

Let The Girl Be Uganda

Program Materials

Let The Girl Be Uganda (LEGIBE), founded in 2022 is an organization aiming to empower vulnerable girls in Mukono District around the shores of Lake Victoria, Uganda through education and health.

Our project area covers two Sub-Counties with a population of 5,000 girls and teenage mothers who are largely vulnerable, destitute, and socially underprivileged. Only a few of them can access education and health facilities. Most of these girls have survived sexual abuse, rape, family rejection, poverty, domestic violence, and neglect.

Our community suffers a scarcity of water for domestic use, leaving girls to fetch it from distant wells dug in forests and bushy places that are unsafe. Most families in our community still follow the old traditional and cultural customs that require only girls to do house chores like gardening, fetching water and firewood, and taking care of young children.

Let The Girl Be Uganda, strives to address these problems through skills focused education, health services, and mobilizing and creating awareness campaigns in communities, for the well-being of girls and teenage mothers. We are a certified and registered non-profit organization, number 161885428.

Programs

Let The Girls Be Uganda has 4 active programs:

1. Mental health
2. Self-Sustenance
3. Music Dance and Drama
4. Community Outreach

Our Education Program, the fifth program, is currently on pause. Through this program we sponsored more than 40 girls to attend school.



Figure 1 Girls at A Creating Our Mental Health Workshop

Mental Health Program

Girls in our community have powerful stories to tell! Their issues need to be handled carefully to restore hope and create development. The counseling we offer aims to help the girls understand and process their struggles and empower them to carry on and build big dreams for their future.

Counseling services help the girls grow and heal from their past experiences in a safe and supportive environment. The counseling empowers the girls so that they may feel that their futures are bright and continue to believe in their power and capabilities as independent women. Each session, an average of 13 girls share their experiences and learn how to see them in new ways.



Figure 2 Unpacking Sewing Supplies

Self-Sustenance Program

The girls in the Self-Sustenance program are determined to become economically independent and self-reliant women. We encourage this by generating projects for the girls such as sewing and weaving. Nine girls attended the most recent sewing workshop.

Economic independence for these girls means going to school and a life of possibilities-- a life that is unfortunately, often not possible without men. However, the self-sustenance program teaches the girls that their creations have value and that they can make and managing their own money.

Music Dance and Drama



Figure 3 Music, Dance and Drama Rehearsal

Music and dance are a big part of our culture and are a way of storytelling. For many of the 15 girls in the program, singing, poetry, and dancing provide emotional release, help them share their stories, and are an endless source of joy. Music and play performances help create a forum for girls and teenage mothers in the community to tell stories, share experiences about challenges in our community. Recent events have focused on the increasing number of girls dropping out of school, the importance of educating young girls, disease control e.g., HIV/AIDS, and family planning.

Community Outreach



We partner with community members, especially leaders and the mothers/guardians of the community girls. Through this program, we invite counselors and women activists to talk to our community girls, their parents/guardians, and other interested community members about the rights of young girls.

Our outreach program enables us to visit High/Secondary schools in Mukono District where our music, dance, and drama team will perform music and dance performances that spread awareness about issues for girls in the community that put them at risks for unwanted pregnancies and HIV/AIDS.

Meet Two of our Young Women

Gertrude, 19 years, joined us in 2023 when she came to a trading center to buy paraffin for fuel at home. She found our Music Drama and Dance team doing a performance about the rights of girls and women at a community outreach event. She told us that she was living with her mother and that her father had died of HIV/AIDS.

Since her mother couldn't afford to pay Gertrude's tuition on top of the fees for her brothers and sisters, Gertrude worked as a porter on building constructions. Sometimes she took on low paying jobs, such as washing clothes and digging in gardens to earn some money for food and other basic needs. Because of the difficulty in raising money for her tuition, her mother, together with other family members, decided to prepare Gertrude for marriage. When she shared her story during a Let The Girl Be Mental Health session, they encouraged her to be strong and tell the family that she was not ready for marriage at that age.

Gertrude is now happy studying Form Five in a high school and she's one of the leaders of the girls in our organization.

Jovia N:

We met Jovia in October 2022 when she was hawking pancakes for her mistress at a Lake Victoria landing site. She was working on a commission basis where she was paid 5% on a day's sale, but only after all the pancakes were sold.

Jovia was not enjoying the work but had no choice; she was collecting money for tuition and had already missed a year. Many men called her as if they were going to buy pancakes but instead asked her for a relationship. When she refused, they would mock her and abuse her. She was tired of what she termed as the "*bad touches of men*," which she couldn't avoid as she wanted them to buy her pancakes. She was about to give in to marriage at a young age, but that's when she joined Let The Girl Be. We were able to take her back to school through our programs.

She's now in her final year of high school and plans to join a university next year. Her dream is to become a lawyer to advocate to stop the violence done to girls and women in our society.