



MEMPROW
Girls' Newsletter

WEST NILE CHAPTER

VOLUME 1 / APRIL 2022

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MEMPROW *Girls' Newsletter*

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MEMPROW

The Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW) is an organisation that was set up in 2008. We work with adolescent girls and young women, aged 14-29. Our goal is to power adolescent girls' and young women's agency to claim their rights and achieve their aspirations, free from the threat of violence. We achieve this through strengthening girls' and young women's capacity to speak up and be heard and to ensure that they have the freedom to make informed choices to realise their potential. In addition we also transform institutional structures, including the family, community, the media, schools and institutions to ensure that girls' and young women's rights are recognised, realised and safeguarded.

FOREWORD

By **Oyungrwoth Stella**
Programme Officer

"The world needs strong women. Women who will lift and build others, who will love and be loved. Women who live bravely, both tender and fierce. Women of indomitable will." Laverne Cox



Even though women and men are equal under Ugandan law, women often are denied their rights in practice. This is especially true with their rights around property and land, which are very much tied to culture and custom.

Uganda continues to face gender inequality in economic empowerment and economic outcomes, despite closing gender gaps in rates of labour force participation and entrepreneurial activity.

The COVID-19 pandemic expanded gender gaps in paid work and business ownership, and the subsequent lockdowns set off a wave of work stoppages and business closures that affected women more than men, while job losses and school closures have resulted in a greater share of unpaid care work for women, who already shoulder a disproportionate amount of household responsibilities.

Therefore providing a continuum of community based services that supports the efforts of Women and Girls with developmental efforts to live as independently as possible in the least restrictive environment through personal involvement, individual decision-making enhances the control of a person over their own lives and foster self-sufficiency and development.

Read more about the change impacts MEMPROW has created from the Stories and Poems, key learning shared by students under the MEMPROW clubs and young women.

-Enjoy-

poems & Success STORIES



Poem: How good you are!

By Patience Ayiorwoth, Angal Secondary School

MEMPROW! MEMPROW! MEMPROW!
How good you are!
You made the girls to stay at school
Go to school
Go back to school
You encouraged the parents to give second
chance to their girls after dropping out of
schools
Oh! MEMPROW

MEMPROW! MEMPROW! MEMPROW!
How good you are to the whole world!
You made the men to know their responsibilities
You also made them to know that both men and
women are equal
They all do the same kind of work and there is
no work/job that can be done by only men
Oh! MEMPROW

MEMPROW! MEMPROW! MEMPROW!
You created awareness to the whole nation
about the importance of Girl child education
Parents used to take only boys to school;
But you made parents to now reconsider girls
going to schools because of mind-set change
Of viewing girls as source of wealth
Oh! MEMPROW, Long Live!

Poem: You're the greatest

By Akello Nancy,
Nebbi Town Secondary School

You're the greatest of feminist
organizations
You have empowered and given us
a voice
To eloquently articulate our
strength
And participating in leadership
You provide spaces for us to learn
and discover things from all
spheres of life
From women of older generation
The confidence you instilled in us
become go getters as women

You're the greatest of feminist
organizations
Bringing young girls and women
together
Providing them with social survival
skills
Just because of your greatness, we
get used to speaking confidently
Am so glad for your organization
You're the greatest of feminist
organizations



Poem: Dream

By Justin, Angal Secondary School

Dream you little Girl child
We are all beside you
All your tears and trails are ours too
You will walk with our support
We are present to speak when you can't
We are here to serve you
You are important and so you need love

Everyone is surrounding you, Girl child
You are a blessing
Take this into your heart
That you are powerful, Smart and Pretty
Let us walk together

Oh Girl child, your life is brighter
Darkness has turned down
Allow your dreams to come forward
Let the world see and know all these
You the elegant spirit of the World

Poem: Girl Child

By Justin, S.3 Angal Secondary School

GIRL CHILD! GIRL CHILD!
I smile whenever I think of how important you are!
Yet not realised
Our societies have failed to appreciate your importance
They all think and assume you are powerless
Your contributions to development and growth go unnoticed

When there is little money, the boys are taken to school while you stay home
Yet you are equal
Sugar Daddies have ruined your life
Impregnated and infected you
Oh Girl Child, you need rescue

You are the route leading men into tomorrow
A lamp into a path of success
A ready help for every husbands
A brain behind all successes of all men
There is no arguing
The girl child is knowledge and wisdom branded, for she is born a teacher
Oh Girl child you deserve a better future



Poem:

MEMPROW! MEMPROW! MEMPROW!

*By Ayiorwoth Patience, Angal
Senior Secondary School*

MEMPROW! MEMPROW! MEMPROW!

What a wonderful program you have!
You have stopped domestic violence in
the society
Men used to beat their wives, Girls and
women were not allowed
To sit on chairs or eat certain foods
But now men and women adore you
because they are treated equally.

MEMPROW! MEMPROW! MEMPROW!

Before your program, parents forced
their daughters into marriages
In exchange for wealth even when girls
were not interested
Age was never considered
You have empowered the girl child a lot
And now we can stand up and say NO
to forceful marriages.

MEMPROW! MEMPROW! MEMPROW!

You have empowered the men, boys to
champion fights against Teenage
pregnancy
Rape which was rampant and
unreported
But now communities are aware of the
referral pathways and reporting
measures to take
Girls and women rights are now being
considered as a priority.

SHE-STORIES

“ **MEMPROW has been the greatest eye opener for me...** ”

Nyamungu Rigan (20 Years old)

MEMPROW has been the greatest eye opener for me. When I became a child mother, I thought my world had come to an end, there was a lot of stigma from the community and was only left with looking after the baby which was already difficult. I was lucky to have been enrolled on the MEMPROW empowerment program through the sub county. From there we were taken through a social survival skills training, one of the components was on entrepreneurship and marketing. I previously had a skill in hand craft from what my mother was doing for our family livelihood; she made small baskets and did kneading during her leisure time. After the training, I made up my mind to start something which I did, I was also lucky that my home was next to the smallest church in the world where tourists from the different parts of the world come for pilgrimage. I started concentrating on kneading which I sold to foreigners mainly and it gave me quite some money to sustain me with my child. I later engaged in Agriculture and small businesses from the start- up capital I received of 400,000shs from MEMPROW. Currently, I have 3 goats, doing my kneading business as well with tomatoes and salt alongside. Out of the business I also do weekly savings of 5,000 shillings. I planted ½ an acre of beans and got 2 ½ basins which I intend to sell.

My greatest challenge has been during COVID pandemic which has affected my kneading business as movements of tourists was affected but i am moving on with the rest. I intend to rent the garden and plant cassava this year 2022.

I am very grateful to MEMPROW again because through their engagement with our parents, the relationship has greatly improved as they are very supportive and look after my child well when I am engaged in other businesses. With this knowledge I will not look back, my economic status has greatly improved.

“

...from being despised and stigmatized in the community to one of the most valued young women in my community.”

Micpamungu Juliet
(20 Years old)



MEMPROW turned my story from being despised and stigmatized in the community to one of the most valued young women in my community. Being a school dropout and a child mother in my community earns you a number of names and I went through all that cycle until I met MEMPROW. After the training and mentoring, I knew I was responsible for my life and had to make a difference despite my current situation. I started with agriculture and worked hard, every week I did savings of 5,000 shillings out of 'lejja' (money earned from digging people's gardens). I saw my life starting to make a difference because I was able to afford the basics I needed with my child. I kept reminding myself that I must get out of this.

Later I received a package of 400,000 shillings to boost my business from MEMPROW. I bought a pregnant goat which gave me 2 more after a short time and they became 3, I used 250,000 to start up a mini shop in my compound which supplies the basics such as salt, sugar, cooking oil, lighting stick, soap etc. for the households around me. I later turned my sitting room to the shop for security purpose as I slept in the same house. I continued with farming as well, planted cassava ½ an acre and beans worth 50,000 which gave me a sack of 6 basins that I stocked and sold when the prices were a bit high, in addition I also have two ducks

and 2 chickens which is already laying eggs.

From the previous savings, I got 100,000 shillings which I used to add stock to my business. I am doing savings in two groups where I save 12,000 every week. I plan to buy more goats out of the savings we are dividing this January and March. I also intend to build a small shop in my compound as the business is growing bigger.

I have also developed a good relationship with my husband because he now knows my value and rights and respects. Even my child is sickly but he is supportive.

I am proud of myself because even the community members now respect me and look at me differently unlike before. They appreciate the person I have become after MEMPROW's intervention. Because people see differently, even when they are selling animals in the community, they approach me because they know I can afford to buy it. My target is for my children to go to school because I now know the value of education. I am very happy and grateful to MEMPROW for my current situation, I will not look back.



“After MEMPROW engaging with my parents, they became supportive and now look after my child while I complete my course...”

**Awekonimungu Gloria
(19 Years old)**

I got the opportunity to pursue my dream of becoming a designer through MEMPROW. I was enrolled to train in tailoring and fashion design by MEMPROW. When I joined MEMPROW program I had dropped out of school because I became pregnant.

After delivery, life was very difficult with no support from the father of the baby, I struggled through it all even when my child was sick. But when I joined the program, I was empowered with information that I still could get a second chance and attain education. My father was not interested anymore in supporting me to go back to school, my mother could

hardly support me either. I showed interest in tailoring but had no financial support to sustain me complete the training. I shared my story of what I aspired to become during training, I was then given a chance to pursue my dream. I am currently on my 5th month of the training and will complete after 6 months. After MEMPROW engaging with my parents, they became supportive and now look after my child while I complete my course and support my movements to the training.

When I received my previous year's savings, I got 130,000 shillings, I used it to buy 5 chickens unfortunately 2 died but 1 hatched and I got 10 chicks which are growing well which makes the number to 13. I used part of the money to buy my baby's needs and some took care of me when I was sick.

I can now sew very well and many times I get clothed for repair and that's the money I save every week at least 5000 shillings.

My father is now very happy with me and has promised me a sewing machine when I complete my training. I am very grateful that I got this opportunity.

#SHE-STORIES



“

I got to understand the importance of work and having a purpose in life when I joined the MEMPROW program... ”

Muber Irene (20 Years old)

Knowing what I want in life has greatly improved my current status. I got to understand the importance of work and having a purpose in life when I joined the MEMPROW program. I also received a lot of psychosocial support from my peer members in my group, many times we remind each other of our pasts and promise ourselves not to look back. After the first training, I spoke to my uncle about taking me back to school and he enrolled me for tailoring so by the time MEMPROW

brought us the seed capital I already had the skill and I received a sewing machine. With this machine every week I make at least 20,000 shillings to save mainly from repairs of clothes. I save in two groups every week. At least I can look after myself and also took my child to grow with his other children so that I could focus of completing my course. I receive great support from the women advisor trained by MEMPROW.

From the previous year's savings, I got 100,000 shillings. I bought 'kitenge' materials and sold during the festive season. I have cassava $\frac{1}{2}$ an acre and planted beans in 1 acre and got $1\frac{1}{2}$ sack that's 11 basins.

I am as proud of myself as I never ask for money from my parents because I can look after myself from the money I get in business. I want to thank MEMPROW for the great opportunity of making me the person I am today.

2021 ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS



Sustaining Women's leadership

SUPPORT TO THE WOMEN COMMUNITY ADVISERS

MEMPROW continues to offer learning, and strengthen communities by addressing societal needs. As a measure to adjust to the impact of COVID19, the women advisors were given materials like Sanitizers, Gumboots, and Soap. The women also used this space to share their experiences on their support towards girl child and how to strengthen their network and support to the Girls; giving them opportunities to unlearn, learn and relearn from each other.



International Day of Girl Child and 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISMS CAMPAIGNS

MEMPROW together with other stakeholders participated in different international campaigns such as the international Day of Girl Child that took place in Apac district. And during the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, MEMPROW girl's network participated in different activities that included the advocacy walk, radio talk shows, community dialogues and sensitization meetings.



COMMUNITY DIALOGUES with Traditional and Religious Leaders

Wives of traditional leaders play very vital role in advocating for inclusion of women in the cultural arena especially if they have knowledge on how they can best mobilize to positively influence change within their chiefdoms. Therefore MEMPROW facilitated dialogues with wives of traditional leaders, the chiefs and the religious leaders from Nebbi, Zombo and Pakwach on their roles and responsibilities in addressing Violence against women and girls within the region.

Northern Uganda Pre-National Girl Summit



NORTHERN UGANDA NATIONAL GIRL SUMMIT VIRTUAL PRE-EVENT HOSTED BY NILE GIRLS FORUM.

THEME: Working together to end child marriages and teenage pregnancies / Culture, Human rights and Accountability.



Key Note Speaker
Rt. Hon. Othman Othman Vincent
Ker Alur Kingdom



Moderator
Faith Birungi
Nile Girls Forum



Panelist
Tino Shirah Juliet
Peer Pal
Nile Girls Forum



Panelist
Arigole Diana
Community Development Officer
Maracha District



Panelist
Ayiorweh Postience
Girl Leader
MEMPROW

2:30PM-4:00PM | Monday 29th November, 2021

ZOOM Meeting ID: 870 9436 4777 | Passcode: 003765

#GirlSummitUg

#EndChildMarriage

For inquiries or registration contact
+256 783 154084 / m.rosachar@gmail.com

MEMPROW participated in a summit spearheaded by the Nile Girl Forum; MEMPROW was represented by their own MEMPROW girl on the panel. The Summit theme was working together to end child marriages and teenage pregnancies, culture, human rights and accountability.



Sustaining Women's leadership

Feminist Response To Exclusion and Gender Violence (FeRe)

The training of community leaders was held in Arua to introduce them to feminism and systems of oppression. Participants were taken on a journey of feminist politics and its relevance to women's human rights struggle. The training allowed participants to reflect on gender roles in the private sphere and how its impact on women's ability to participate fully in public life.

At the end of the training through a reflection session participants gained personal agency, voice leading to increased public participation.



A section of community leaders from Arua
after the FeRe training

INTER-SCHOOL

Sports EVENTS



Sustaining Women's leadership

MEMPROW conducted an inter-schools sports event; an activity that focuses on promoting confidence in girls by encouraging their participation in sports. The girls participate in all kind of games such as Football, Netball, Athletics, Sack race and Egg race. The participating schools included: Oturugang Girl Primary School, Afere Primary School, Angal Secondary School and Nebbi Senior Secondary school.



Sustaining Women's leadership



Participants during the inter-schools debate tournament conducted in Nebbi Senior Secondary School.

DEBATES

Under the themes of 'I am responsible for my situation during COVID19 lockdown' and 'Gender equality is a woman's Issue', four selected schools (Oturugang Girl Primary School, Afere Primary School, Angal Secondary School and Nebbi Senior Secondary school) were involved in a debate competition. The main purpose was to build their reasoning and critical thinking capacity, build confidence and impart public speaking skills. The competition further offered opportunities for the learners to evaluate the impact of COVID19 on their lives and how they can manage to overcome the burden that came along.



Sustaining Women's leadership

Gallery



MEMPROW STAFF with HIS ROYAL MAJESTY, RWOTH UBIMU RAUNI III during the celebration of his 11th Coronation Anniversary 2021.



**Beneficiaries of
Economic
empowerment
program
(tailoring and
Salon training)**



MEMPROW Staff with Teachers during the Inter-School Sports competition at Nebbi SSS Playground.



Community sensitization with Police on Pakwach FM, Pakwach District



Sustaining Women's leadership

Engaging YOUNG PEOPLE

*(boys and girls) on
Strategic Responses
to Violence against
Women and Girls*





Our Partners' Messages

On International Day of the Girl Child 2021



May this day therefore be a day of revival and renewal to energize and motivate us to do more without relenting until all the girls in the world are fully liberated from the vicious cycle of violence.

*Abedkane Erick
Community Development Officer,
Nyaravur-Angal Town council*



An empowered girl is a resource to herself, family, community and nation.

*Fuacan Sophie,
CDO, Nebbi Sub county*



Join the Conversation

On Women and Girls' Empowerment

This Newsletter is a publication by Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW)



Plot 1476 Muyenga
Road, Kampala, Uganda



@MEMPROW1



+256(0) 414 664 511
+256(0) 716 168 996
+256(0) 701 843 942



@mempro.org



@memprouganda

WWW.MEMPROW.ORG

