



RAISING TEENAGERS UGANDA- 2023 ANNUAL REPORT



www.raisingteenagers.org



MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Another Year has come to an end and we are excited to bring to you our accomplishments for 2023.

We at Raising Teenagers Uganda would appreciate everyone that has supported us in our campaign to Keep Girls in school and End Child Marriage. We have embraced the exceptional role to come with working in partnership and collaboration with other to address the pressing issues affecting communities today.

Through our school and community Clubs we have empowered young girls with Leadership skills which has enabled a number of them to compete that take up leadership positions. We have prioritize life skills development such as effective communication skills, problem solving, goal setting, time management, resilience so that young people can effectively navigate daily life and achieve personal and professional growth.

This year we have reached out and supported a total number of 8,500 girls with Re usable sanitary towels through training and menstrual education so that periods don't become a reason for girls to miss or drop out of school. We have provided guidance and counseling services to over 25,000 school boys and girls. We have reached out to 1300 parents with trainings on Positive parenting practices and 80 Local Leaders with information on Child protection and well-being.

At Raising Teenagers Uganda, we recognize the fact that in order to achieve sustainable change and enduring menstrual and gender equality, accurate and empowering education is extremely important not only for women and girls but also for men and boys so that they appreciate the urgent need to address issues of stigma and achieve period equality. With each lesson, we are not only imparting knowledge but also promoting compassion and inclusivity for generations to come.

I take the opportunity to appreciate all the schools that have open their doors to us so that our school-based programs can be implemented to empower and transform the young generation. To the students, teachers, parents, local leaders and the staff at RTU, I am extremely thankful and look forward to doing even much more in the coming year.

To our Partners and Donors, thank you for supporting our efforts to transform society. We look forward to impacting on the lives of many more girls as we work towards Keeping Girls in School to End Child Marriage.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nankunda Hope Mwijuka'.

NANKUNDA HOPE MWIJUKA



Dear Friends and Partners of Raising Teenagers Uganda,

It brings me great Pleasure to present to you the 2023 Raising Teenagers Uganda-Annual Report with updates about what we have been able to achieve through our different programs including Education, Water and Sanitation, Sexual Reproductive Health Education, Child Protection and Safe Guarding as well as Advocacy and Gender Equality.

This Annual Report presents our accomplishments and some of our collective efforts in preventing and Responding to Child Marriage and Teenage pregnancy at community and National Level. We have witnessed in increase in enrolment for girls in school as well as improved performance at different levels. Through partnerships and collaborations with district leadership, school administrators, community leaders and different champions, we are making strides and improving lives of young people significantly.

We continue to embrace community led approaches to end child marriage which involve empowering local communities to take action and address the root causes of the practice. We are also creating more awareness on the benefits of educating girls so that parents can be at the forefront of the campaign to keep girls in school.

We seek more partnerships and collaboration from private sectors so that they also join the efforts to transform communities through corporate social responsibility. Let's walk a Journey of transformation Together.

On a Special Note, I appreciate my fellow Board Members, the staff of Raising Teenagers Uganda, and partners who have worked tirelessly to make a lasting difference in the lives of young people. I also appreciate our partners and Donors for believing in our mission and supporting our efforts to keep girls in school until they complete their education.

As you read this report, remember that our key areas of celebration for 2023 and many that we have left out give us lots of hope for 2024 and many years to come. A journey that we would wish to continue moving with you because our strength is in our togetherness.

Thank You and God Bless You,

Yours Faithfully

WINFRED TUHUMWIIRE.

INTRODUCTION



We Mentor Young People and Watch them get Transformed.

ABOUT US:

Raising Teenagers Uganda is a non-profit organization that has existed since 2014 mainly working towards creating a safe space for engagement of adolescents to discuss and debate issues affecting them. We empower them with skills and knowledge on assertiveness, communication skills as well as sexual and reproductive health education. Offering them career guidance and managing their dreams and aspirations is our mandate.

OUR VISION

A world where all girls feel fully confident and participating in the social, economic and

political development of their communities in future

OUR MISSION

To provide a platform for Teenagers' engagement on a wide range of issues that impact on their lives and promote proper transition from childhood to adulthood.

OBJECTIVES

Enhancing an enabling environment that supports the transition of young people from adolescence to adulthood

- To advocate for the rights of the marginalized Girls and ensuring access and retention in schools
- To provide Guidance and Counseling programs for adolescents in schools and higher institutions of learning
- To sensitize Parents and Teachers on the Importance of Education through school out reaches and Community Dialogues
- To promote for school-based clubs which give girls an opportunity to share issues affecting them and seek appropriate guidance.

AREAS OF FOCUS

- Education
- Child Protection and Safe Guarding
- Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Services
- Sexual Reproductive Health Education
- Advocacy and Gender Equality

- Child Protection and Safe Guarding

AREAS OF OPERATION

Our organization operates in 5 districts namely **Wakiso, Kampala(Slums), Isingiro, Kamuli, Sheema and Bushenyi.** We also partner with some organizations located in different regions of Uganda and with them we manage to reach out to different girls in different parts of the country with the sole aim of supporting them to stay in school until they complete their education.

2023 HIGHLIGHTS

1. Advancing Girls Leadership through our School and community clubs. 280 girls have been benefited from this program by attending the various mentorship camps.
2. Influencing Inclusive Access to Girls Education- Breaking Barriers; Building Futures.
3. We organized Girl Champion Awards under the theme- Celebrating Outstanding achievements of Girls and Young Women across all sectors.
4. RTU reached out to 400 adolescent Girls in Nakivale Refugee Settlement to information on SRHR and the dangers associated with Teenage Pregnancy and Child Marriage
5. Movement Building and Advocacy Leadership program for Africa and Asia organized by Girls Not Brides.
6. UNITE for Girls Night on the International Day of the Girl Child.
7. On 18th November, RTU hosted University Students on the

- International day for Prevention Healing and Justice to end Childhood sexual Violence with Brave Movement.
8. We have provided guidance and counseling services to over 12,000 school boys and girls and provided sanitary products to girls so that they can menstruate with dignity and respect.
 9. Our Annual Hiking event brought together 65 Organisations to support young girls in Kisoro District.
 10. RTU attended the Girls Opportunity Alliance convening for members in Greece.
 11. With support from Girls First Fund we are implementing a project- Preventing and Responding to Child Marriage at in 5 Parishes.
 12. We together with other Girls Not Brides members organized the Central Region Girl Summit in Buikwe District.
 13. We held our 5th Annual Hiking Event which brought together 65 Hikers from 25 Partner Organizations and supported over 600 girls with reusable sanitary products.

PROGRAMS

Our education thematic area promotes equal and quality educational opportunities for every child through school fees scholarships, re-entry of child mothers back to school, engaging parents, and school outreaches.

Our programs are designed to promote Child Protection and ensure

that every girl is able to achieve her full potential.

In partnership with FEMNET- African Women's Development and communication Network, we have strengthened the capacity of 60 Girls and Young Women from the different TVET centers in Advocacy Leadership, communication and set them out as Champions for Change.

These are girls that have taken up male dominated professions and are proving to the world that what boys and men can do, Girls and women can also do. These are female engineers, mechanics, plumbers, welders, carpenters to mention but a few.

Considering that Girls and young women are the biggest victims of climate change in our societies, they should be given priority as well as capacity building in combating the impacts of climate change which is also included in our program.

Through this program we have also worked closely with the ministry of Gender, ministry of Education and sports as well as KCCA- Kampala Capital City Authority to ensure that the available government opportunities for women and girls are made known so that more girls can take them up.

Advancing Girls' Leadership program aims at empowering young people with skills to take up leadership positions in their schools and communities.

Through the Holiday Camps we are able to host Girls from different School and equip them with life skills that can enable them to feel but



ADVANCING GIRLS LEADERSHIP

Advancing Girls' Leadership program aims at empowering young people with skills to take up leadership positions in their schools and communities.

Through the Holiday Camps we are able to host Girls from different School and equip them with life skills that can enable them to feel safe and enable them to stay in school until they complete.

The camps help to direct the girls' attention and efforts towards their academics through setting clear objectives and plans for their future.

With Partners like **Engender Girls Mentorship** we are glad to build a generation of transformed, empowered and thought Young Leaders.



Girls Camps and events provide safer environments for the girls to freely express themselves and learn from each other.

Menstrual Hygiene Management



RTU continues to reach out to girls in rural Uganda and support some girls to menstruate with dignity ensuring that they don't miss school because of their periods.

We don't only distribute sanitary products to girls but also train them on how to make their own reusable sanitary pads for sustainability

Menstruation is normal and Natural but we have witnessed a number of girls drop out of school because of their periods and others are forced to get married as soon as they begin their periods. We have organized sessions with Parents and sensitized them about the need to support their girls with basic needs including sanitary products.

Our intervention has improved school attendance for girls and will enable them to complete their education with constant support and programs that aim at MHM.

We support Young Girls with Sanitary Products to keep them in school.

This year we have carried out a number of activities related to MHM with the purpose of breaking stigma around menstruation and ensuring that we reduce on the number of girls that miss or drop out of school because of menstruation.

Sensitization campaigns both in schools and communities have been done. We have reached out to 36 schools this year where we have provided sanitary pads to the needy girls as well as train teachers and boys about the need to support the girl child.

The boys have been meaningfully engaged and informed that menstruation is normal and happens to all girls and women in their lives. Therefore, the need to be supportive and break the stigma has been well emphasized as opposed to humiliating and embarrassing them when they stain their dresses both at school and at home.



Girls in Kisoro after receiving sanitary products.

OUR 2023 HIKING EVENT – Mt Sabinyo in Kisoro District.



Our Annual Hiking events are a form of fundraising strategy that aims at encouraging everyone out their to do something for the Girl Child.

This year we took 65 Hikers to Kisoro District and they were able to not only enjoy the beauty of their country but also contribute towards sanitary products for 600 girls in Kisoro.

The event also gives partners the opportunity to connect and build new synergies for collaboration. Some of the organizations that joined us for this year's hiking event include;

1. Irise Institute East Africa

2. Women's Probono Initiative
3. Scope Foundation Uganda
4. Assorted Trends Africa
5. Totya Platform Uganda
6. Twekonyere Foundation
7. The Hunger Project- Uganda
8. Health Promotion and Rights Watch Uganda.
9. Wezeshya Girls Network
10. Kaleke Kasome Foundation
11. Dream Teens Uganda
12. Gejja Women Foundation
13. Tip Travels
14. Period Equity Africa
15. Amity for Humanity Initiative Uganda
16. Engender Girls Mentorship
17. Raising Teenagers Uganda
18. Dream Again Africa
19. Dokitar App
20. Civ Source Africa
21. Just Like my Child Foundation
22. Anthill Foundation
23. LATO Milk Company
24. Different People that came as individuals.
25. Brave Movement Uganda

We appreciate the power that comes with working together in partnership and collaboration to address challenges affecting Young people in different communities and we are always looking forward to another Hiking event that brings more people on board.

Our Annual Hiking Events started in 2017 and we have since then supported over 70,000 girls with sanitary products in different parts of the Country.

RTU School Clubs



The clubs gave girls an opportunity to open up and speak about issues affecting them both in their homes and communities. This helps to give us direction on how to address some other the challenges especially as we meet their parents and community leaders.

We hold conversations around the dangers associated with teenage pregnancy and child marriage as we challenge them to be part of the solution and report any form of abuse that could be happening in their communities.

They helped to build their self-esteem and confidence levels as well as leadership skills. We get to share SHR Information with them to enable them make informed decisions about their lives.



Our Schools clubs are comprised of both girls and boys and we emphasize the need for all of them to stay in school and complete their education.

Our school clubs offer platforms for students to engage in activities they are passionate about including debates, drama, poetry which foster creativity, team work and personal growth.

They provide an opportunity for social interaction, skills building, leadership development exploring interests outside academic curriculum.

EDUCATION SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

At RTU we are supporting 18 girls and 5 boys with sponsorship so that they can access education and complete school. These students are from vulnerable families but yet very bright and capable of transforming societies in future.

They are supported by individual sponsors who have reached out to us and offered to support this program so that children can achieve their dreams in life. Our Sponsors are from both Uganda and outside Uganda.

We appreciate you all that have made it possible for the children to access education. You are making a significant contribution towards achieving the sustainable development goals by 2023.

Education sponsorships play a great role in enabling students to access quality education especially those from underprivileged backgrounds facing financial Challenges. We call upon more well wishers to join us and make it possible for us to send more girls to school because Education is the greatest investment and the best gift a child can ever receive.



Anitah is one of the Girls on our sponsorship program and she just completed her O'level.

She has now joined A'level with a Combination of Physics, Economics and Mathematics PEM/Ict and she looks forward to being an Engineer.

“When I received my results and saw how very well I had performed, I was filled with great Joy because that meant that my sponsor would be extremely happy that she made a decision to support me to stay in school. I'm now looking forward to taking PEM/Ict and I believe I will make a very good Engineer in a few years to come. Thank You Raising Teenagers Uganda for making this possible for me. I will forever be grateful for this opportunity to study in a my 1st Choice school. Anitah”

RTU LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMS

Our Livelihood programs are making it possible for single mothers to keep their children in school and this will help to reduce the cases of school dropouts and child marriage.

One of the beneficiary family is now sending their son Mukisa to secondary school and he is the first to go past primary level of education and he is committed to ensuring that his young sisters stay in school and complete their education so that they don't fall victims of Child Marriage like his 3 elder sisters.

In order to end child marriage we must work closely with men and boys so that they are able to appreciate the importance of Girl Child education. We doing this and so much more with support from **Girls First Fund**.



Mukisa's family received one Goat in 2019 but it has since multiplied and now have 21 goats. This has become a game changer in the family because the mother can now get school fees and scholastic materials by selling some of the goats as the multiply.

JOINT CLIMATE ACTION PROJECT - An Exchange Program with students in Germany

We had a 3 months exchange program with students in Germany and students in Uganda. The program was run through use of phones and laptops where the students

would connect and get to know the climate situation in either country.

The program also created an opportunity for the students to ask as many questions as possible about the cultures and programs in the different countries. For example, students in Uganda found out that students in Germany do not put on school uniform while going to school while those in Germany were surprised that students in Uganda have to cut their hair short while attending school.

The project was designed to share and learn about the climate solutions that should be embraced so that mother earth can be saved. They shared about the causes of the current climate change which include; deforestation, improper waste management, industrial activities, Land use Changes, poor garbage disposal among others.

Planting and taking care of trees is very important and the students were able to plant fruit trees which they are taking care of as a means of protecting their environment. We want to continue working with the students in different schools to address issues of climate change and we are looking out for more partners to join us and support our efforts in meaningfully engaging young people as agents of positive change in society for generations to come.



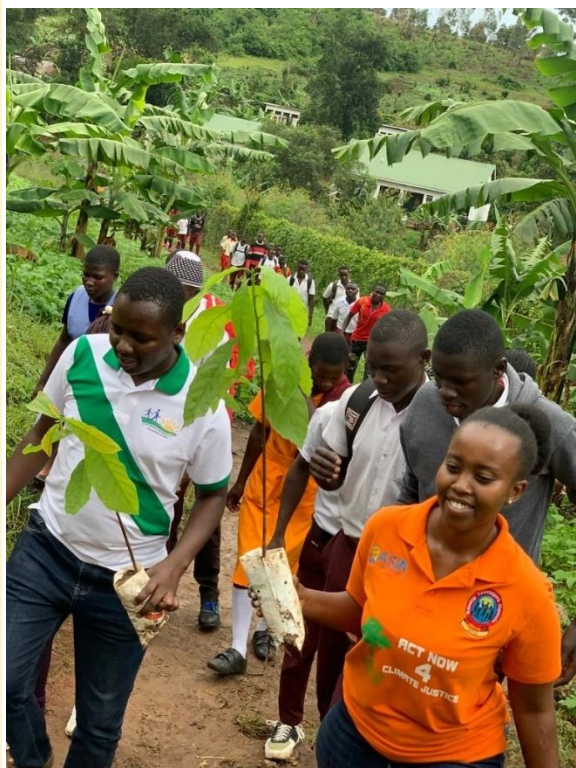
Post International Day of Forests:

We are mindful about the issues of climate change and how they are affecting young girls and leading to increase in Child Marriage. This year we worked in partnership with other CSOs to take climate education in schools in Kasanda District.

Students had the opportunity to learn more about climate change and their role in addressing the current challenges in order to achieve Climate Justice.

We planted 500 fruit trees at Forest High School and students committed to take care of the trees so that they can grow well and benefit many more young people for generations to come.





Together we can address issues of Climate Change through working directly with schools and communities.

1. JOINT EVENTS WITH OTHER PARTNERS:

- Girl Champions Awards
- GNBU Central Region Girl Summit

- International Day for Prevention Healing and Justice to End Childhood Sexual Violence
- The Gathering of Givers
- GNBU National Girl Summit 2023

INTERNATION DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD 2023.

RTU with other Partners including Kaleke Kasome Foundation, Uganda Cares, Girls Must Uganda, SRHR Alliance, Irise Insitute East Africa among others organised the Girl Champion Awards that were aimed at shinning a spotlight on Young girls at that are making a signification contribution in their communities.

This was intended to celebrate outstanding achievements of girls and young women across all sectors and award them for their hard work. The different categories included;

1. Girl Innovation Award
2. Survivor's Award
3. Unique Abilities Award
4. SRHR Girl Champion Award

The program was open to Girls between 14-25 years of age based in the central Region in Uganda.



The Girl Champion Awards created a platform for young girls to share their stories and inspire thousands that were following closely.

Young people need a lot of motivation and inspiration to achieve their full potential and we are honored to make it possible for them to thrive and receive such recognition for their outstanding efforts.



The winners went home with Awards and it was indeed such a great opportunity to see them excited and ready to continue making a difference in their communities.

GNBU CENTRAL REGION GIRL SUMMIT- Buikwe District.

The event was hosted by Raising Teenagers Uganda in Partnership with other members of the network based in the central Region. The summit brought together 250 participants including; district officials, CSOs, Religious and Cultural Leaders, Local Leadership, Students from different schools, the media and parents.

The Theme of the Summit was A United Society Free from Child Violence. This was brought forward by Church of Uganda which had declared the month of November as the Month for Children.

This presented an opportunity for young people to speak up about the challenges they are facing and seek guidance where necessary. The presentations from young people caught the attention of the Chief guest- The Executive Director: National Children's Council under the Ministry of Gender, Labor and social Development.

Some of the issues raised by children include;

- Parental neglect.
- increased cases of teenage pregnancy and child marriage.
- Drug abuse among children.
- Poor communication between parents and their children.
- Lack of scholastic materials.
- High level of school dropouts.
- Lack of role models in their communities.
- Walking long distances to and from school.
- Sexual abuse and exploitation
- Lack of good example from elders among others.

Much appreciation to the District Leadership for all the support that led to that success of the event.



18TH NOVEMBER: WORLD DAY FOR PREVENTION HEALING AND JUSTICE TO END CHILDHOOD SEXUAL VIOLENCE:

On this day, Raising Teenagers Uganda hosted other members of **Brave Movement Uganda** and University students. The aim was to have a conversation with university

students on how to address issues of sexual violence in institutions of Higher Learning.

In a more extensive discussion, university students shared the extent to which sexual violence including “Sex for Marks” affects many students and the urgent need for implementation of policies and strategies to address this problem.

Student Leaders were given the opportunity to share what they are doing as leaders to ensure that the policies in place to prevent and respond to sexual violence cases are implemented. It was observed that many students fear to report cases of sexual violence for fear of humiliation and embarrassment which puts their lives at risk.

Some of the students indicated that they can't report to student leaders for fear of judgement and criticism. They called upon the Leaders to be friendly and accommodative so that the affected students can find it easy to open up and report.

A student Leader from Makerere University GRC shared about the existing online platform when students can report cases and seek Justice. The platform is called **KISH – Kicking Sexual Violence out of Higher Institutions of Learning**. This project is supported by the Government of the Republic of Uganda through **Makerere University Research and Innovations Fund (Mak-RIF)**

Some of the students shared their stories and they are stories to change the future of other students for a greater good. One of the stories was for a student who missed graduating because she couldn't give in to the sexual demands from a lecturer who had promised to adjust her marks in exchange for sex. And while she missed graduation, she is happy that she couldn't sell herself for marks.

There is however urgent need to create opportunities and platforms for such students

to speak up and report cases of sexual abuse so that other students can be saved. The need to **NAME & SHAME** the Lecturers that are making life difficult for students should be brought to light so that another generation can be saved.



The BE BRAVE EVENT was also a Safe Space to share how Students can protect themselves.

- Students were encouraged to be informed about the definition of sexual harassment so that they can protect themselves.
- Students should get information about the institutional policies regarding sexual harassment and safeguarding.
- Take an active role in fostering and creating environments free from sexual harassment.
- Look out for trainings on sexual harassment prevention.
- Report cases of sexual harassment to your supervisor immediately, or to a higher authority if your supervisor is the harasser. Never be afraid to report a comment, action, or gesture by somebody that made you feel uncomfortable.
- Where possible, speak with the individual directly and inform him or her that you feel that kind of behavior is inappropriate.
- Seek support from family members, friends, colleagues, Dean of studies or Vice chancellor's office.
- Document the harassment in writing as soon as possible.

UNITE FOR GIRLS EVENT.

On International Day of the Girl Child, Raising Teenagers Uganda hosted 25 young women and Girls to have a conversation about ending Child Marriage.

It was a platform for them to share what they are doing in their different communities to transform lives of girls and give them opportunities to thrive. RTU was one of the 45 hosts globally that brought together women and girls to share learn and connect as they front the campaign to End Child Marriage.



HEALTH CAMP IN BUIKWE.

Through Health Camps we are able to reach out to thousands of women and girls in rural communities and support them to access various medical services.

Did you know that cervical cancer is the 4th common cancer among women? Did you also know that women living with HIV are 6 times more likely to develop cervical cancer compared to women without HIV?

This information informs our decision to work with other partners to prioritize medical camps which enables us to directly improve lives of women and girls and children. There was HIV Testing, Cervical Cancer testing, Sickle-cell testing, malaria testing and

treatment, family planning services, Counseling services and more.

On this medical camp we touched lives of 420 people and we believe that this will enable them to lead health lives after receiving numerous information.



4. Guidance and Counseling Services

We provide counseling services in three schools with the purpose of promoting positive discipline among students in schools.

This service is important for both boys and girls because lately most parents have not embraced the need to speak to their children and guide them in how to become responsible citizens of our nation. Our sessions help students to acquire skills that can help them manage and deal with emotional and personal problem.

Proper counseling helps to incorporate valuable lessons in their daily life. Some sessions involve career guidance, where the students are advised on the selection of courses and different career paths. It's important to prepare them for life after school and what to expect in the different fields they might opt for.

Through this program;

1. Students are given proper guidance on how to deal with psychological problems which

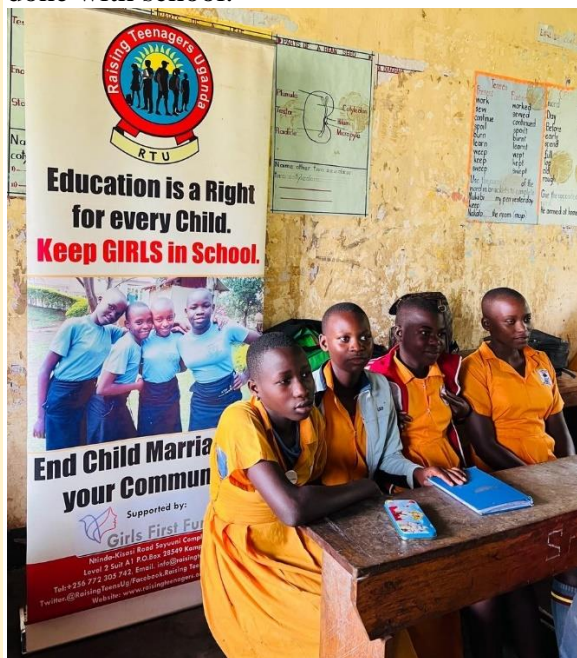
can badly impact their studies. Through these sessions, the students are able to develop certain problem-solving skills which to some extent help them deal with particular issues surrounding their lives both at school and at home

2. The students are advised on how to cope with different situations they tend to face in their school life. For instance, how should they talk politely or relate with their peers and teachers. This advice gives them perspective on how they should behave and relate.

3. It helps to shape a student's behavior and instill enough discipline in them.

4. Students appreciate the need to relate well with other people in their school community which also helps them to learn to appreciate other people in their environment.

5. Students get comprehensive advice on career, courses and jobs that enable them to make a proper and informed choice and understand what they can do after they are done with school.



We Provide Counseling and Guidance through school outreach programs.

We also provide Individual counseling to students who are not comfortable sharing their challenges in groups.

This helps them open up freely and receive the guidance they need.



Individual counseling ongoing



Listening to young People gives us the direction of how to help them.

Preventing and Responding to Child Marriage in Namayumba.

Since 2019, with support from Girls First Fund we have been running this program in Namayumba Subcounty where we directly work with Schools, local leaders and parents to create awareness and support more girls to stay in school until they complete their education. We also build their Leadership skills through our clubs both in schools and communities.

As a result, we have seen increased retention levels for girls in school as well as reporting of cases of child abuse and exploitation at Police.

2 New Classrooms have been constructed at Bukondo Chance primary school to cater for the increase enrolment of girls in school. This is such a great milestone considering the fact that when we started our program in this

school in 2019, the school had only 110 students and now they are over 400 students in the school.



The Joy that comes with new buildings at Bukondo Primary School.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND LOCAL LEADERS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE



RTU works closely with parents and local leaders to promote positive parenting practices and sensitize parents about the benefits of keeping girls in school.

parents realize that they can only benefit more if they keep their Girls in school.

With parents, we also share about Child protection and the need to be friendly to their children so that they can feel safe to share the challenges they are facing both in the community and at school.

Issues around failure of some Parents to provide scholastic materials to their children come out a lot when we are having sessions with young people in the schools so these meeting give us the chance to remind the parents about their roles and responsibilities.

We have seen more parents embrace the need to send all children to school but we are also mindful that many boys have resorted to boda-boda riding after dropping out of school.

All parents are encouraged to send all children to school because education is the greatest investment they can ever make.

We also have parents that have helped us to identify abusers and perpetrators in the community and we have been able to follow up and get some of them arrested by the law enforcement officers.

Our dialogues with parents and leaders also bring out the importance of giving girls who have given birth an opportunity to resume formal education and be able to complete their education. This has been embraced and now we are seeing more girls being rescued from Child Marriage and support to go back to school.



A Dialogue meeting with Parents and Leaders in Namayumba.



The Parents of Bukondo Parish appreciate our efforts in helping parents establish good relations with their teenagers.

Our interventions have promoted open communication between parents and their children and they are now able to guide them appropriately in different aspects of life.

Our interventions with parents and leaders explain why we now have more girls attending school and we are believing for a better tomorrow.

RTU Works with Refugees – Nakivale Refugee Settlement

Our work in Nakivale Refugee settlement is aimed at working with young people as we share information on SRHR and encourage

them to stay hopeful. Hope is all we can give but we also carry for them some basic items that are normally donated by well wishers and supporters.

We share with local Leadership on issues of Child Protection and the dangers that come with have child mothers within the settlement.

The adolescent girls and boys are equipped with skills and knowledge on how to report cases of sexual abuse and exploitation within the settlement.

Girls and young women have been trained on how to properly manage their periods including training them on how to make their own reusable sanitary products so that they do not exchange their bodies for pads.



RTU team at HOPE Training Center in Nakivale Refugee Settlement.

It's difficult to wake up one morning and everything you ever owned is no longer available for you.

This is why we find it important to reach out to refugees and share the little we can with them. This can be information, basic needs and helping the children to attain some life skills such as decision making, goal setting, public speaking, resilience, confidence to mention but a few.



GOOD DEEDS DAY- Reaching out to Children in Katanga Slums:

GIRLS FIRST FUND- SUPPORTING GRASSROOTS ORGSNISATIONS TO END CHILD MARRIAGE.

Its been 5 years since Girls First Fund started supporting our programs focused on preventing and responding to Child Marriage and early unions at community level.

The lives of Girls we have rescued from Child Marriage and supported to resume school will never be the same again. We have witnessed increased enrolment of girls in schools and improved parenting practices as a result of our continuous sensitization programs and school outreaches.

Through Advocacy and Lobbying at district level, Two of our target schools Bukondo Chance Primary school and Bugimba Primary school have added new classroom blocks to cater for the increased enrolment and this is going to enable many more girls to access education and complete school.

Above all the opportunity to always meet with other Grantees and share learnings has been such a game changer.

We have held joint press conferences as grantees to raise awareness about the issues affecting children and challenging the government to implement the laws that have been put in place to protect children.

There is power in standing together in collaboration and partnership to address issues affecting the well-being of Ugandan Children.



There is power in collective Action to End Child Marriage.





Attending Learning events with other Grantees of Girls First Fund has helped to create an environment to learn and share best practices which help us to get better everyday that passes as we front the campaign to end child marriage.

Together we are preventing and responding to Child marriage and early unions in different communities in Uganda.

INTERNATIONAL EVENTS:

GIRLS OPPORTUNITY ALLIANCE- Members Convening.

Our Team leaders Hope Nankunda attended the GOA members convening in Greece Athens where she was able to meet and interact with other members of the network from different parts of the world.

This was organized alongside the Obama Leadership Network that had also brought members from Africa, Latin America and Asia Pacific.

The event provided a platform to not only share our work and best practices with other members but also gave us the opportunity to hear and learn what others are doing in different countries to protect girls and ensure that they stay in school and complete their education.

With numerous presentations from great facilitators, we learnt a lot about storytelling, fundraising, communication skills, sharing best practices among others.

There was also a beautiful evening specifically designed for GOA members to directly interact with different Donors and Funders. This was such a great experience as Hope shared about our campaigns to keep girls in school and end child marriage in Uganda.

Having an open conversation with Former president Obama was the high light of it all and GOA members interacted with him and he also deeply shared his insights as he appreciated the tremendous work we are all doing in are countries.

He called upon each one of us to celebrate the little wins we are making and know that it is

making a big difference in the lives of those that have directly benefited.

The event open doors for us to connect more with other members present and we have since been in touch as we share and learn on this journey of community transformation.

As a result of this event, RTU is in now in the final stages of receiving funding from the **Girls Opportunity Alliance** which will be used to Promote Access, enrolment and completion of Girls in schools. More Girls Matter Clubs will be formed and the lives of Girls who will benefit will never remain the same.



“Meeting Former President Obama in Person was the Highlight for me. A moment I will hold onto for years to come. He encouraged all of us to celebrate the little wins we are making and that was so Empowering for ME:”

says Hope Nankunda



Our Team Leader Hope Nankunda meet Former President Barack Obama.

MOVEMENT BUILDING AND ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM - By Girls Not Brides.

Our Team Leader Hope Nankunda was one of the 3 Ugandan representatives that underwent a 6 months training in movement building and advocacy Leadership led by Girls Not Brides- The global partnership to end child marriage.

The program involved Leaders from Africa and Asia.

This presented an opportunity to connect with other leaders and share best practices and draw strategies that can make the GNB movement stronger and better.

Great information on Advocacy leadership, Feminist Leadership, Movement building, Storytelling, Communication for social social change was acquired among others.



Members visiting the secretariat of Girls Not Brides Nepal.

The 2023 GNB National Girl Summit



The GNB Uganda comprises of 110-member Organizations located in different parts of the country all working to end child marriage. Within the National Partnership, we coordinate the Central Region which brings together 65 member Organizations. Since 2018 we have been holding the National Girl Summit during the 16 Days of Activism and this has greatly transformed lives of different young people significantly.



The Summit brought together close to 250 delegates half of whom were young people from different schools.

Raising Teenagers Uganda was part of the organizing team and brought young girls from our school clubs to attend the summit. This was an opportunity for them to meet other young people and share knowledge and experiences as they walk on the journey to realize their dreams.

The Summit created a platform for young people to speak up about the issues affecting them in form of a Children's Parliament.



Issues raised by the Children include:

- Increased cases of Child Marriage that continue to limit young girls from realizing their full potential.
- High levels of sexual abuse cases that go unreported and the effects this has of the survivors.
- Parental neglect and abuse
- Failure to implement laws that have been put in place to protect Ugandan Children.
- Lack of access to education in communities where schools are very few and children have to walk long distances.
- Lack of opportunities for young people to speak up about the issues affecting their well-being.
- Sexual exploitation in higher institutions of learning where university students are faced with the issue of "Sex for Marks" and some have been denied an opportunity to graduate just because they refused to exchange their bodies for marks.
- Poor Parenting approaches.

- Online sexual abuse that goes unnoticed yet affects children's mental wellbeing and the increasing rates of drug abuse among children.

The Girl Summit gave young people an opportunity to fully participate and share their concerns with the stakeholders in the room so that their concerns can be addressed.

LIGHTUP IMPACT DAYS CONFERENCE Bringing Together Grassroots Organisations in East Africa.

Raising Teenagers Uganda meaningfully participated in the Light up Impact Conference in Nairobi Kenya which brought together 120 Grassroots Organisations from around East Africa working to transform lives of young people in many different ways. The Conference provided a platform for grassroots leaders to share best practices and learn from each other. It was also an opportunity to network and build synergies from further partnerships and collaborations.

The Conversation was around Shifting the Power and embracing Bottom-Up approaches that will transform communities and build sustainable solutions.





We joined other Grassroots Organizations to share Learn and connect.

CHALLENGES

We have done a number of activities and events this year however, we also encountered some Challenges and shared bellow;

1. Mental Health challenges in schools ranging from academic stress, peer pressure, depression faced by students yet without personnel to attend to them in terms of offering guidance and counseling services and supportive environments.
2. We still see families that force their girls to get married despite our efforts to sensitize communities about the dangers associated with the practice. Some of these manage to get away with it due to corruption.
3. Efforts to combat child marriage require community engagements, awareness campaigns and empowerment to break the cycle of poverty but not all parents turn up for our programs which some of them do not receive our information.

4. Some schools are against the program of sexuality education and so when we approach them to provide guidance and counseling, they have a negative attitude towards our services which limits girls from accessing appropriate information for their well being.
5. There are some girls that experience sexual violence and abuse both from home and from school and they have nowhere to report because sometimes even the parents have no time to sit with their children and listen to their challenges. This leaves them very vulnerable and desperate.
6. In rural Uganda there are many girls that need our support with sanitary pads but many times we are unable to support them all. This has continued to increase the rate of school dropouts and consequently the rate of child marriage.
7. We have seen more boys drop out of school which is not a good sign in regards to achieving gender equality.

Recommendations:

1. There is need to improve reporting mechanisms for children and students so that they can seek justice.
2. There is need for engaging men and boys in the campaign to keep girls in school and end child marriage.
3. More media engagements and campaigns can go along way in education Ugandans

about the benefits of education and dangers of child marriage.

4. Create more opportunities for young people to meet and share their stories and experiences as they seek guidance and support.
5. Promote positive parenting practices to enable parents relate well with their adolescent boy and girls.
6. Sensitize children on the dangers that could be found online including online sexual violence.
7. Invest in peer mentorship especially since children can listen more to fellow young people than the old.
8. Create more programs for University students that could promote breaking the silence and seeking Justice for the survivors of sexual abuse.
9. Implement Laws that have been put in place to protect Ugandan Children.
10. Strengthen referral systems to enable the survivors seek justice and psychosocial support system.
11. Religious and cultural leaders to carry forward the campaign of child protection and let the message flow to the grassroots through local churches.
12. Formulate more messages that can be shared with the

public with emphasis on ending sexual violence and promoting education.

13. Embrace collective action through partnerships and collaborations to end sexual violence in society.

FUTURE PLAN

In the year 2024 we plan to carry out more local fundraising and raise money to support more girls with sanitary towels as a means of reducing the rates of school dropout due to menstruation. This will be through our annual Hiking events and we shall also organize fundraising dinners to interest Ugandans into supporting the less advantaged girls.

Working more closely and in partnership with line ministries to disseminate and popularize the policies in place so that young people are well protected and provided with information on sexual reproductive health services.

We plan to have more sensitization campaigns in communities with parents, local council leaders, cultural leaders and other stakeholders and talk to them about the importance of keeping girls in school and giving them an opportunity to complete their education.

We plan to increase on the number of schools where we carry out our programs so that we reach out to a bigger number and promote girls' education more, this will be subject to the opportunities of funding we receive.

We also plan to have programs for boys in schools and educate them to support girls and look at them as sisters instead of

humiliating them especially while in their periods. When boys are able to appreciate the challenges faced by girls, they will then treat them with respect and care and that will make education for girls possible.

Sensitization programs for teachers will also be carried out specially to encourage them to be supportive to the girl child in regard to menstrual hygiene management so that girls find schools very conducive places for learning.

We plan to establish more Girls Matter Clubs and empower the senior women teachers to ensure that they can continue operating for sustainability.

We plan to have more partners on board working in different districts so that with them we can reach out to a much bigger number of girls. We shall organize more

community events and get interested members to join so that we have same voice aimed at transforming lives of young people.

CONCLUSION

This year we have done our very best but we also believe that we are capable of doing much more if we continue working in partnership with other organizations that carry the same vision and goal like we do. We appreciate every one that has been part of our journey, both organizations and individuals. Your contributions towards keeping girls in school will contribute tremendously towards ending child marriage. We look forward to working with you more in the coming year for the benefit of our nation.



We appreciate everyone that has supported us to reach this far, together we are transforming lives of Young People in different communities.

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

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