

## KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE

### QUARTER ONE (APR- JUN)

#### WORKING GROUPS

The beauty in networking is that we come together as individual entities to unite for one cause of improving the welfare of children countrywide, as well as supporting each other as people/staff working with children to give children better service. CRANE has 5 working groups in different areas of operation; Special Education needs, Community empowerment, street connected Education and the Crisis pregnancy. **Crisis pregnancy** is a group dedicated to girls who, from no choice of their own, have become mothers too soon. Organizations have formed a working group to harness ideas and intentionally have a rolling agenda for teenage mothers where we can all take part. Teenage Pregnancy is a challenge here in Uganda and the situation has become more concerning due to covid19 pandemic:

Sadly, there is also a connection between teenage mothers and babies that have been abandoned and so the crisis pregnancy working action group includes institutions that support babies who have entered the world under delicate situations.

As part of the solution, CRANE has initiated **22** Creative Learning Centres in Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono, Buikwe, and Nakaseke. The Creative Learning Centres are run by CRANE network members and provide catch up education for girls who have dropped out of school. During the life time of the project, we have been able to support **442** teenage mothers. The young mothers have had catch up education of 6 months in a Creative Learning Centre and have moved on to other forms of learning, including mainstream school, Early Childhood Development training, Secretarial Studies, Tailoring and Hairdressing. As part of CRANE's wider vision together we desire to see all children, inclusive of young mothers below 18, safe, well and thriving in God's plan as they fulfil their God given potential.

For more on teenage pregnancy visit :

<https://www.postdator.com/2020/10/23/abandoned-children-on-the-rise-as-teenage->

Crisis pregnancy working group after a meeting



Crisis pregnancy working group press dialogue



# NETWORKING & PARTNERSHIPS

## OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS LAUNCHES CHILD-FRIENDLY ROOMS IN KABALE, MBARARA AND MASAKA

The Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) launched child-friendly rooms at its regional offices in Kabale, Mbarara and Masaka. The launch of the child-friendly room in Kabale took place on 19th May 2021, presided over by Hon. Justice Moses Kazibwe, the Resident Judge of Kabale, who was the Chief Guest. The launch of the Mbarara and Masaka child-friendly rooms took place on 20th May 2021, presided over by Ms. Rachael Odoi, the Senior Technical Advisor, Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS).

Speaking at the event, the Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions, Mr. Vincent Wagona noted that, previously prosecutors faced numerous challenges when preparing children for court because some of the children would get timid, shut down or simply keep quiet when asked to narrate their ordeals in open spaces with adults. It became very difficult to get any evidence from child witnesses and some of the cases would be lost in court as a result. He further observed that a couple of ODPP trainings with Children at Risk Action Network (CRANE), revealed that children needed child-friendly environments to be able to open up and tell their stories during judicial proceedings, resulting in the birth of child-friendly rooms.

With the creation of these rooms, it has come to light that the children who are prepared for court in this kind of environment tend to give better evidence in court thus reducing the number of cases lost due to the failure of children to testify. "More cases can now be successfully prosecuted because children can now easily tell their ordeals." said Ms. Faith Kembabazi, the Director, CRANE.



Ms. Rachael Odoi the Senior Technical Advisor Justice Law and Order Sector speaking at the Launch in Kabale



ODPP in partnership with JLOS commissioning one of the child-friendly spaces





# SAFEGUARDING

## SHEILA'S STORY (NOT REAL NAME)

Sheila was brought from Busia to Kampala to work in a shop, at least that's what she was told. She was contacted and connected by a friend close to her family. On reaching Kampala, she was met by a man who spoke her language and identified himself as one who had sent for her and she was shown proof.

She agreed and went with this man to his home. On arrival, she was surprised that there was no one home, he told her that his wife was at school. She was at ease at first, hoping the woman of the house was going to return soon. It became dark and there was no sign of the woman coming home. By then, it was very late in the night and she didn't know anyone in Kampala. Her contact had stayed back home in the village. Without a person to reach out to, that night she slept with the man and as misfortune would have it, she was sexually abused in the night and the night after that. She resolved to call her contact back in the village to try and get her out of the situation.

The dilemma for Sheila, was her parents finding out what had happened to her. She didn't want to implicate the family friend who had connected her to the supposed job, so she decided that she wouldn't tell her parents. Her contact got in touch with the CRANE safeguarding manager who started following up the case.

After a process of investigations, the suspect was apprehended by police and awaits court ruling.

Sheila was successfully resettled back with her family after a sit down with them to counsel them and help them understand that it wasn't Sheila's fault that these events happened to her.



Hope Academy safe club engaging in a session of dance as a way of upholding their rights

## HOPE ACADEMY SCHOOL VISITS

Hope Academy continues to inspire and empower children through creative activities like music composition & production and poetry in line with safeguarding. This is done through safe clubs in schools. Each safe club has about 30 children in 10 schools. Through the school visits, the Hope Academy teachers hope to inspire other children to join the safe clubs, spread the messages to their communities that fellow peers have created through music. In addition to the children, there's capacity building for the mentors to be able to use the hope academy manual that was developed to aid in teaching without the presence of the hope academy teachers. The mentors are taught how to use the manual to further education for the children both in school and out of school but with a consistent methodology of teaching.



Children at one of the implementing schools of Hope Academy watching productions made by them during the camps

