



GIRL CHILD NETWORK UGANDA

2012 IN REVIEW

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GCN Launched the Opportunity Program

GCN's programs place heavy emphasis on creating, expanding, and upgrading local capacity to identify and respond to major risks affecting girls. GCN has been implementing the Opportunity Program since February 2012. The Opportunity Program is geared towards transformation and improvement of the general welfare, quality of life and increased community participation in economic activities of girls in our districts of operation in Uganda. We believe in the possibility that we can help initiate change for thousands of girls using very little resources. We believe that their hope can be transformed into a reality. This change cannot occur with simple food aid, but requires an aggressive approach that will address all the needs of girls, including health, education, skills training, and the resources to

start their own income-generating projects. The program plan for the GCN Opportunity Program has been carefully designed to address each of these needs. As of December 2012, GCN had worked with nearly 2,000 girls who benefited directly from this program.



Above: GCN members showcasing their performing skills

Start-up Kits and Micro-loans

The start-up kits and micro-loans are provisions of financial services that have significantly changed the lives of girls living in poverty. The combination of a start-up kit and a loan ensures that girls are not burdened with the loan once they start their own businesses as they might take time to be self-reliant. However, GCN does not believe in giving free money and would also want other girls to benefit from the Program through a fund that enables them to get micro-loans. GCN's loans are interest-free and we offer a mix of loan products, including individual loans, group loans, and loans tailored to girls in specific areas such as agriculture. In 2012, over 100 girls benefited from these start-up kits and micro-loans and many more will continue to benefit from this fund in 2013.



GCN and UpEnergy Partnership

Above: Sara Cohen of GCN with Acholi Quarters Community club members during the distribution of energy saving stoves.



Agnes Samler of Defence for Children International-Canada during a visit with GCN girls in Wakiso

“Life has knocked me down a few times. It showed me things I never wanted to see. I experienced sadness and failures. But one thing for sure, I always get up!”



Masaka members in their creative outfits

GCN Empowerment Clubs

GCN’s work is for and by the girls and it is important to reach out to these girls and support them. However, it is difficult to reach out to girls unless they are organized and this is why the GCN empowerment clubs are important. The most unique element of the clubs is that they are run and managed by the girls themselves. The club’s leadership is comprised of *an elected president, vice president, secretary, treasurer and mobilizer*. With

the help of Club Coordinators, these clubs enable girls to take control of their lives to create positive social and economic leadership leading to improvement of their general welfare, quality of life and increased participation. The more clubs we form and launch, the more girls we will be able to reach. This year’s goal is to work with a minimum of 100 clubs.



GCN’s netball teams in Masaka

Savings and Loans Associations

Savings trainings are mandatory for all GCN clubs because we want to instill the culture of saving which is lacking in Uganda. GCN developed a training handbook on savings and loans for the community clubs who have established Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) in

groups of 10-30 people. Girls in VSLAs save together and take small loans from those savings. The activities of a VSLA run in “cycles” of about one year, after which the accumulated savings and profits are **shared out** among the members according to the amount they have saved.



GCN members in Acholi Quarters during their VSLA meeting

Income-generation and Business Management Skills

School drop-outs are often left with no option to earn a living and at times end up getting involved in risky activities such as commercial sex work. GCN creates financial opportunities for girls through the vocational training program.



Through the business management initiative, GCN members receive business management, entrepreneurship and financial literacy training to learn basic skills related to managing a small business, earning, spending, budgeting and borrowing money.

Barclays Bank Trains GCN on Financial Literacy

On October 13 and October 27, 2012, Barclays Bank Uganda successfully trained GCN club members from the following clubs:

- Acholi Quarters
- Namuwongo
- Gayaza
- Mengo
- Kinawataka
- Masaka

The trainings were attended by a total of 117 club members, 5 GCN staff and 8 Barclays Bank staff members from the Compliance Department

led by their head of Department Mr. David Mayeku. Savings trainings are mandatory for all GCN clubs because we want to instill the culture of saving which is lacking in Uganda.

The sessions covered basic money management and provide everyone a better understanding of managing their finances and educate them on how to effectively and efficiently plan, budget, save and make in-

formed borrowing decisions.

The financial literacy strategy helps low-income individuals build their financial knowledge, skills and confidence through access to appropriate financial information, education, resources, and advice; and gain greater self-sufficiency, personal dignity and hope for the future. The financial literacy strategy addresses some of the root causes of poverty.



Mr. David Mayeku—Head of Compliance Department at Barclays Bank during a GCN financial literacy training

Counseling Program

Girls cannot contribute to the nation’s development if they are hurting because they were abused and never got counseling, rehabilitation and/or were never reinstated back into school. Counseling is important for GCN because it allows girls to heal while they are receiving skills,

start-up kits and/or micro-loans. GCN provides counseling to all girls who are members of our clubs or those interested in joining our clubs. In 2012, GCN reached out to over 1,000 girls through the counseling program.



GCN counselor (far left) with some GCN members after a group counseling session

GCN joins the world to commemorate the International Day of the Girl Child in Kampala, Masaka and Wakiso

GCN Uganda Commemorates the International Day of the Girl Child

GCN members in all our clubs in Uganda joined the world to commemorate the first **International Day of the Girl Child (October 11)** with lots of interactive activities. The activities were held in schools and communities in Kampala, Masaka and Wakiso during

the week of October 7-12, 2012. Some of the activities that were organized by GCN members included:

- Poetry
- Singing
- Essay writing
- Netball tournament
- Dance and drama
- Creative designing





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About GCN

Girl Child Network Uganda's (GCN) mandate comes from the girls themselves who by joining GCN girls' empowerment clubs signal their need for GCN to act as a voice and lead the holistic empowerment of the girl child and to vulnerable children. GCN envisions a society where girls are empowered and confident to utilize and enjoy their full rights as a member of their society.

GCN's approach is unique as it emerged out of a need for access to equality, or an understanding of lack of rights/equality. GCN emerged from the collective frustration among girls in Zimbabwe who were starting to feel and understand the consequences of the unequal society they were being raised in. Since 1999, GCN has a proven track record of implementing the empowerment model that is acknowledged across the continent and has made it possible for GCN to move seamlessly from the grassroots level to the global village. GCN has clubs in Kampala, Masaka and Wakiso districts.

We want to thank all our partners and individuals who have supported our work thus far, specifically Defence for Children International-Canada, Global Fund for Women, Stichting Mutuba, GCN Worldwide and Barclays Bank. Heartfelt thanks to all GCN staff, interns and volunteers.

www.gcnuganda.org

GCN Products

GCN's products are made by the girls themselves usually between 16 and 24 years (*please note that GCN will not compromise girls' education to make these products, but incorporate it as part of skills building within their clubs*). The products we sell here are made by girls who are 16 years and above. Our products are made out of the following materials:

Paper – all our paper beads products are environmentally friendly as they are made from recycled paper (magazines,

calendars, etc.).

Seeds – Some of our necklaces are made from dried seeds.

Fiber & sisal – Some of the bags are made out of dry banana fiber or dry sisal from swamps (all environmentally friendly).

Ribbon – a few of our bags are made out of ribbons.



Where does the money from sales go?

75% of the money from all sales proceed is given back to the girls--it is the only income they have and 25% goes to the GCN Education Fund--it ensures that some of the girls who drop out of school at an early age are reinstated into school.

To place an order, please contact us via email at info@gcnuganda.org.



Beautiful handbags made by GCN members

