

## **RESILIENT WOMEN'S ORGANISATION ANNUAL REPORT 2021**

### **EMPOWERING YOUNG WOMEN TO EMPOWER THE NEXT GENERATION**

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## **MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**



It's with immense gratitude and honour that I present to you the Resilient Women's Organisation 2021 Annual Report under the theme, "Community-Led solutions defeating Gender Based Violence & giving women and girls free choices."

2021 has seen us take a stride in our community-led interventions and shown us that solutions to community problems should indeed come from these very communities demonstrating a great stride towards our vision of a community whereby adolescent girls and young women have equal access to services and resources. Our sealed partnerships with Local Council leaders, Katabi Town Council, Wakiso District Local Government and most importantly community mentor parents and peer educators ensure that the communities we dream about changing are deeply involved in program planning and implementation.

Statistics indicate that 1 in 5 women aged between 15-49 have experienced sexual violence at some point in their life compared to men with less than 1 in 10, and every year approximately 14 million girls are subjected to child marriage.

In Uganda it's estimated that more than 24% of pregnancies are of teenage parents. Marriage & pregnancy usually means the end of education to the child; with no education the future of the child is uncertain and undermines numerous development priorities, hindering progress towards a more equal, healthy and prosperous world.

**Uganda has a very young population, with nearly half (47%) of its people under 15 years old. The choices that these young people and their parents make will affect the country's future for decades to come. Addressing GBV, harmful social and cultural practises such as child marriage equates to major benefits to girls and women and lead to societal benefits, such as improved health of children and faster economic growth.**

As demonstrated within the annual report, we have continued the fight against gender based violence, teenage pregnancy and child marriage through our mainstream

programs aimed at promoting equal and quality education opportunities for both girls & boys, enabling access to age appropriate comprehensive sexual & reproductive health information & services, provision of direct services to at-risk girls and young women and ensuring social and economic empowerment of vulnerable households with a focus on child mothers. We have been in position to implement activities under these programs through the generous support of the Girls First Fund, The African Women's Development Fund, Founder Members, Individual donors and International volunteers, for which we are always grateful. I would also like to thank the Local Leaders especially the Local Council Nalugala Women's Representative and her Committee, the Mentor Parents from Nalugala and Kitale Villages, the Youth Chairpersons who closely worked with us across the different events and activities we are all celebrating in the report.

I would wish to thank the staff, associates and community champions who have continued to commit to the fight against gender based violence, teenage pregnancy and child marriage with limited or even no pay.

Let this report show that with the right attitude and commitment we shall most definitely create an environment where every child will have an equal opportunity to quality education and develops to full potential without the impact of teenage pregnancy & child marriage; we will indeed see a community where adolescent girls and young women have equal access to services and resources.

***Hope Lydia Ndagire***

***Executive Director***

***Resilient Women's Organization.***

## **RESILIENT WOMEN' ORGANISATION STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

Established in 2016, Resilient Women's Organisation is a registered Community Based Organisation (CBO) based in Wakiso district, Katabi Town Council, to empower and support adolescent girls and young women who have been affected or are likely to be affected by Gender Based violence and poverty in order to achieve an equal and just society.

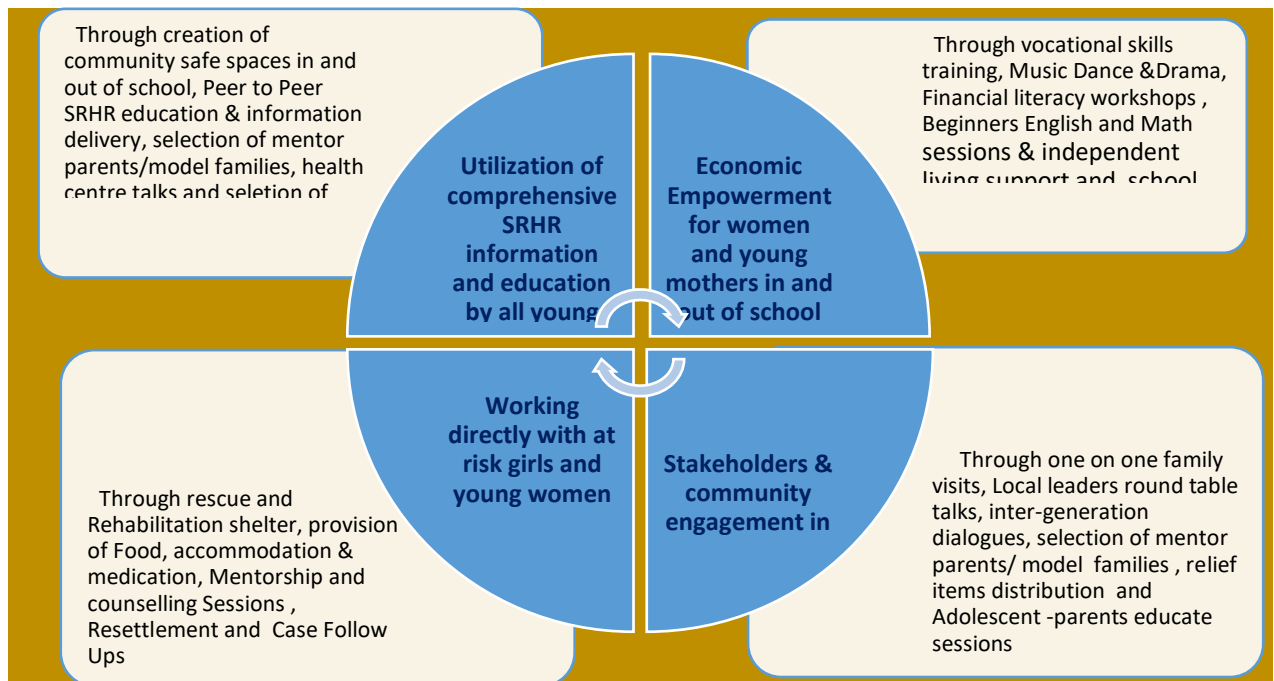
**VISION:** Resilient Women's Organization envisions a society where all adolescent girls and young women have equal access to resources and opportunities.

**MISSION:** Resilient Women's Organisation exists to create lasting solutions to poverty and unemployment in the lives of adolescent girls & young women through resilient social and economic empowerment programs.

#### Our Values

- RESPECT; We respect the individual.
- TEAMWORK; We work together.
- TRANSPARENCY; We are open in our communication.
- COMMITMENT; We are committed to our communities.
- INTEGRITY; Above all, we act with integrity.

## What we are doing to realise our vision and mission



## 2021 QUANTITATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER OUR RESILIENT SOCIAL & ECONOMIC RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING

### Utilization of comprehensive SRHR information and education by all young people.



- 8 community resilient clubs were in operation
- 89 SRHR sessions delivered
- 409 young people reached with SRHR education
- 2 in-school Resilient clubs operated briefly
- 10 mentor parents selected & trained in SRHR/GBV
- 2 health center talks conducted with 8 medical people
- 16 peer educators on board
- 3 days' capacity building workshop peer educators
- 14 adolescents- parents SRHR educate sessions, 30 families reached out
- 2 partnerships established for SRHR services referrals

### Economic Empowerment for women and young mothers in and out of School



- 31 under hair dressing
- 31 under Tailoring
- 108 under talent development
- 2 girl under independent living support
- 7 girls under back to school sponsorship

### Temporary rescue shelters to at risk girls and young women

- 5 girls provided a temporary rescue shelter
- 19 families, 17 girls and 5 young mothers reached out during COVID-19 through calls and food items
- 5 girls were resettled

### Stakeholders engagement in advocating for the rights of girls and young women

- 102 parents reached out through Intergeneration dialogues
- 28 leaders reached out through local leaders table talks
- 13 police officers given GBV case handling capacity building
- 30 vulnerable families provided with relief food items
- 2 health centre talks
- 4 District & 3 town council engagement visits



-28 local leaders and 10 mentor parents capacitated to fully understand GBV and SRHR



## Our 2021 in depth

### 1. THE GIRLS FIRST FUND PROJECT

After a successful completion of our annual learning year Girls First Fund grant in response to Child Marriages and Early Unions (15th July 2018 up to 15th July 2019), Resilient Women's Organisation was considered for a renewal of this very grant under an amplified response to child marriages and early unions for 2 years. The project goal is 'All young people especially girls and young women are empowered to say no to child marriages and early unions through SRHR information and economic empowerment'. June 2021 began the last year of this 2year grant.

Under the GFF project, three major outcomes describe our two years' journey.

These include;

- i) Utilization of comprehensive SRHR information and education by all young people.
- ii) Empowered young people increasingly voice their rights
- iii) Supportive social-cultural, environment for youth-friendly SRHR

Since the GFF Project feeds right within our organizational vision, most the bulk of the 2021 activities at RWO were tailored to tackle the underlying root causes of child marriages, teenage pregnancies and GBV in general.

GFF organized several capacity building and learning sessions to enable us implement these programs better and foster organizational growth.



*Empowering girls to stand up for their rights.*

## 2. AWDF Grant

In September 2021, RWO was one of the lucky recipients of a grant from the African Women's Development Fund, to be running for a year under the theme, **"Defeating GBV, enabling free choices for women and girls in Wakiso."**

This grant comes just in time to enable us continue our strategic direction of increasing access to comprehensive Reproductive Health & Rights Information for women and girls in Wakiso, and address violence against women and girls by working with local rights bearers and health workers to foster community GBV response mechanisms and advocacy for the rights of women and girls.



*We work with the police to address violence against women & girls, and to advocate for the rights of women and girls.*

### **3. KEEPING GIRLS IN SCHOOL WITH OUR SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM**

Our girls' sponsorship program has grown from 6 sponsors to 8 sponsors. The number of sponsored girls has also grown from 6 girls to 8 girls. Most of the sponsored girls are in secondary school, while a few new girls are in Primary School. The organisation also printed out various scholastic and reading materials for our girls both at the centre and in the community during the lockdown

Our sponsors worked with, and supported us through the on & off covid-19 school schedule, with reading materials and coaching for some of the girls.

#### **4. WORKING DIRECTLY WITH AT-RISK ADOLESCENT GIRLS & YOUNG WOMEN**

##### **❖ Rescue and Rehabilitation**

Our temporary rescue and Rehabilitation shelters have been in place to offer social – physiological support to girls and young mothers who are victims of sexual and gender based violence. The shelters proved to be the most source of rescue and hope to girls and young women during COVID-19 times, more especially during the lockdown. Before COVID-19, the shelter had a number of 5 girls, three of whom were young mothers. As a result of government restrictions on gatherings, we had to complete the family resettlement process for some of the girls, however, our offices remained open offering calls to the vulnerable and most at-risk families. The immediate presidential directives of closing all institutions across the country and the ban on social gatherings directly affected our work, girls and young women we serve as they were disproportionately affected and many couldn't travel to access our shelter or offices. Government has put in place stricter measures to control shelters and institutionalization of minors and RWO is working within these measures. As a result of increased cases of sexual violence, Psychological-stress, domestic Violence and Forced sexual encounters, we had to ensure the safety of adolescent girls and young women through these three points of interventions;

##### **i) Parents, young mothers and girls' check-Ins: More family engagement**

The staff at Resilient Women Organization directly engaged families, girls and young mothers through phone calls providing Sexual Reproductive Health rights information, needed referrals and provision of psychological support counselling. 19 girls, 14 families and 5 young mothers were reached out.





*Engaging parents*

## **ii) Meaningful Engagement of local leaders**

Local leaders including the chairmen Local council ones, women and youth leaders were facilitated to reach out to most vulnerable families and girls. A week long capacity building training was organized, with facilitators from Family Medical Point, to help the Local Leaders understand what Gender Based Violence and Sexual Reproductive Health & Rights are and how addressing these issues will make our communities better.

All local leaders who are already registered as stakeholders of RWO have been facilitated with airtime so that we can be kept alert and informed in case our beneficiaries need us. 28 local leaders were involved.



*Local leaders undergoing capacity building to ensure community-led programming.*

## 5. INTEGRATION OF SRHR INFORMATION AND COVID-19 INFORMATION DURING THE CHECK-IN'S CALLS

Our social worker and the councillors ensured dissemination of right information regarding COVID-19 and safety measures as laid down by the ministry of Health and WHO to protect our beneficiaries. This information was

disseminated alongside vital information regarding domestic violence, safe sex and counselling. The Temporary shelters are now accommodating 2 girls, including a young mother whose baby is two months old.

## 6. ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT FOR WOMEN AND YOUNG MOTHERS both IN AND OUT OF SCHOOL

### ❖ Vocational and Life skills training

The fact that we work with a marginalised key population including young mothers, teenage pregnant mothers, out of school youths, single mothers and orphaned children, we had to strengthen our vocational skills trainings as to minimise the poverty and economic disparities as a result of COVID-19 to our beneficiaries. To protect



families, girls and young mothers from the risks of making unhealthy life choices including marrying off daughters in exchange of dowry, prostitution, forced marriages, unsafe sexual behaviours in exchange of money and domestic violence, early unions and school dropout, we designed a creative approaches aimed at preparing communities cope up with COVID-19 impact. We have integrated skills training in both of our safe space centres.



The livelihood skills trainings within the communities provided an opportunity for 24 young mothers, 22 in school girls and 6 young boys in hair dressing. Again, 8 out of school young mothers and 31 in school girls are still under training in tailoring (91 young mothers, girls and boys received trainings from Jan to December 2021). Two young mothers are employed as the trainers for these two skills within their communities

#### ❖ INDEPENDENT LIVING SUPPORT

Four of the girls who successfully completed skills trainings were able to start up their own income generating activities.



Two of the girls been employed as full-time trainers with the organisation, one girl has started her own hair dressing salon and tailoring shop in Kitale, and the two other girls also own salons in Kampala.

#### ❖ **English Literacy lessons**

These were delivered at our resilient clubs especially targeting the young women who had dropped out of school and interested in learning Uganda's official language.

### **7. ONE ON ONE SRHR INFORMATION TO MOST VULNERABLE FAMILIES/PARENTS VISITS**

With the help of the mentor parents / role model families and the local women and youth leaders, were able to identify most vulnerable families, these included girl's families headed by single mothers, economically challenged parents/ guardians, families with girls being headed by elderly parents, families with out of school girls and families with histories or at risk of marrying off girls at an early age. We have been able to reach out to 30 vulnerable families and 21 parents, all these families have been able to continuously receive parent- adolescent SRHR sessions weekly. The 30 families have also received relief items including food, sanitary towels and reading materials twice. Two young mothers have also been rescued for shelter and 3 most at risk girl helped to join back to school program.



## 8. WORKING WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO ADVOCATE FOR THE RIGHTS OF ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN.

Village Police visits & talks on GBV case handling

Health Center talks

Katabi Town Council GBV scorecard

Wakiso District MOU & GBV scorecard

Mentor parents & Local leaders use local media to advocate for elimination of GBV



## 9. ADOLESCENTS SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS INFORMATION AND EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT

### ❖ Adolescents SRHR educate sessions and information delivery

Through a peer to peer education model, young people, both boys and girls, in and out of school have continued to receive weekly SRHR information and educate sessions on topics such as human development, gender, life skills, safety from violence, relationships, promoting and protecting health, alcohol and drug abuse, and making reusable sanitary pads through a peer to peer education model. We had to adjust our planned in-school programs to a new model of out of school Youth Friendly

Safe corners opened up in Katabi town council. The objective is to enable young people more especially girls and young mothers make informed life choices.

So far, 8 resilient community clubs have been established in the communities of Nalugala and Kitala. In addition, seven model families' / mentor parents have continued to host and mentor the clubs. The peer educators have been able to deliver 86 sessions in total reaching out to 409 young people, including 304 girls and 105 boys. Out of these, 36 are young mothers. As a result, young people's knowledge and life skills have increased and this has enabled them to make safe choices. Some case stories recorded clearly indicated the changes in sexual behaviours and goal setting. For the many affected school goers, we made sure that they have access to reading material, as part of our care packages.



*Community Resilient Clubs Safe offer young people with safe spaces, under supervision*

## **10.COMMUNITY RESILIENT CLUBS AS SAFE SPACES FOR ADOLESCENT GIRLS AND YOUNG WOMEN**

The main objective for these Safe spaces is creating a supportive environment for adolescent girls and young women SRHR and also providing spaces where they can

learn, educate and stay safe. Resilient Women's Organisation has so far put in place 8 safe space centres, Nalugala and in Kitale. The creation of safe spaces within the communities is in partnerships with the community local leaders and mentor families, more especially the women and youth local leaders. These have provided spaces where young people learn and especially women and girls, find peer support, SRHR information and service referrals, counselling and mentorship. 4 Model family's/mentor parents were added to last year's 6; these provide us with free safe space venues. While early unions remain prevalent in the communities where we work, model families and parents who are seen to have succeeded in life, educated their children play a significant role in offering an alternative to the social norms and practices that fuel child marriages and have a strong voice in the communities.

#### **11. SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS ADVOCACY THROUGH MUSIC DANCE AND DRAMA**

Day of the Girl Child skits and poetry from the different community clubs, with club members writing and performing their own theme centred skits and poems to showcase the dangers of teenage pregnancies, child marriage

Christmas Cantata, the first of its kind in the 2 villages of Kitale and Nalugala performed by the girls and young women plus some Resilient boys, recorded and trained by RWO's Board Chairperson, saw the community clubs competing on who had better talent to show off during our very first annual Christmas party.

#### **12. HEALTH CENTRE TALKS**

We organised 2 health talks in partnership with Kitale Health Centre 11, and Quest Medical Clinic. The health talks' objective was to get the right information regarding what the status of GBV especially teenage pregnancies and domestic violence is, as far as hospitals statistics go, and to engage these rights bearers of GBV response and referral services, so that together, we can reach out adolescent girls and young women in need, and needing the services of these health centres without stigma.

#### **13. ADVOCACY FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH LOCAL MEDIA AND PUBLICATIONS IN LOCAL LANGUAGES**



## 14. COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS WITH DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Resilient Women's Organization strengthened partnerships with 3 international organizations to strengthen its social media, website and networks outside Uganda;

- Ayni Cooperazione, an Italian non profit whose volunteers upgraded our website and social media outlook
- ACES World, a collective of member organizations working towards gender equality, a network that shares our work with the world
- GivingWay platform which we continue to use to connect us to international on-site and online volunteers.

## FUTURE PLANS AND COMMITMENTS

The organisation's Board of Directors, together with the ED reviewed the organization's current status versus the 5 Year Strategic plan (2020-2025) whose strategic goals include:

- Enhancing Resilient Women's Organization capability, growth and sustainability. We aim at achieving an NGO status by end of 2022.**
- Eliminating GBV and Violence against women and girls through our socio-economic empowerment programs and community led/centered approaches.**
- Economic empowerment for adolescent girls and young women through vocational skills training**

As part of our future plans, we are resilient in ensuring we put in place a modern vocational skilling centre in Nakawuka by 2025. We also want to strengthen our back to school program to ensure we have more out of school girls and young women on back to school program. Community drop in centres in all the communities of Entebbe. We also envisage a big movement of young girls capacitated to improve the SRHR environment in Uganda.

We also envision expanding our girl's sponsorship program to 50 girls, both in primary and secondary education.

As an organisation, we are cognisant of the impact of working together, the resilient team is more focused on creating more resilient friends and partnerships to support our vision and mission. We are building a strong team to help achieve this.

We couldn't have done this without support from The Girls First Fund, The African Women's Development Fund, Judi & Richard Musick Family, Samantha Buhr , Beth & Hellen Trigg, Naomi Leigh, our on-line volunteers from Ayni Cooperation, plus all the Sponsors of our Back to School Program.