De Nutte thanked everyone for participating in this webinar and engaging with the information out of the presentation. A special word of thanks was directed towards the CCVS-Uganda team for implementing the activities within the field, CCVS-International for their support and the Trust Fund for Victims for funding the project.

The webinar was concluded at 12.50pm.