

# MIFUMI PRIMARY SCHOOL

Newsletter-July 2017

## A secondary School for Mifumi Village- First Milestone:



The idea of setting up a Secondary School was conceived in 2015. The concern for MIFUMI was many pupils were unable to continue to the next level (Secondary Schools) or secure good quality education despite their outstanding performance.

Although the Government of Uganda has successfully secured Primary Education for all under the Universal Primary Education (UPE), most children from rural and very poor backgrounds find it difficult to join Secondary Schools because of all the associated costs of tuition and transport.

Also, in the specific case of Mifumi Village, it became increasingly difficult for some students within Mifumi community, to join secondary schools because of lack of O-Level schools in the area to absorb the pupils leaving Mifumi Primary School.

The closest secondary school to Mifumi Village is about 9 kilometres away. A student will have to walk least 18 kilometres to and from school every day. This walking distance, coupled with no lunch served at school and other domestic chores that a student has to do every day at

home, forces most students to become unenthusiastic about learning and sooner or later drop out of school before completing O' Level education; leaving them with very few options as adults. The girls are usually the most affected. Jersey Overseas Aid Commission (JOAC) made a generous donation as the first step towards setting up a secondary school in this village that will respond to the concerns listed above. This donation was made towards the construction and equipping of Mifumi Secondary School Science laboratory.

Significant progress has been made with the construction of the laboratory block and the erected structure includes; Physics, Chemistry and Biology classrooms.

Also, construction work for a 4 classroom block kicked off in February 2017.

MIFUMI is embarking on a fundraising drive to erect latrines and an admin block to realise the dream of a fully functional secondary school, responding to the needs of Mifumi village. Work on the landscaped compound is also taking place. To see the blocks on Google maps search for Mifumi Secondary School..

## Capacity building workshops for teachers:

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In responding to the capacity building and performance improvement needs of the teachers at Mifumi Primary School, MIFUMI is continually engaging the expertise of specialist early learning instructor, Margaret Apio.

Margaret has so far conducted 2 training workshops for teachers. The trainings are designed to fall during the School holiday to allow the teachers the opportunity to translate and incorporate learning from the training into their lesson plans for the next term.

The first training took place during 2016 third term holidays which runs from December to early February and the second was conducted in May 2017. The training focused on attitudinal

problems that hinder development were also covered in the training; and embracing creative non-traditional approaches to imparting learning. The teachers were challenged to consider their pupils specific learning needs and develop teaching material that best suit these needs. The teachers have noted that this form of instruction practically engages the children and also enables the teachers gauge whether learning is happening at the time of teaching or not. The teacher can then review how best to re-plan the same lesson to be more effective for the learning of the pupils.

An improvement in the teacher's performance has been noted ever since the trainings began.

## Mifumi Primary School excels at National Sports Competition:

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Vincent Okoth and Lawrence Olwenyi, both in Primary Six speak with pride and passion about a recent event that saw them take first and second position at the national primary school athletic competition.

Whereas Vincent acknowledges his love for sports, especially athletics, his dream is to become a doctor. Vincent is the 3rd of 5 children. His 17year old sibling recently got married because she could not afford to go to secondary school.

Vincent says the other reason he actively

participates is because he learned that some schools award bursaries to pupils who excel in sports; therefore he is running so he can maximise his chances of getting into secondary school eventually realize his dream of becoming a doctor.

Lawrence Olwenyi is the last born of 6 children. All his siblings have dropped out of school after primary school. Like Vincent, he says he runs for the opportunities active participation in sports brings at higher institutions.

# Sanitary Pads-Enabling girls stay in School



MIFUMI continues to support girls to stay in school by providing sanitary pads. A total of 300 sanitary pads were recently procured with the kind donations from the people of Jersey. The current population of the school is 678 pupils; of which 380 pupils are girls and 298 are boys. (The highest annual population the school has registered is 742)

Of the 380 girls at the school, 264 are 10 years old and over. The oldest girl at the school is 17 years.

According to the senior woman teacher, Alupo Dorothy the earliest registered incident of a girl experiencing her first menstruation was that of a nine year old girl in Primary Three.

Many girls at that age are not well prepared for such occurrences by their parents and her role as a senior woman teacher is to teach and prepare all girls at the school from the age of nine to expect and manage situations of menstruation.

It is also quite costly to purchase a sanitary pads. A pack of 8 regular sanitary pads costs about 80 pence. A girl will need at least 2 packs for her entire menstrual period each month. Parents in this village can hardly afford to buy their daughters these pads. Even if they did, sanitary pads for daughters will not feature on their family priority list of basic needs during planning for their hard earned money.

Managing menstruation in the village: Mifumi village Women's Rights Champions (WRC), the senior woman teacher and some pupils of Mifumi Primary School were asked to share some experiences of the coping mechanisms for girls experiencing their menstruation in the village; below are some of their responses;

- Stay away from school because an accident might happen and the boys will laugh at you and call you a 'mature'
- Girls often use rags to pad themselves
- Some use waste paper bags/ or old newsprint brought in from the town
- Some girls will layer several panties to soak the blood and avoid sitting
- Another girl tells of an incident where her cousin would be made to sit in on the earth close at the back of the house in the garden for several hours to let the blood soak into the earth.
- Take numerous baths;
- Pinch off a chunk of sponge from their parents'/ family mattress that they use as re-washable pads.
- 2 girls say their parents could afford to buy them toilet paper rolls to use as pads.

The girls who revealed they used sponge, toilet paper rolls, newsprint, layers of panties

added that during their menstruation they avoided sitting in public places lest their periods soaked through their uniforms causing them great embarrassment.)

What the school is currently providing;

- Sexual and reproductive health education (information and education on menstruation)
- Practical support for every girl experiencing her menstruation for the first time through the office of the senior woman teacher
- Counselling support; A Full time senior woman teacher (resident at the school premises), who also doubles as a counsellor to the young teens in helping them understand and manage changes in their bodies among other counselling areas.
- A change of clothes / uniforms
- First aid – paracetamol for children experiencing painful cramps.

Through support and donations from agencies such as MIFUMI Uganda, Jersey Overseas Aid, Standard Bank, among others, the school has managed to acquire

- A purpose-built washroom to meet the needs of girls undergoing menstruation.
- Occasional donation of pads/ sanitary towels from MIFUMI Uganda, well-wishers and visitors to Mifumi Primary School. (please note: because of the high costs attached to acquisition of sanitary towels, MIFUMI Uganda can only make a modest contribution to respond to situations of emergencies at the school; and not the needs of all the approximately 264 girls experiencing their menstruation every month).

Whereas the school environment is able to support girls experiencing menstruation within the school premises; there is very little support for the girls at home during holidays and vacations.

**Mifumi Primary School**  
Securing the Basic right to education

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Flickr, Twitter**

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