

Holding my family together: beneficiary experience from the parenting sessions in Wakiso

Nancy (34years) is a single parent (widowed) with a household of four (4) members including herself and 3 daughters aged 13, 5 and 4. Her lastborn Najjemba aged 4yrs was the index child targeted by the EMM parenting program. Nancy is a cleaner in a health centre and recently opened a used shoes sales point at her home using the cash grant support she received. Nancy also used part of the money to buy scholastic requirements, bedsheets and clothes for her daughters.

Nancy's daughter had been institutionalized when her husband died and she was unable to take care of all her children. When interviewed in November, she shared that taking her child to the child care institution did not address her challenges related to inability to care for the two she retained. She was always more distressed not being sure how her child was every other day unlike the two who she would see all the time. To this end, Nancy kept hoping that she would find a sustainable solution to holding her family together someday. She was glad that the Probation Officer selected her family to benefit from the TPO Uganda parenting program in addition to the first step of having her daughter reunified under the DOVCU project.

During the parenting sessions, Nancy interested close to 22 of her neighbors to participate in the sessions at different points in order to increase the safety of children. If many of us are trained, it gives us trust that when the child is not with me, she is still safe.

Nancy noted that the parenting sessions helped to gradually shape her daughter from solitary to joining in play with other children. From the time the group of participants including her daughter jointly drew the network of support with the Esanyu Mu Maka parenting facilitator, she was able to master her way to school and back. This was important because she always got lost. But now she knows the mark stones and where to go in case of any problem before she gets home.

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Having gained self-confidence from the activities of the project, Nancy now intends to take the learning further by becoming a facilitator herself. Therefore, for continuity, she hopes her group of participants are given a skilling training so that they can continue to engage other community members on parenting.