

REPORT ON THE EMPOWERING GIRLS BOOT CAMP

EXECUTED ON

10TH – 11TH OCTOBER 2021

AT

BANANA VILLAGE ECO RESORT HOTEL GALUGA

BY

**THE ROTARACT CLUBS OF BWEBAJJA, NKUMBA STEWARDS,
NAMASUBA, LUBOWA AND ROTARY CLUB OF NKUMBA**

UNDER

ROTARY DISTRICT D9214



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1.0. Executive Summary

The Empowering the Girls Boot camp is an advocacy campaign towards gender equality and protection of the girls' rights that was executed by the Rotaract Clubs of Bwebajja, Nkumba Stewards, Lubowa, Namasuba and the Rotary Club of Nkumba in commemoration of the international day of the Girl Child ear marked by the UN for October 11th.

The boot camp subjected 54 girls residing in kajjansi and Katabi town councils and Makindye Ssebagabo Municipality to an intensive training in life and business skills with the goal of awakening their potential to take active roles in advocating for their inherent rights subsequently improving their livelihoods and the developing their communities.

The boot camp was held on 10th-11th October 2021 at Banana village Eco Resort Hotel in Nalugala along Entebbe Road under the 2021 theme Digital Generation, Our Generation.

2.0. Project background and justification

Women and girls represent half of the world's population and it is crucial to accelerate their development. The world needs to pledge to empower young girls and women and give them proper healthcare, skill-based learning facilities, equal opportunities and a world free from gender-based violence and discrimination.

In Uganda specifically, statistics indicate that many girls have suffered injustice at all levels of the legal system, physical and emotional violence, and extreme discrimination in family and society. This has had resounding adverse effects on the level of the girls' self-confidence and esteem, ability to make personal decisions and think critically, communication and interpersonal skills, and self-management among other life skills that are crucially needed for a successful life.

This has been exacerbated by the invasion of the covid-19 pandemic that has forced the Government to close down schools for almost 2 years to control the spread of the deadly disease among the school communities. By doing this, another layer of vulnerability has been added to an already existing dire web of vulnerabilities. Apparently, many girls have been subjected to hard domestic and commercial labour, denied access to any form of education whilst their male counterparts being enrolled in to e-learning classes, suffered sexual

harassment at the hands of their relatives and friends, and many forced in to marriage at an early age resulting in to early pregnancies and the associated hostile effects.

In light with the above glaring challenges facing the girl child, there is need to make timely interventions to avert the potential reversal of the strides achieved over the years towards gender equality and protection of the girl child right to a safe, educated, and healthy life not only during the critical formative years, but also as they mature into women. Such interventions will arm the girls with the power and potential to change the world as tomorrow's workers, mothers, entrepreneurs, mentors, household heads, and political leaders.

In commemoration of the United Nations International Day of the Girl Child slated for 11th October meant to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges they face around the world, the Rotaract bloc of Bwebajja, Nkumba Stewards, Namasuba and Lubowa focused attention on the need to address the challenges girls face and to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights. This was executed with a boot camp project dubbed **Empowering the Girls** on 10 – 11th October 2021.

3.0. Project location

The Empowering Girls Boot Camp was held at Banana Village Eco Resort Hotel located in Nalugala, Kitala along Entebbe – Kampala Road. The resort hotel is suitably located in an eco-friendly environment that offered the perfect conditions for a peaceful and focused learning experience that was well required if the project was to register any success after implementation.

4.0. Implementing organisation

The project was executed by the Rotaract Club of Bwebajja, Rotaract Club of Nkumba Stewards, Rotaract Club of Namasuba, Rotaract Club Lubowa and Rotary Club of Nkumba. The Clubs through a deliberate partnership formed a bloc with a goal of executing heavily impactful community service projects through joint resource mobilizing. The Clubs are voluntary Organisations with an average membership of 40 professionals each who have devoted their finances, skills and time towards bringing a smile to humanity through

relevant community service projects. Over the years, these have developed capacity in humanitarian service having executed projects that have had positive impact on the lives of tens of thousands of people living within Uganda and internationally. These acts of generosity have manifested the overwhelming resolve by Rotaractors and Rotarians to make positive change in the global community.

In recognition of these efforts, the Clubs have been accredited for their bold interventions in the most vulnerable communities of Uganda, where they have changed the way of life with community service projects that addressed challenges described in the 7 areas of focus of Rotary international.

5.0. Implementation strategy

Empowering the girls Boot camp was mainly focused on capacity building and mindset change through business and life skills training, keeping in mind that programmes combining income generation and life skills training are the most effective in helping adolescent girls succeed in most aspects of life.

The project team enrolled 50 girls aged 18 years and below in to a boot camp training at Banana Village eco resort. The boot camp created a platform for constructive dialogues, group dynamics, mentoring and coaching, in human rights awareness, education, entrepreneurship skills, financial empowerment through women's rights training. This was meant to empower the girls by giving them a voice and power to disengage from the predicaments they are facing in Society.

6.0. Mobilization strategy

The project beneficiaries were mainly adolescent girls aged 18 years. Mobilization of the girls was handled systematically in liaison with the local authorities of Kajjansi Mulayini, Kawuku and Nalugala and Makindye who identified the suitable beneficiaries and their families.

Through the local authorities, the project team was introduced to the families of the beneficiaries who explained the background and the objectives of the project highlighting the glaring positive impact the project will make in the lives of their girls. The parents signed consent forms that permitted the project team to enroll their children in the boot camp.

7.0. Boot camp Training sessions

7.1. Life skills training:

This training session was facilitated by the former Miss Uganda Oliver Nakakande who is an ardent advocate for second chances and teenage girls' empowerment. The training mainly focused on the basic life skills that are often down played in the formal education curriculum despite the fundamental importance they have towards the girl child's chance to success in life. Among the skills that were discussed was self-awareness, confidence, public speaking and the related values they instill in the girls as explained below:

- **Self-awareness:** Self-awareness is the ability to monitor your own emotions and reactions. In other words, being self-aware requires one to take a deeper look at their feelings, assess why one feels a certain way and how their feelings could turn into reactions. Through self-awareness the girls learnt to identify their strengths, weaknesses, triggers, motivators and other characteristics.
- **Set boundaries.** The girls were taught the importance of setting strong boundaries by being warm towards others whilst saying no when it is needed. Keeping one's boundaries firm enables them to maintain the integrity of their goals and guarantees dignity and self-respect.
- **Self Confidence:** Self-confidence is an attitude that is characterized by a positive belief that one can take control of their life and plans. Through self-confidence, one risks security and comfort to achieve higher levels of growth and independence, seeing obstacles as opportunities.
- **Public speaking:** Public speaking is the art of making presentation in public. Public speaking is a key trait that comes in handy while one is marketing their skills and abilities. Strong public speaking skills improve confidence in one's ability to advocate for noble causes and market their business offers to potential customers.

7.2. Books before babies' campaign

According to the Uganda Demographic Health Survey (UDHS), 25% percent of women aged 15 to 19 are already mothers or pregnant with their first child while 17.2% of the maternal

deaths in Uganda are due to teenage pregnancies. This implies that at least one in every four teenage girls is pregnant or has already had a child. This has been worsened by the several sexual reproductive health challenges ranging from HIV/AIDS and STDs/STIs that are facing the adolescent girls.

This prompted the inclusion of the books before babies' campaign that focused on maternal and child morbidity, menstrual health and the related challenges in the empowering girls boot camp. The campaign was championed by **Aunt Sue**, a professional counselor and strong advocate of sexual health in young people. Books before babies campaign typically dwelled on sharing information regarding body changes, sex life, and relationships, STI, HIV/Aids among other sexual and reproductive health concerns that are ignited by lack of information and misconceptions.

7.3. Entrepreneurial skills

The Empowering the girls campaign made a comprehension that without equal educational and economic opportunities, girls will never fully realize their potential. In this regard, the boot camp equipped the beneficiaries with practical skills in making paper bags and black books. With these skills, the girls were empowered with the requisite skills and knowledge that they will aptly employ to establish small enterprises that will rescue them from the economic reliance on men for survival ultimately escaping the cycle of extreme poverty.

7.4. Menstrual hygiene management

The boot camp educated that girls that Menstrual hygiene is fundamental to the dignity and wellbeing of women and girls and an important part of the basic hygiene, sanitation and reproductive health services to which every woman and girl has a right. The boot camp discussed the many challenges that the girls are facing regarding menstrual hygiene while at school and home and collectively brainstormed ideas that would offer redress to the same challenges.

Among the many challenges discussed were:

- Menstrual hygiene is considered a taboo in the communities and some schools making it a topic that is hardly discussed in the formal and informal spheres.
- Inadequate preparations for young girls prior to their first menstruation experience.
- Lack of or inadequate water to clean and wash their bodies while at school and home.
- Lack of suitable materials like sanitary towels for proper management of menstruation.
- Lack of private space and wash rooms for changing menstrual materials with comfort and dignity.
- Inappropriate facilities for disposal of already used menstrual materials.

The above challenges elucidated that menstrual hygiene is routinely ignored by professionals in the water, health and education sectors. Through the boot camp, the girls were educated on how to properly handle their menstrual days while retaining their dignity. They were empowered to identify the right channels to advocate for their right to access proper menstrual facilities, demand for menstrual education and support during menstruation.

7.5. Donation of Mosquito nets

Studies have shown that malaria is an endemic in all of Uganda and continues to be the leading killer of children. The Rotaract fraternity has henceforth prioritized distribution of mosquito nets as a key intervention for malaria control and prevention as it has been proven to be one of the most cost-effective ways of elimination of malaria. In the same vein, as part of the empowering the girls' campaign, a total of 100 mosquito nets were donated to the mothers and children in the areas of Garuga, Nalugala who were advised to put them to their appropriate use to control the spread of the ravaging malaria endemic thus reducing on the child and maternal mortalities that are characteristically high in Uganda.

7.6. Social activities

To develop a healthy mind that is free of stress and anxiety, the body needs to be subjected to physical and mental exercises. On that note, the team engaged in scheduled outdoor physical and team building drills that were meant to suppress the typical class room anxiety

that does not favor learning. The social and physical activities also offered an opportunity to the girls to engage in personal discussions within themselves thus creating useful networks and improving their interpersonal skills which will come in handy in their future episodes of life as they are looking for employment or marketing their businesses and skills.

8.0. Project beneficiaries

The Empowering girls boot camp benefitted 50 girls aged 18 years and below residing in Katabi and Kajjansi town council. The beneficiaries were girls in and out of school that had not be chanced with the opportunity to share information about the physical body changes, human rights, necessary life and business skills among other relevant lessons.

9.0. Project impact

On economic margins, the the empowering the girl's campaign raised the likelihood that girls will engage in income generating activities by starting up small enterprises in line with the business practical skills they were armed with. This in the long run will guarantee self-reliance for the basic social and health needs that otherwise would have been provided by spiteful men with ill intentions. On health-related margins, the girls realized the invaluable importance of abstinence, self-confidence, respect and the combination of other life skills. This will significantly reduce the probability of early pregnancies and the associated demerits while at the same time protect the girls against the vicious STDs and STIs that might claim their lives in their infancy.

10.0. Expenditure report

No.	Item	Quantity	Units	Unit Cost	Total Cost
1	Markers	1	Box		5,000
2	Flip Charts	1	Piece		25,000
3	Venue Hire (Accommodation)	48	Day	5,000	240,000
4	Utilities	2	Day		105,000
5	Video and Photography	2	Day	50,000	100,000
6	Meals				130,000
7	Printing				10,000
8	Ram				20,000
9	Manila Papers				30,000

10	Fuel / Transport				270,000
11	Skilling				150,000
12	Water				15,000
13	Flyers				35,000
14	Conference Hall				50,000
15	Project Report				60,000
	GRAND TOTAL				1,245,000

11.0. Relevance to Rotary

The Empowering the girl boot camp was a long-awaited intervention in the Rotary circles that has garnered applause from the fraternity leaders. The boot camp was used as a recruitment platform through which prospective members understood the values and ideals of Rotary. This ignited interest from the beneficiaries, their parents and guardians and service providers to join the fraternity so that they make their personal contributions towards making the world a better place.

The fact that the project perfectly aligns with the UN recognized Day of 11th October earmarked as the **International Day of the Girl Child** and was executed on the same day with over 25% of the participants who are non-members of the Rotary fraternity, qualified the project as a Rotary Day of Service as guided by the 2021/22 Rotary International President Shekha Menta.

12.0. Sustainability.

As a matter of sustainability, the project team has embarked on organizing and chartering Interact Clubs in the various schools that the beneficiaries attend. These Clubs will create a valuable system that will relay communication about the socio-economic status of the girls while at school and will also make follow-up on the state of life the girls are living in while at home.

This information shall be analyzed by the project team and used to plan, organize and execute subsequent boot camps and trainings in the schools that are meant to share knowledge and skills necessary to protect their rights and promote socio-economic equality.

13.0. Challenges

- **Financial constraints:** The issue of finances narrowed the scope of the boot camp in many aspects. Financial constraints limited the project team to only a few facilitators and few boot camp activities which resultantly diluted the impact of the training.

Lesson learnt: The club fundraising avenues are not sufficient to finance the boot camp at the magnitude that will propel substantial impact. On this note, there is need to invite more stakeholders and good willed individuals to support the boot camp with various resources including finances, material items, advise and time.

- **Hesitance to participate:** Many parents in Uganda are oblivious of the importance of the girl empowerment initiatives. In this regard, the parents discredited the intentions of the boot camp and were hesitant to permit their girls to enroll. This hesitance exerted emotional torture to the project team and also denied some of the prospective beneficiaries the opportunity to learn life and business skills that would have come in handy in their lives.

Lesson learnt: The project team will be keen to share documentation in form of videos, photos and reports on the boot camp with the parents and guardians of the beneficiaries. This will instill confidence in the parents about the content of the boot camp and inform them about the importance of such trainings in the lives of their girls. The same recordings and reports will be employed as tools of persuasion while scouting for beneficiaries in the subsequent empowering girls' boot camps.

- **Limited coverage:** The boot camp could only be executed in one location which limited its impact to only a few beneficiaries.

Lesson learnt: This is need to for Rotaract Clubs across the Country to establish partnership with non-governmental, corporate organisations and community Organisations to provide the requisite resources that will facilitate the execution of the girl empowerment initiatives in various locations across the Country. This will awaken the general population to participate in the protection of the girl child's rights and report any violations and abuses of the human rights in the communities.

14.0. Project Plans

The Empowering the girls boot camp is an annual project meant to shine light on the injustices facing the girls in community that subsequently distort their mental and socio-economic welfare in their later years. The subsequent edition shall be held around the same time as this edition and it will be meant to consolidate the impact that has been registered so far. The subsequent editions shall include an element of talent discovery as a sustainable economic venture, motivating the girl child to actively engage in sports activities while at school and home, funding small business projects in school while training the girls on the importance of financial literacy and business management skills.

15.0. Partners and Sponsors

- **Rotaract Ladies Initiative (ROLI)** – ROLI is a league of service ladies under the Rotaract fraternity with a unified stance towards empowering women and girls to achieve their potential. ROLI availed the appropriate branding for the event and the training facilitators.
- **Miss Uganda Foundation** – Miss Uganda Foundation has been instrumental in creating awareness of the need for education, sexuality, sexual reproductive health of the girl child and entrepreneurship development of the young children in Uganda. The foundation availed a set of training facilitators and speakers led by Ms. Oliver Nakakande who shared valuable insight in areas of girl empowerment and sexual reproduction.
- **JB Caring Hearts International** – The charity organization is heavily involved in inclusive education advocacy, community outreaches in health and sanitation as well as skills development. The organisation used its database to identify and mobilize participants from the villages.
- **Banana Village Eco** – The eco-friendly resort hotel with an exquisite environment and unleaded customer care hosted the boot camp at a subsidized prize of 50%.

16.0. Conclusion

Girls everywhere have the power and potential to do incredible things. Unfortunately, many still face barriers that keep them from reaching their full potential, simply because Society defines them as just girls. This gender stereotyping and inequality has resulted in millions of girls being unable to exercise their right to education or to decide their own futures. The Rotaract fraternity is inviting all concerned stakeholders to commit towards protecting the rights of girls and women by executing and supporting activities geared towards raising awareness in rural and urban communities across Uganda to end child marriage, gender-based violence and other injustices against girls and women.

17.0. Pictorial





