



Volume 10 | Issue 1 | May 2019

The MEMPROW Girls

NEWSLETTER



Sustaining women's leadership

A MEMPROW GIRL STANDS UP, SPEAKS OUT!

Speaking out - has been an integral part in the work that MEMPROW does, we not only speak out on behalf of girls and young women everywhere, but also empower young women to speak/advocate for themselves.



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For the past 10years, MEMPROW has worked towards amplifying girls' voices; strengthening girls and young women's agency and participation. We have achieved this through different trainings such as the social survival skills training, feminist conversations, intergenerational dialogues, Leadership trainings etc.

These distinct approaches have yielded positive results as girls report shifts in mind sets, improved self-esteem, confidence, reduced risky sexual behaviors and improved knowledge on various topical issues. Secondly, the girls/young women have been provided with platforms to speak out on their past and present experiences, dreams and those of their communities.

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The comprehension of oppression is "indispensable" to a new vision of the world based on justice and freedom

Dr. Hilda M. Tadia



Message from the Programme Director

When you speak out, you will find your voice. This is because your opinions, answers, and questions aloud allow you to formulate and organize your thoughts and understanding of the concepts. You will feel great about yourself! How you express your opinions (or not) is a direct reflection upon how people experience who you are and what you represent.

In class, speaking out keeps you awake and engaged in what the teacher is saying. Active participation is the key to how you process information and new concepts. Your teacher will appreciate your effort when you speak out.

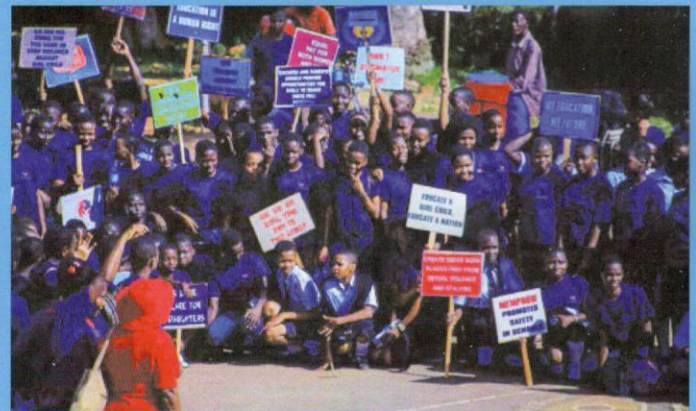
At work, your voice defines the value you bring to the organization. Your performance at work begins to wane when your voice is not heard. Speaking out fuels discussion, ideation and group-think. Everyone has the right to freedom of speech and expression according to article 29(1)a of the Constitution of Uganda. With this in view and cognizant of the fact that many females do not access this right, MEMPROW works towards improved voice and agency of girls and young women; one of the key tools that can help them to claim their rights, and to achieve their aspirations.

School Leaders, teachers, parents, community members, political and religious leaders are all encouraged to be deliberate in ensuring participation of both females and males in various programmes. However, meaningful participation can only be attained if girls are nurtured in a way that enables them to speak out easily. Currently many females' participation is curtailed by religious and cultural beliefs, norms and practices that place them in a subordinate position. For example, many girls share with the MEMPROW team that one of the things taught at home is that "if you boldly speak, no man will marry you", and another is "silence is humility". These myths have been demystified and we have seen many results including getting girls take on top leadership positions in schools, and having girls actively participate in decision making at home. There are also many female leaders and or influencers who wavered the negative cultural and religious systems, spoke and made a positive contribution to our society. One of these is our very own Dr. Hilda Tadria, the Executive Director of MEMPROW whose fight and voice for Human Rights and in particular girls'/women's rights in Uganda is recognized, and to which she was awarded a Gold Medal this year during the National Women's Day celebrations.

MEMPROW girls and boys, make it a habit to speak out. It is your constitutional right. It is the right thing to do. When you voice your opinion consistently, you set a tone for yourself.

A strong voice can strengthen your influence. A consistent voice creates unexpected opportunities

Immaculate Mukasa
Programme Director



Who is a MEMPROW Girl?

One becomes a member of the MEMPROW Girls' Network through participation in MEMPROW activities.

a) Social Survival Skills Training: This is a two weeks' rigorous training in institutions of learning. It focuses on building self-esteem and confidence of girls with emphasis on skills for exercising social agency in changing their own lives. The training process creates awareness on Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, encourages girls to have higher aspirations and to stay in school; boosts girls' life skills and provide career guidance

b) Intergenerational mentoring and gender dialogue: These provide a space where girls and boys convene once every month at MEMPROW Offices to discuss different topics in the field of gender, human rights, entrepreneurship, current affairs, social etiquette among others. When one attends at least six sessions of the intergenerational dialogues, she becomes a member of the network.

c) Any other training/activities organised and conducted by MEMPROW such as the feminist leadership training, Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) training, business and entrepreneurship training among others

MEMPROW Girl is;

- Socially intelligent
- Confident of who she is, loves herself, body, mind and soul
- An agent of change and a leader; she inspires and mobilises others for positive action
- An advocate for social change and ensures that social change will not stop with her
- Strong even in the face of unfair gender and age biases
- stop with her,
- Strong even in the face of unfair gender and age biases.

Through our various trainings, MEMPROW girls have been empowered to claim their rights and to challenge the status quo. Some of the girls share their stories as portrayed in this issue;

Before I became a MEMPROW girl, I was so shy and scared of facing my fears such as public speaking. Whenever I stood up to speak in public, my heart would pump, I always wanted the ground to swallow me. I attended the social survival skills training and my life changed a good deal; i learnt how to communicate. My self esteem was boosted and I am proud of who I have become. Thanks MEMPROW! I am now a person with a purpose. Long Live MEMPROW! Kirabo Evelyn - Luzira SS



A MEMPROW girl giving her views during a press conference

Before the training, I used to walk while facing down. After the social survival skills training my life changed especially my walking style. I now walk with alot of confidence, my friends have also noticed such changes.

In addition MEMPROW has taught me how to look people straight in the eyes while talking to them. This too has built my confidence and communication skills. I am proud of who i have become. Thank you MEMPROW
Akoth Proud MEMPROW Girl

I will speak out: I Pledge To Fight Injustice

My neighbor used to fight with his wife whenever he got drunk and smoked marijuana. He would beat his wife whenever he asked the wife for money and the wife refused to give it to him or maybe at times the wife wouldn't be having money. Sometimes, he would brutally beat his wife using harmful objects like iron bars and stones, causing severe bodily injuries to her. The issue became a major concern in our neighborhood. On several occasions, I talked to them as a couple on how to leave peacefully and happily in their marriage. I even told the man to stop taking alcohol and drugs since he was wasting money that would be useful in meeting his family needs, but there was no change.

So, one day, after understanding the rights of women better through one of the MEMPROW trainings, I decided to invite my neighbor's wife and talked to her as fellow women, reminded her of her rights. I emphasized that she deserved to live life free from all kinds of torture and disrespect. I remember I also told her that it was her right to seek legal support from the authorities. After some few days, she came to me saying that she had made up her mind to leave her husband so that she can have some peace of mind. As I talk now, she has left Pakwach and she is staying in Kampala. She one time called me to tell me she had gotten a job which was paying her well. I guess she is finally living a comfortable and peaceful life.

This story is so important to me because I saved somebody's life from excessive torture and pain. With the acquired knowledge on women's rights, I can't sit and watch women and girls suffer any form of injustice. I know my role is to fight against such kinds of social injustices faced by women and girls in my society. - JOYODI's Joan A.T.



Securing Girls' Livelihood and Resilience

MEMPROW with support from Medica Mondiale implemented a project of securing girls' livelihood and resilience in Parombo Sub County. The project supports the training of highly marginalized young women who have become child mothers, have no skills (have never attended school or have dropped out) to gain basic social entrepreneurship skills with an objective of improving the quality of their lives and their children.

In this session, the girls open up on how they got pregnant and dropped out of school. We hope the girls who are still in school will learn some lessons from these stories



while studying. I would walk long distances to look for coffee for sale. I got into labor pains while I had gone to purchase coffee for sale, I had no money for a bodaboda to rush me to the nearest health centre. I had to walk all the way to the hospital, by the time I got there, I delivered normally but the baby was tired. The baby was so frail and became deformed. The baby cannot walk or see up to this moment in time. **Name withheld**

I was in primary five when I got pregnant but the boy rejected the pregnancy. My parents pressurized me to disclose who was responsible for the pregnancy and I told them who the boy was and where he lived. My parents acted by reporting the case to the police, when the police was coming to arrest the boy he got to know and escaped. Later on, I was asked to go and stay with the mother to this boy, but she rejected me. She claimed I was too demanding to be taken care of, I then left and went to stay with my grandma. Life became hell on earth for me. A few months to the time of delivery I asked for financial support from the boy's family but they declined to my plea. I decided to fend for myself. When the day for delivery arrived, I gave birth normally but the baby was not fine for some time but got better and survived. **Name withheld**

My father was a poor man and could not support me to stay in school. I started doing petty business while studying to raise school fees. I got this thought of getting a boyfriend to support me financially. We started dating when I was in senior one and got pregnant while I was in senior three. This man stopped offering me financial support when he realized I was pregnant. He was afraid to be associated with a minor and would be arrested. I dropped out of school and continued doing the coffee business I had started



MEMPROW engaging child mothers



Advice To Fellow Peers

Career first, boys and men later

My name is KS, I am 17 years old. I live in Pulum parish, Aliakra village. I am a single mother with one child. My dream was to become a nurse but lost hope when I got pregnant. During the training, I have learnt how to survive on my own and do business; the groups formed will help me save money. I have met new friends and the sharing of stories gave me comfort that I'm not alone in the struggle.

I want to work and earn a living; I do not want to be dependent on a man for money. I have realized that I can work by myself. I have gained hope; the future is bright. I know some day I'll be who I wanted to be. I plan to do a business or work to earn a living, i would also love to go back to school if I get money.

My advice to the girls in my same situation is that their problems are not big, and can always be solved, to the rest I caution them that men want to take advantage of girls, after impregnating them, they reject them. I advise them to pursue their careers first then marriage and children come later.

Work hard

My name is MM, 17 years old, single with one child. I live in Gyupudeba village, Pagwata parish. I sell onions and do farming on a small scale to earn a living. My dream is to become a successful business woman. I need capital of shs300, 000 to start a business of coffee. I got to know about this project through a member of the community. The biggest problem I face is my inability to provide for the basic needs for myself and my child due to the meager income I earn. When my baby is sick, I do not have money to take her to the hospital. I take the baby to the dispensary where there are few drugs or no drugs at all. This condition worries me greatly. The child is disabled which is another burden on my side. I feel worried and weak. I worry about my future in case I do not get help. Yes. The training has helped me so much. My life has changed. I know now that if I work hard, my life can improve. I am inspired to engage more in business after the entrepreneurship training which has imparted entrepreneurial knowledge to me.

Groups formed will help me in several ways, savings emphasized. Apart from business, i would like to do farming. I know how to plant onions and tomatoes but the garden is small for me to realise high yields. My parents feel this is a good training. They are happy with my involvement in it. I need capital to start my business. My future is bright. I can become wealthy.

My hope is to be better than i am today in terms of finances and academic level. My advice to my fellow girls out there is that pregnancy is not the end of the world. Do not look back, work hard. Boys and men are liars.

Staying focused

My name is PS, 17 years old. I come from Jupukok village, Pagwata parish, I have one child. I sell bananas to earn a living. i am single and dropped out of school in primary five as a result of pregnancy. I got to know about MEMPROW project through the local council one chair person of my village. I live with my grandma, life is so hard, and we barely survive. I am the bread winner of the family. My grandma is too old. Yes the problems i face also happen to other women in my community.

I have decided after this training to start saving, i want to have money to help my child. If i work hard, my future is bright. I sell bananas to earn a living, but since it is a perishable product, it goes bad and i make losses. I am contemplating on changing my business to trading in silver fish then later on sell clothes. The biggest challenge i have in my business is limited capital. I want to be important and have money to take care of myself. Through this training i have realized that i can actually become important and economically empowered.

I have gone with the message of hard work and starting small. I won't look back; i shall instead focus on my future.

My Right, My Future!

MEMPROW with support from Terre des Hommes Netherlands continues to implement "My Right, My Future-empowering Girls and community to end child marriages and teenage pregnancies" Project in Pakwach district; a project that supports child mothers between the ages of 11-18yrs. The project has resulted into economic empowerment and improved self-worth among child mothers

Stay in school, say no to sex

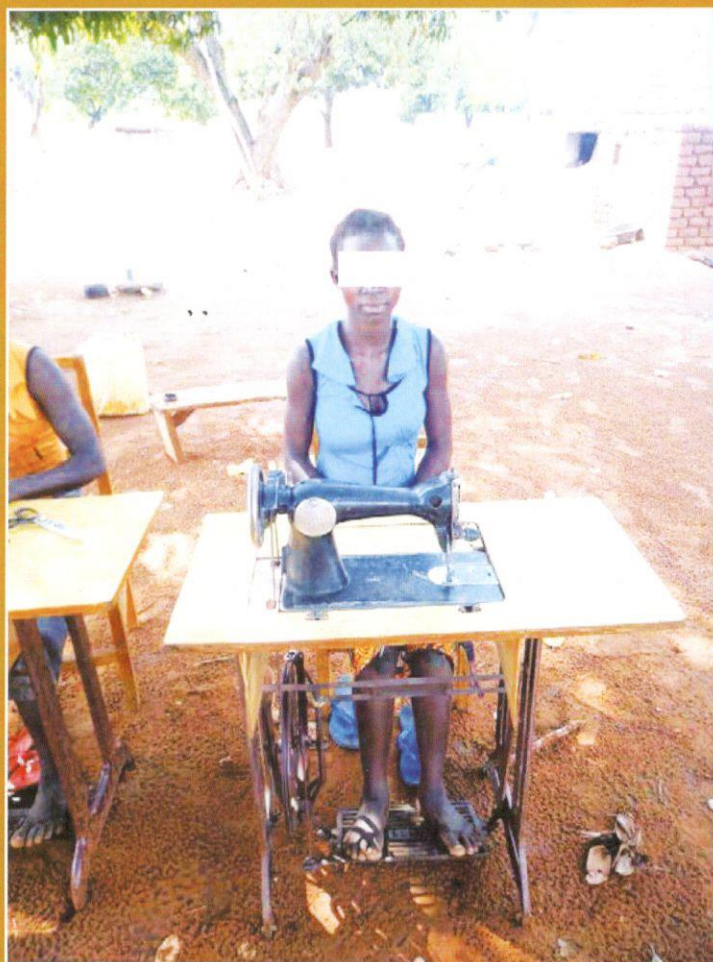
AP is the last born in a family of four children, she is aged 15 years. She went to school but while in Primary One (P.1) class, her elder sister who was a policewoman and married requested her mother to let her go to Kampala to help baby sit her two children. Her mother accepted and she came back when she was ten years old. "I felt so big to join P.1 again to continue with my studies, I feared that younger children will call me 'mother'" I stayed home for a few days and went to my other sister in Pakwach town for about one year. After the one year, I went back home and joined my mother in doing agricultural work. I used not to do any business. Because I was redundant, I got a friend with whom I would move from place to place on the streets watching films from morning to ten o'clock in the night. My mother warned me many times against my risky behaviour but her plea fell on deaf ears. She sometimes would get angry and even beat me up but I would not listen. I ended up getting a boyfriend from the films and started having sex. Though I was already 14 years old, I did not imagine it would make me pregnant until I missed my periods. From that point, he denied responsibility and my mother had to take up the role of supporting me through the pregnancy. The case was not reported to the police but the LCI was notified and they (parents of the boy) brought two goats to my parents. From then, I have not seen any help for the child to date.' She narrates.

Intervention

I heard about MEMPROW from Ms. Florence now our mentor. She told me that there was a project in the sub county that needed child mothers. I went and I was lucky to be picked out of the many that showed up. We were trained for five days and at the end of the days, we were given some money as transport refund. From the training a lot was said that changed my thinking about life. I realized I could do a business and support myself and my child with so I used 30,000 Shillings out of 50,000 Shillings given to start a business of selling mandazi and I now have a profit of 100,000 shillings. I also used part of the transport refund to plant half an acre of cassava. We also have a group garden created and funded by MEMPROW from which we got 10 basins of simsim and 2 acres of cassava which we hope will enhance our economic status.

Current Situation:

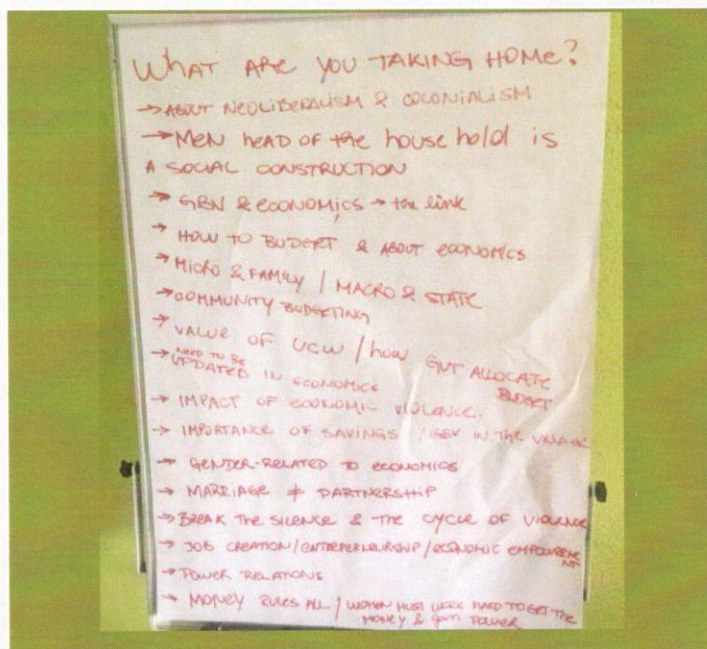
AP is now able to meet her basic economic needs and that of her baby. Currently, she has got an opportunity to obtain a skill of tailoring at Home empowerment tailoring school. 'I deposited about 30,000/= obtained from our group for this training. I feel happier that MEMPROW is going to pay all our requirements for this training. I am serious with the training and I know that with this skill, I will be in position to make more money, save more, invest and meet our household needs. I thank MEMPROW for encouraging us to go back to school. I didn't know I would be able to do a tailoring course. I would like to tell other girls not to follow our footsteps but stay in school and say no to sex and marriage before they are mature.'



Feminist Economics Training

MEMPROW under the Community-Based Approach to Preventing Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Project (2017-2020) funded by NORAD in partnership with Masimanyane Women Rights International conducted an interactive three-day feminist economics training for young women.

The training aimed at (i) Introducing and increasing awareness and appreciation of the ways in which micro and macro-economic policies and decisions are part of our everyday lives; (ii) Introducing and increasing understanding of key issues related to economics, economic rights, budgeting and development; (iii) Enhance participatory democracy through discussions of inequality, health, education, etc as well as their multi-dimensions based on gender, class, race, sexuality and (iv) Strengthen capacity and enhance participation of young women in provincial and national governance, specifically in the area of budgeting



My involvement and participation in MEMPROW trainings has helped me a lot especially in expanding my knowledge on issues of Gender Based Violence GBV. During my university education, I remember I was taken through Gender Equality as a course unit but honestly I don't think the classroom knowledge can come close to what I have gained (knowledge and capacity) so far in the trainings I have been part of. The knowledge I have gained has also helped greatly when it comes to sharing my opinions about women and the different forms of violence that they face. I have been able to share the knowledge with my family members, workmates and even the community members in my neighborhood. I now have the confidence to share with others about the violence those women and girls experience especially violence that they face because of their sexuality and men's 'power'.

This change is important to me because I have now realized that each and every person can fight violence including me. I used to ignore all kinds of violations that happened to women even if it were a man or a woman who is the perpetrator.

I am completely a different person, even at family level, I am like the peace builder and for my neighbors I have encouraged at least

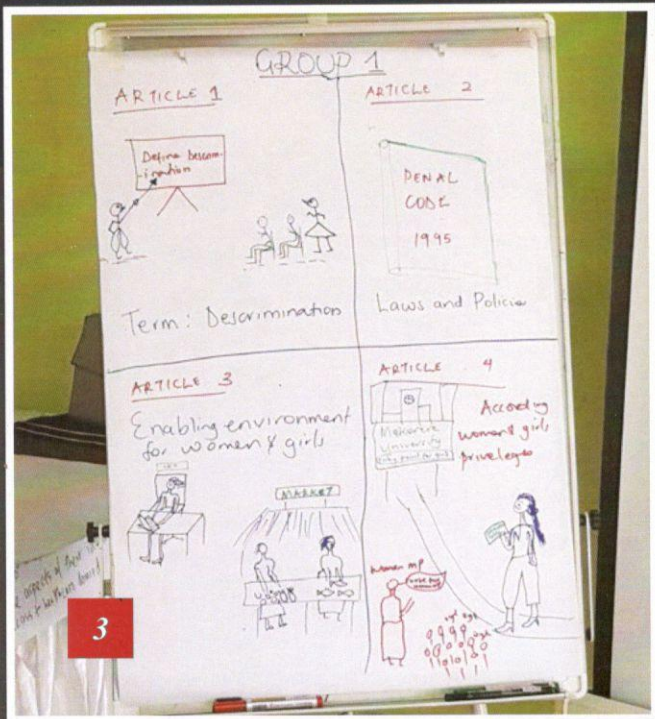


six women to start saving some money to avoid violence which is as result of their dependence on their husbands. I have encouraged them to become independent and also make independent decisions on how and when to use their money. —LICO's Sharon .K. O.

Pictorial

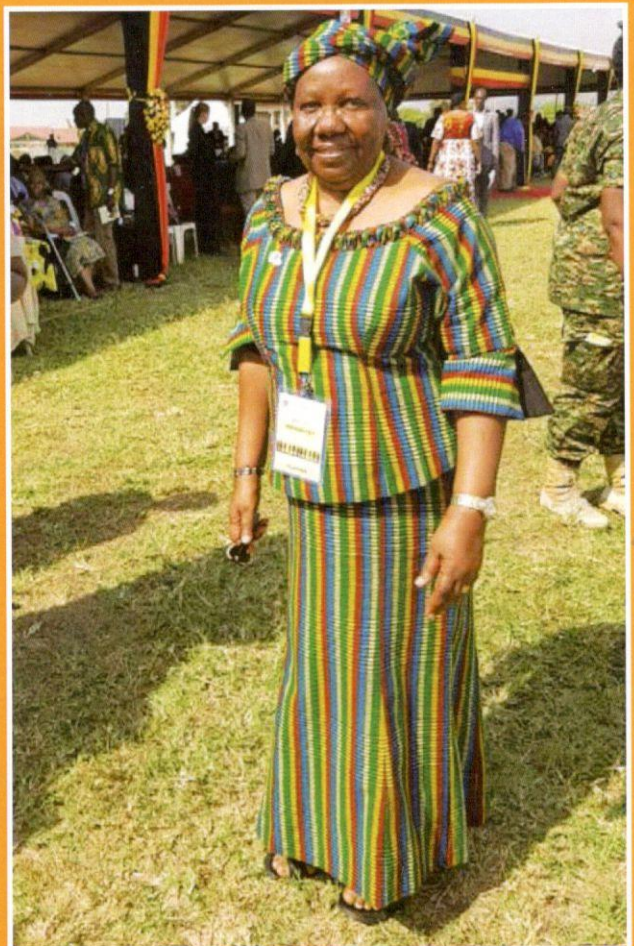


- 1) Young women discussing issues regarding violence in their communities
- 2) The president of the MEMPROW girls' club at Bishop Cipriano giving opening remarks at the sports gala
- 3) CEDAW first 4 articles as summarized by MEMPROW participants during a gender training
- 4) A MEMPROW boy from Luzira SS representing men's views during MEMPROW@10 Celebration
- 5) Students of Oturgang girls' primary school after attending the social survival skills training
- 6) A young girl speaking out her views during a Summit organized by MEMPROW
- 7) At MEMPROW we believe in inclusion; MEMPROW girls during a football competition
- 8) MEMPROW Girls during an advocacy walk



The MEMPROW girls Network wishes to congratulate Dr Hilda. M.Tadria, the ED and Founder of MEMPROW upon the Gold Medal awarded during the National Women's day Celebration. Thank you for the amazing work you do for girls, young women and communities

Congratulations!



Quarterly programme highlights

Gender Awareness Teachers' training

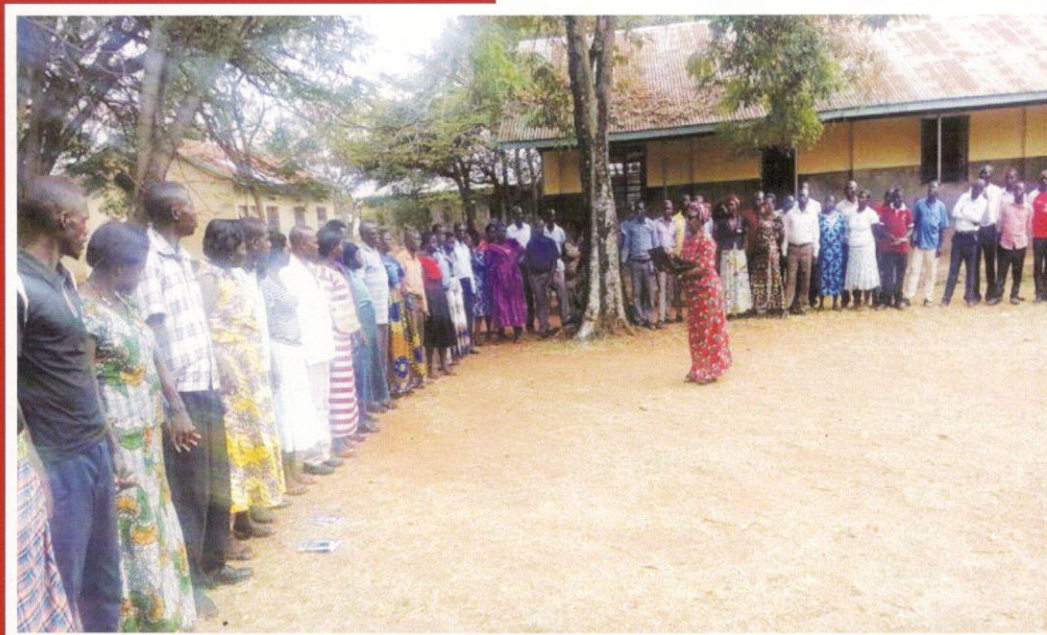
To enable collective effort of keeping a girl in school, for the last 4 years MEMPROW has been conducting Gender Awareness trainings for teachers.

The purpose of these trainings is to ensure that the changes MEMPROW is making in influencing negative mind-sets about girls' capabilities and violence against girls in schools are institutionalized and sustained. MEMPROW involved teachers to stimulate their interest in improving girls' performance and to sensitize them to value the practice of keeping girls in school. This year's training was conducted at Angal parish and engaged 95 teachers both male and female.

The teachers committed to work towards ensuring that the school systems and structures are safe and support girls to stay, study and excel. They made plans for implementing their commitments.

ORYANG PRIMARY SCHOOL WORK PLAN 2019				
	What you commit to do	How do you plan to do it?	Indicators	Time frame
Administration	Supervision Monitoring	Assessing pupils work	Syllabus coverage Assessment	On going
Fellow teachers	Work out on the programme of MEMPROW	Meeting the teachers	Handout of programme	On going
School environment	Make school environment friendly to the learners	Through making talking compound	Enrolling Comp. bound	On going
Learners	Teaching Guidance and Counselling	Schemes of work Lesson Plan Assessment Meetings	Syllabus coverage Performance Discipline	On going
At home	Discipline Avoiding Violence Sharing Ideas	Family meetings	Discipline Working together	On going
Community	Child enrolment at school	Sensitisation Mobilisation	High child enrolment	On going

RINGE MEM. P/S. 2019				
	What you commit to do	How do you plan to do it?	Indicators	Time frame
1. Administration	Organising meetings	Teach	Minutes	Feb-May
2. Fellow t's.	Guidance and Counselling	Individually Staff meetings	Record of minutes	Feb-May
3. Sch. Env.	Talking Compound	Involving t's and learners	Talking Compound plants	Feb-May
4. Learners	Formation of Clubs Hygiene maintenance	Training by t's	Availability of pads	Feb-May
5. At home	Guidance and Counselling	Individually	Provision of Scholastic materials	Feb-May
6. Community	Family meetings Provision of Sch. mat. Sensitization	Organize drama	Drama performed	May



Intergenerational Dialogues

MEMPROW continues to conduct its monthly intergenerational dialogues. In these dialogues we employ different methodologies such as having debates, group discussions, and brain storming among others. In this issue we present to you the results of the two dialogues conducted so far;

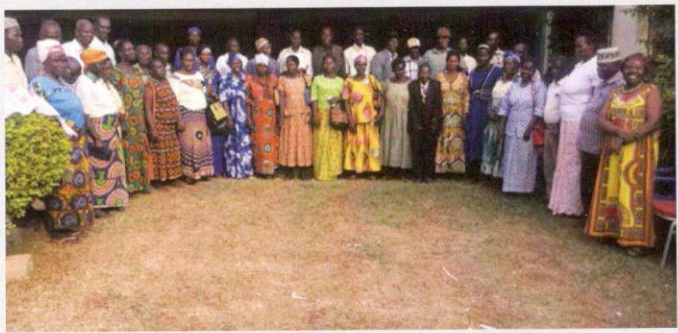
Strategic Planning Dialogue held on 2nd Feb 2019 with 150 participants; the objective of this dialogue was to engage participants in developing topics that will be discussed throughout the year. The participants suggested several topics such as self-defense skills for women, cancers, finance/savings and investments, violence, self esteem and confidence, career guidance, HIV/AIDS and etc. In attendance was the Prime minister of the Alur Kingdom Mr. Vincent Ochaya who expressed his gratitude in seeing young people trying to access knowledge that can improve their lives. He also commended MEMPROW for their timely intervention and challenging the status quo of young women.

Myths and Stereo types on Cancers dialogue held on 30th March 2019 with over 150 participants, facilitated by Dr. Kalungi Richard, a specialist in Cancer. Dr. Kalungi centered his discussions on the definition, different types, signs and symptoms, causes, risk factors of cancer. He concluded his session by advising participants to go for screening and to live a health life



Community Dialogues

In the effort to transform negative cultural practices and norms, MEMPROW organized community dialogues attended by 90 local leaders, chiefs, district officers and their wives the three districts (Nebbi, Pakwach, Zombo). The three day interactive sessions were aimed at increasing appreciation of education and value of girls/ women.



During the sessions, participants were guided to understand the values/norms held by cultural leaders in relation to girl-child education. In addition the participants were helped to understand that defilement is a capital offence according to the domestic laws. Secondly, they were made to realize that criminals should be isolated from the community to prevent further crimes both in the communities where they previously committed the crimes and elsewhere they may live. Thirdly, participants acknowledged that even when they do not report criminals, parents to defiled girls end up taking care of the child mothers and their babies and such mothers are more likely to be trapped in poverty together with their children.

At the end of the sessions participants appreciated the great awakening about the effects of sexual violence (teenage pregnancy and child marriage) on girl-child education and community development in general and improved appreciation of girl-child education.



Chiefs and other local leaders during a group discussion



About MEMPROW

- VISION:** "A transformed, violence free society where young women and girls can claim their rights And achieve their aspirations.
- MISSION:** To develop girls and young women's leadership capacities and self-reliance through training and inter generational mentoring; feminist movement and advocacy networks building; social analysis and research; as well as peer learning within institutions of learning and local communities.
- THE GOAL:** To be a centre of excellence in promoting girls and young women's access to their rights.

Our Partners

Editorial

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