

# Training Uganda's Next Generation of Entrepreneurs



Project Girls Dream Labs Report (September 2022-August 2023)



Education & Development  
Opportunity - Uganda



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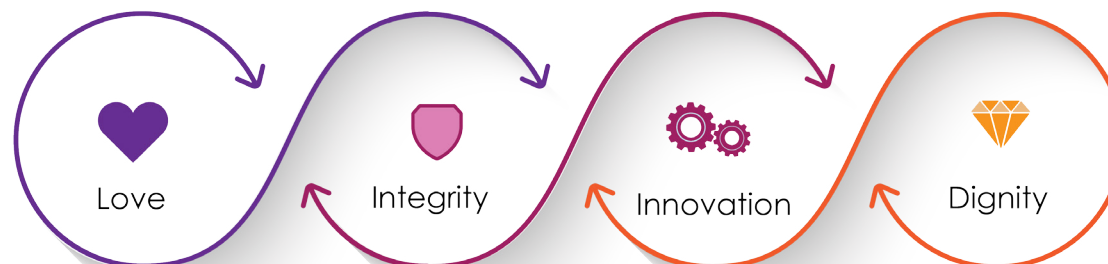
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# INTRODUCTION



Education & Development Opportunity – Uganda (EDOU) is a charity organisation incorporated in Uganda with a mission to transform lives. We provide access to education to orphaned and vulnerable young people, mainly girls, through education scholarships; improve the health and wellbeing of the youth through access to information, training and capacity building; and empower and advocate for the wellbeing of girls and women. Since 2009, we have been growing in our charity cause, mobilising and committing resources in areas of practical need. Our work is deeply rooted in our firm conviction about engaging key actors in policy and decision-making, taking up the case of strangers, being a father to the fatherless, and upholding man's primary responsibility of serving humanity. This allows us and our partners to transform lives.

## Core Values





# PROJECT GIRLS DREAM LABS

Project Girls Dream Labs was implemented in Uganda from September 2022 to August 2023 with an extended arm of university scholarships offered to three girls up to 2025. The project received financial support from the New Life Fund, managed by the King Bourdain Foundation.

Project Girls Dream Labs enrolled 25 girls at risk of child marriage and former child brides (aged 15-25) in a one-year business management and entrepreneurship training and mentorship programme. Former child brides lack employment because they hardly have employable skills, so taking care of themselves and their children becomes very difficult. Many work as housemaids but are exploited, including being sexually harassed by their bosses. They also lack basic financial literacy skills. Project Girls Dream Labs trained and equipped the girls with skills to start and effectively manage income-generating projects. The training covered saving, credit and investment, record keeping, sales and marketing, and customer care.

Project Girls Dream Labs aimed to scale the impact of the 25 Girls Project implemented between 2020 and 2021 with the New Life Fund grant. The 25 Girls Project enrolled 25 at-risk girls and former child brides (aged 15-25) in a one-year apprenticeship programme in motor vehicle engineering, phone and TV repairs, media and creative arts, including fashions and designs. The impact of the 25 Girls Project was phenomenal. "Now I know; I know I can dream again," one girl remarked, a conviction shared by many. As a result, we received overwhelming requests from the community to enroll more girls. Project Girls Dream Labs supported these aspirations.





# THE LIFE-TRANSFORMING IMPACT OF PROJECT GIRLS DREAM LABS

## Training Uganda's Next Generation of Entrepreneurs

Project Girls Dream Labs trained and equipped 25 girls at risk of child marriage and former child brides with skills in saving and microcredit, starting small-scale businesses that require little or no financial capital, record keeping, sales and marketing, and customer care, in addition to providing on-site mentorship. We were also mindful of the health needs of adolescent girls and young women, so we organised a session on sexual and reproductive health where we discussed various subjects such as good menstruation management, HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections and cervical cancer.



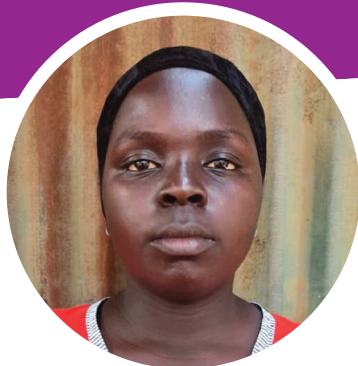
## 10 Stories of Change

The impact of the project has been tremendous. The skills and knowledge acquired from the Dream Labs enabled many girls to start, manage, and grow their businesses.

### Stories of change as told by Nabukeera Sauda and Nagaddya Noeline.

#### I learnt how to price my products and earn a good profit

My name is **Nabukeera Sauda**. I am 24 years old. I live and work in Nabweru. I worked as a waitress selling chips before I opened a restaurant that sells local food. My working capital was UGX20,000/= (€5), which has since increased to UGX50,000/= (€12.5). I used to sell a plate of food for UGX2500/= (€0.6), but I was not making profits. From the training, I learnt how to price my products. I increased the price for a plate of food to UGX3000/= (€0.75). Today, I am selling a plate of food for UGX4000/= (€1) and earning a good profit. My business is growing. The most important things I learnt from the training are handling a business well, accounting and record keeping. I know how to balance my books, take aside working capital and distribute the profits between saving, consumption and investment. With these skills, I see myself expanding my restaurant and employing more workers. My challenge is that some customers don't pay on time, and some don't pay at all.



#### I know what I need in life

My name is **Nagaddya Noeline**. It was a bright morning when Mr. Mutebi gave me an excellent opportunity to train in the Girls Dream Lab business training, which supports young mothers in many ways, including self-awareness. I was inspired. I changed my mindset. I learned what I need in life is love and picking myself up when I fall. I gained skills in balancing expenses and expenditures and profit and losses. I learnt how to pull myself out of the poverty bucket. My passion has always been in baking. I acquired skills in what one does to open up a bakery. I did market research around my home area and noted a need for bakery products. I told my spiritual parent about my business idea, and she gave me start-up capital in addition to helping me market the business. I started making daddies, muffins, and doughnuts. My dream is to build a brand called Nora & Abi Bakery. I am still looking for more capital as I teach at a nursery school and complete my certificate course in Early Childhood Education. I believe in myself; I know I will make it.



## Stories of change as told by Ainembabazi Promise and Ndagire Stella

### The training opened my eyes to the mystery of saving.

My name is **Ainembabazi Promise**. I am a fruit vendor at the City Square in Kampala. The training opened my eyes to the mystery of saving and business handling tactics. I should not spend unnecessarily to avoid being under the poverty bucket. In other words, I learnt not to spend what I don't have in the name of helping others when I am just trying to climb out of the poverty bucket. My main focus is to save money. I ensure I save UGX2000/= (€0.5) every day, for I learnt that saving is a source of capital. Using my savings, I intend to open a fruit booth in the city. My biggest challenge is people not paying on time, which leads to losses.



### I did not believe in my abilities, but now I do

My name is **Ndagire Stella**. I am 24 years old. I am a single mother with one child. He is a boy and is now two years old. It is not easy being a single mother. I was a teacher but was not allowed to teach with a baby when I got pregnant, so I lost that job. I stayed at home jobless with my sister, who was helping me to take care of my baby and me. God is good and has good people that he brings our way. I am talking about the people who run the Girls Dream Labs. I got training and advice on starting a business and believing, loving, and caring for myself. I did not believe in my abilities, but now I do. I have a small business. I sell food. That business has helped me to take care of myself and my baby. I thank Girls Dream Labs for the training and mentorship. May God bless you. I still need you in my life.





## Stories of change as told by Martha Bamugye and Musimenta Joanita

### I grew my business from one person to seven employees

My name is **Martha Bamugye**. I worked as a waitress at a restaurant in Aura Park. The training ignited my zeal to start my own business. After acquiring knowledge of managing a successful business, I started a restaurant called MARTHA FOODZ, located at Jesco Plaza, Wilson Street, in Kampala. We sell local food and chips. I am sure my business will succeed. These are some of the things I learnt:

- 1 You're the first employee of your business, so pay yourself.
- 2 Use profits, not business capital, to spend. So, I make sure I earn profits first before I spend.
- 3 I ensure good record-keeping. At MARTHA FOODZ, I have seven workers. Everyone has a small notebook in which they record daily orders, yet I also record every plate of food we sell.

With these skills, I have seen my business grow from employing one person to eight. I used to be someone's employee; now I am an employer. It is amazing! I owe all this to Girls Dream Labs. I look forward to the next training.



### I see myself owning a big fruit canteen in the city

My name is **Musimenta Joanita**. I work at Kooki Towers as a fruit vendor. From the business training, I gained skills and knowledge to grow my business, and one of the resolutions I made was to save money every day from the profits I make. I learnt that saving money is essential. I save UGX3000/= (€0.75) daily to realise my dream of getting capital to grow my business. I see myself one day owning a big fruit canteen in the city. My biggest challenge is some customers don't pay or take many days without paying, which affects my savings and planning. Thank you, Girls Dream Labs, for teaching me how to save.



## Stories of change as told by Nansamba Jane and Salome Osida

### The training gave me the courage to start my business

My name is **Nansamba Jane**. I am 19 years old. I worked as a waitress in a restaurant in Nabweru before I started selling chips at Nansana-Masitoowa. In the training, getting an answer to the question "Where do businesses come from?" helped me. The answer is "from people and the surrounding environment". When I looked around, I saw that the need of the people in Nansana was fast foods. I solicited capital from my family, which I got because I had a good business plan. I learnt business planning from the training. I can manage my business well with the business handling and record-keeping skills I acquired from the training. I make sure I save money from the profits I make every day. My goal is to own a big restaurant like Café Javas. Thank you, Girls Dream Labs, for giving me the courage to start.



### I got a better-paying job to increase my savings to start a retail shop.

My name is **Salome Osida**. I stayed in Namulonge, where I worked as a housemaid. Currently, I live in Biiira, working as a school cook. From the Girls Dream Labs training on business and self-care, I realised the need to love and care for myself. With the knowledge I acquired about businesses, what stuck with me was the idea of saving. That's why I decided to look for a better-paying job to increase my savings and start a retail shop. Thank you, Girls Dream Labs, for I know my future is bright because of you.



## Stories of change as told by Namaganda Elizabeth and Nabitungiriatta Angel

### I learnt to give my clients good customer care

My name is **Namaganda Elizabeth**. I am 23 years old. I thank God for the opportunity to attend the Girls Dream Labs training on business management. I lived and worked in Nabweru selling porridge. I relocated to Maganjo, where I opened a restaurant selling local food. From the knowledge I acquired from the training, I give my clients good customer care because they are my number one priority. I learnt how to save irrespective of how little profit I make daily. I make sure I save UGX10,000/= (€2.5) every day. I also learnt good record keeping. I have a cash book for my business, which helps me to know my daily earnings. I see myself owning a restaurant with 30 employees in the next five years.



### I am saving money to start my own business

My name is **Nabitungiriatta Angel**. I am 18 years old. I worked as a housemaid in Nabweru-Katooke. My bosses paid me UGX60,000/= (€15) per month, but it was not enough to live on with my two-month-old baby and all that comes with providing for the child. After the training I got from the Girls Dream Labs about self-care and business management, I sat down and thought about my future. I decided to return to my grandmother's home in Kitto, Matugga, where I reside. I got a job in a saloon where I currently work while I leave my baby boy in the care of my grandmother. My dream is to start a saloon business. What I earn enables me to look after my family and save some money to start a saloon business. I believe I will succeed in business with the knowledge I got from the training on what a business is, what it takes to start a business and record-keeping and stock-taking skills. I am so grateful to Girls Dream Labs for this knowledge.





# UNIVERSITY EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIPS



The project awarded three university scholarships. Eseza Nasasira is doing a Bachelor of Tourism and Hospitality Management at Ndejje University. Ebenezer Nambasa is doing a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance at Multitech Business School. Doreen Nandudu is doing a Bachelor of Arts in Human Resource Management at Makerere University Business School. Attainment of university education inspires and provides role models to other former child brides and violence survivors.



## Just how much do these scholarships mean to the girls

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"My name is **Eseza Nasasira**. I am pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management at Ndejje University Kampala campus. I thank Education & Development Opportunity – Uganda for the scholarship opportunity.

"Before I got the scholarship offer, I was stranded, asking myself where I would get tuition from if I were to study at the university. I used to see students register to study at the university and would feel happy for them and pain inside me. I would say to myself, 'God, even me, one day I will write my registration number on those papers'. I would say so while tears were flowing from my eyes because I had no idea where I would get money to study at the university.

"Joy was restored in my heart when I got this scholarship. It is a miracle from God. It has made a great impact on me and my family. When I rang my mother to tell her the good news, oh, my goodness, she made a loud, joyful noise. She said, 'I want to see those good people who have held up your hand.' She was so happy.

"When I registered at the university and was given a student registration number. I wrote it down on the papers as I had craved for a long time. Tears flowed from my eyes, but unlike before, these were tears of joy. Light has shone into my darkness. Darkness vanished because light shone into my darkness. Thank you very much for showing us the world in a different dimension. God richly bless you. Please don't stop helping people in need like me; you will receive a greater reward."



## Just how much do these scholarships mean to the girls



"My name is **Ebenezer Nambasa**. On 7 October 2022, I was granted an incredible opportunity. My tuition was cleared, and I attended school without worrying about tuition fees. It was the first time that has happened to me. It was because of Education & Development Opportunity – Uganda (EDOU).

"So many girls have so much ability inside of them, but because of different life circumstances, their dreams have been put to a standstill; they have no one to hold their hand. I was one of those girls before EDOU came to my rescue. I had dropped out of school over school because of the lack of school fees. I did odd jobs for four years, including working as a housemaid. Now, EDOU has given me the opportunity to smile and pursue my dreams of becoming a professional accountant. I promise to impact my generation in every way possible to make the world a better place.

"I am forever grateful to EDOU for paying my tuition so I can study at Mulitech Business School for a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Finance. It is a huge opportunity. Thank you for holding my hand at such a time when I had lost all hope. May God bless you."



# ADJUSTMENTS IN THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

What was planned	What was done	Impact of the adjustments
Organise two sessions of Girls Dream Labs in a year.	We held one dream session of Girls Dream Labs, and instead of having the second session, the business experts who facilitated the Labs advised us that we do field visits and offer on-site, tailored support and mentorship to each girl according to the needs and challenges they were facing.	The field visits and on-site mentorships provided tailored support to the girls, and we were able to document the impact and stories of change resulting from the Girls Dream Labs, some of which will be used to write the skills training handbook on business and entrepreneurship for girls.
Organise girls into a savings and credit group.	No saving and credit group was done because the girls operated from different locations, and the cost of bringing them together every week would be higher than the savings they would make.	The on-site mentorships established that individual girls saved rather than borrowed money to support their businesses.
Award 2 university scholarships to girls at risk of child marriage and former child brides.	The Girls Dream Lab session was organised at a lower cost than budgeted. This was because of the lower price of on-site visits, training materials and handbook, venue, and facilitators secured with the project partners. The savings made in those areas supported the scholarship for the third girl.	This contributed to meeting the overwhelming need for university education in our communities.
Develop a skills training handbook at the start of the project.	The project management team agreed to develop the handbook at the end of the project, incorporating training notes and stories of change to provide case examples of real-life business management practices for girls and organisations that will use the handbook.	The lived experiences of girls who have gone through the Girls Dream Labs will inspire and enhance learning.

# NEXT STEPS

## Skills Training Handbook

We are developing the skills training handbook on business management and entrepreneurship for girls at risk of child marriage and former child brides. The handbook is compiled from the training notes delivered by the experts in the Girls Dream Labs, lessons learned, and best practices documented during the implementation of Project Girls Dream Labs. The skills training handbook will be used to train at least 10,000 girls in business management and entrepreneurship through our partners, such as Girls Not Brides Uganda Partnership, an alliance of 106 civil society organisations maximising efforts to end child marriage in Uganda.

## Partnerships

Project Girls Dream Labs was implemented in partnership with the local communities in Nansana municipality, Wakiso district; the Girls Not Brides Uganda Partnership, an alliance of 106 civil society organisations maximising synergy to end child marriage in Uganda; and the African Feminist Research Initiative for Advocacy and Development (AFRAD).

## Girls Dream Labs II

Project Girls Dream Labs has been a great success as most Girls Dreams Labs graduates started their businesses. We have overwhelming requests for more girls to enrol in the Girls Dreams Labs. We recommend that the New Life Fund consider phase II of the project to meet this need. In Girls Dream Labs II, we will enrol another cohort of 25 girls and provide graduates with continuous mentorship in business growth and sustainability. Their capacity-building needs will be ascertained through on-site visits, and customised training will be provided to help them grow their business. Significant barriers such as poverty, cultural and social practices, gender biases, and child marriages continue to inhibit girls from enrolling in tertiary institutions, hindering them from reaching pivotal learning milestones. In Girls Dream Labs II, we will further advance our mutual mission of transforming lives by awarding more scholarships for university education for vulnerable girls.





+256 701 378 219  
+256 782 378 219



<https://edouganda.org/>  
[bmutebi@edouganda.org](mailto:bmutebi@edouganda.org)



@DreamEDOU

