



Gulu Youth Center (GYC) in Gulu District, Uganda



Women's Refugee Commission and
Save the Children
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REPORT FOR COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTORS

WHO ARE WE?

The Women's Refugee Commission is an advocacy organization based in New York, United States (U.S.). It advocates for changes in laws, policies and programs to improve the lives and protect the rights of refugee and internally displaced women, children and young people.

Save the Children works to improve the lives of children around the world by providing food, medical care and education. It responds to disasters and conflict and help communities rebuild through long-term recovery programs.

ADOLESCENT SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

Everyone, including adolescents, has the right to access information and services that they need to take care of their bodies. Adolescent girls and boys 10-19 years of age need special attention and sexual and reproductive health information and care that meet their needs. This includes the right to learn how to prevent sexually transmitted infections, like HIV, and access to pregnancy prevention methods, like condoms and pills, if they are not ready to have children.



Straight Talk Foundation's adolescent clients at GYC

WHY DID WE COME TO UGANDA?

We visited Uganda to learn more about Straight Talk Foundation's Gulu Youth Center (GYC) since we heard about the good work they were doing for adolescents in Gulu District. We wanted to find out more about the services that GYC provides to adolescents and what the staff and clients think about the center. The information we collected will be part of our report on adolescent sexual and reproductive health programs around the world.

WHAT DID WE DO DURING OUR VISIT?

We visited Gulu in August 2012. We spent time observing what happens at GYC and talking to staff and adolescent clients about the center. We also had group discussions with four outreach workers and 10 boys and 10 girls who had visited GYC.

WHAT DID WE LEARN DURING OUR VISIT?

Straight Talk Foundation, a national NGO, established the GYC in 2004 to provide sexual and reproductive health information and services to adolescents during the armed conflict in northern Uganda. GYC provides adolescents with counseling and supplies, such as condoms, to help girls and boys prevent pregnancy and infections such as HIV that are transmitted by sexual contact.

The boys and girls that we talked to told us that what they like most about GYC is that the providers are friendly and helpful. They shared that GYC is a comfortable place to go to with friends, participate in health talks and watch movies about life skills.

GYC has had great success in giving adolescents education and services that empower them. One of GYC's biggest strengths is its combination of providing sexual and reproductive health services to adolescents and teaching them skills so they can earn money and be independent.

Another part of GYC's success is its use of infotainment/edutainment activities. These activities facilitate discussions among adolescents through film, entertainment, print messages, radio programs and SMS text messaging.

WHAT WILL WE DO NOW?

We are writing a report about sexual and reproductive health programs for adolescents affected by conflict and disaster and the information we gathered about GYC will be included in this report. The report will highlight good practices and challenges of these types of programs. We hope that by bringing attention to the good work done by local organizations like GYC, these types of programs will receive more funding and can improve the sexual and reproductive health services that they provide to adolescents all over the world.



A meeting with adolescents at GYC

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE?

GYC is located in Gulu town and is open from 8:30-17:00 during the week, and also on Saturdays. Sexual assault survivors can seek services from 8:30-17:00 seven days/week. A hotline is available 24/7.

To learn more about the Women's Refugee Commission's advocacy on behalf of displaced women, children and youth, visit www.womensrefugeecommission.org or contact us at info@wrcommission.org.

Photographs: Women's Refugee Commission/STF; Phyllis Awor

This report was written by Erin Stone.