

## Akore-Mentorship Camp II-May 2016 Report.

### Theme: Education; My Hope, My Future

Securing Futures Foundation (SFF) is a group of young professionals committed to sharing their knowledge and resources with disadvantaged children who are at risk of dropping out of school. One of the strategies used with success has been mentorship camps for pupils in primary school to interest them to continue with the pursuit of their education regardless of their circumstances. SFF preaches PERSISTENCE as the main vehicle against all obstacles life throws at young people in their journey of life.

201(79B, 122G) drawn from P.4 to P.7 participated in Akore II mentorship camp conducted in the final week of Term I; from May 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>. A number of issues affecting children's education came out during discussions with children, their parents and teachers as elaborated below:

- **Abuse from fellow pupils.** It was agreed that this was clearly an issue of indiscipline and both parents and teachers needed to instill discipline to the children. Teachers should do their best at school as the parents do the same at home.
- **Shouting in class** at a time when others want to concentrate in their studies.
- **Failure by parents to pay fees.** This is one of the challenges facing the pupils and forcing many out of their education. In the parents meeting, it was agreed that all parents should take their responsibilities seriously and ensure that all fees are paid to enable their children study.
- **Hunger at school/absence of a school feeding programme.** This generated a hot debate between parents and teachers/ school administrators. Some parents said they were not to blame because they had contributed food in-kind towards the school feeding programme but some parents did not and yet their children too ate from school! This caused failure of the programme as those who contributed withdrew as well. It was agreed that both parents and teachers have a separate meeting to discuss feeding for at least primary seven (7) children for a start. The chairperson SMC was to call for this important meeting.
- **Workload at home.** Children said one of the obstacles that discourages them from coming to school is workload. The parents agreed to lessen the workload for pupils at home so that they are able to come to school earlier, reduce on absenteeism and also be able to concentrate in class.
- **Girls treated less important at home.** The girls were aggrieved by the practice of being treated as second to boys. This was said to be manifesting in the payment of school fees of boys first and even provision of uniform and scholastic materials before girls are attended to. Some parents seemed to be on the defensive as they unsuccessfully tried to explain it away and even reiterate that girls are for dowry and not school! However; after the value of education and the importance of girl child education session, their opinions and attitudes were positively

influenced. They unanimously (by show of hands) promised to do their best to support their girl children just as much as they do the boys.

- **Marrying off young girls.** This came out of the general group discussion with the girls. The parents were reminded that this was illegal in Uganda and they were cautioned to guard against this as they wouldn't reap anything good out of this outdated practice.
- **Sending children to the market during school days.** It was resolved that parents take their full responsibility of providing for their children and carry on with their duties. Children must be at school during week days unless a child is sick was resolved by the parents and teachers present.
- **Escorting mothers for antenatal care and babysitting.** The workshop meeting agreed that husbands must be the ones to accompany their wives for antenatal care and not the girl child who is supposed to be at school. Babysitting should only be during holidays and weekends and not school days to allow the girls study and get an education.
- **Parents drinking a lot and failing to pay fees.** Parents were advised to prioritize their children's education. They should learn to ensure that their drinking doesn't cause the failure of their children to get an education.
- **Absenteeism by some teachers as one of the challenges that affected children's learning.** This happens during market days where teachers disappear to the market and leave children in school. The other reason for this vice was drinking alcohol. This was agreed needed the intervention of the SMC and the District inspectorate of schools to step up monitoring attendance.
- **Poor monitoring of class work by teachers as children are left alone at school.** Teachers attributed this to **inadequate housing**. This turned out controversial as parents as well were able to prove that they had done their best to provide but the teachers were unreasonable in their expectation of housing. Teachers were tasked to occupy the houses that had already been built. Parents had fulfilled their duties by building one-house-per-teacher but the teachers were not using these houses as they opted for their villages where their families lived hence failure to attend to children in school.
- Parents also committed to doing more to add on the housing to try and cater for the teacher's family members. They committed to renovate all houses that were said to be dilapidated. Each house had already been allocated to a specific village. Responsible persons were selected and follow-up timeframes were agreed.

### Life skill session and issues emerging

#### **Assertiveness**

Having identified that the children of Akore PS are not assertive enough, assertiveness was one of the life skills sessions discussed. Assertiveness being the ability to communicate clearly and firmly

without having to be aggressive. It means saying NO and meaning it without easily changing one's mind and even using the appropriate body language.

**Action areas agreed upon and commitments made:**

- Always communicate clearly
- Mean what you say and do what you say
- Mind about your body language.
- Always stay committed to the exercise of assertiveness and
- Abstain from sexual activity and focus on matters education

**Consequences of early sex**

Early sex is the union between two opposite sex who are under the age of 18.

This is dangerous because it leads to early pregnancies, causes transmission of STI/diseases, leads to dropping out of school, brings shame to the family, perpetuates poverty and even brings about early death due to complications during pregnancy and or birth.

**Commitments:**

- Avoid bad groups.
- Avoid early sex and practice abstinence
- Change behavior and attitude to avoid risky behavior/relationships with the opposite sex.

**Menstrual Hygiene & Management session**

- This session was aimed increasing the level of understanding of menstruation,
- How to keep hygiene during menstruation as well as...
- How to manage challenges associated with menstruation.

**Making of reusable sanitary wear.**

- 122 girls were taken through a practical session of making reusable pads; made from quite easily available/affordable materials which is as well easily washable and dried.
- The aim was to ensure that the girls attend school even when they are under their periods.
- The girls were also educated on how to ensure proper hygiene during menstruation.
- They were encouraged and guided on the importance of opening up to female teachers about their periods.
- The senior woman teacher was also encouraged to have session with girls on menstruation and how to make reusable pads.

Challenges faced

- Large number of pupils, hence class management was difficult.
- Low concentration of the teachers during discussions

**Recommendations for the next menstrual hygiene and management session**

- Have the girls in smaller manageable groups.

-Have focal teachers as representatives of the organization.

### **Tree planting exercise**

The boys actively participated in tree planting. Out of 150 tree seedlings of eucalyptus and grevalia donated by a friend of SFF, more than 130 were planted as a few got damaged on transit. This activity was aimed at inculcating a culture of care of the environment. This was expected to gradually be instilled in the children as they learnt to focus on keeping the life of a tree safe and sustaining it as they grow with it. This would give them a sense of satisfaction on the inside, boosting their sense of self confidence as well as a deeper sense responsibility to their environment at school and home as well.

- Teachers and school administrators were encouraged to allocate the trees to particular classes and groups of children so that they take closer attention to the same.
- The deputy head teacher was also encouraged to ensure that ant hills surrounding the school are destroyed so as to avoid impending destruction of trees by termites.

### **Boy talk**

- Boys above the age of 13 participated in boy-talk discussions with male facilitators. The boys were encouraged to focus on self-discipline and control in order to make it in life.
- The boys asked many questions on sex and relationships with girls and they received guidance from their elder brother who had experienced similar challenges while growing up.

### **The main action areas/commitments made were:**

- Respecting themselves and exercising self-control/self-discipline. A bible reference from 2 Timothy 1: 7 that says that; *For God has not given us a spirit of fear and timidity, but of power, love and self-discipline* was used to stress and emphasize the fact that God actually created the capacity to control and discipline oneself in all of us.
- Having individual goals and personal plans to achieve and not adjust it based on pressure from girls or fellow boys. Being assertive!
- The teenage boys were also encouraged to choose abstinence as it was the only option that guaranteed no trouble while at the same time preserving the true enjoyment of sex that only happens in marriage.

**People who made Akore II mentorship camp possible:**

Ivan Ecaat

Michele Fatuma

Henry Mukiibi

FaustineEpel

Edith Abuko

Emmanuel Mbuga

Dennis Labeja

Patrick Okoth

DaphineMellaAlupo

FlaviaAcom

Joshua Opio

Mariam Nanfuka

Arthur Ssali

Pius Kikomeko

Betty Lamunu

ZipporahIteu

Rita Arionget

Evelyn Angiji

Ronald Kitanda

Christine Ewanu

Brenda Akumu

Judith

Sam Ntale



PRIMARY FOUR		PRIMARY FIVE		PRIMARY SIX		PRIMARY SEVEN		TOTAL
BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	BOYS	GIRLS	
3	6	38	67	20	27	18	22	201
1%	3%	19%	33%	10%	13%	9%	11%	100%

Resources



## Akore Mentorship Camp Follow up program: 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May 2016

### Day 1; Target group Parents and Teachers

Time	Activity	Responsible person
10:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preliminaries- introductions, purpose of the meeting etc</li> <li>• Working tea break</li> </ul>	Dna
10:30- 12:00 pm	The value of education – adapt the content to be presented to children	Tim
12:00-1:30 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from pupils as picked up from the last camp (a summary of issues that came up from the children and that have a focus on parents and teachers)</li> <li>• Parents and teachers reactions /discussions</li> </ul>	Josh
1:30pm-2:30 pm	Lunch	
2:30- 3:30	The role of parents and teachers in enhancing education of children, especially girls	Tim
3:30-4:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitments and way forward</li> <li>• Closure</li> </ul>	Tim

### Days 2&3: Target group Pupils

## Day 2

Time	Activity	Lead person
8:30 to 10:00 am	<b>Preliminaries</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introductions</li> <li>• Recap of previous camp- as led by the children</li> <li>• Updates from some children on commitments made in previous camp</li> <li>• Objectives of the camp</li> </ul>	Josh
10:15- 11:30 am	<b>Value of education</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plenary sessions</li> <li>• Documentaries of real life stories of people children can identify with</li> </ul> <i>Working tea break</i>	Tim
11:30- 12:00	Break- games outside	
12:00- 1:00pm	<b>Career guidance</b>  Presentation by a representative of Soroti vocational training institute	Paul
1:00- 2:00 pm	Lunch	
2:00- 3:00 pm	Continuation of career guidance	Paul
3:00- 4:00pm	Games Free discussions Closure	Josh

## Day 3:

Time	Activity	Lead person
8:30 to 9:00 am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recap of previous day</li> </ul>	Dna
9:10- 10:30	<b>Life skills- Self discovery and Assertiveness</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plenary sessions</li> <li>• Group work</li> </ul>	Paul
10:30- 11:00	Break tea and games outside	
11:00- 1:00pm	<b>Early sex and its consequences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plenary discussions</li> <li>• Video show</li> <li>• Group work</li> </ul>	Josh Dna Jennipher
1:00- 2:00 pm	Lunch	
2:00- 3:00 pm	<b>Breakout sessions boys and girls separately</b> Girls: Continuation of managing peer pressure Menstrual hygiene	Jennipher, Dna, Katie, Noena

	Boys: Continuation of managing peer pressure Leadership skills development	Tim, Josh, Paul, Abrah
3:00- 4:00pm	<b>Action planning</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Filling out of commitment cards</li> <li>• Evaluation (to be done in groups, students interviewed and responses recorded by team members)</li> <li>• Closure</li> </ul>	Tim Josh

## Other roles

1. Registration of participants (forms filled for day 1-3)- **Abraham and Neona**
2. Evaluation forms filled- **Josh**
3. Food- **Dna**
4. Pictures taken- not just of participants only but also a group picture of the facilitators, up close shots of children in twos, threes, fours etc – **Abraham**
5. Getting experiences of participants- parents, teachers and pupils: a quote on how useful the camp has been and respective pictures- **Abraham and Paul**