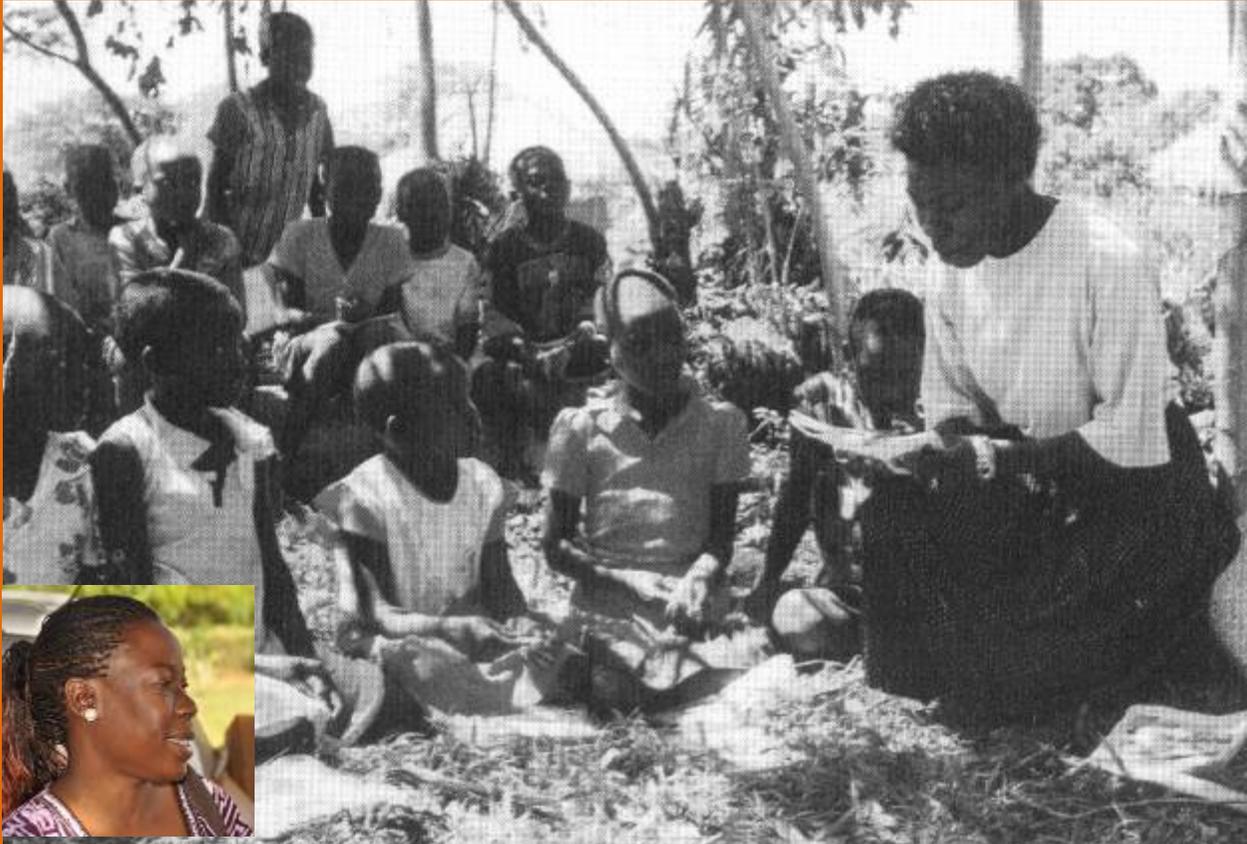


VOICE OF MIFUMI

May 2011

MIFUMI RECOGNISED AGAIN

This Month



Atuki Turner in the 80's volunteering as a mentor to pupils (girls) of Mifumil Primary school. Inset : Atuki Turner

- MIFUMI recognised
- Farewell Akoth Laura
- Students speak out
- More.

Atuki Turner, the Executive Director of MIFUMI, was recently awarded the 2011 African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Model OF Excellence accolade in recognition of her role as an outstanding and influential woman achiever.

The 11th Sarah Ntiro Lecture and Award brought together women achievers and role models from all walks of life.

The well-attended event held at Grand Imperial Hotel celebrated those women who are either inspiring models or have worked to facilitate girl-child education.

Prominent women professionals turned up for the Forum for FAWE organised-event.

The Model of Excellence award recognised women achievers who had set a good example for young girls.

Over the years, as an individual and executive director of MIFUMI, Atuki has taken it upon herself to ensure that women live violence free lives and that every girl is given the opportunity to realise her full potential. Her efforts were not in vain; in 2008, Atuki and two others were recognised by the Danish Government to be torch bearers for the

3rd Millenium development goal that calls for global action to promote gender equality and empowerment women.

Dr Miria Matembe was also one of the women honoured for her vigilant efforts to promote girl child education. She gave thanks to God when receiving and accepting the award.

The FAWE event was organized to support the underprivileged girl-child who had done African Women Educationists proud.

MIFUMI BIDS LAURA FAREWELL and WELCOMES NEW STAFF

Laura Leach, a volunteer with the US Peace Corps arrived in MIFUMI Uganda in 2009. While in MIFUMI, Laura ventured into the enterprise department focusing and investing all her attention to women economic empowerment schemes.

Laura says: *'... it seems even in the slow pace of Uganda, time can slip away from you. When I arrived in Tororo two years ago, it felt like I had all of the time in the world to get to know and work with the women of Tororo district. Here I am two years later, about to leave the country I've grown to love, and I did not get to properly say goodbye to all of the groups I worked with while I was here. I want to take a moment to thank all of the women I met and worked with throughout my time at MIFUMI. From Nagongera the first group I worked with to Malaba the last group I met with, and every group in between. I came to Uganda hoping that I could make a positive impact while I was here. I leave Uganda knowing that you have made a positive impact on me.'*

Laura, who the women named Akoth, trained the village savings and loan groups in various skills ranging from savings, investing, spending among others.

According to Laura, the Village Saving and Loan Association (VSLA) is a self-selected group of people, who pool their money and through the multiplier effect, group members can access small loans to enhance and set up their own business's hence empowering themselves economically.

The money is paid back with interest, causing the fund to grow. The regular savings contributions to the group are deposited with an end date in mind for distribution of all or part of the total funds (including interest earnings) to the individual members, usually on the basis of a procedure that associates payout to the amount saved.

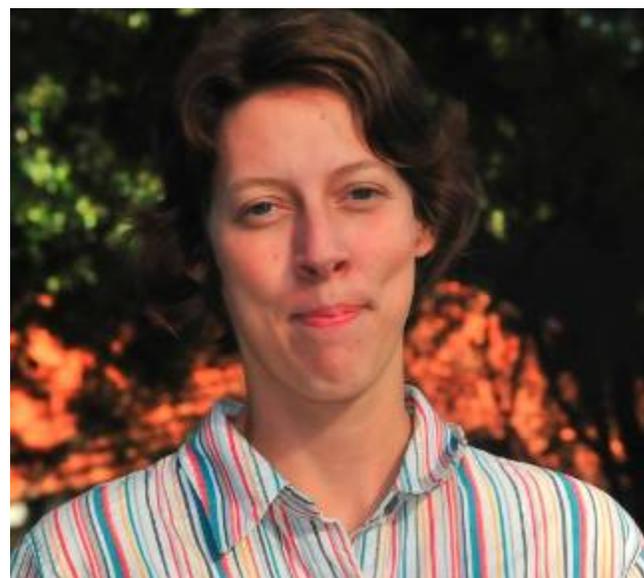
The VSLA does not call for the establishment of an institution to handle members' funds or issue loans: money is handled solely by the groups themselves and all net interest income remains their property. This lump sum sharing at the end of the rotation (usually 12 months) provides members with a large amount of money they can use for investment in whatever activities or assets they wish.

Members are also able to set up funds for emergencies, school fees, festivals and other predictable annual events.

VSLAs enable the very poor to manage their household cash flow more efficiently and flexibly Its most dramatic impact is on self-respect and social capital, particularly amongst women, who form 100% of the membership.

Laura leaves 80 functional VSLAs in Tororo District.

As MIFUMI bid Laura farewell, she welcomed new staff; Dora Ntungwa and Akwii Irene into the Public Relations department, Agnes Banda in the Account and Finance department and Scovia Akumu as the new Administrator based in Tororo.



Laura 'Akoth' Leach



MIFUMI SPONSORED STUDENTS *Speak out*



Some of the students from St Paul's College Mbale under the MIFUMI scholarship fund project.

Students who benefit from the MIFUMI sponsorship scheme on 22nd April were sent home from their respective school for first term holidays. The Students were set to be home for one month and report back on the 23rd of May 2011 for their second term studies in their various respective schools.

MIFUMI Scholarship scheme supports under privileged children particularly in Tororo district, Eastern Uganda by educating the most able but under privileged students; transforming them into future leaders for their rural community.

The students expressed utmost gratitude to their sponsors and MIFUMI for continually supporting them in their pursuit to a promising future founded on a good education.

Aketch Nanzirina a senior two student of St Paul's College, Mbale was the 24th out of 154 in her class. There are hundreds of children in my village who would have loved to be in his place. Aketch was very happy upon completing this term successfully and promised to continue working hard in her studies. There were a few challenges this term but going to work harder next term.

Paul Oyoo, a senior four student of St Paul's College Mbale says he has never forgotten that he was fortunate to get this scholarship.

He works hard each day to prove to his sponsors; Richard and Anne Tanner that they did not make a mistake in identifying him as a beneficiary and someday be very influential in his

village. He also believes he will pass his UACE examinations with flying colours.

Patrick Owere is a senior 3 student of St Paul's College, Mbale. Patrick managed to score only distinctions and credits in computer studies, commerce, chemistry, geography then english, cre, mathematics, biology, history and physics respectively.

Patrick was congratulated by both the headteacher and his class teacher for his wonderful report.

'When the HM and Teacher were congratulating me in my heart I was saying Thank you to my sponsor Pat and now that I have the opportunity to say it where she will read it, I say again, Thank Pat for your generous support towards education. I wish you the very best from the bottom of my heart in every thing that you do and may GOD reward you richly.'

Richard Oketcho is now in form four at St Paul's College, Mbale.

Richard in his Very few and honest words said

" I send my sincere appreciation to MIFUMI for identifying my need. To a child, the best gift is education which you have offered genuinely".

To Trudy my sponsor; because of your continued parental support and love. Thank you.

LEARNING THE HARD WAY

Jenny is the first and elder wife to Frank and Julia is the second and younger.

Jenny says though she was open to a polygamous relationship, she was not prepared for what it meant to be in one.

She said when her husband, Frank married his second wife Julia she was a little jealous that she (Julia) looked much younger and beautiful. However it felt good to be the first wife. She would command and demand respect from everyone including Julia, who is supposed to respect the first wife. Jenny further says 'No decision would be made without consulting me. I would get the family home and Julia would get a smaller hut. In the village, everyone respected me as the first wife.'

While Julia says being married as the second wife made her feel young, full of life, desirable and better than Jenny who was old and not as beautiful as she was and Frank would definitely treat her better than Jenny. He was already showering her with many gifts and favours.

For Frank, marrying a second wife would make him feel like 'a real man' like his father.

In less than a year into the polygamous relationship, reality started to hit.

It all started with the small rivalries between Jenny and Julia all revolving around their husband and who he loved most. The small rivalries turned into tongue lashes on whose house he spent a longer time and later into physical fights affecting their children and neighbours.

Jenny's perception of what it meant to be a first wife in a polygamous relationship was shattered. She was no longer happy; all she thought about was what she would do to make Frank love her and her children better than Julia and hers. She struggled to make herself better than Julia.

Julia wanted Frank to abandon Jenny and 'be her man' so she worked so hard towards this. She went out of her way to make Jenny look bad and ugly before Frank. Julia soon realized that she was not happy in this relationship as the only thing that she passionately worked at was the downfall of Jenny.

For Frank, at first it felt good to see the women fight over him as they each went out of their way to please him. However when the women started fighting, the children started demanding and his pockets started sticking out, his woes started. There was never enough. He did not have property or enough land to till.

He was also struggling with re-assuring them that he loved them 'equally'.

At the one of the community reconciliation meetings after a fight between Jenny and Julia, Frank revealed that he was grateful to MIFUMI's intervention. Marrying many wives had not made him 'a real man' but a man with many woes. Now that he already had children with both of them, he was going to go to work harder to provide for his family, allow his wives to support him and would ensure that he does not show favouritism to either of his wives or children.

MIFUMI's mission is to Promote protection of women and children from domestic violence and abuse and secure for them basic rights through education, Health Care and economic self sufficiency.

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