

Impact assessment of Self Defense – the views of the participants

Nshamba, April 2011

PART 1: THE SELF DEFENSE PROJECT

1. The background

In 2000 Kurt Madoerin, terre des homes Switzerland and the Humuliza team started to build up a child and youth-led organization called VSI (Vijana Simama Imara: Youth standing upright). The VSI grew rapidly and had reached around 2'200 children and youth by 2003 (the year that Kurt Madoerin handed over the program to Tanzanian staff.)

In 2002 (as part of the VSI) Kurt Madoerin organized a training programme for about 20 girls coming from Humuliza and the Tanzanian organization KIWOHEDE. These girls were to then go on and run self-defense programmes with young people. The 2002 training was given by Nathalie Ullman (PALLAS, Switzerland). Afterwards the VSI organized until the end of 2004 a number of trainings for around 250 girls of the VSI under the leadership of Lightness Mpunge.

After having handed over the Humuliza program, Kurt Madoerin started two programs dealing with cash transfer and with a focus on “children as caregivers”:

- 2003 the Kwa Wazee program (support for grandparents and their orphaned grandchildren living with them)
- 2007 the program supporting parents (usually women-headed households) who are HIV-positive and on antiretroviral treatment, and their (mostly non-infected) children.

The children’s programs included different kinds of training (prevention, HIV, life skills, leadership, theatre for development etc.) and the formation of mutual support groups with savings and income generation. By the end 2010 there were about 100 groups with about 1'000 children and youth members.

2. Self defense courses

Due to the high level of sexual and other forms of gender-related violence Kwa Wazee raised funds for self defense training. The guidelines elaborated by PALLAS in the original 2002 training were developed into a more interactive training with a workbook, containing 16 modules.

1. Me and my body – my body belongs to me
2. Sexual violence
3. Vulnerable parts of my body
4. How safe do I feel in my environment
5. Support
6. Vulnerable parts of the male body
7. Our body: also a weapon
8. We all have (and need) boundaries

9. Self-confidence
10. Feelings
11. The inner voice
12. Shame
13. Fear
14. Anger
15. Concentrate what you can do....and not what you cannot do
16. This will make me safer

On suggestion of Apollonia Mugumbya who visited Nshamba on behalf of the Swiss League of Catholic Women (the main funder of the program), four modules have been added and tested in March 2011:

17. What do we need to know about HIV/AIDS
18. Self defense starts a long time before an attack
19. These are my rights – and those help me to get them
20. What to do in the case of sexual harassment – negotiation skills

The training, which lasts between 12 and 14 days, is composed of physical/technical training of defense techniques and – based on the workbook - reflection on the role and conditions of young females in Tanzanian society. The age of the children is between 11 years and 18 years – the average age is 14 years. (Until September 2013 eighteen courses have been delivered with around 1'100 participants.)

Many of the participants meet every week or twice a month on Saturday for refreshment training. Some have also started an economic activity. Groups are functioning in all 13 clusters.

PART 2: ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPACT: THE VIEW OF THE PARTICIPANTS

Sample

82 girls from three areas (Nshamba, Kishanda and Buganguzi) were selected for this assessment of impact. This represents 44% of the participants of the first three courses:

- the participants from Nshamba received the training six months or one year before the assessment.
- the participants of Kishanda und Buganguzi received the training eight months before the assessment.

All the participants took part in the continuous refreshment training up until and beyond) the time of the assessment.

Results

The results are presented below under a description of the tools used to measure impact.

1. How safe do I feel?

Tool 1: Ladder of security

The children were given a picture of a ladder with 10 rungs.

INSTRUCTION

“Here you see a picture of a ladder.

Now think about your security as a girl. The upper part (7, 8, 9 or – of course – 10) means that there is no danger or harassment or problems – you feel that you are secure and safe.
 The lower part of the ladder (3, 2, 1) means that you don't live in a safe environment and there are good reasons to be afraid.
 The middle part (4, 5, 6) means that you are not in danger, but also you don't feel comfortable and fully safe.
 Now look at the ladder and think where you have been BEFORE the training - draw a little circle at this place.
 And then think about where you feel that your security is NOW AFTER the training. Draw there a cross.
 Finally – if there is change and a difference between BEFORE and AFTER - write down two or three reasons you think that they have contributed to this change”

Table 1: The feeling of security before and after the training

SCALE	BEFORE THE TRAINING		AFTER THE TRAINING		DIFFERENCE	
	NO	VALUE	NO	VALUE	NO	VALUE
	NO x SCALE		NO x SCALE		NO x SCALE	
1	29	29	0	0	2	2
2	31	62	0	0	3	6
3	10	30	0	0	2	6
4	3	12	0	0	3	12
5	3	15	2	10	5	25
6	1	6	0	0	6	36
7	1	7	2	14	26	182
8	3	24	6	48	19	152
9	1	9	36	324	16	144
10	0	0	36	360	0	0
TOTAL	82	194	82	756	82	565
AVERAGE		2.36		9.22		6.89

Comment: The subjective feeling of personal safety and security has increased tremendously from an average of 2.4 point to 9.2 points even 6 to 8 months or a year after the training.

Although we couldn't verify to which degree this subjective feeling corresponds to the reality, we trust in the dynamic, which is described in the Thomas' theorem (see Appendix 1), that “what is perceived as real is real in its consequences”. We know from research that victimization has the tendency to attract perpetrators – from this we can conclude that an increased self-confidence is an efficient part of their protection (combined with the knowledge of defense techniques).

2. Why do I now feel safer?

One thing that confirms that the perceived change, which is measured in Tool 1 is real and will be long-lasting is the extent to which the children can articulate the reasons why they feel safer.

Table 2: Main reasons for the changes

The children identified the following reasons for feeling safer:

1. Increased self-confidence (52 mentioned this). The following quotations illustrate this:

- “Before I was very afraid” (20)
- “I say now clearly ‘NO’” (5)
- “I’m now strong” (6)
- “I’m stable” (10)
- “I can say anything to the group and to the people” (5)
- “There is no anymore disturbance from our enemy”(4)

2. Knowledge (30)

- “I know how to defend myself” (20)
- “The body is mine” (4)
- “I know to use my voice” (6)

3. Changes in their own behavior (28)

- “I stopped to be violent myself” (6)
- “I tell the boys: I have no time” (5)
- “I avoid to be seduced” (6)

4. Solidarity among us girls (17)

- “We advice each other” (6)
- “We have built friendship – we interact with other group members” (6)
- “We help each other when others have problems” (4)

5. Integration (9)

- “I’m better integrated at home” (4)

6. Physical strength (5)

- “My muscles and my body is stronger” (5)

7. Safer environment (3)

- “The small paths are now safer”

Comment: The girls indicate three main reasons for their new perception of their security:

- i) it is a result of reflection of their own values, rights and strengths,
- ii) technical training of self defense,
- iii) changes in personal behavior.

We assume that the combination of factor i) and ii) leads to the changes in individual behavior, as one expression of their increased sense of self-worth.

3. How safe does my area feel now?

Tool 2: Landscape of danger

We selected a number of places in the participant’s environment that they had frequently indicated were “dangerous places” and asked them to tick one of the following three options:

- Violence decreased
- Violence increased
- Violence is just the same as before

Table 3: Changes of perception of danger in selected living areas

SCHOOL

Violence decreased: 78

Violence increased: 0

Violence is the same as before: 2

MALE FRIENDS

Violence decreased: 75

Violence increased: 2

Violence is the same as before: 1

HOME

Violence decreased: 72

Violence increased: 4

Violence is the same as before: 2

ENVIROMENT (NEIGHBORS ETC.)

Violence decreased: 74

Violence increased: 1

Violence is the same as before: 1

COLLECT FIREWOOD

Violence decreased: 70

Violence increased: 3

Violence is the same as before: 4

COMMUNITY AS THE WHOLE

Violence decreased: 69

Violence increased: 0

Violence is the same as before: 6

The participants also had the possibility to add new area categories:

PLACE WHERE WE WASH CLOTHES: Violence decreased: 3

CUTTING GRASS (an important source of income): Violence decreased: 3

FETCHING WATER: Violence decreased: 40

PLACES WHERE WE DO GAMES AND PLAY: Violence decreased: 9

FEMALE FRIENDS: Violence decreased: 10, violence increased: 5

LEARNING: Violence decreased: 1, violence increased: 2

ON THE ROAD/PATH: Violence decreased: 31

IN THE GROUP: Violence decreased: 1

AT THE MARKET: Violence decreased: 7

PARENTS/GUARDIANS: Violence decreased: 4, violence increased: 1

FEAST/PARTY: Violence decreased: 2

HAIR SALOON: Violence decreased: 1, no change: 1

CHURCH: Violence decreased: 3

WORKING IN THE FIELD: Violence decreased: 2

Comment: The response reflected in Table 3 shows that the participants feel a positive change in the levels of violence in most areas of their lives. They feel there is less violence and that they are more secure.

One result that is interesting is the perception of increased violence among female friends. This was reported mostly in the Kagera area. One explanation of this is that the change in perception of their role as women (and their rights) could result in confrontation because this now challenges the cultural norm for girls/women in the Kagera area.

4. Why does your area feel safer?

This tool served two objectives: to confirm or reject the data gathered in 3. Above and to enlarge our understanding of additional factors of change by giving them a range of 11 possible factors.

Tool 3: What made the area safer?

Give participants the list of 11 factors that have made the area safer.

Participants got the following instruction:

If you feel that the violence in the different areas has decreased what in your opinion has contributed to make this difference. You can put as many ticks as you want to find items have been relevant.

Table 4: What has made our area safer

These are ranked in the order of importance the research participants gave them.

1. Because I feel that I can now defend myself: 69
2. Because I know that my body belongs to me: 62
3. Because I know how to avoid dangerous situations: 61
4. Because I changed my behavior: 55
5. Because my capacity to defend myself has grown: 55
6. Because I know how to explain what I want and what I like: 50
7. Because the adults (e.g. parents, guardians, teachers) feel happy about what we learned and they support us: 48
8. Because the potentially bad people fear the police who will arrest them when they commit sexual violence: 41
9. Because together we are strong: 36
10. Because people respect us more: 34
11. Because the boys know that we have been trained in self defense: 34

Comment: Table 4 gives clear evidence that the perception of decreased violence and the better protection of the participants is located very clearly in the development of the personal/individual competence of the participants - both in the areas of knowledge of techniques (1, 5) as well in the areas of increased awareness and development of self-protective behavior (2, 3, 4, 5, 6).

The role of external persons is there (as sympathetic or active supporters: 7, 8, or increasingly being respected by the social environment: 10, 11) but not as leading and dominant protective factors.

5. Why should my female friends do the self defense training?

Tool 4: Why join self defense

Instruction:

You want to convince your female friends to join the self defense. What would be the two main reasons you would tell them in order to convince them?

Table 5: Reasons to join the self defense training

The reasons are ranked in the order of frequency given by the research participants:

1. You can increase your self-confidence and self-protection: 55
2. You learn to know and to practice the techniques of self defense: 30
3. You get advice and you exchange opinions and your experiences: 21
4. You talk about sexual violence and you get sensitive about it: 17
5. You learn to respect your body: 17
6. You learn to respect other people: 7
7. You will be helped by the training to avoid to be seduced: 5
8. You will be integrated in to the groups and the society: 5
9. Your body will get stronger: 5
10. You will find friends among the course mates: 4
11. You will have the chance to make projects: 3
12. You avoid dangerous diseases such as HIH/AIDS: 2

Comment: The findings confirm the findings in 4. Above regarding the importance of personal competencies such as self-confidence (1), self-respect (5) and knowledge of self-defense techniques (2).

What appears stronger here than in the other results is the social aspect and the effect of gathering many girls together over a period of two weeks: the importance of talking together, especially to break the silence about sexual violence (3, 4), advising each other (3) and building friendships among each other (8, 10).

PART 3: SELF-DEFENSE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING

As we have developed and reflected on the Self Defense Training we have asked ourselves two questions. Can self defense training be seen as a psychosocial intervention? Can participating in a self defense course contribute to young people's emotional wellbeing? In this section of the report we share some of our reflections and conclusions.

In the manual "Are we making a difference?" the authors propose 13 indicators for use in measuring the possible impact of psychosocial interventions on children (Madoerin/Clacherty, "Are we making a difference", REPSSI 2009, p.11). These indicators are presented in the following table:

Table 5: Possible indicators of psychosocial well-being

AREA	INDICATOR
Intrapersonal	- Emotional self-awareness - Independence - Self-regard/self-worth
Interpersonal	- Social networks - Empathy - Integration into the community
Adaptability	- Flexibility - Problem-solving
Broadening coping alternatives	- Contribution to own basic needs - Normalisation - Skills and knowledge
General mood, or state of feelings	- Happiness vs. depression - Optimisms and future orientation.

We propose to “test” and analyze the contribution of the “Self Defense Training” towards improving the psychosocial well-being of girls through the lens of these indicators. We will use the findings of the impact assessment above, the content of the workbook and observation of the experiences of the young women who attended all four Self Defense training courses.

Indicator 1: Emotional self-awareness

Emotionally self-aware children are more able to paint a true(r) picture of reality – of themselves and of their environment. Emotional self-awareness is like a seismograph which helps them to be in a better control of situations and to minimize the stress. Additionally emotional self awareness will help the child to have a more colored picture of the reality: not monochrome (only grey), but polychrome.

We consider emotional self-awareness as critical for successful self-protection. The more children become aware of their own feelings the more likely they are to make choices which go along with their feelings. The modules in the Self defense Training about feelings (modules 10, 13-14), the felt degree of security (module 4), the module about the “inner voice” (module 11) and the module 18 (Self-defense starts long before an attack) train the girls to learn more about their feelings and to link them to situations. They become sensitized to the importance of being aware of feelings, being sensitive to them and to taking them seriously as an important tool for building their personal security. One of the objectives of the course is to train the girls in “emotional literacy” and to overcome the culturally-bounded and gender directed “emotional illiteracy”. When we show in Module 18 the John Kilaka picture that describes “Say what you mean – and don’t say ‘perhaps’ or ‘I don’t know’”, we make the clear link between “to know what you want and you don’t want” and the prevention/protection.

In Table 4 above the girls identified as one of the reasons for change in their environment that “I know to explain what I want and what I like” (this was ranked 6th with 50 girls mentioning it). But before you can EXPLAIN what you want and like you have to KNOW what you want. This link between emotion and cognition is explored by a number of leading theorists (see Appendix 2).

Indicator 2: Independence

“Independence” appears in the context of self-defense mainly as a gain in direction of (more) independence from the culturally dominant gender definitions and gender pattern - especially from these parts of the cultural definition which are harmful for the girls. There is a close link to what has been said concerning “emotional literacy” (Indicator 1) but now concretely applied to the physical female body and the living conditions as a girl. Especially the discourse “My body belongs to me” (e.g. in module 1) should strengthen the sense of the personal identity and of the untouchable property of my own body. That the participants have understood and internalized this message became evident in “3. How safe does my area feel now?” and 5. Why should my female friends do the self defense training? 62 mentioned that their area felt safer because “Because I know that my body belongs to me”.

Indicator 3: Self worth and self-respect

Having a high self-worth and self-respect operates as a protective factor and as a strong reason for self-care. An operational outcome of self-worth can be found in the degree of self-confidence.

In the results presented in Part 2 of this report there is impressive evidence of the increase of self-confidence as a product of the courses. This is often mentioned in the context of self-protection:

- Table 2: main reasons of the changes on the ladder of security: Position 1 with 52 mentioning: “Increased self-confidence”
- Table 4: What has produced changes in the environment: Position 1 with 69 mentioning: “Because I feel that I can now defend myself”
- Table 5: How you convince your female friend to join the self defense: Position 1 with 55 mentioning: “You can increase your self-confidence and self-protection”

During the assessment we asked the girls to give one or two examples of their new position on the ‘ladder of security’. Three examples follow:

- Nowadays when a boy sends somebody to call me then I tell him that I don’t want to see him and I have no time for anybody.
- Nowadays I don’t feel embarrassed to talk to a boy and I’m able to talk to him looking at his face and without doubts.
- Nowadays I tell the boy to leave me – I have this freedom because I learnt self-defense.

Module 16 of the training (“This will make me safer”) offers the participants the possibility to reflect on possible/intended changes in their personal life. This possibility to express what the participants intend “to do”, “to stop” and “to change” allows them to develop self-worth and self-respect.

Indicator 4: Social networks

According to the representatives of the “social historical theory of human development” (such as Vygotsky, Luria or Leontjew) all thinking and perception is embedded in a social context and environment. Vygotsky says even that all development (including cognitive development) is first social before becoming individual in the sense that all development results from the permanent challenges emanating from the society to the individual. (Rolf Oerter: Der oekologische Ansatz, p. 126 in “Entwicklungspsychologie” 1987)

The social context, therefore, plays an extremely important role when it comes to the assignment of “meanings” and “importances”. What is considered as “meaningful” and “important” is mediated and constructed socially, through the tradition, through the culture, through communication between people, through education, through the social entity the individual belongs to.

We call these condensates of giving meanings, norms, values, appreciation, motivation, support etc. “thinking entities” or “thinking collectives”. They will shape and influence the way a girl perceives what “it can”, what “it is” and what “it knows”.

These “thinking entities” play an even bigger role when it comes to re-shaping or even confronting cultural norms such as harmful gender definitions.

Although we locate the observed changes – according to the expressions of the participants – primarily in the area of personal and individual competence – we can’t underestimate the role of the gathering and the togetherness of so many girls during the nearly two weeks of training – this for two main reasons:

- The training provides a safe space where participants have the possibility to expose their painful (mostly hidden) experiences. This can be done either in front of the whole group (and is generally received with much empathy: see next indicator) – or more confidentially with one of the trainers or facilitators. This possibility is frequently used. We have seen many cases where the participants talk about these experiences for the first time in their life.
- The many contributions from the participants show that the personal painful experiences is NOT personal in the sense “that it is only ME” but it also the experiences of so many other sisters. This takes away an important part of the felt shame and feelings of guilt and builds up a feeling of togetherness and sisterhood, and constructs what we would call “a thinking entity” around the role of girls.

The importance of the setting of the courses (gathering over time) has been mentioned in Table 2 (“Solidarity among us girls” ranked 4th by the girls and mentioned by 17 of them), further in Table 4 (“Because together we are strong”, ranked 9th, mentioned by 36), and finally in table 5 under two headings: “You will get advice and you exchange opinions and your experiences”, (ranked 3rd, 21 mentioning, and “You will find friends among the course mates”, ranked 10th, 4 mentioning.)

The fact, that most of the participants joined the refreshment group after the course, might be another indicator for the created social coherence among them.

Indicator 5: Empathy

Empathy allows the child to develop and integrate emotional and social responses from watching other people, and in this way to expand their understanding of feelings and how people react to different situations.

When participants are ready to share their painful experiences (following the work in Module 2 about sexual violence) in the whole round of over 60 girls we observe how the stories and experiences touch most of the participants to the point that they start to cry (fortunately it was only once that the whole group cried). We listen to and assist young women who often share

critical situations. We think they are prepared to open up because of the high level of empathy from the group.

In Buganguzi/Kishanda we asked, after the presentation of two sad stories (where a number of participants cried), if we should stop asking for those testimonies - or if they find that it is also helpful to them. There was unanimity that we should keep this practice because “many of us experiences similar situations” and “we can learn how we can cope with it”. The latter observation shows us that the level of empathy (as a learning process) is also extended to the topic “Being a survivor of sexual violence” and can contribute to healing.

Indicator 6: Integration into the community

We don't work – until now – specifically on this indicator – for different reasons. One reason is our very limited capacity in terms of manpower. Further you need a “critical mass” i.e. a certain number of participants in order to balance the existing power relationship in a community. Don't let us also forget that “girls” suffer from a double discrimination: once as a child (“it is only a child”) and then as a girl (“it is only a girl”) and to change mainstream cultural values is a long-term process. But with the formation of the refreshment groups we started to work on the “visibility” and the presence of the self defense idea in the community.

We don't know if the decrease in violence in most sectors of their lives which is observed by the girls (see Table 3) is an indication that “the community” has adopted the idea that sexual violence should be banned and contested. We had a request from the Primary School from one village to provide self-defense courses to all female pupils. There are some indications from the results of the assessment that there is some impact on the community though:

Table 2: “Integration”, position 5, 4 mentioning

Table 4: “Because the adults – e.g. parents, guardians, teachers – feel happy about what we learned and they support us”, position 7, 48 mentioning.

Table 4: “Because people respect us”, position 10, 34 mentioning.

Table 5: “You will be integrated in to the group and the society”, position 9, 4 mentioning.

Indicator 7: Flexibility

Flexibility i.e. the capacity to use existing opportunities and have access to existing spaces through adaptations is very tricky in the realm of gender relationships where the other gender appears as both a loved and attractive person AND as a possible enemy and perpetrator. Flexibility means, in this complicated field, to transcend thinking in either/or and black/white - without losing your own identity – an extremely challenging task.

Three modules try to address this difficult task:

Module 8 talks about the role and the necessity to be aware of their own boundaries, Module 11 introduces the idea of the “inner voice” as a guide to handle flexibility, and Module 18 gives some concrete advice of internal and external preparation which can enable the girl to explore new spaces while keeping the situation under control.

Indicator 8: Problem-solving

Madoerin and Clacherty define the significance of this indicator for psychosocial well-being as follows:

“The ability to problem-solve gives children a sense of power and a strong locus of control, in other words, the capacity to influence their life, rather than to be a victim.... It reduces stress

and increases competencies. It contributes to the development of logical thinking and allows children to prioritize, for example making the most important and healthy choice.” (ibid. p.49).

Table 1 and Table 3 give overwhelming testimony to how the safety of the participants in different areas of their daily life has improved. Obviously children have been able to use the different tools they got during the training in order to influence their environment and solve problems of violence.

Table 3 and Table 4 show that they are also able to make healthy choices for themselves (Table 3: “Changes in the own behavior”, position 3, 28 mentioning, and table 4: “Because I changed my behavior”, position 4, 55 mentioning).

Changing personal behavior as part of problem-solving is dealt with in Module 16 (reflection on what the participants would like to change or to stop).

Unfortunately we do not have the technical means to record voices and body language. But one of the biggest changes we observe over the course of the training is how the girl’s voices and body language change, and that both become tools to strengthen the individual locus of control.

Indicator 9: Contribution to their own basic needs

While in the Madoerin/Clacherty manual “basic needs” are mostly understood as “material basic needs” it is important to broaden the understanding in this context. The “PSS Training Manual” listed in Module 3 the following basic needs of children:

1. Physiological needs of subsistence: Food, shelter, sleep etc.
2. Protection
3. Social inclusion: Sympathetic understanding and social attachment
4. Acceptance and acknowledgment: each child needs to be loved as a unique person i.e. psychological acceptance and physical acceptance
5. Play, stimulation and achievement
6. Each child must be supported to develop and to test assumption about its “self”: Self realization and coping capacity

The self-defense course contributes in manifold ways to satisfy basic needs of children if we see them in this broad way:

The contribution to “protection” is self-evident (and confirmed in the assessment). As mentioned earlier, the decision to implement the course as one continuous part contributes to creating bonds of friendships and an atmosphere of sympathetic understanding (see indicator 4 and 5). The self-defense training is aimed at empowering the girls to defend their physical acceptance and safety. They learn to build their coping capacities and are encouraged to express what they want (self realization). And finally seeing them continuing to practice even in the breaks indicates how the drive for achievement energizes them.

Indicator 10: Normalization

This indicator is even more tricky than indicator 7 (Flexibility) when it comes to gender based violence. Sexual violence is NOT normal and can’t be normal even when it has the appearance (in the dominant discourse about gender) to be “normal” or at least “semi-normal” and

“tolerable” (the nature of man is like this...). The training should provide impulses to normalization in the sense to allow girls “to structure their day, which provides for the safety of routine, and therefore, reduces stress” (Madoerin/Clacherty *ibid.* p. 54).

The whole course intends to construct and contribute to the “safety of daily routines” of girls – weather at home, at school, at their home chores, but also in their relationships with boys. Table 3 gives an optimistic picture in the sense that most of the participants indicate a shift towards a less violent “normal” life.

Indicator 11: Skills, knowledge and information

Knowledge, skills and information has the most prominent position in the impact assessment after self-confidence, and confirms the protective function knowledge, skills and information have:

Table 2: “Knowledge”: position 2 (with 30 mentioning)

Table 4: “Because I feel that I can now defend myself”: position 1 (69 mentioning)

Table 5: “You learn to know and to practice the techniques of self defense”: position 2 (30 mentioning).

Not reflected in the assessment are the intensive and long discussions around Module 17 of the Self Defense Training (What do we need to know about HIV/AIDS). It became evident that most of the girls miss the opportunities to ask about the many questions and concerns they have. These include the fear of being infected due to rape or to agreed unprotected sexual intercourse and the need to have an opportunity to be tested in a protected setting. (In the last course 42 out of 64 girls went for testing – either because they had been raped or they had started unsafe sexual relationships).

Indicators 12: Happiness vs. depression, and 13: Optimism and future orientation

The two indicators look at the general state of feelings and should give some indication about the level of energy which is available for the present (in the form of the daily dominant “mood”) and for the long-term goals (in the form of future orientation and its realizations).

Sexual violence is a deeply traumatizing event in the life of a girl, which deeply affects her psychological resources.

“Trauma” is a Greek word that means “wound”. When we fall down and our knee is bleeding, we are “wounded”.

In this same way, shocking events can hurt our minds and souls. We are never prepared for harmful things like extreme violence, rape, war, or earthquakes. They happen unexpectedly, and can disturb or even change the course of our lives. In this case, we can describe the affected person as “traumatized”. Sometimes it may not be a single event, but a series of events that create a heavier burden on the child. Continuous sexual harassment, long term sexual abuse and a permanently unsafe environment can have the same effect as a shocking single event.

(PSS-manual, module 10, “Trauma”, Handout)

From the different testimonies of the girls we could observe the frequent and various links between sexual violence and poverty.

Although research tells us that 9 of 10 cases of traumatization might recover after a certain time and that “only” one of the cases might experience bigger problems afterwards, sexual violence - especially in the form of rape – is a serious attack on the person and her identity and corporal integrity. Below some of the reactions often observed in the case of traumatization:

Acute stress reaction just after the event might include:

- feelings of "numbness": you can't talk to the person
- limited awareness: you don't remember what happened
- disorientation: you don't know where you are
- withdrawal from society – not feeling the need to be with other people
- body signals indicate a heavy heart beat or heavy sweating, etc.

Long-term reaction might include

- regular memories of the event in sudden, very life-like pictures that spring to mind.
- continuous acting out and repeating the terrible event in play
- continuous nightmares about the event and disturbed sleep
- a feeling of being "dead inside", not being able to experience feelings in the usual way. He/she feels unable to love or to respond to loving feelings from others
- He/she tries to protect him/herself by not thinking of what happened, and avoids activities and situations that may remind him/her of the traumatic event.

It is evident that those reactions influence to a big extent the two indicators.

Kwa Wazee has no baseline and didn't investigate the impact of the self-defense course on the daily mood and the future orientation.

But the course provides a set of items which are acknowledged to be supportive in cases of psychotraumatization:

- New resources: skills in self defense, new friends, girl-children with similar experiences, a caring and empathic environment, a stronger feeling for the strength of the own body (through the physically challenging training and module 7: “Our body, also a weapon”), things you are good at (Module 15: “Concentrate what you can do”).
- Training in interpersonal skills (module 5: “Support”, module 19: “These are my rights – and those help me to get them”, module 20: What to do in the case of sexual harassment – negotiation skills”) including a strong emphasis on self-respect (module 1: “Me and my body – my body belongs to me”, module 8: “We all have (and need) boundaries”, module 16: “This will make me safer”, module 18: “Self defense starts a long time before an attack”)
- Support to build up a more powerful and more effective regulation of emotions which can result in more emotional stability and in more control of the own emotional status, and in more competence to handle emotions and feelings. Further it might reduce vulnerability and facilitate to build positive experiences (module 10: “Feelings”, module 12: “Shame”, module 13: “Fear”, module 14: “Anger”).

Kwa Wazee might have the possibility in the follow-up with victims of rape to gather more precise information on the impact of the self defense course on the two indicators.

Conclusion:

We hope to have shown the manifold and extensive impact of the self-defense training on the psychosocial well-being of girl-children and girl-adolescents. We are convinced that it is one of the strongest “stand-alone” tools in the tool box of psychosocial interventions.

The impact assessment is also a strong call for developing an adequate and appropriate tool, which is directed to boy-children and boy-adolescents!

Nshamba, April 2011/Kurt Madoerin-Jovinatha Joseph-Juster Joseph

Appendix 1: Reflecting on the Thomas theorem

The Thomas' theorem is underpinned by the findings in modern neuropsychology, especially by the finding concerning neuroplasticity and the role of "Long Term Potentiation":

In modern neuroscience, plasticity generally refers to the ability of the neural substrate of the brain to change or be modified as a result of some change in conditions, among them variety of environmental experience. In contemporary perspectives, experience is broadly construed to include not only external events but also internal events such as the effects of trauma, child maltreatment....and the consequences of development and aging." (Curtis W.J and Cicchetti, D. (2003) "Moving research on resilience into the 21st century: Theoretical and methodological considerations in examining the biological contributions to resilience", Development and Psychopathology, 15 (2003) p .780).

Self defense is certainly a quite intensive external event which results in "activated neuronal networks". Huethers describes this process that "there is a development from the initially tiny 'nerve-paths' to more and more solid roads and finally to broad and veritable high-ways. A primary coping strategy has become a long-established program which decides on the whole further thinking, feeling and acting of the concerned person"" (Huether (2006), "Bedienungsanleitung fuer ein menschliches Gehirn" p. 62).

In neuroscience this phenomena is called "Long Term Potentiation" (LTP) and means that synapses which fire will not only be structurally strengthened and fortified i.e. connected to other synapses into neuronal circuits BUT they will transmit stronger signals when used again in the future. Different factors seem to influence the efficacy of the synapses connecting the nerve cells to complex networks and systems, among them the frequency of being activated, and the success which is followed by the activation. The duration of the self defense course of 12-14 days is certainly suitable to promote the development of LTP's, another factor for promotion of LTP's is the physical training which increases the success of living safer in the future.

Appendix 2: Thinking about the link between emotion and cognition

Antonio Damasio has developed in his book "Descartes' Error: Emotions, Reasons and the Human Behavior" (1994/2006) the concept of the "somatic markers" which shape – through the feelings – the reasoning.

Antonio Damasio formulated the hypothesis that – evolutionary - the cognitive system is an extension of the automatic emotional system and that emotions – via the "somatic markers – have different important functions in the cognitive processes, e.g. to reinforce the "salience of a premise and therefore to shift the conclusion in direction of that premises. Feelings can also be supportive to keep present different facts in the conscience which have to be considered for a reasonable decision" (Damasio 2006, p. IV).

Damasio describes "somatic markers" as a somatic condition, as a feeling which "marks" an imaginal picture and directs the attention on an expected negative or positive result which could result of a certain activity. He says that a negative somatical marker could act like an alarm bell, a positive somatical marker like a start signal. Somatic markers – so Damasio – don't substitute the cognitive thinking, but support the cognitive process.

Another scholar who investigates in the link between feeling and cognition is Luc Ciompi ("Ciompi, Luc (1997): „Die emotionalen Grundlagen des Denkens. Entwurf einer fraktalen Affektlogik“, Ciompi, Luc (2007): „Gefuehle, Affekte, Affekylogik“).

Ciompi's central hypothesis is that emotional components can't not only be separated from any form of thinking, but also that emotions fulfill a crucial role for the organization and the integration of all received signals which he calls the impact of the emotions as an "operator". (Ciompi 1997, p. 93). (In physics any force which acts on variables and influences them is called "operator"). Feeling and thinking, emotions and cognition, affectivity and logic (in a broad sense) act inseparable to together (Ciompi 1997, p. 11, Ciompi 2007, p. 14).

Ciompi assumes a number of the "effect of operator" of the emotions:

- Emotions are important – or even decisive – producers and suppliers of energy. They can either accelerate (e.g. as motivators) or slow down cognitive activities.
- Emotions determine at each moment the attention we pay to the outside and inner world. Ciompi says that we select out of all possible cognitive perceptions for further processing mainly those perception that are consistent with our inner basic mood.

- Similar effects of operator can be observed within groups. The basic emotional mood determines not only (at least partly) the distribution of our attention, but also how long and how intensive the attention remains attached to a certain cognitive item.
- Emotions act as floodgates and doors which open or close the access to diverse memory stores.
- Emotions create continuity and homogeneity . They operate as “glue” or “connective tissue” between different cognitive elements.
- Emotions determine the priorities and the hierarchies of our cognitive content i.e. what is important and what comes first.
- Emotions help to reduce complexity. The individual will probably experience confusions, irritation and stress if emotions can’t fulfill this functions (e.g. in double-bind situations) (Ciompi 1997, p. 95-99).

Appendix 3: Case Study

S. is today 19 years old and is studying in form four (Secondary School).

Her case happened when she was in Primary School Standard Six (she was at this time 14 years old). She was selected to be the library prefect. She had to support a female teacher who was working in the library.

One day, when she was arranging books in the library, a male teacher came into the library and asked her for sex but she rejected. The teacher didn’t stop to follow her - he continued insisting and asking for sex. The girl didn’t disclose this to anybody because she was young and was afraid to be beaten.

Later he used another “technique”: he asked to come every Sunday for cleaning and doing other work in the library but S. didn’t go.

What happened after was this: the teacher dislocated the books in the library and dropped others on the floor.

After he went to accuse her to the head teacher claiming that S. is throwing the books, dislocating books and the library is not well arranged. The head teacher called S., punished her and asked her to stay the whole day arranging the library.

After the school hours – it was raining - , the teacher followed her in the library and offered her first to pay 100/= for having sex, and when she refused he increased to 2000/= . She rejected the money. From here the teacher forced her to have sex – he raped her. She shouted but there were nobody came to help her although there were some children at the compound of the school. In the compound of her school there were children living there, they heard her shouting and screaming but they didn’t come to rescue her.

Finally she went back home feeling pains. The next day she managed to go to school. She explained the incidence to the female library teacher. The library teacher felt sorry to her and requested her not to disclose this to anybody. S. kept this secret and didn’t disclose to anybody else. But the children who heard her shouting continued teasing her and abusing her every time. She never disclosed the rape (after disclosing to the female teacher responsible for the library) to anybody until now in the self defense course.