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PROMOTING AWARENESS ON THE DANGERS OF EARLY AND FORCED MARRIAGES (INITIATIVE COVID-19)

Tipologia dell'ente/Kind of organization: NGO

Nome dell'ente che lo ha realizzato/Organization-institute presenting the project: ANNPCAN - African Child Protection Network
Neglect

Paese/ Country: Malawi

Città/City: Blantyre

Descrizione del progetto/Describe the project : The Covid-19 global pandemic has adversely affected various developments almost in all spheres of the world. In response to the challenges posed by the pandemic, the Prevention against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) aimed at ensuring inclusive quality education service. In 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in April 2020, the Malawi Government imposed restrictions in which schools were closed, public gatherings were banned including religious gatherings. This led to the spate of teenage pregnancies and child marriages. A reputable organization called Oxfamuncovered that in Malawi, a girl is impregnated in Mangochi. This challenge rocked even the government. Statistical findings raised concerns on the long-term consequences of teenage pregnancies and child marriages. Through Economic and Social Development with high illiteracy levels more especially among the young population less productive thus slowing down the economic growth. Concerned with such prospects ANPPCAN crafted a project aimed at supporting mothers who happens to be Covid-19 victims to go back to school. The project involves holding focus group discussions with victims (teen mothers), teachers, Parents as well as the community to create a conducive environment for such girls to resume their studies. In addition, the project involves various students such as Students living with various disabilities, students with Albinism, girls and boys with the aim of fighting stigma and discrimination that can impinge continuation of schools by teen mothers. Furthermore, ANPPCAN through the project engages parents and community in their communities to ensure that parents with teen mothers encourage their children send their young ones back to school failing which they will be doing service tasks. This has led to the increase of teen mothers returning to school. Again, the project facilitated minded set of children including physically challenged learners. In these sessions tea

trained to create special classes for teen mothers and physically challenged students aside from normal classes with the aim of preparing these disadvantaged students psychologically to focus on their education not their physical status. This initiatives have seen teen mothers and physically challenged learners being best performers in some of the targeted schools.

Categoria del progetto/Project category : Educazione fino ai 18 anni/Up to 18 years

Uso delle tecnologie / Use of technologies: In order to ensure the smooth progress of the project ANPPCAN created WhatsApp forums for various stakeholders to be aware of the challenges of teen mothers and teenage pregnancies and the problems they are experiencing in their areas. WhatsApp has been elected as the main platform for communication as it is a cheaper, commonly and friendly used tool of communication in both urban and rural settings. Again, WhatsApp can be used by both literate and illiterate people through the use of Voice Notes (VN) by those who are challenged intellectually and Short Message Service (SMS) to complement the WhatsApp platform.

Indicare gli elementi di innovazione del progetto / What are the innovative aspects of the project?: ANPPCAN is the first organization in Malawi to use WhatsApp for communication and best performing organization in terms of reaching out to various schools and communities best in treating teen mothers.

Con quanti utenti interagisce il progetto?/How many users does the project interact with? : The project interacts with 550 teen mothers and 100 teachers (550 teen mothers and 100 teachers) conducive environment to engage various stakeholders. Students living in rural areas are the main target of the project aim of fighting teenage pregnancies in schools by teaching them about the dangers of teenage pregnancies.

Di quali mezzi o canali si avvale il progetto?/Which media or channels does the project use?: Main channels of communication are WhatsApp, Facebook, and radio. NGO's well known in the area have been elected as partners.

Il progetto è già stato replicato? /Has the project already been replicated? : Yes, the project has been replicated in 10 other schools in the territories covered by the project.

Quali sono le aspettative future?/What are future expectations?: ANPPCAN expect to create a platform for communication through Face book and Whatsapp to reach out to more schools and eliminate early and forced marriages.

Allegati/Attachments:  [project_photo.pdf](#) ^[1]

Durata progetto/project duration: 1 year (December 2020 - December 2021)

Risultati ottenuti/Results: Results so Far (14/01/2021): -Partnership with the District Assemblies in the form of by-laws -350 young mother re-admitted in 70 primary Schools across Malawi -350 young mothers trained on good parenting

Cognome del coordinatore del progetto/project coordinator surname : Mhango

Nome del coordinatore del progetto/project coordinator name : Kenwilliams

Il Progetto ha contribuito ad affrontare la pandemia da Covid-19? / Has the project helped facing the emergency of Covid-19? : In Malawi just like in other countries, the government has declared a state of emergency from 12th October to 12th October 2020. The government has declared that all schools should remain closed and no classes should be held. The government has reported that in Malawi, there are 10 and 12 pregnancies by girls between 10 and 12 years of age. The government has reported that there are 10 and 12 marriages as a result of teenage pregnancies. The government has reported that there are 10 and 12 hour a girl child is in school.

Mzimba 400 and in Nsanje 324 girls are pregnant due to the Covid-19 mandatory holiday. 82 pregnancies have been registered compared to Nchinji 58, Kasungu 20 and Blantyre 64. Blantyre police has reported 4 arrest 1 woman and 3 men involved in child marriage related cases. Amendment in by Parliament in 2017 provides for 18 years as marriage age and removed 14 years as consent age hence all the cases involving girls less than 18 years are prosecutable. It is against this background that ANPPCAN Malawi Chapter is running a project to promote awareness on the dangers of early child and forced marriages that have occurred during the Covid-19 mandatory holiday in Malawi. Moreover, in efforts to improve access of quality education service delivery amid Covid-19 global pandemic, ANPPCAN through this project distributed Covid-19 personal protective equipment (PPE), soap, sanitizers and water buckets in various schools. Therefore strictly adhering to covid-19 prevention measures are awarded thereby incentivizing the Covid-19 prevention process as both students and learners are protected from the global pandemic their ensuring equal access to quality education.

Fondazione Mondo Digitale

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[1] https://gjc.it/en/system/files/project_photo.pdf