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YOUNG, EMPOWERED AND DIGNIFIED: REVERSING THE CULTURE OF SEX WORK AMONG UGANDA'S URBAN YOUTH THROUGH VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

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ABSTRACT

Sexual exploitation is considered as one of the worst forms of violence against children and women. Whilst a combination of factors have been advanced for involvement in sex work, including poverty and unemployment, lack of schooling, Violence against children and gender- based violence as well as the influence of urbanisation, research has shown that for most adolescent girls and young women in Uganda, sex work is engaged in as a source of livelihood and survival since they lack other viable alternatives. Despite its being criminalised, highly stigmatised and exploitative, young people in Uganda continue to engage in this trade particularly in urban areas. This paper examines outcomes of an intervention implemented by Plan International and Uganda Youth Development Link to empower sexually exploited girls and young women in Kampala, through vocational skills training. Data were collected through an evaluation study involving 210 project beneficiaries. The results show that providing young women with alternative livelihood skills is not only economically empowering but potentially reduces their vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

KEY TERMS: *Sex work, vocational skills, empowerment, livelihoods, Uganda*

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Uganda has one of the youngest populations in the world (Population Reference Bureau, 2019). Of its estimated 44.7 million people, about 56% are below the age of 18 and an additional 21.3% is between the ages of 18 and 30 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, UBOS, 2014). With such a young demographic, the country's sustainable economic livelihoods face severe capacity constraints such as limited skills to match the labour market demands. This is against a backdrop of a low gross national product and very poor human development indicators: with a human development index of just 0.493, Uganda falls among the bottom 25 poorest countries in the world (UNDP, 2016). The head count poverty is estimated at 27.7% (UBOS, 2018). A significant number of Ugandans earn income at the margins of the poverty line, and their poverty status is therefore sensitive to the variety of external and household level shocks such as weather vagaries, price fluctuation or ill health. Unsurprisingly, poverty underpins most of the other vulnerabilities that the population faces including poor health outcomes, low levels of education, destitution, child neglect, social and livelihood insecurity, teenage pregnancy and early marriage, and commercial sex exploitation among others (Twikirize, 2019). Although poverty is often aggregated for the whole population, young people are among the most affected, given that many are unemployed. Estimates show that youth unemployment could be as high as 64% (International Labour Organisation and UBOS, 2013). Due to lack of unemployment insurance and other social protection schemes, young people out of employment will strive to survive on their own through doing odd jobs, engaging in criminal activities, including sex work while some fall prey to other forms of exploitation and trafficking.

Just like their middle-class counterparts, youth from poor and vulnerable backgrounds have dreams and aspirations which they strive to achieve through a struggle for not just survival but also for 'fitting in'. In the process they are ready to defy social norms and engage in any licit or illicit trade to assure survival. This quite often leaves them broken, further excluded and uncertain about the future. Diouf (2003: 9) succinctly captures the situation of such youth:

Clothed, adorned with jewels, powdered, perfumed, and shaped, their bodies also bear the scars left by the struggle for survival or the longing for "a good life" through licit or illicit activities such as prostitution, vagrancy, or delinquency. By living life on the margin, young people abolish the gap between adolescence and adulthood, and in some cases, between childhood and adolescence. Sex and violence become rites of passage and initiation which, like the new religious practices, produce a historicity of dissidence and dissent. By escaping the political and moral discourses that hemmed them and by moving into the cracks opened up by the crisis of the state and society, African youth has provoked an unprecedented moral and civic panic. Young people are now seen and constructed as a menace, as much because of their pleasures and leisure activities as because of the violence they manifest.

With a young population that is confronted with multidimensional poverty and high levels of unemployment, it's important that the vulnerability gap of the urban youth, mostly those living in slum areas is reduced so as to provide the necessary sense of security through livelihood development, skills training and other innovations that improve sources of income and livelihoods for a more decent life. This paper draws on a study conducted on a three-year project that focused on empowering sexually exploited young women in Kampala's slum areas through vocational skills training in order to provide alternative sources of employment and livelihoods. The paper elaborates the nature of the intervention and the results in relation to young women's empowerment. The central argument is that skills development through vocational training empowers young women by giving them choice.

Commercial sex work in Uganda

The United Nations Population Fund (2006) defines commercial sex work as the exchange of money or goods for sexual services, either regularly or occasionally, involving female, male, and transgender adults, young people and children where the sex worker may or may not consciously define such activity as income-generating. Ugandan society frowns upon premarital sex and worse than that, sex work or prostitution as it is commonly referred to. Young people engaged in this kind of work are given all sorts of labels and despised. The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 182, which was ratified by Uganda in 1999, categorizes sexual exploitation as one of the worst forms of child labour. Conversely, the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Violence Against Women (CEDAW) to which Uganda is signatory, recognizes sexual exploitation as a form of violence against women that has to be decisively eliminated by states parties. The Children Act (amended) 2016 and the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons Act (2009) outlaw sexual exploitation. The Penal Code Act (CAP 120) criminalizes prostitution and living on earnings of prostitution. Despite this, an increasing number of young people especially in urban areas are engaging in sex work, mostly for economic survival. A 2011 study estimated the number of sex workers in Kampala to have increased from 12,000 in 2004 to 18,000 in 2011 (Uganda Youth Development Link [UYDEL], 2011). If this trend continued, then the numbers are staggeringly high. Underlying factors for engagement in sex work include poverty, family disintegration, loss of parents, and

dropping out of school. Past research on sex workers in Uganda has shown that most come from extremely poor backgrounds, have dropped out of school without any employable skills and quite a number of them lost their parents when they were young, making them extremely vulnerable (Schoemaker and Twikirize, 2011). They thus join sex work as a form of economic survival and because they lack other viable alternative sources of income. Other risk factors include alcohol and drug abuse, adverse childhood experiences including sexual and physical violence, as well as orphanhood (Swahn et al, 2016). Nearly all sexually exploited young women have dependants to take care of including their own children, have to pay their own rent, food, transport costs, medical bills and other expenses and so sex work is their way of meeting these demands (Schoemaker and Twikirize, 2011). Most join sex work during their adolescent years and are forced to have sex with adults in exchange for money or non-monetary remuneration. Hence, a common term used to describe the type of work is commercial sex exploitation (especially of children) (ILO, n.d). Although there are cases of sex trafficking, majority of young people control their own sex trade rather than being managed by a pimp (Schoemaker and Twikirize, 2011).

Interventions for sex workers have often focused on their reproductive health especially in the era of HIV/AIDS. Sex workers are categorised as a risky population for HIV infection with recent statistics estimating a prevalence rate of up to 37% compared to a national average of 7.3% (Uganda AIDS Commission [UAC], 2015). They are thus seen as not only directly affected but also a risky category for the spread of HIV in the general population. However as elaborated by Schoemaker and Twikirize (2011) HIV is only one of the many threats sex workers face, for sex work is an occupation full of grievous occupational hazards including violence of all forms (WHO, 2005) as well as social stigma, diminished dignity and social identity, police arrests and constant detention as well as weather vagaries for street sex work. The situation presents not just a public health issue but also a human rights challenge in as far as girls, young women and other slum dwellers are concerned.

Empowering sexually exploited girls and young women

Empowerment is premised on the belief that poverty and deprivation are consequences of oppression and exploitation rather than a lack of productivity (USAID, 2010). Empowerment thus involves a process or processes by which people who have been denied the ability to make choices acquire such ability (Sevefjord et al, 2001 cited in Onyejekwe, 2002). Anderson et al. (1994) define empowerment as entailing a process of learning to move from only being reactive to life events to becoming proactive in shaping one's vision for life. Hence, applied to commercial sexual exploitation, young people cease to lament about their unfavourable situation but are equipped with knowledge, skills, and abilities to proactively engage in transforming their lives and those of their communities and to having a voice in matters that concern them. Andersen et al (1994) identify five spheres of empowerment, namely: personal, social, educational, economic and political empowerment. These are intertwined as empowerment in one sphere is dependent upon and has the potential to influence empowerment in the other spheres. Thus, whilst economic empowerment through for example, livelihoods development, is critical, it cannot succeed in isolation. Instead it requires that at the same time, the individuals involved have developed life skills at a personal level including a firm sense of self identity and confidence to engage in decisions that affect their lives. The social and political environment must also be enabling for individuals to exercise their freedoms and have their voices heard.

Technical and vocational education and skills training have been fronted as viable for young people's economic empowerment especially in low income countries. It is considered a key tool in reducing extreme poverty through increasing access to employment especially for young people (Hollander & Mar, 2009 cited in Chinedu, 2015). In fact, the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa (CESA 16-25) advocate technical and vocational education for young people as a priority strategy to increase access to the job market, obtain a decent job, and cultivate an entrepreneurial spirit among young people. In this regard, technical and vocational education and/or skills training is a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational processes involving, in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences, the acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (Chinedu, 2015). Thus, vocational skills training potentially empowers young people to engage in productive employment and to avoid involvement in potentially exploitative work and behaviours. This could also apply to giving choice to young people in as far as avoiding commercial sex exploitation is concerned given the evidence that most engage in this exploitative work after they have dropped out of school and because they have extremely limited skills for decent employment.

The PEVUS project

The "Partnership for Empowerment of Vulnerable girls and young women in the Urban Slums of Kampala city" (PEVUS) was implemented by Plan International Uganda in partnership with Uganda Youth Development Link (UYDEL) with funding from Comic Relief. The project aimed to increase access to age-appropriate sustainable

alternative livelihoods among girls 13-17 years and young women 18-24 years engaged in all forms of sexual exploitation. The project was implemented for three years from 2014 to 2017 within Kawempe and Rubaga divisions in Kampala city. Although primarily focused on alternative livelihoods development, the project also addressed issues of HIV and sexual reproductive health information and services as well as provision of early childhood care and development services for children of sexually exploited girls and young women. Thus, the strategy was integrative of key areas that are critical to empowerment of vulnerable girls in Kampala's slums. A partnership model was adopted that actively brought on board key stakeholders including community development organisations, police, managers of hotels and bars in the target area, relevant local government departments, community leaders and most importantly the sexually exploited girls and young women. A total of 900 sex workers were directly targeted with interventions. Of these, 600 got involved in 6 months' vocational training in a classroom setting while 300 were involved in apprenticeship training. The choice of training depended on an individual's interest and ability. An end of project evaluation was conducted between August and September 2017 to assess whether the project had resulted in concrete outcomes with regard to empowering sexually exploited young people. Empowerment was narrowly indicated in the improvements in choice as far as alternative livelihoods are concerned. Other social benefits were also considered including for example the development of a positive sense of identity and confidence.

STUDY APPROACH AND METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive survey design using quantitative and qualitative methodologies. The quantitative aspects of the study collected measurable data on key variables including changes in sources of income, employment status and engagement in sex work. Qualitative methods were important in capturing the subjective opinions of the target population particularly in defining the changes that had taken place as a result of their involvement in the project. The primary respondents included sexually exploited girls aged 13–17 and young women 18–30 years who were engaged in sex work in the slums of Kawempe and Rubaga divisions in Kampala City and who had been directly involved with the PEVUS project. Besides these direct beneficiaries, the evaluation also enlisted the participation of other slum dwellers including boys and women from the two divisions. Secondary respondents included the implementing organisations and other government, civil society and community level stakeholders. Purposive sampling of 5 sites per division was done based on the geographical spread and the concentration of the target population. UYDEL and Plan International Uganda provided the sampling frames for the target areas and the sexually exploited girls and young women reached with interventions. A representative sample of 383 respondents was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. The sample size was distributed among all the age categories that were intended to benefit from the project i.e. Girls and young women directly targeted (sex workers), other slum women and young boys. Due to the focus on direct impacts of the project, the sample was distributed on a ratio of 50:25:25 between sex workers, other slum women, and boys. The actual sample of sexually exploited girls and young women reached was 210. Systematic sampling using a random start (Babbie, 2004) was used to select sexually exploited girls and young women based on a data base kept by the implementing organisation (UYDEL). Purposive sampling was applied for the rest of the Key informants depending on their relevance and anticipated knowledge on the subject matter. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods were used in the evaluation. Qualitative data were collected through key informant interviews (28), focus group discussions with target sex workers (8 FGDs) and four (4) in-depth case studies with sex workers. A structured questionnaire was administered to the study sample to collect quantitative data while a business appraisal tool was used to collect data on the nature, viability and sustainability of alternative livelihoods, specifically businesses started as a result of the vocational skills training.

Quantitative data were analysed at univariate (frequencies and percentages) and bivariate levels (cross tabulations of major variables including age and type of training received), with the aid EPI-INFO (version 6) and SPSS (version 21). Analysis of qualitative data collected through key informants in-depth interviews and FGDs was facilitated by NVivo (Version 11). This was a commissioned study (project evaluation) by Plan International. The Children Protection Policy for Plan International Uganda guided the study. Informed consent/assent was sought from all study participants after explaining to them the purpose of the study and assurance of confidentiality and anonymity. All other issues pertaining to social research with vulnerable populations including respect for their dignity and freedom of participation, objectivity in reporting, privacy and confidentiality in handling data have been adhered to.

This article focuses on the economic and social impacts on the intervention on the lives of the young women involved in sex work.

RESULTS

Profile of respondents (only target beneficiaries)

Majority of the 210 sampled sexually exploited girls and young women were between 19 and 24 years of age (66.4%). More than a half (55.7%) had attained secondary level of education, 5.2% had never been to school while just below 4% had a post-secondary (tertiary) level of education, hence reflecting the disadvantaged position of the girls and young women in terms of socio-economic status. With regard to marital status, 71% reported that they were single while the rest had ever been married. Fifty eight percent (58%) of these respondents had children, with a majority having one child (44%). More than a third of the sexually exploited girls/young women lived alone (34.3%), while 21.8% lived with parents, implying that living with parents in socio-economically vulnerable circumstances such as those in Kampala's slum areas may not completely shield children from sexual exploitation. All major religious affiliations, namely Catholic, Protestant and Muslim were represented in the sample; with close to 15% of the respondents affiliated to the born-again faith. This is significant because in Uganda, being born again is often associated with a transformed life style, from a life of 'sin' to that of one considered moral. Since sex work is a moral issue, this percentage might represent changes in cultures of the targeted girls and young women, with economic survival prioritised over religious obligations.

Alternative livelihoods development through vocational skills training

A total of 903 girls and young women received training in alternative livelihood skills. Of these, 603 received vocational training while 300 were trained through the apprenticeship model. Girls acquired skills in hair dressing (87.4%), tailoring (14.2%), catering and bakery (11.5%) and others including jewellery and craft making (6.6%). Figure 1 shows the type of training and the employment status after the training.

Table 1: Mode of training, age category and impact on livelihood status of respondent (N=210)

	Got employed	Started own business	Improved existing business	Other
Type of training				
Apprenticeship	75.8	14.5	0.0	9.7
Vocational skills	64.9	14.9	4.4	15.8
Age category of respondent				
16-19	79.3	3.5	6.9	10.3
20-24	72.7	12.8	0.0	14.5
25-30	58.1	25.8	6.5	9.7
31 +	0.0	0.0	50	50
Total	70.4	13.4	2.8	13.4

The highest majority (70.4%) of girls who received training had accessed alternative employment at the time of the study, 13.4% started their own businesses, while 2.8% improved their existing businesses. The proportion of girls who got employed was slightly higher among those who underwent apprenticeship training (75.8%) when compared to those who undertook vocational skills training (65%); while in terms of business start-up, there was no big difference. With regard to age category, the younger girls (16-19 at the time of the survey) were more likely to get employed while the likelihood of beginning own business appears to have increased with the age of the respondent. For example, 79.3% of those aged 16 to 19 years got employed compared to 58% among the 25 - 30-year olds. Conversely, only 3.5% of the 16 - 19-year olds started own business compared to 25% among the 25-30-year olds. Respondents in FGDs reflected on the usefulness of the training:

The most beneficial training was hair dressing because for it even when you don't make a salon for yourself someone can call you from wherever you are to come plait her (Former Sex worker, Bwaise, Kawempe division).

For me tailoring was very important because it's earning me some money now (Former Sex worker, Kyebando).

One of the most significant results is the reduction in the proportion of girls surviving on sex work from 77% at the start of the project to 6.2% at end-line, a difference of 71 percentage points.

Table 2 Previous and current source of income /occupation of girl/young woman (N=210)

Occupation	Previous %	Current %
None	12.9	8.1
Bar attendant	4.6	3.8
Karaoke dancer/singer	2.1	1.0
Food seller	0.5	3.8
Charcoal seller	0.5	1.0
Restaurant attendant	2.1	3.8
Shop keeper	0.5	1.0
Grocery seller	0.5	0.5
Hair dressing	1.0	50.5
Sex worker	71.1	6.2
Clothes hawker	0.1	1.9
Vegetable seller	0.0	0.5
Mobile money services	0.0	0.5
Others	4.1	17.6
Total	100	100

The evaluation findings also indicated some slight increase in monthly incomes (*data not shown in table*). For example, whereas 59.2% of the girls and young women earned less than 50,000UGX (US\$14) before the project, at the time of the survey, 32% earned between 50,000-100,000UGX (US\$14-\$28) per month. Majority of the girls and young women (87.3%) were confident that they could meet their basic needs without necessarily engaging in risky sexual behaviour. The increase in incomes was unanimously attributed to the acquired skills that helped most of them to either get employed or start some small businesses.

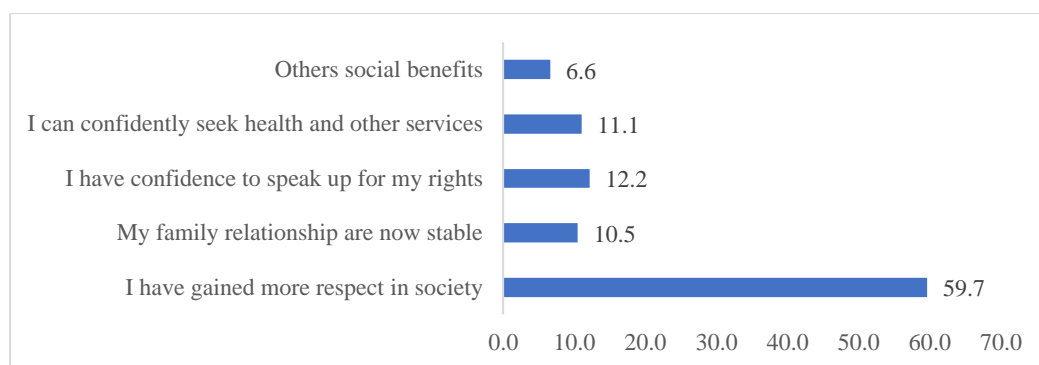
Economically ... in prostitution, I would get the money but then I would spend it in treating STIs and drinking alcohol, so such things but now, at UYDEL we are given skills and business training, they teach you how to start up a business and maintain it so that it does not collapse. It also includes things like saving. So, such things, like now, I can have like 100,000 shs and sometimes 200,000 shilling in pocket when it is mine and with no problems and yet back then, I would waste money in drinking alcohol because I was no longer conscious or shy.” (Former sex worker and now peer educator Bwaise Kawempe Division, Kampala)

Whilst most incomes still fell below the national poverty line of USD 1 per capita per day, the results reflect an improvement in the incomes of the girls when compared to the previous situation. Generally, there was an evident enthusiasm and excitement amongst the girls and young women concerning their transition from sexual exploitation to more socially and economically empowered lives.

Social impacts: Improved dignity and self-worth

Many young girls and women shared experiences of how they are no longer ridiculed and ashamed of their past, others have been reunited with their families while many others said they are no longer dependant on drugs and alcohol due to the empowerment gained through the intervention. Close to 60% of the girls and young women interviewed said they have gained more respect in their communities.

Figure 1 Social impacts on the lives of sexually exploited girls (N=210)



Due to the nature of sex trade, most community members frown upon those engaged in it. Whilst the social stigma may take longer to be overcome, the biggest attribution of such respect has been the fact that the sexually exploited girls have gained the confidence to admit their past while at the same time demonstrating a positive change in behaviour.

And by the way when we are doing peer sessions, we teach in areas where we are known and where we stay. So, when a person sees you and they know you were the most indecent person, you are the one who used to get drunk, so when you go and do the peer sessions and they see you speaking out important information, they draw you closer to themselves and respect you. So, the community no longer despises you, so that I cannot lie to you, it has happened. (Peer educator Bwaise Kawempe Division)

The results were positive for all variables used in this study to assess confidence including ability to refuse sex (94.2%), ability to ask for condoms and other SRH commodities and services at health centres (81.3%), ability to insist on using condoms (90.9%), and ability to negotiate for safer sex with the client (91.8%) among others.

Table 3 Level of confidence among sexually exploited girls and young women (N=210)

Statement	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
1 I feel confident that I can refuse sex if I do not desire it	94.2% (195)	1.9% (4)	3.9% (8)
2 I feel shy to ask for condoms, pills or other SRH/contraceptive services at health facilities	17.3% (36)	1.4% (3)	81.3% (169)
3 I am confident that I can insist on condom use every time I feel my partner and I should use them	90.9% (190)	4.3% (9)	4.8% (10)
4 I am confident that I can get my partner(s) to use contraceptives/condoms if I desire it	95.2% (195)	2.4% (5)	2.4% (5)
5 It is ok for a woman/girl to suggest to his male partner that they use a condom or another method to avoid pregnancy.	92.8% (192)	2.4% (5)	4.8% (10)
6 Am confident that I can refuse and negotiate for safer sex even if someone/client demands unprotected sex with me	91.8% (189)	3.9% (8)	4.4% (9)
7 My friends would laugh at me/ tease me if they found out that I was asking for condoms, pills or other contraceptive services	27.1% (56)	12.1% (25)	60.9% (126)
8 I believe I can seek sexual and reproductive health information services if I needed them	(98.5%) (204)	1% (2)	0.5% (1)
9 I believe that the government is responsive to the needs and rights of slum dwellers.	(68%) (140)	6.8% (14)	25.2% (52)

The positive transformations of some sex workers within the respective communities, with some readily serving as peer educators/trainers was identified as one of the factors responsible for the community according respect to these sexually exploited girls and young women. Hence, the issue of reduced self-stigma is directly linked to an increased sense of respect within the community.

DISCUSSION

Globalisation, urbanisation and a fast-paced neoliberal culture are working in tandem to increase risk and vulnerability among girls and young women. At the local level, extreme poverty and marginalisation, high levels of unemployment and increased cost of living especially for urban dwellers are forcing young people to struggle

for economic survival at any costs including commodification of their bodies either willingly or through coercive means such as sex trafficking. Sexual exploitation is recognised as one of the worst forms of child labour as well as gender-based violence both internationally and nationally. As argued by Bennell (2007) young people need to be supported to have a voice not just in political but also economic processes; and they need to be empowered with information and skills to confront the challenges they face. As exemplified in the intervention presented in this paper reasonable investments in young people can alter a culture of vulnerability and risky sexual behaviour, and improve their dignity and sense of self-worth.

The promotion of sustainable alternative livelihoods, skills training and entrepreneurship development are directly aligned with the sustainable development goals as well as Uganda's national development framework and more specifically the National Youth Action Plan (MGLSD, 2016). The provision of alternative livelihoods is significantly relevant since lack of livelihood skills and economic disempowerment drive and sustain sexual exploitation among girls and young women in the urban slums. The livelihoods development is also directly in tandem with the government programme of empowering youths and tackling unemployment. Specifically, technical and vocational education and training has been associated with preparing young people for the ever-changing world of work and is a vehicle through which individuals can aspire to have a better life and then develop the necessary skills needed to attain such aspirations (Chinedu, 2015).

A number of factors are necessary when designing empowerment interventions for sexually exploited young people. As exemplified in this case study, such factors range from an integrated and holistic approach that addresses the interrelated challenges of sex workers, to working in partnerships with key stakeholders including local government authorities, health facilities, community leaders, other duty bearers, and the civil society. The active beneficiary and community participation not only lead to stronger mobilisation and self-advocacy but also contributes to sustainable results. As argued by Staples (2016), quite often members of a target group or community will know better what needs to be added, altered, or eliminated to make their lives better and they have the right, necessity and capacity to define their own goals and objectives and act on their own behalf. In this intervention, sex workers defined the type of training they wanted, acted as peer educators and chose the type of businesses that made sense to them. No one was coerced to leave sex work, but rather they were supported with different alternatives, so that they could have increased choice.

The project adopted a strengths perspective, which instead of considering the deficits of the girls, valued and made use of their inherent strengths and resources and their ability to transform their lives. According to Saleebey (1996:297) "the strengths perspective demands a different way of looking at individuals, families, and communities. All must be seen in the light of their capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, visions, values, and hopes, however dashed and distorted these may have become through circumstance, oppression, and trauma". Beneficiaries' views were considered when designing the interventions and there was evident flexibility on the side of the implementers, which directly communicated respect and value to the beneficiaries. For example, the study established that training hours had to be adjusted to mid-morning rather than early morning in order to accommodate the working hours of the sex workers; and that on the request of the trainees, male trainers were mostly employed because that's what would make most trainees comfortable. Peer champions were also identified from the sex workers themselves and these were then used to mobilise, educate, and psychologically support their peers.

CONCLUSION

Giving young people voice and space to take control of their lives, not through coercive means but through expanding opportunities is extremely crucial. It is also important to work in partnership with young people to transform their own lives and environments, allowing them to act as their own change agents. Respecting their way of life rather than condemning them is an important element of empowering youths to survive and thrive in an urban, globalised environment. Socially excluded and marginalised young people have the capacity and willingness to change if supported with concrete interventions. Development of vocational skills is one of the significant tools for such socio-economic empowerment.

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