

A Woman of Purpose: Let every woman watch over the other.

It's 05:00 pm; 30 minutes after school closes, but Margaret Nyang's day seems to have just started. She is surrounded by a group of 8 girls who all want to talk to her. They want to know if she can spare more time tomorrow after school to meet them again. She readily agrees. Excited, they run off wishing her a good evening.

The mention of 'Madame Margaret' brings smiles to faces of girls in Mudakori, Primary school where she is a senior woman teacher. To them she is a friend, a mother and a teacher. They will ask and tell her anything.

As Madame Margaret walks to meet the MIFUMI Children's Officer, her smile and confidence explain where the children get theirs.

Two pupils follow her to the staff room. One is 13 year old Anyango Catherine and 30 year old Veronica Okoit. With the exception of the age difference, nothing else seems strange about these two pupils but they later reveal that they are both mothers. They have with the help of Madame Margaret decided to return to school. Catherine is a mother to a 9-months old baby girl who she goes to breastfeed during lunch break while Veronica is a happily married woman and a mother to 5 children; one who is in the same school with her. One question lingers; how does Madame Margaret do this?



Saying no to Domestic Violence



Women in Tororo are realizing their rights and options. Domestic violence, abuse and bride price related cases reported by women at MIFUMI advice centers have been on a steady increase following the opening up of 7 new MIFUMI Advice Centers in other sub-counties, sensitization and trainings by the Human Right Defenders Network and the Legal Aid Basket Fund.

In the last 3 months (November, December and January), 128, 157 and 183 cases of domestic violence were reported by women across the 10 advice.

Most of the women who visited the advice centers confessed that they had suffered many forms of violence and abuse from their partners silently because they could not easily access the services of MIFUMI from their villages.

With these new advice Centers and 20 newly trained independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs), MIFUMI hopes many more women will now access both its services and justice.

When I was growing up, educating a girl was not priority, she was groomed to become good wives. I was orphaned at a tender age with 9 siblings who did not get to go to school. Though I was not a boy, my uncle saw the potential in me and believed I could make the family proud. I believe every girl should be given a chance to go to school. This is the reason I never tire moving from home to home encouraging girls and women to get an education. I also teach my girls about their rights and how the law can protect them. I have personally reported and followed up some of the cases of defilement and child abuse with the police and MIFUMI.

Alowo Margaret, Apalat Mya, Parani, Alowo M. Florence, Catherine Anyango and Veronica Atuko Okoit are few of the girls that have returned to school because of Madame Margaret's home visits.

Madame Margaret has been teaching for the last 39 years and her message is clear;

'Let every woman watch over the other. As a teacher this is the best I can do. I know what MIFUMI is doing, I know what our government is trying to do; what are you doing as a woman like me?'



Anyango Catherine, Madame Margaret and Veronica Okoit

ENTERPRISE

Nagongera women's Guild RLS explores the possibility of transforming into a SACCO

There is an initiative by the Nagongera Women's Guild supported by the Enterprise Department of MIFUMI to transform the Nagongera Women's Guild Revolving Loan Scheme (RLS) into a Savings and Credit Cooperative Organization (SACCO).

MIFUMI believes that registering the revolving loan scheme into a SACCO will make it independent of MIFUMI and be able to get support from the government.

Mr. Opolot Egos, the Commercial Officer in charge of SACCOs in the district visited the women's Guild offices in Nagongera on the 27th of January 2009. He commended the Guild for the good work they had done by contributing to the reduction of poverty in this community. He added that the idea of transforming into a SACCO would benefit more people.



Members of the women's Guild

Mr. Opolot called upon the Guild to consider a few changes that will be necessary for the RLS to successfully transform into a SACCO.

The women's Guild must recruit more members up to 300 or more who are willing to pay a membership fee of 15,000 Ug. Shillings and be willing to continue saving even when they have not got loans. The members must be willing

to buy shares. Also to motivate the members repay the loans, women's Guild must be ready to open the scheme to the community and open to new leadership structure.

The guild members are willing to take the chance after consultation with the rest of the members and the community.

HEALTH

MIFUMI Health center Staff trained on new Contraceptive



Sr. Atheino Goretti & Okasai Norman at MIFUMI Health Center

On the 21st February 2009, two staff of MIFUMI Health Centre attended and successfully completed a two weeks training on family planning birth control methods organized by Population Services International (PSI).

The Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Device (IUCD) is a small device made of plastic or copper that is placed into the uterus as an effective method of contraception. IUCDs are believed to be better than the combined oral contraceptives and as effective as reversible sterilization.

PSI was founded to address the health problems of low-income and vulnerable populations in more than 60 developing countries such as Malaria prevention, family planning, and HIV/AIDS prevention.

PSI believes IUCDs are safe and effective methods in controlling unwanted pregnancies in rural areas and encourages Health Centers to adopt this by providing

them with the necessary logistics, contraceptive and equipments. The latest 380 mm banded copper IUCDs are believed to be better than the combined oral contraceptives and as effective as reversible sterilization.

Norman Okasai, the clinical officer of MIFUMI Health Center said some members of the community were still learning to accept other family planning methods like the use of oral contraceptives. He hoped that the IUCD will be readily accepted in this village.

EDUCATION

From the Head Master's Desk



L-R: Abbo Justine, Owere Patrick and Nyafwono Caroline were awarded Scholarships for excelling in the 2008 P.7 leavers exams.

It has been a great month for us at MIFUMI Primary school.

The Primary Seven results for the year 2008 are out and I am pleased to inform you that we had 29 candidates of whom 9 excelled in second grade. There were no failures.

The best three pupils from the school were awarded scholarships.

I would like to express my gratitude to Meg Wyld and her friends for their continued support through the scholarship scheme. Many pupils are motivated to work hard to have a chance to win a scholarship. We use the grades of last year's best candidate as a bench mark for the next candidates.

We are hoping for the best with the current candidates.

We also received donation from the John Carnegie who we can never thank enough.

We intend to put the books to good use.

It is now possible to have 2 pupils share a book. Previously we had up to 5 pupils sharing one book which made it difficult for teachers to give take-home assignments to pupils.

We have 60 new comers to the school most in nursery and Primary one and a few in the upper classes of Primary 5-6.

The school parent's day has been set for the 17th of March 2009. Parents will be expected at school to familiarize themselves with what their children do in school and how they can support them to perform better.

The term started off well. The pupils have picked up so fast after the long holiday. We will keep up the spirit as we strive for success.

Headmaster
Bernard Onyango



Meg Wyld, Chair MIFUMI UK



Pupils of MIFUMI Primary School



Pupils receive donations from John Carnegie

The Sure Start Project kicks off with excitement



Pupils of MIFUMI Primary School with their Trainer Miss Barbara Ayo

FACTS

Sure Start karate training in schools started a few weeks ago in four schools of Mifumi, Pasindi, Mudakori and St. Jude Malaba in Tororo district. The girls, head teachers and the community embraced this new sport that put girls first in a male dominated sports.

Sure Start is a MIFUMI Project that aims to develop the use of Karate around community schools to improve the status of girls while convincing the local leaders and duty bearers that sport is a positive thing for girls that leads to a change in their self image and develops awareness of their inner strengths.

This programme intends to reach approximately 300 girls in the four schools and up to 1920 girls in the whole district by the end of 2009.

In the village the community demands so much from a girl, they expect her to be virtuous by acting timid, bow her head when speaking to a man or boy and respect the belief that boys are better than them. When girls join school, this is what they bring with them. They rarely participate in class and sports leaving it all to the boys. Sure Start hopes Karate will change this attitude.

The district flagged off the Project on the 19th February 2009.

- Most rapes and sexual assaults happen to girls under eighteen years of age.

- Karate does not make girls lose their femininity; it protects them physically while building their confidence, self-esteem, self-discipline, respect and improves concentration at school.

- Karate instills leadership skills in children.

- Children with special needs such as autism, Attention Deficit Disorder, learning difficulties and hyperactivity learn to concentrate and express themselves.

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MIFUMI

Protecting women and children from Domestic violence