



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Message from the Country Director



66

2022 was a good year for Komo and our Do It Yourself (DIY) Clubs. We had no interruptions in implementation and the participants were more than excited to have a full dose of DIY.

We engaged our partner schools through community dialogues carried out by our DIY participants. These dialogues had a very positive response from community leaders and parents – they saw their young people engaged in bettering their own communities by trying to understand where there are gaps and opportunities.

The climax of the year saw DIY participants demonstrate their projects, which were absolutely creative, solution-based, and completely off the hook! Hurray to all the student changemakers who brought their A-Games to DIY this year!

And an even bigger hurray to the champion teachers, head teachers, club leaders, and community leaders who participated in fundraising for our various projects.

Thank you and we wish you all the best for the coming year. We are looking forward to even better and more creative ideas from DIY participants in 2023.

Happy New You!

Lucy R. Namayanja

Our Journey in 2022

After two years of school closures in Uganda, we were finally able to realize a full DIY implementation cycle. With the support of teachers trained in youth-adult partnerships, DIY participants became changemakers in their schools. After a foundational training in the DIY curriculum (lifeskills, power dynamics, and gender norm change), they took on their student-led projects with creativity and a strong spirit of service. Project topics included gender inequality, drug abuse, school dropout, menstrual hygiene, and lack of safe drinking water.

We reached 3,551 learners (64% girls, 36% boys) and 226 teachers in 30 schools in 2022.

We also launched the Resilience Project mental health program and observed inspiring changes in the 168 students who graduated. With positive results from an external, mixed-methods evaluation of DIY and growing interest from school administrators and government officials in our work, we are looking forward to a great 2023!



Case Study: DIY Project in Action

Equality Starts Now!: A project by DIY Club members aimed at promoting gender equality.

THE CHALLENGE

During their needs assessment, DIY club members found that gender issues were profoundly affecting the lives of their peers. They complained about certain school regulations and perceptions of girls' and boys' abilities, saying that these drew boundaries between the two.

Many believed that boys were stronger than girls and were much better suited for sports that demanded greater effort and strength. Such notions were perpetuating the idea of girls being the "weaker sex," as was opined by most students (girls included) in a debate organized by DIY Club members. The DIY students felt that such beliefs were limiting girls from realizing their full potential.

Students also said that some teachers favored boys and felt they could perform tasks that girls could not. Boys were perceived to perform better than girls in science subjects, and so, the latter were discouraged from taking science combinations at A-level. During evening exam preparations, girls were separated from boys, and teachers gave the two groups different instruction. Girls complained about failing exams because they received different teachings from those given to their thriving colleagues, saying: "once we failed [the teacher's] paper and he asked us the reason why we failed. I told him that 'master you teach us different things as a result of separation with boys." Furthermore, boys and girls were unequally assigned school chores that infringing upon the time they could dedicate to academic pursuits.



DIY members designed the *Equality Starts Now!* project with the goal of changing these harmful gender norms.



THE SOLUTION

Students arranged debates geared towards teasing out their peers' attitudes on gender stereotypes and then debunking them. They also conducted sensitizations during school assemblies, relayed the negative effects of gender inequality to teachers and their peers through drama presentations and dialogues, and created and distributed posters around the school.

Through their project, DIY members have gradually changed the mindsets of teachers and students toward gender issues. Girls and boys now collaborate more on school activities, have evening exam preparation together, and carry an equal burden of school chores. We are starting to see not only a change in perspective on gender in DIY schools, but concrete shifts in gender behaviors.

A Focus on Girls' Education

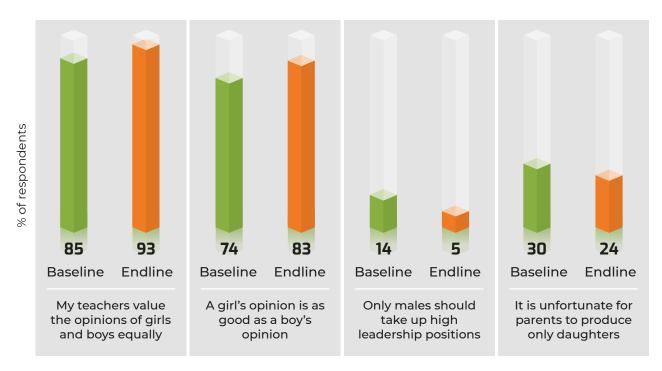
In DIY, we envision a school environment with attitudes, norms, and practices that enable all youth to feel safe, learn free from violence, and have space to freely express their ideas.

Because of our focus on transforming gender norms, we have seen greater

improvement in girls across all our evaluation metrics (e.g., lifeskills, agency, participation), despite girls scoring below boys at baseline.

When looking at gender-specific survey questions, our data showed that gender attitudes are starting to shift.

Survey Findings on Gender Attidudes (n=1,370)



Agree or Strongly Agree at Baseline

Agree or Strongly Agree at Endline

DIY Student Voices

44

I want to be a dentist... I will first use the skill of having an open mindset, like most especially when you go to hospitals you find that the dentists you find there are men. I don't usually see women do such jobs. But because of the open mindset, I know I can do it. Maybe I can be one of those women that are dentists instead of saying that the job is specifically for men. I can do that because right now I believe in myself... It doesn't matter whether you're a woman or a man. Like last time I saw you taking pictures. I didn't know there are women who do such jobs.

But that's proof that we can do everything. (student)

77

44

In most cases they used to see that girls shouldn't stand in to be prefects, but right now girls can stand in and compete with boys for leadership and in most cases girls win over the boys. And even in the debating clubs, they never thought that we girls could debate, that we couldn't stand and raise our points, but even right now we can stand and raise our points clearly and confidently through the effort of DIY... They thought that for us we are weak, that we are not confident to speak in front of boys — that's what they thought. But right now, they are seeing the impact of DIY, that it has encouraged girls to stand in for those things that they want and to achieve the goals that they have set. (student)

77



Komo's hand washing stations were key in preventing the spread of COVID in DIY schools.

DIY External Evaluation

In partnership with the Luigi Giussani Institute for Higher Education (LGIHE), we completed our proof-of-concept study, which aimed at establishing whether the DIY program improves youth lifeskills, agency, participation, and school environment. The researchers used a quasi-experimental design, conducting baseline data collection in March 2019 and endline data collection in September 2022. A total of 326 students participated in both surveys. Six constructs were measured: agency, self-determination,

positive identity, school climate, social and communication skills, and student participation. Data on gender and COVID-19 resilience were also collected at endline only.

Study results were exciting, demonstrating that the intervention group had better outcomes in each of the constructs than did the comparison group. Particularly, we saw statistically significant differences in agency, participation, gender, and COVID-19 resilience.

We are committed to disseminating our learnings and have shared our findings and experiences at several fora, most notably at the 2023 CIES conference in a panel presentation titled:

In Pursuit of More Engaging and Equitable Learning Environments: Three Examples from Uganda.

In terms of our advocacy, in 2022 we made progress fostering relationships with district-level education stakeholders – sharing our work, advocating for more meaningful youth participation, and listening to their challenges and priorities. We are also working to influence systems

change at the Ministry of Education and in other national arenas. Our participation in the Regional Education Learning Initiative (RELI) network has helped us access these stakeholders and in solidarity with other RELI partners, we are working for a stronger education system in Uganda.

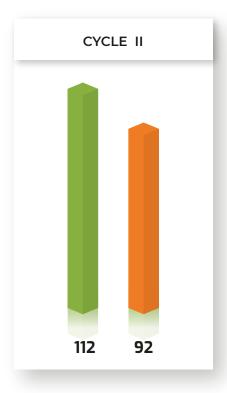
Mental Health

Access to mental health services has been a challenge in the communities we serve – a situation that was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. When school resumed after this period, we received concerning reports about students struggling with the trauma they experienced during the two-year school closure.

In partnership with Strong Minds Uganda, we launched the Resilience Project – a mental health intervention that uses the Group Interpersonal Psychotherapy (IPT-G) approach. After getting promising results from the project pilot in 2021, the Resilience Project was rolled out in three schools in 2022.

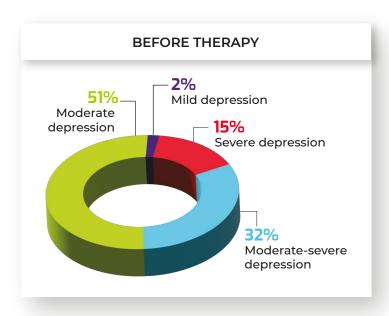
Learners reached with therapy

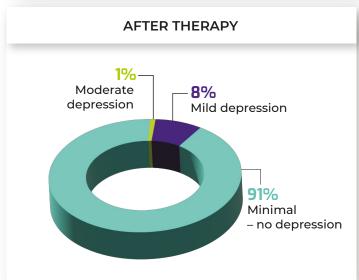




- # Enrolled (at pre group)
- # Graduated

We graduated 168 learners from the IPT-G program, all of whom showed significant improvements at the end of the therapy period.





The average PHQ-9 score went from 14.6 (moderate/severe depression) to 1.31 (none-minimal depression) after the 10-week intervention. We also conducted mental health sensitization activities in over 20 schools, creating awareness about mental health, reducing stigma, and promoting support-seeking attitudes among learners.

Youth Centre



At the Komo Youth Centre, young people take an active role in their own personal growth and the development of their communities.

Here, they respond to social issues that they are passionate about.

This year members have committed great effort in sensitizing young people in their community on various sexual and reproductive health issues. Through drama skits and radio talk shows, they have reached out to over 190 learners in primary schools and the community at large with sensitization messages about adolescent pregnancy, HIV/AIDs, STIs, and menstrual hygiene management.

The youth also took part in a back-to-school campaign, through which they reached out to parents, learners, and teachers in four districts through educational drama shows.

Twenty-five youth have also graduated from the *Straight Forward Financial Growth* course, in which they gained capacity in saving, financial management, and business startup.

DIY student-led community service projects often have an income generating component.



Sponsorship

Our sponsorship program is currently supporting 48 students at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education.



This year we celebrate Sandra Nabukalu, who we supported through secondary school, university, and medical school. This year, Sandra graduated with a master's degree in surgery and her thesis focused on the inequalities in Ugandan surgical practice. She says that not only do women face discrimination during admissions to surgical courses, but also in the world of surgical work. Sandra reports that qualified female

surgeons are not trusted with major procedures, do not take up important leadership roles, face unequal treatment and microaggressions, and are discouraged from living in "a man's world." Sandra feels that the surgical field lacks a platform for articulation and recognition of gender inequalities, and she is dedicated to influencing standards and policies.

Supporting Local Changemakers



Komo provides support, guidance, and funding to several local Ugandan organizations, which we highlight in the next few pages. These passionate changemakers have strong vision and are dedicated to improving the lives of the communities in which they work. Their diverse programming includes community health, gender-based violence prevention, livelihoods development, and services for the visually impaired. We are proud to support these innovative programs and see great things in their futures.

Nama Wellness Community Centre

Komo helped launch the Nama Wellness Community Centre in 2014 as a community based organization. Since then, Nama Wellness has grown exponentially, opening a maternity ward in their Health Centre III, training and supervising 100 community health workers who made over 111,000 home visits in 2022, providing technical assistance to four government health centres in Nama Sub-County, and working tirelessly to advocate for national and global community health reform with their colleagues in the Community Health Impact Coalition. We are so proud to see Nama Wellness thriving as a strong, stand-alone NGO!

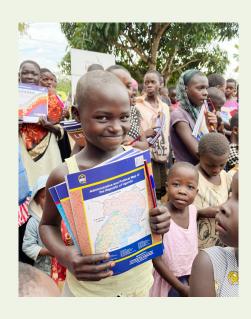


We for Her, MULIA, and Dynamic Doctors

Komo continues to provide financial support and program guidance to these three innovative organizations.

WE FOR HER

We are partnering with We For Her, an organization founded by two or our Sponsorship Program gradates, whose vision is to transform the lives of women and girls in rural marginalized communities. Their programming focuses on girls' education, women's economic empowerment, and awareness of women's rights.



MUSIC FOR LIFE AFRICA

Music for Life Africa Foundation (MULIA) is a Community-Based Organization founded in 2014 that implements programs in performing arts, education, and livelihood development. Their vision is "youth, in all their diversity, thriving socially and economically."

DYNAMIC DOCTORS

Dynamic Doctors was established in 2018 to empower medical professionals, specialists, junior doctors, and medical students to support and transform the lives of youth and vulnerable groups. Since its inception, Dynamic Doctors has been directly providing health-related service and advocating for better healthcare in hard-to-reach communities.



Thanks to our partners!















www.komolearningcentres.org

