



Innovative Micro-Projects Facility

For Intergenerational and Creative Feminist Movement.

**INCREASING RURAL YOUNG WOMEN'S ACCESS TO SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH AND RIGHTS SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE AND ADVOCACY**

DISSEMINATION SUMMARY REPORT



CEHURD
social justice in health



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The Feminist Rural Academy (FERA) Empowering Rural Young Women with skills and knowledge to collectively advocate for their rights and lead change

Innovative Micro-Projects Facility: For Intergenerational and Creative Feminist Movement
Increasing rural young women's access to sexual reproductive health and rights skills, knowledge and advocacy

Letter from the Executive Director



Tendo Mirembe Namata

Dear Allies and Friends,

Embibo is a seed planted by two young women in Kamwenge, Uganda as a response to gender injustices and inequalities to women and girls. Embibo was born not to help but to create liberation as Lilla Watson describes it: “If you have come to help, you are wasting your time, but if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine then let us work together.”

Our identity as a sown seed lies in revolution, action, accountability, solidarity, participation and love. We are a true example of the fierceness of my mother and great grandmothers that found ways to resist patriarchy in a world where they were often silenced and their bodies violated. Our battle is to voice and become accountable to 6 generations behind me and 6 after me so that they may bear fruit and new seeds that create equality.

In 2020, we started the journey of building a movement of young women and adolescent girls that can fight and defend their rights and those of their communities

In all things, we are extremely grateful to the French Embassy and SRHR consortia for their belief in Embibo Gender Initiative to do this work.

For the staff, communities of women and leaders who have worked tirelessly to challenge systems that reduce women and those at the margins access to essential Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights.

Thanks to your kindness, we have been able to :

- Expand our team to 3 more staff and 10 peer educators that have increased access to information and services to over 1200 AGYW and key populations.
- Successfully build internal systems and structures.
- Open our first Drop in Centre and
- Harness essential partnerships with district and sub county leaders, health, education, media and social development actors in Kamwenge.

Your unwavering support to improving the status of all women socially, economically and politically continues to inspire us and build resilience for this work.

This dissemination speaks to a project that we are so passionate about, achieved for and by rural young women.

Reflection from the Project Coordinator – PISSCA, Increasing Rural Women's access to SRHR Services, Knowledge and Advocacy.

Ronald Niwamanya

This project has been a great pillar to the growth of Embibo gender initiatives as (CSOs) working around AGYW and key population persons, priority persons and community in Biguli, Bwizi and Nkoma sub counties in Kamwenge District.

The project has aimed at creating awareness around contraceptives, Comprehensive Sexuality Education, SGBV and comprehensive HIV/AIDS services. Through the project, a DIC has been established and ease access of condoms, HTS services, STIs, UTI screening, antenatal and family planning services.

As a project coordinator, I have seen great leaders' surface from rural areas and we continue to do this work even after the grant because its impactful.

successful, though some parts of Kamwenge district was not reached, therefore we seek for more intervention by the government and CSOs fall under humanity for the wellbeing and development of our communities in the above district.



Organisational Back ground:

Embibo Gender initiative (EGI) is feminist rural collective that focuses its work on building capacity through trainings and necessary resource provision, advocacy efforts as well as research and documentation of the stories of African rural women.

Our vision is to see a society where rural women, girls and youth enjoy equal rights and opportunities in relation to gender and sexual health inequalities. We work in increasing women, youth and rural communities' access to economic justice, sexual reproductive health and rights, domestic violence alleviation and quality inclusive education.



Bridging Gender and Sexual Health Equalities for Rural Women, Girls and Youth in their Communities.

SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT:

The outbreak of COVID 19 has exuberated the already dire state of SRHR with government containment measures such as two-year school closures (UNICEF, 2020) and closure of CSOs within the SGBV and SRHR referral pathways, In Kamwenge where EGI works, other economic constraints like limited market for crop produce and current increasing prices of soap, fuel and other household goods have severely affected spending on SRHR for young women and girls

Biguli and Bwizi subcounty also have no local other organizations that specifically work around SRHR thus creating over burdening of existing entities like EGI. There is therefore a need to build an organized movement and leaders within communities.

This project thus developed the knowledge and skills of a group of young rural feminist leaders in national, regional and international policies that can help increase their advocacy for their communities to access SRHR services and products.



The project addressed the following needs:

- Lack of factual and feminist informed knowledge and skills around SRHR and SGBV for young people and women in rural Kamwenge to advocate for their communities. Most policies are not fact based and instead represent religious and cultural inclinations that further oppress those that are vulnerable.
- Lack of community partnerships, ally ships and collaborations to advance young people's leadership and contribution to SRHR capacity-building and policy advocacy for women and girls in rural communities.
- Limited documentation of best practices and feminist self-initiated actions around advocacy and uptake of SRHR in Uganda. This would help to identify and support indigenous, self-initiated actions and models of feminism and SRHR advocacy.



Overall Project Objective

The main objective of the project is to build a critical mass of rural feminist leaders that engage and change SRHR legal and policy frameworks for women and young people in Kamwenge District.

Direct Results of the project:

- Empowered young people especially AGYW and KPs with feminist factual knowledge, skills and confidence to express their SRHR needs.
- Strengthened community platforms and partnerships with duty bearers to advance AGYW's leadership and contribution to SRHR.
- Documented successful feminist indigenous and self-initiated advocacy actions that promote SRHR for young people in rural areas.
- Assessed men and masculinities and how these affect access to SRHR in Kamwenge.





PROJECT KEY ACTIVITIES AND IMPACTS:



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Increasing rural young women's access to sexual reproductive health and rights skills, knowledge and advocacy

Objective 1: Increase and identify factual and feminist informed knowledge and skills trainings around SRHR for young people and women in rural Kamwenge to advocate for their communities.

Embibo worked through the Feminist Rural Academy (FERA) and the Peer educator outreaches as a path way to amplify rural adolescent and Young Women's advocacy, knowledge and leadership to increase SRHR social services and public policy friendly to them.

1. FERA (Feminist Rural Academy):

30 Adolescent Girls and Young Women between ages of 15 to 25 years trained in feminist analysis, sexual reproductive health and rights SMART advocacy and policy frameworks. FERA participants sourced from education, sub county, district council, media and health leaders.

Explored policies included: HIV Control Act (2015), Revised Prevention and management of teenage pregnancy in school setting guidelines- 2020 (Specific interest in re-entry), National Sexuality Education Framework (2018), Uganda's family planning Commitments 2030 and Penal Code and Children's Act's provisions for SGBV.



2. PEER TO PEER OUTREACHES FOR SUSTAINED SOCIAL ACTION:

- 20 Peer educators trained.
- 10 Peer educators retained.
- 60 Peer outreaches conducted.
- 1200 AGYW reached with information on HIV, Contraceptives, Safe maternity and SGBV services and preventative best practices.
- 80 men including Clients of Sex Workers tested for HIV and STIs.
- 552 tested through the DIC and outreaches.
- 70 STI and UTIs tested and treated.
- 6 enrolled for ARTs.
- 27 enrolled on PREP and PEP.
- 4 PAC cases handled.
- 10 Female Sex Workers enrolled on contraceptives
- 27 PREP refills and referrals
- 2 Domestic and 1 Sexual Gender Based Violence cases managed



Peer educator session in Mutama



VOICES OF CHANGE

Story from Peer Educator – SHEILA

I have been able to learn how to carry out HIV testing using ora quick and sure check self testing kits and have helped other AGYW know their status. I have also been able to rectify myths in community that has helped to reduce stigma against people living with HIV in community. Previously, HIV was thought to be a curse from God and family members were chased from community gatherings and other functions.



Story From Peer Educator - PHIONA

Through the project, I was able to even refer some AGYW clients to seek for antenatal to the health center. I have followed up on them and they gave birth safely. I have also contacted the officer in charge of family planning to help and counsel the young mothers to consent to it so that the level of poverty decreases. I have also obtained public speaking skills, sensitization and screening skills that I have used to train other AGYW and my friends and they now even call me doctor.



Embibo gives us free services straight to our door step. You just call and they come with condoms and lubricants. They also provide free UTI treatment and testing to all of us and check on us freely. This solves two issues, if you go to a public facility there are long lines and private facilities are expensive.



KP Peer Educator - MARTHA

Story From Peer Educator - ANNA

As a peer leader, I have referred several AGYW to the DIC and health centre for HIV/AIDs testing and this has created impact and visibility for the project and SRHR services at health centres in Kamwenge



Embibo Gender Initiative helped me when my grand child was gang raped to ensure that transport costs and the police were involved. We were taken to hospital and accessed medicine plus a small fund to take care of her.

GENEROUS

Twirerende Aminart (Para social worker)

As a mobilizer in Keishunga, I have been able to link a mentally ill victim that was later found to be pregnant and HIV positive at the health center in Biguli. She was linked to ART and antenatal services until she gave birth. This was with the support I received from Embibo staff after I received information and HIV testing in an outreach.

Our girls through the Feminist Rural Academy have learnt how to avoid sexual abuse and harassment by teachers, parents and other teenage males, this has helped the school to reduce drop out and teenage pregnancy.

Thanks to Embibo.

Musasizi Didas(Head master at Panaroma Vocational Secondary School

Christine Musimire, Senior Five (S.5)

Girls in school are having sex in school. There is a need for sex education in schools especially since most children are most likely to drop out because of the poor decisions they make. This is an issue for young girls especially who are seduced by older men with promises of gifts and sometimes by fellow young males leading them into unwanted pregnancies and contraction of STDS, HIV and STIs.



Objective 2:

Strengthen community partnerships, ally ships and collaborations to advance young people's leadership and contribution to SRHR capacity building and advocacy for women and girls in rural communities.

- 40 district, sub county and youth leaders engaged to increase visibility and strengthened relationship with key stakeholders and duty bearers in communities.
- 60 CSO representatives engaged in advocacy and planning meetings

Kampala CSO dialogue- 30 participants coming from organisations that focus on GBV and SRHR targeted towards key populations, persons with disability, AGYW and men including organisations like EASSI, AMREF, Foundation for Male Engagement, Trans Youth Network, ICEWA among others. Recommendations from this session were sent to the EAC parliament to incorporate into the EAC SRH Bill draft 6 under the Youth Hub.

- 75 Duty Bearers and 15 AGYW and female Sex workers. The round tables brought notable district policy and technical heads in community mobilization, health, education and police, sub county leaders, bar owners and managers, CSOs, health workers and media.

The objectives of the round table included: Garner support for Embibo Key policy issues around Adolescent and Young Women's health, Review success and changes that can be implemented in future projects and receive policy recommendations for GEF under the French Embassy SRHR initiative.

Kamwenge CSO dialogue - 30 participants from youth led and serving groups in Kamwenge including LWF, Save the Children, Baylor Uganda among others to discuss KP and AGYW SRHR



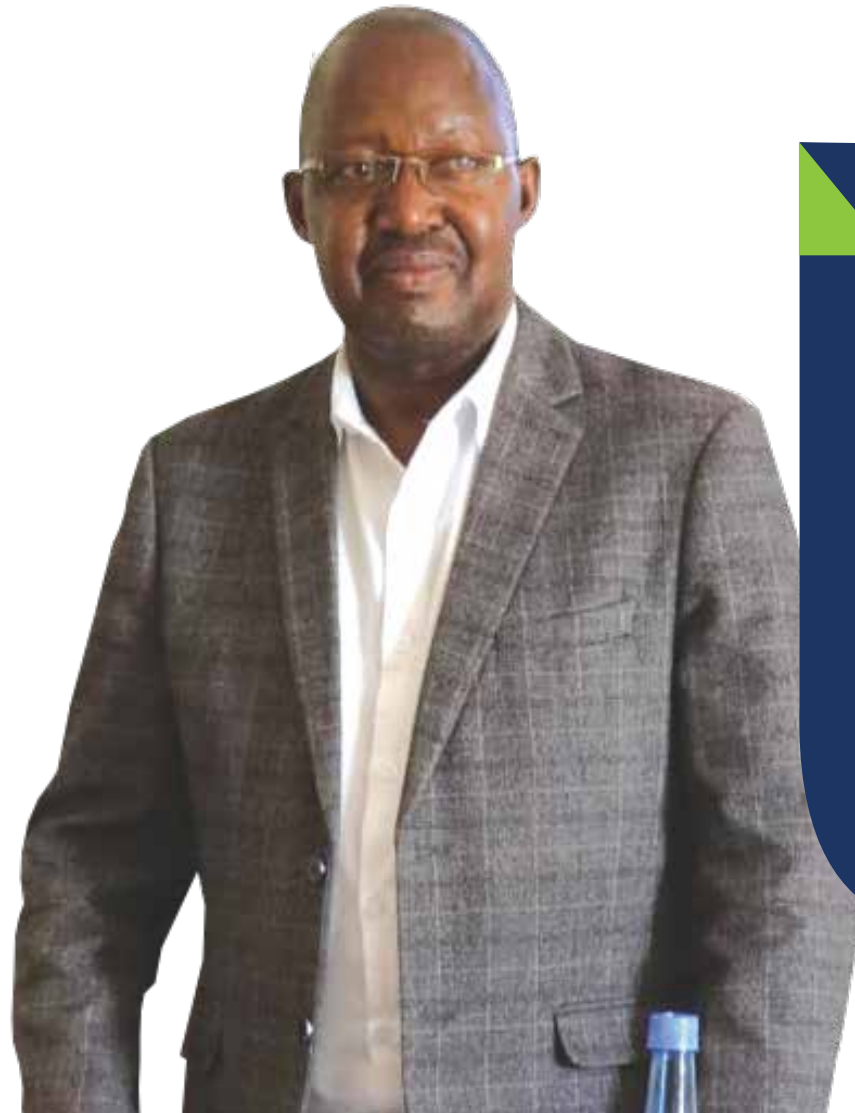
Figure 12: CSO advocacy Meeting in Kampala



Embibo is an NGO organization that has been providing health services to people in the community like PEP and PREP, family planning and HIV testing. We usually engage in capacity building and training opportunities for example most recently the FERA and round table.

Joseph Musinguzi, ”
Nurse Biguli Health Center III





More to that on side of HIV/AIDS prevalence, he said that Kamwenge districts is sparsely populated, therefore Embibo has been trying to tackle about HIV/ prevention treatment and care to mostly KP s and discordant couples in areas of Biguli. Embibo also conducted round table dialogue in Kamwenge district which was nice to engage government officials, key population and other groups which increased advocacy and awareness of rights, rising their voices and services, especially girl child who are disadvantage in the community.

**District Health Officer, Kamwenge,
Dr. Mucunguzi William.**

Objective 3: Document and share successful feminist indigenous and self-initiated advocacy actions that promote SRHR for young people in rural areas.

1. Study on Access, Availability and Utilization of SRHR information, services and advocacy for AGYW in Kamwenge. A baseline feminist participatory research on the current state of SRHR in rural Kamwenge District.
2. Radio Talk shows. Embibo carried out 3 radio programs and mentions at Nyumbani and Voice of Kamwenge radio with young women from the academy as a tool for advocacy and change to collectively speak for their rights in regards to SRHR.

Delivering rights based and non- stigmatizing messaging around Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights to improve service and information access for rural communities.

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Objective 4: Assess men and masculinities and how these affect access to SRHR in Kamwenge.

1. 20 religious, traditional and other local male leaders engaged in a 3-day male information session to address the role of men through a gender transformative approach of men as change agents, clients, supportive partners and fathers in relation to SRHR.



Engaging men in SRHR and gender equality as clients, supportive partners, fathers and change agents

- Study on the effects of masculinities on SRHR in Kamwenge, “Who is a man: the effects of masculinities on SRHR access utilization and availability in Kamwenge district.’ This was carried out to determine social definitions of man hood, access and utilization of SRHR and what can be done to change and increase access trends for SRHR products and services in Kamwenge.



Through Sunday gatherings at my church I have initiated programs aiming to address masculinity issues for example, I always teach the word of God but including strategies to combat the above problem like sharing of roles, between men and women, advising men to take their responsibilities and help spouses receive antenatal services, providing for families which has at least increased men's engagements to their families.

REVEREND NATHAN, Masculinities Information Participant.



Key Mile stones and Achievements:



- A drop-in center for Priority and Key Populations is opened in Biguli to increase HIV comprehensive services in Biguli, Kamwenge.
- 75 stakeholders have a series of round tables with district, sub county, Civil Society Organization and health leaders and highlight the importance of SRHR for Key population and AGYW in Kamwenge leading to key commitments around school health club, Differentiated Service Delivery Models and access to SGBV justice.
- More than 200 men and community members organize the Embibo football tournament to increase awareness around sexual reproductive health for men and young women.
- Embibo Gender Initiative holds a CSO advocacy meeting with 30 youth led and serving organizations in Kampala. Adolescent, key population and women's health recommendation document is sent to East African Parliament through AMREF youth hub.
- 4 Manuals developed Peer educator manual, feminist rural academy manual as well as gender, SRHR and masculinity manual.





KEY LESSONS AND AREAS OF IMPROVEMENTS



Key lessons and areas of improvements

- There is need to have a more in depth FERA as the one given was not enough to orient participants in all needed advocacy strategies.
- There is need to reduce harm reduction and non-discriminative
- Concentration on male engagement sessions and masculinity, activities, advocacy and programme service eg to increase SRHR uptake access and utilization.
- Limited uptake of PREP and PEP especially due to misconception and myths.
- There is need to increase sexuality education to prevent HIV new infections, unwanted pregnancies and SGBV.
- Increased access to justice by the victims of SGBV from law enforcements.

Appendix



Kamwenge DCDO, Ms. Niyigira Molly Harriet during the district dissemination



Strengthening partnership and ally ship with CSOs, district and health technical Partners for gender equality and social health service delivery



Creating safe environment through Age appropriate Sexuality education for teenage pregnancy, sexual violence and HIV/AIDs prevention



Assessing men and masculinities and how these affect access to SRHR in Kamwenge.



The winners of the Embibo Football cup, Bwizi Senior Secondary School pose for a photo after the match



EGI staff and peer educator carry out HIV testing at a hot spot



Youth leader kick start meeting for project consultation



The Feminist Rural Academy (FERA) Empowering Rural Young Women with skills and knowledge to collectively advocate for their rights and lead change.

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