



WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE IN AGYW's WORTH GROUPS FROM MAGRETH ZABRON'S PERSPECTIVE.

21st May, 2021

“To me it is like having a solution to all the problems I had been facing, it is like being safe from any unnecessary dangers and risks of HIV and Poverty.” This is how Magreth Zabron explains how being the member in one of the Rafiki – SDO’s AGYW’s Worth Groups feels like.

On Friday 21st May, Winifrida Mushi a Social Economic Empowerment Officer visited Magreth Zabron Manumbu, a 20 years old young woman and a single mother to a one-year-old daughter lives at Kizumbi, a member of HATUSHINDWI AGYW group from Ibinzamata, and a businesswoman owns a hair dressing saloon with a lot plans for her future despite been through a lot in her life.

Magreth has been a member to HATUSHINDWI AGYW Worth group since February 2021, she explains her experience before joining the group as the worst, she feels like she missed a lot before being a member of the AGYW group including education, health services and life opportunities. She said this while addressing her past.

“I am a mother to a daughter a single mother, it happened unplanned probably because I had no understanding on the risk behaviors which could lead me to this. Maybe I could have been able to avoid this only if I knew.” Spoke Magreth.

She said being a member of the group under

Rafiki – SDO helped her realize that she still has a purpose to fight for, her daughter. She said being in a group helped her realize that she needs to be safe and healthy as well as strong in economy so she can raise her daughter safely with out getting into risks by depending on someone especially men.

“As I said I am a mother now, I need to rise my daughter but how? For someone who is not a member of the AGYWs groups the first thing will think of is finding someone who is capable enough for her to depend on, obviously this thinking will lead him to a man, and this is risk. I learned this from one of the teachings were are offered in our group’s session, depending on men can expose me to HIV infections.” Said Magreth.

She also added “I started saving and borrowing from the group after I joined, I found someone I knew auctioning her saloon tools, I asked her to sell them to me but I would pay in installments she accepted. I was confident that I can manage to pay the whole price after several Installments by borrowing from the group and from some money I borrowed from my father.”

Magreth managed to pay back her dept and completely owned the saloon tools launched her own saloon where she currently earns a lot enough for herself and her daughter. She said now she is thinking about helping others, she welcomes whoever wants to learn about hairdressing and makeup to visit her.

She thanks Rafiki – SDO for giving AGYWs a chance to learn about HIV and how to live their life without falling into risk by depending to men, she said it is the best way to rescue them and the whole society from HIV infections.



In a photo: Magreth Zabron in her own Hair dressing and Makeup saloon when we visited her on Friday 20 May, 2021 at Kizumbi.



Rafiki - SDO Staffs Irene Mafunda and Charles Ally with Usanda Local Government Leaders at Usanda during an Open Meeting with the Community.

RAFIKI – SDO VS USANDA COMMUNITY: AN OPEN MEETING TO CREATE AWARENESS ON AGYW’s SAFE SPACES

20th May, 2021

Rafiki – SDO devotes their time and resources on helping Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYWs) and the society as whole, to be safe from the risk of new HIV infections by providing them with Behavioral change education, Health services mainly HIV testing services and family plan services, and fighting Gender-Based Violence as it may incite HIV infections in one way or another.

This Thursday May 20, a team of Rafiki – SDO staff while being supported by the Local authorities held an open meeting with the Usanda community at Singita village in Usanda Ward to clarify their presence in the ward, what they offer, its benefits and their call for the support from the community in helping AGYWs out of the risks of new HIV infections.

Charles Ally, a Rafiki – SDO staff in charge of the presentation began his presentation by explaining what is Rafiki – SDO saying, Rafiki – SDO is a Non-Government Organization (NGO) based on Shinyanga, Musoma and Rukwa with a 17 years’ experience working with the society dealing with Education, Health and Gender-Based Violence.

Proceeding with the presentation he said, Adolescent Girls and Young Women at the age of 15-24 years old are marked as the most vulnerable group to HIV infections in the society in every researched statistic, so Rafiki – SDO has intended to slowdown the drastic spread of new infection among AGYWs and that they are at Usanda to discuss ways to keep AGYWs safe from HIV infections.

He proceeded saying, one of the methods Rafiki – SDO has adopted to keep girls safe is using AGYW's Worth Groups where girls join to access behavioral change education provided by the Empowerment Workers (EWs) and Peer Educators (PEs) trained and Supervised by Rafiki – SDO, apart from behavioral change education they are also being provided with saving and borrowing service and education on how to do it better.

Raising a concern to the Usanda community Mr. Ally said, "We parents are sometimes the reason our daughters fell into the risk of HIV infections by setting obstacles towards their access to Health education by banning them from attending or joining AGYW's Worth groups or arguing that Health education is only for adults you can not tell young people about those things."



From Rafiki - SDO team, Mr. Charles Ally speaking to the majority of Usanda Ward during an Open Meeting.

He also said, "Rafiki – SDO has been providing education to AGYW's in their groups using the special trained EWs and PEs, but we went far by advancing the teaching process by making it mor practical where AGYW's can

learn by actual examples through video programs which are installed in computers and placed in different spots known as Safe Spaces, and Usanda is one of the wards happened to have one of the safe spaces among the three."

"The safe space is located at the Division ofices Usanda and it is for free, the safe space does not provide Computer training course but the AGYW's are trained to understand some computer basics to help them be able to open the programs for learning." Said Mr. Ally.

Halima Tendega the Community Development Officer Usanda called for the cooperation from the community asking them to encourage their daughters to attend the safe space training and stop thinking that their daughters are heading out to meet with boys as most of the parents pictures it. She also said, when a girl is educated the family benefits from her since she is opened to different opportunities both health opportunities and life opportunities such as entrepreneurship and loans.



Usanda Ward Community Development Officer Ms. Halima Tendega speaking to the Majority.

On his part Mr. Emmanuel Maduhu the Ward Executive Officer said “We really need to thank Rafiki – SDO for what they have brought to us, it is very important not only for our daughters but also to the society. HIV is still out there and it is killing many people by this education Rafiki – SDO is providing we might be able to save our society.”

Lastly the Singita village’s Chairperson Mr. Francisco Katobesi emphasized on mobilizing and encouraging girls to attend safe space computer sessions by promising to use his authority as village chairperson to influence as many people as he can.

Mr. Katobesi said “In our meetings I will ask the VDC members to mobilize in their localities so can we reach as many girls and parents as possible within a short time, and we will also conduct different open meeting to sensitize the issue.”

RAFIKI – SDO MUSOMA: OUT OF SCHOOL SUPPORT GROUPS COMPREHENSIVE LIFE SKILL TRAINING.



13 newly recruited OSSG members in a class receiving comprehensive life skill training which include SHR and GBV facilitated with RAFIKI-SDO.

INTRODUCTION

In recognition of the Government effort to increase access to education both to formal and informal Education particularly to girls who have dropped out from Secondary schools. Rafiki – SDO has been providing alternative education pathways for girls who have dropped out of secondary school whether due to pregnancy, economic hardships or any other reasons and have no any option to return to public secondary schools.

For this case the identified adolescents aged from 13 to 24 years are introduced to the Out of School Support Groups (OSSGs) model which offers participants into step-by-step opportunities which may include the Life skills training, the opportunity to take part into the income generating activities as an individual or as a group. To complement this effort Rafiki-SDO has been working in collaboration with the Government of Tanzania particularly the Community

Development Department in ensuring that the girls are supported in all peer environment which helps to reintegrate girls back into their communities.

BEST PRACTICES ON THE TRAINING

The training was officially opened by Rafiki-SDO Executive Director Mr. Gerald S. Ng'ong'a by first congratulate the 13 girls out of the 15 who did attend the training regardless of different challenges facing them.

The Executive Director continued by insisting the OSSG members that Rafiki-SDO in collaboration with the government, are working to support the girls so as they can fulfill their potentials and dreams through informal or alternative education pathways, girls need to show and prove their commitment, they need to realize that the organization uses a lot of resources to make sure that the girls are supported.

The Executive Director further said and insisted the OSSG girls that in every stage of life if you need to succeed, you need to put much efforts, you need to never give up and also you need to determine your ambitions.

OFFICIAL OPENING

During the training there are things which happened and are seemed to be good for the betterment of the project, some are appreciations and support from the government for girls, and these are as follows;

- OSSG members attended the training were offered to receive free medical check-ups and treatment from one of the Municipal dispensaries which is Police dispensary. This offer was officially announced by the medical in charge of the hospital/ dispensary as some of the girls were seemed to have health problems. The girls were informed that they may start attending at hospital from Tuesday 27th April, 2021.

- During the training the team managed to enroll 3 OSSG members all are teen moms, this was a result of the good coordination with other individual community members, as during the training one of the Anglican Church office attendants who was responsible for venue arrangements and cleaning did inform us that there are 3 girls whom they know have dropped out from secondary schools. After we have told her to call them to our office for interviewing them, we realized that they are fitting to be enrolled, the team did enroll them and verified the information's they shared to the team. One of the girls has joined Nyasho safe space and two of the girls have joined Bweri safe space.
- OSSG members have shared some of their experiences and some have promised to change their behavior particularly on the way they are communicating with their parents and the fathers of their children as it is clearly seen as a problem. During the closure of the training all OSSG members were given time to speak something pertaining the training. Generally they have given much thanks to Rafiki-SDO and the government for the good efforts of seeing that there is the high important of helping and supporting them since after they have dropped from secondary schools they were taken or considered as wrong doers by their fellow students, their parents/ guardians and other community members, but Rafiki – SDO is like their savior as it has made them feel comfortable, they have changed their attitudes towards their future and now their communities are judging them with positive minds.

CLOSING REMARKS AND WAY FORWARD

The training was officially closed by the Musoma Municipal Community Development Officer Mr. Respicious Katundu, giving much thanks to Rafiki-SDO for a good work they have done at Musoma MC within the 16 targeted wards.



The MCDO further continued by saying that the girls need to utilize what they have been trained as it is a step ahead before engaging them in skill-based training, they need to be innovative and creative so as even if when the project phase out, they will have something

benefited them and can even be seen by other people even by not narrating to them. When they fulfill their full potentials, it is where now they can say that their dreams are fulfilled.

Furthermore, the girls were insisted that they need to work as groups as the government has the opportunity of supporting them in groups, but only when they are working together in any economic activities. Therefore, as a team we also encourage them to attend to their safe spaces particularly the newly enrolled OSSG members so as they can meet 60% to be enrolled on skill-based training.

Contacts:

Location:

Mbuyuni street, Near Roman Catholic Church Ngokolo/Radio Faraja.

Shinyanga Municipal

P.O.BOX 2078 Shinyanga, Tanzania.

Website: www.rafikisdo.or.tz

Email: info@rafikisdo.or.tz

Mobile: +255 754 448 838

Tel: 028 2710341

   @rafikisdotz