MEETING POINT INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2021.

"Our goal is not to merely alleviate suffering, but to create dignity and build lasting relationships that gaze at the fullness of the human person."

- Rose Busingye

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Our Approach

Meeting Point International (MPI)'s unique approach prioritizes educating the people we serve to discover the infinity of their value. It is the core value fundamental to every activity we carry out.

In whatever we do, the goal is to provoke whoever encounters MPI to recognize said infinite value in themselves and others. In themselves by discovering that they are not defined by whatever hardship they are going through and neither is their value/worth attached to that hardship and in those without that particular hardship to recognize that those with the hardships are not defined by them. This knowledge not only prompts one to gaze upon a fellow human being with respect and dignity, but it also gives one a sense of belonging to a link that is greater than you but at the same time great because of you.

MPI's overall approach to development is related to development as described by Paul Farmer as accompaniment. According to him, there's an element of mystery, of openness, and of trust in accompaniment. The one accompanying says, "I'll go with you and support you on your journey wherever it leads." Similarly, the activities MPI carries out are simply an approach to meet the person so that we can accompany them. This according to us, is the real method of development.

This is why once a mother joins MPI, through the companionship and friendship formed, we learn about the needs of her household. When we accompany a mother, her whole family becomes a part of our journey and we support them in all aspects of their lives however we can as a friend would. This includes but isn't limited to health Care for her and her family members, educational support for the children, availing income-generating opportunities, child protection, etc. This is why 95% of the MPI's direct beneficiaries are women and children.

We encourage group activities as well as open and honest discussions as a strategy to build a bond with and among our members because we believe there can be education in every encounter if one is keen on prioritizing self-discovery which encourages one to become a protagonist in their lives. This has enabled us to become part of our clients' experiences like a dear friend with whom one can find solace and belonging.

Our Vision

To offer a friendship where persons are looked at and embraced for their infinite value and they are not reduced to their sickness or limitations.

Our Mission

Meeting Point International, in adherence to the social teachings of the Catholic Church, aims at supporting the most disadvantaged persons and communities of Uganda, with a particular focus on Women and Children, in their struggle for better life and development having priorities to assist the suffering victims of HIV/AIDS, to promote education at all levels and commit to poverty alleviation.



Rose Busingye and Florence (right) participating in a psychosocial activity in Kireka.

2021 AT A GLANCE.



863 students were supported in school through payment of tuition and provision of scholastic materials.



14 students graduated from **University and** vocational institutes



122 adults accessed adult education services before schools closed again and gatherings were banned.



2,474 patients accessed health consultation and medical care at our Kireka and Naguru clinics.



81 patients whose cases were too complicated for the clinics to handle were referred to bigger hospitals.





96 home visits were conducted to clients' homes to check on the families and sick clients.













22 households linked to more profitable international markets for 7,154 craft items. **47**community dialogues with women were held where free sensitization. counselling, guidance, and psychosocial activities take place.

15 youth and **15** high school students started orientation and training on horticulture while practicing climatesmart agriculture.

Community Dialogues



Anyiri Sarah sharing an experience during a community dialogue in Kireka

MPI, through the founder Rose and the social workers, creates avenues to prompt the strengthening of the aforementioned bond by holding community dialogues four times per week alternated between Kireka and Naguru where at least 100 members in Kireka and 30 in Naguru meet for either dialogues on topics like health and nutrition, drugs, human value, and belonging, child abuse, etc... or simply to participate in the games, singing, dancing, aerobics or Yoga. This exercise improves not just their physical health but their mental health as well.

In 2021, **47 meetings with the clients were held** at the MPI Head Quarters in Kitintale. Kireka (20) and Naguru (27). We met the clients in Kitintale in groups of 20 to respect the COVID-19 restrictions. Later, once the lockdown was partially lifted, we resumed meeting from our cultural centers in Naguru and Kireka. About **170** (**fully vaccinated**) **beneficiaries** took part. A community outreach where the Ex. director of MPI Rose Busingye moved together with the women to their communities in Naguru and Kireka was held to see where the individual women lived and in what conditions since the majority of them became unemployed during the lockdown. This further strengthened the friendships between the women, Rose, and the social workers.

MPI's participation in Music dance and drama is an expression of the culture and tradition that enhances the identity of a person and his/her awareness of belonging

with other people. Activities such as outings, games, and meetings with significant testimonies given by our beneficiaries who have experienced true friendship and love, are used to acknowledge the beauty and truth in their realities.

Psychosocial Activities



Rose Busingye and MPI members in Kireka performing a cultural dance

MPI recognizes the human need for belonging and this motivates us to prioritize group activities among our members like community dialogues, dancing, games, aerobics, Yoga, singing, etc... This peer-based approach creates a sense of belonging among the women and makes it easier for them to **form lifelong friendships where they support and hold each other accountable** thereby promoting personal growth/ discovery which in turn grows the community. Because the friendship is also created with MPI, it breeds a safe space for these women to be themselves. A place to rest and remember the meaning of their lives through fun activities so they can go back to their homes stronger. This safe space formed as a result of the knowledge that they belong with MPI and each other allows them the freedom to express themselves freely because they know they are loved regardless of who they are. This free expression during the dancing, singing, etc., creates an environment that is simple enough for anyone who wishes to join MPI to do so without an ounce of intimidation.

Income Generating Activities

Alleviating poverty among our women by availing opportunities for growth and self-discovery can be achieved when they understand the link between their value and the value of the things around them, money inclusive. Some of the difficulties these communities face like domestic violence, child abuse, poverty, hunger, and sexual harassment can be reduced if these women acquire the financial freedom to accord them options. MPI implements the following strategies to reach that goal.

VSLA (Village Saving Groups)

MPI women started saving vigilantly some years back after they were trained on financial literacy and the link between their money and their value. They started saving because they understood that behind the money, there's a face, and when one understands their value, they also understand the value of the things around them, their money and other people's inclusive. These groups not only strengthened their friendships, but enabled them to start or boost their businesses, and to borrow money within the saving groups. MPI still helps to monitor these groups to help the women respect the rules of VSLA savings groups that they set for themselves.

At the beginning of 2021, a total of 6 saving groups were still active. The social workers of MPI did follow-up visits to five saving groups with 150 members till the third quarter when they could save anymore because many of the women became unemployed.

Enabling Access to Profitable Markets.



MPI women during the craft making activity

For 15 years, since the women of Meeting Point International (MPI) learned the art of craft making, we have consistently helped them access more profitable markets both within and outside Uganda for their craft items. The women make craft items like necklaces, table cloths, earrings, bangles, baskets, etc... from recycled glossy magazines and Kitenge (African fabric). This has helped to increase their sources of income and reduce their need to toil in quarries and other physically harmful jobs just to feed themselves and their families.

In 2021, MPI bought **7,152 necklaces from 22 households** to support their businesses and give them an alternate source of income. This time the children of the Welcoming House also participated.

The craft making helps them discover, explore and share their creative ability since women gather to make these in groups depending on the order number.

This creates a sense of pride and belonging among the women who develop new designs and those that willingly learn the new designs. The beauty is also in the fact that these skills are just passed down from generation to generation and the activity also creates bonding time among families as well.

Health Care



Nurse Betty checking an MPI client for blood pressure at the kireka Clinic.

MPI's focus when it comes to patients is not just to treat the illnesses improve and physical health of an individual but their mental health as well. We believe that availing of medication at our two clinics in Kireka (Acholi quarters) and Naguru can help one feel better but it cannot heal the depression that

sometimes people succumb to due to illnesses like HIV that have no cure. This is why each patient is handled with love and helped to discover that their value is not attached to their illnesses.

Two Nurses are assigned to our two cultural centers in Kireka and Naguru to treat our clients throughout the week and every first Saturday of the month, a doctor is available for consultation and further treatment.

In 2021, **2474 patients accessed health consultation and medical care** at our two clinics **52** of whom, due to critical conditions that could not be handled by our nurses were referred to Benedict Medical Centre. **21** of the patients referred to Benedict hospital, with support from AVSI Foundation were further referred to Nsambya Hospital.

<u>AVSI Foundation</u> is one of MPI's major donors and partner. It is an Italian NGO whose attention is focused on the defense and promotion of the dignity of the person as a cornerstone of every project it carries out.

Hospital and home visits to the sick by fellow members and MPI social workers give the sick a sense of honor and belonging. Health topics are included in the dialogues during meetings with the women and in 2021, they were repeatedly encouraged to get vaccinated against Covid-19 and wear masks to protect themselves, and be more vigilant about having balanced diets to strengthen their immune systems, especially those living with HIV-AIDS.

HIV, Diabetes, and patients with Hypertension are sensitized, trained, and monitored at no cost whatsoever to ensure they take their medication properly and consistently. As a result, patients don't succumb to the consequences that uninformed patients suffer when they stop taking their medication once they begin to feel relief from their symptoms.

Healthy nutrition is repeatedly encouraged during the dialogues with the women to sensitize the new members and remind the old ones about the importance of a balanced diet in boosting the body's immunity. The different cultural staple foods and methods of cooking are examined and shared so that the women can pick recommended recipes and methods of cooking from the different cultures and incorporate them into their memorized cooking styles for the healthiest options. These nutrition dialogues improve the women's ability to prepare healthy meals that help them manage their chronic illnesses better, and raise healthy children that don't easily succumb to sickness. They also get to engage their creative sides by borrowing recipes and trying unfamiliar foods from the different cultures of the different women thereby diversifying their meal options.

Home Visits



 $Nim rod\ (extreme\ left),\ an\ MPI\ social\ worker\ during\ one\ of\ the\ home\ visits\ last\ year.$

Home visits are another unique activity that MPI prioritizes to further strengthen the bond with our clients. The home visits are carried out by MPI employees to clients' homes and clients among themselves. Office visits are also encouraged in case a client has a problem that he/she needs help with.

96 home visits were made in 2021 despite the difficulties encountered due to the lockdown.

Visits are characterized by jokes and laughter even during serious discussions. Other than following up on the well-being of our clients, home visits are also made when a client is sick to ensure that they are recovering well. Hospital visits if the sick person is admitted to the hospital, or whenever an MPI client passes away or loses a member of their family, a visit is made to strengthen the bereaved during the difficult time.

For our members and MPI employees, the unconditional visits bring about a sense of honor for both the visitor and the host, reminding them both that they are respected and deserving of love.

The home visits are how our social workers get to have heart-to-heart conversations with the families and get a chance to discuss matters that they may otherwise have difficulty sharing during the community dialogues depending on one's personality and the gravity of the problem. However, the women are encouraged to visit the MPI offices and have a one-on-one with Rose for sensitive problems.

Child Protection



Precious and Luigi (being carried) are both children at the Welcoming

MPI created a home that currently has **54 children** from different walks of life as of 2021 that are residing at what we refer to as **"the welcoming house"**.

This home was set up to rescue orphans, children that have been abandoned, and other children whose families cannot afford to look after them. Some of these children are brought by concerned adults, police, and religious leaders once they discover a child that is in need of a home.

For majority of these children, it is the only home they have ever known, so we ensure it remains a safe haven for them by employing staff that handle them with kindness and respect as a biological parent would, and with the help of donors like

<u>Support International E.V., AVSI Foundation</u>, and <u>The Fraternity of Communion and Liberation</u>, we ensure they receive the best quality of life MPI can offer.

It is important to note that due to MPI's vigilance to protect our children at the Welcoming House, neither the children nor their caretakers have contracted the COVID-19 virus since it was discovered. Instead, the closure of schools due to the lockdown prompted them to stay at home together for longer periods than before and this contributed to growth in friendships among themselves.

However, because we believe a family setting with relatives can offer the best form of nurturing for a child, we work hand in hand with the police to trace relatives of these children. Some of the female members of MPI within the community however volunteer to raise some of the children in their homes despite their limited means. This humbles us and it is for us an indication that the repeated education on the human value being infinite is being understood.

In communities where parents are struggling to put food on the table, children often fall victim to burdens like child labour and abuse either out of necessity or because the guardians don't know any better. MPI, therefore, has put in place child protection and sexual harassment policies that are compulsory for our trained staff to put in place when dealing with the children or handling cases that involve children. The women of MPI most of whom are mothers are also sensitized and educated about these policies during the community dialogues.



Rose Busingye with some of the children at the welcoming house.

Supporting Education.



Rose Busingye, MPI Executive Director

"You can only educate if you refer me back to what I am made of and for."

This is what I sensed in my encounter with Fr Giussani and journey with Carron.Fr Giussani continually referred me back to the One who does all things and over time, I realized without this constant reference to something greater, that is, to the real content of me and you, education becomes a great desert in which nothing can becomes Everything sprout. ephemeral, it all becomes about just passing a test and nothing to do with our hearts therefore, we get bored.

Life is pressing. An urge for reality pours out of me, the flowers, the sky, and the mountains must all have a connection with me otherwise I am not interested. This is how education begins; with the realization that what is urgent outside of me has a link with what is urgent within me. My heart explodes when it recognizes this connection because an attractive beauty occurs. I have always wished that anyone who met me could be attracted to this beauty that has exploded in my flesh and that makes my heart and my life vibrate. It is in this attraction that one begins to have the urgency for meaning, to name and know things.

If we educate children without referring them to the urgency of meaning that they are, we bore them at best, otherwise even push them away. Our urgency for meaning is what really draws us to people, and it is what drew me to Fr Giussani. For him, meaning was something that can also be fully grasped around daily routines like morning coffee, homework, and sleeping in the evening. I remember that before meeting Fr Giussani, I lived in segments, no one offered me the unity of reality, let alone the unity of me. On encountering him, I slowly discovered the essence of me, and... whoa! Learning geography, physics and mathematics was a whole other thing.

Therefore, to educate children, it is vital to break the hard wall of appearances to achieve belonging. We cannot afford to lose ourselves in what we can see and touch, but think beyond, to something that we can neither see nor touch, but

exists. In fact, when we talk about an educational journey, we are walking together, on a journey in which the educator must immediately admit that;

"Dear friend, I am not the truth, but come with me, we are companions on the journey, towards the destiny to which you belong as much as I do".

If we do not introduce them to a bigger path, the children may leave once they realize that they are becoming slaves to our little ideas, yet it is an idea bigger than us that they need, a novelty that we cannot do.

This is why I always say that I've come to love the "no" of the youth because it is a sign that I have not made them slaves to my ideas. They are not obeying a "Yes, Madam/Sir!" motto, rather they are obeying something I'm pointing towards that is greater than me. This way, I am confident that even if they go away, they'll come back, and if they don't come back, well, I'm not their destiny, and then destiny will look after them. He will take care of them.

A few years ago a little boy, forced to live with the rebels, showed up at my office. He had a need and said, "Rose help me with school fees so that I can study and become a soldier. I want to avenge the death of my parents".

I could not refuse to help him and I trusted what I had encountered, which is the salvation of me, and therefore also of that boy. After two years of school, the boy returned to my office with a radiant face, bringing me a drawing that had a large motorcycle with a large helmet and a house attached to it. He then says to me, "Aunt Rose, so you can go to town safely because I love you. The house, on the other hand, is for kids like me. We must welcome more".

This drawing was a prophecy because we built the largest house soon after, the Luigi Giussani High School, and then the Luigi Giussani Primary School.

You cannot educate without one's yes, because it is through this yes that the mystery willed and preferred you. I want to call upon everyone, from the taxi driver to the mother, that Christ is everything and enough for life because He is the meaning of all things. Therefore, you cannot educate if you do not refer to this meaning. The very presence of the children cries out to the educator for this meaning. Responding to this cry is responding to the educational emergency because we cannot offer children emptiness, otherwise, we cheat them and cheat ourselves. Faced with the drama we see every day, we can only affirm that me, you, and the children are not our mistakes, but an infinite value. This is our true nature.

- Rose Busingye, MPI founder and Executive Director

Academic Support

Meeting Point International (MPI) in partnership with different donors like the <u>AVSI Foundation</u>, <u>Support International E.V.</u>, <u>Insieme Si Puo'</u>, <u>Giovanni Scolaro</u>, and other private donors, maintains a unique program that links the sponsored children to their respective donors all over the world. These donors send much-needed financial support to cater to the children's school fees, school requirements, and other activities.

To nurture the relationship, an exchange of letters and photos between the "foster" children and their "parents" is highly encouraged and this happens at least twice a year. Recently, video conferences are sometimes also held between the two and an interpreter is present in case of language barrier instances.



Social workers guiding twins during letter writing to their sponsors

This personal involvement of the sponsor prompts the children to be even more enthusiastic about their education and creates a sense of belonging which reminds the children that they are loved despite their living circumstances.

During its life, MPI has developed 2 schools and an institution namely; Luigi Giussani Pre-Primary and Primary School, Luigi Giussani High School, and Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education where the majority of our children study because they are using the same unique method of educating where apart

from the academics, a student, through lessons and how they are treated, are encouraged to discover how infinite their value as is as well. With the support of the Luigi Schools, MPI has managed to continue reaching its students through the teachers to offer learning during the period when schools were closed due to the pandemic.

In 2021, MPI continued paying school fees even if schools kept closing and reopening for the main part of the year. When schools closed, some schools like Luigi Schools, Mivule Primary School, and Clever's Origin Junior School continued providing self-study materials, pre-recorded lessons, online lessons, and remedial classes for all students. The teachers from the Luigi schools noticed after a while that the response from the students had deteriorated, they discovered that the students were tired of this arrangement and had lost hope in school.

To renew their hope, the Luigi Schools teachers organized home visits in the Kireka and Naguru slums where each child was visited as they delivered the materials and helped elaborate on some topics. The students were very happy seeing teachers come to their homes and inspired to have hope. It was also an opportunity for the teachers to see where their students come from which helps them to handle each child even more delicately. One teacher said, 'some of our students come to school by miracle'. MPI also paid for private coaching for 13 students from the Welcoming House who study at the Mivule Primary School and Clever's Origin Junior School. For the other schools (Naguru schools) that didn't have study programs, the social workers made follow-up visits to check and accompany the children in this during that period when many had lost hope in school.

Students' paid tuition fees in 2021.

Primary level – 442

Secondary level- 346

Tertiary level- 26

University level- 22

Graduates- 14 from Universities and Institutes.

MPI staff work hand in hand with the schools by attending school functions like sports days, class and parents' meetings held by schools whenever we are invited. This helps us track the progress of the children and listen to what advice the teachers have to offer in case a child is finding difficulties in prioritizing their education. Last year, after identifying these children with the schools' help, our founder invited the children and their parents for a dialogue to discuss, with input from the children, how MPI and the parent can work hand in hand to better help these children on their education journey.



Rose Busingye conducting a dialogue with S.4 students and their parents.

Adult Literacy



MPI women attending an adult literacy class in Naguru.

All MPI members from young adults to the elderly that did not get a chance to go to school are given an opportunity to acquire basic maths, English speaking, reading, and writing skills. The lessons provided by a qualified teacher twice a week alternating between Kireka and Naguru at the MPI offices in those areas. Acquiring this knowledge improves their esteem and not only allows them to go about their daily activities more confidently but also enables them to access services like banking that would otherwise intimidate them.

Improved literacy also reduces language barrier scenarios over time as it gives the women a common language in which to communicate and maths helps them manage their businesses better once they master addition, subtraction, division, and multiplication.

In 2021, **122 adults accessed this education service** between January and June when the lockdown was partially lifted. However, due to the 2nd wave of COVID-19 and the surge in the number of COVID-19 cases, the classes were put on hold because gatherings were banned.

Skills Training

Apprenticeship

MPI with support from the AVSI Foundation identifies either unemployed or vulnerable youths to help them acquire different employable skills and knowledge in different fields to enable them either to start up their own businesses or become suitable candidates for job opportunities in the different sectors.

Once these youths are identified, MPI caters for their training fees, training requirements, meals, and transport fees to and from the workshops.

In 2021, despite COVID-19 restrictions, MPI identified one youth who is still being trained in motorcycle mechanics. We take the initiative to follow up and monitor the apprentices under this program and make sure they are performing well.

Employee Training



MPI staff during a financial literacy training last year

Every year, MPI endeavours to equip its employees with lifelong skills that aim at helping them deliver better both at work and in their personal lives. 4 trainings were held in 2021.

In the 2nd quarter of 2021, with help from AVSI, **13 employees and 1 volunteer** underwent an **excel training** session on formulas and functions that would help ease their work. During this period, **7 employees** attended a refresher course on photo and video shooting to help them improve the quality of photos sent to the donors. This has tremendously improved the quality of our photos.

In July, **7 social workers underwent a training on counselling and guidance** to help them handle our clients more professionally and improve their relationships with said clients.

In September, 13 employees underwent another training on financial literacy. This was aimed at equipping them with knowledge to improve their personal finance skills and to also refresh their minds so that they can better train the women during the VSLA meetings and Income generating activities.

Ssonde DIT Training Centre



Youth attending a theory session of the agricultural training

Meeting Point International Environmental Friendly Mixed Farm and Training Centre is a 2.45-acre piece of land in Ssonde, a small village located in Mukono District approximately 17km from MPI headquarters. Prior to the recent developments, this land was mainly used to cultivate crops like Matooke, cassava, beans, vegetables, etc... and rear a few animals for the sustainability of the welcoming House. The children visited Ssonde every now and then to appreciate how the food they receive on their plates is grown, to learn about the different agricultural practices like weeding, harvesting, and feeding the animals all of which they enjoy participating in. They were also attracted to the beautiful natural environment in which they could extensively play and have a change of scenery.

In 2021 Ssonde was registered as an accredited agricultural training center with the Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) in Uganda and in collaboration with AVSI foundation we are running a project to skill 80 youth and 94 high school students in horticulture, poultry, and piggery production by 2024. The trainees' skills are then assessed by DIT and awarded a certificate at the end of each training as evidence that they possess these agricultural skills and competencies. This project aims at equipping the youth of working age with employable agricultural skills and encouraging more young people to choose agriculture as a career path thereby alleviating the unemployment rates in Uganda.



Youth in Ssonde during a practical agricultural training session

Stories of Hope

Meeting di Rimini



Our women and youth during the at the Meeting in Rimini exhibition

In the late seventies, some friends from Rimini who shared a Christian experience, also discovered they shared a desire to bring to Rimini everything good and beautiful that was present in the culture of those times. They hoped to prompt an encounter among persons of different faiths and cultures and create a place for friendship where peace, socialization, and a friendship among people may be established. These are encounters born from people that share a tension towards what is true, good, and beautiful. Since then every year great political personalities, managers, representatives of different religions and cultures, intellectuals and artists, athletes, and protagonists of the world scene visit it.

In 2021 Meeting Point International's founder Rose Busingye was invited to participate in the Rimini meeting themed "The Courage to Say I". MPI then attended and showcased an exhibition themed "You are a Value" where 5 of our women from Kireka and Naguru, and 3 Youth shared their experiences before and after their encounter with Rose and in turn Meeting Point International.

"I didn't even know what "worthy" meant. I thought worth was something only rich or educated people had. I didn't know I was of worth because I have AIDS and people were continually telling me I would infect them. Rose took my children and brought them to school where they receive the same love. When I accepted Christ into my life, I understood that my worth is greater than poverty, disease, or education. Now the more I live, the more I feel Christ living inside me." retells Apolot Florence, one of our women from Kireka.

"Rose's women from Kampala, Uganda were the protagonists at one of the most visited exhibits at the Meeting in Rimini, entitled You are worthy." wrote the Communion and Liberation in the October Traces. Read full story here



Namwesezi Hanifah, an MPI woman participating in a dance at the meeting in Rimini.

THE UNEXPECTED LOVE



Achan Priscillar our former supported student and a teacher at LGPPS

My name is Achan Priscilla, a 22-year-old teacher at Luigi Giussani Pre-primary and Primary school (LGPPS). I live with my two siblings Abraham, a 19-year-old, and Rovia, a 12-year-old in Acholi quarters. I just finished my degree at Kyambogo university this year where I was pursuing a bachelor's degree of arts in education. I managed **to get a first-class degree** and am very happy about it. This would not have been possible without the support of my donors and Meeting Point International (MPI). Having lost my father in 2003, a lot about my life became uncertain especially completing school. My mother struggled to raise us and got some relief when she discovered MPI and I was enrolled for support in 2008 when I was in primary five. Unfortunately, when I was in senior four, my mother succumbed to cancer and passed away. I now had a family to take care of and provide for yet I was a candidate that very year and I still had to sit national examinations amidst the grief and new responsibilities. I, however, **managed to work hard and earn myself a first grade.**

Overwhelmed with my new responsibilities, I requested Aunt Rose to allow me skip the Advanced level of secondary school and opt for a shorter course of one year and gain hands-on skills so that I could be in a position to support my family. She assured me that MPI would support my family financially and provide any help we needed. This gave me strength because I realized I was not alone. I attended Luigi Giussani High School (LGHS), a school whose focus is to help students discover themselves every day. The teachers helped me embrace the reality of my situation and I began looking at my mother's death with positivity which paved way for growth and maturity. I completed my senior six in 2016 and emerged as the best student in my school.

I also wanted to attest to all the girls and orphans that it is possible to find success amidst the hardships we go through. I am very fortunate to have encountered MPI because they have continued to accompany me in my daily life even now by catering to my family's education, health, and other needs. I was given a job at LGPPS, a school founded by MPI and I began volunteering there as a teacher. The same beauty I encountered at LGHS is what I found at my workplace which prompted more personal growth.

I decided to become a teacher because of the inspiration of my teachers at the LGHS. The teachers not only taught in a way that made me understand the subject but also addressed the needs of my heart. Their hearts were open to what was happening with each student. Mr. Wandera Joseph my History teacher inspired me with the way he presented himself and spoke in public. He had this self-esteem that I admired and wanted to imitate or even better.

My journey at the university wasn't easy because I would go to work in the morning, go to study at the university in the afternoon, and later get home late in the evening and care for my siblings who would be back from school too. However, I had a lot of support from my colleagues at work, the LGPPS administration that allowed me to reschedule my timetable to study in case they clashed, my lecturers and coursemates always helped me catch up through discussions because they were moved by my situation. This degree that I have achieved is not just for me but for everyone who stood with me.

"I want to thank MPI and all my sponsors especially Familie Zöpfl and Support International that accompanied me through my school journey. I wish that they could feel my love, excitement, and gratitude for them."

They have accompanied me even in times when I had lost all hope. I don't take for granted the fact that they decided to love me this way, that they decided to prefer me this way. In the absence of my parents, MPI and my donors have been the parents for it is usually only parents who would do what they do for me. They love me for who I am and their biggest desire was to see me happy. I am happy and grateful and I will always strive to make them proud. I am going to study and get a master's degree in linguistics and P.H.D that I dedicate to them. I recognize the value in everything that they have done and I want what I have encountered to be able to help whoever I encounter so that the people out there also understand the value of life and its meaning.

Story written by Adoch Mary Clare 01/11/2021

RECOGNISING AN OPPORTUNITY AMIDST HARDSHIPS



In a blue T-shirt is Beatrice, exreme left is Dorothy, shilla in a floral dress and their little sister Ruth in a green dress in front of their home.

dokorach Beatrice B-MPI-9524 is a 36-year-old lady who stays in Naguru police barracks with her husband Oyet Christopher. Christopher is a police officer whereas Beatrice makes cassava chips to earn a living. Together, they have three children named Dorothy 12years old (P.6), Shillah 9 years old (P.3), and Ruth who is 5 years old. She is an active member of Meeting Point International (MPI), two of her children are supported by MPI and they both go to Luigi Giussani Pre-primary and primary school.

"This period of lockdown had both advantages and disadvantages" says Beatrice.

Beatrice was working as a private security guard at Luigi Giussani High School. During the pandemic unfortunately, she was diagnosed with fibroids and a heart condition and couldn't continue working. This however availed her the opportunity to spend more time with her daughters who were also home due to the closure of schools. Dorothy and Shillah for example, often complained about their teachers giving them too much work

among other complaints, and Beatrice for a long time thought the teachers were the ones at fault. She however reflected on what Aunt Rose always says about solving problems by prioritizing the value of the people involved. She then realized that she had a responsibility to acknowledge the teachers' value and at least listen to their side of the story but schools were still closed.

Watching her daughters during the lockdown, she also started noticing that Dorothy is indecisive about what she wants, does the opposite of what she is asked to do, and gets angry when Beatrice tries to correct her. She noticed that Shillah has a habit of dodging house chores and postponing the homework given to her from school. She keeps making excuses and when you try to put pressure on her, she begins crying and she ends up not doing it anyway. This recognition gave her the push to face the reality of what her girls were doing and it became clearer as she spent more time with her girls that she wasn't on the same page with the teachers.

When schools reopened, Beatrice says she created time to go and listen to what the teachers had to say about her girls. She realized the teachers who spend most of their time struggling to groom them might feel the same way she did during the pandemic. She apologized to the teachers at school on behalf of her children who have been disturbing them and felt sad for not having come earlier to work hand in hand with them and find a way to help her daughters in their school journey. This helped her realize the importance of being directly involved in her children's lives and the need to educate her children so they can learn that they are the protagonists in the journey of their lives.

Beatrice acknowledged that most times, many parents listen to their children and believe that their teachers are the ones in the wrong. She advised fellow parents during a community dialogue, to find out about their children at school and prove if what the child is reporting to them is correct before they conclude and make a judgment. She encouraged them to remember Rose's words about solving problems by first acknowledging the infinite value of the people involved and then like in her case, work hand in hand with the teachers to help their children achieve their educational goals.

She continued to say that the parents should keenly monitor their children to know how to better raise them and to avoid wrongfully accusing the teachers.

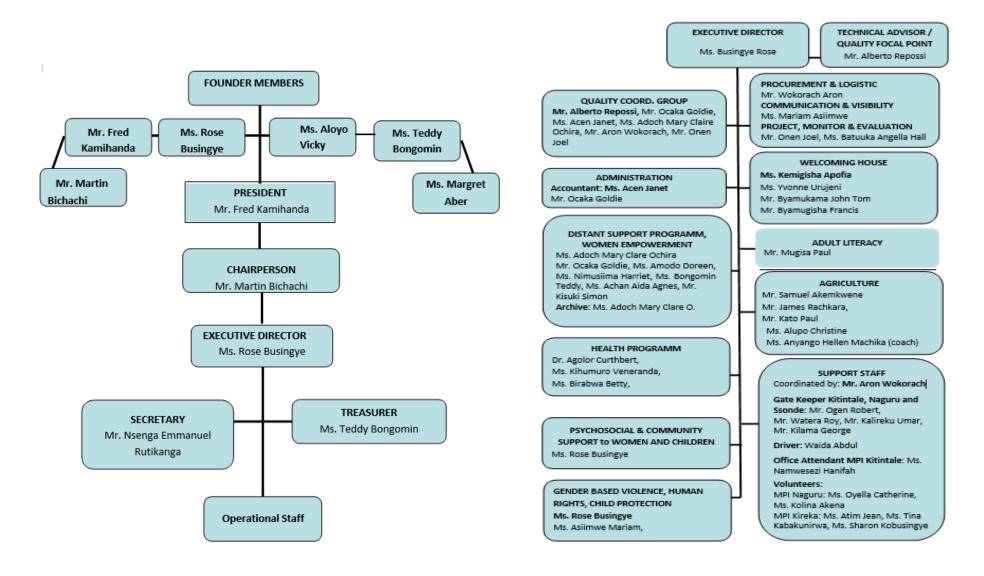
"When we accompany and build a good relationship with the teachers, it simplifies how we raise our children and we can journey together in discovering ourselves and improving our relationships with our children," says Beatrice.

She realizes she may not have discovered all this when she did if the lockdown had not happened to keep her children home, and neither would it have happened if she had not stopped working due to her illness. This is why she concluded that the lockdown had both advantages and disadvantages.

Story by;

Achan Aida Agnes (Social Worker, MPI) 27/10/2021

Our Organisational Structure



Donors and Partners

The impact MPI makes within the different communities would not be possible without partnerships, grants, and donations from different organizations and some private donors. Below are some of our main donors.

































Where We Work

Kitintale Office, MPI headquarters



The administrative headquarters of Meeting Point International(MPI) are located in Uganda, along Mutungo hill – Engineer's Close, next to the Courts of Judicature, Luzira Magistrate Grade One Court in Kitintale, a Kampala suburb. This office is responsible for the allocation of donated funds, tracking of children under sponsorship, distribution of medicine to the kireka and Naguru clinics, carrying out home visits, handling correspondence between the donor and child, finding profitable markets for craft items for MPI women and all the administrative work that relates to MPI.

In a newly remodeled facility with office rooms, and a courtyard for gatherings clients, visitors and volunteers will always find a Meeting Point International employee ready to address their needs.

Naguru Offices

The Naguru offices of MPI are located along Katale road in Naguru, a Kampala suburb. This office has a clinic section where our clients who live closer to Naguru receive medical attention from our qualified nurse. It is also where adult literacy classes, psychosocial activities and community dialogues for those clients are held every Monday and Wednesday.





Kireka Offices



Rose conducting a community dialogue with the women in Kireka

The Kireka offices of MPI are located in Kireka near Luigi Giussani Pre-Primary and Primary School. The area, due to the continuous flow of migrants from northern Uganda, mostly of Acholi descent, has been nicknamed "The Acholi Quarter." This office too, like the Naguru office, has a clinic section where our clients who live closer to kireka receive medical attention from another of our qualified nurses. It is also where adult literacy classes, psychosocial activities and community dialogues for those clients are held every Tuesday and Thursday.

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How to Support Us

Meeting Point International can receive bank transfers made in 3 currencies. Below are the account details;

Bank Name: KCB Bank Bank SWIFT: KCBLUGKA

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Account Number: 2290241482

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USD Account

Account Name: Meeting Point International

Account Number: 2290241490

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Intermediary SWIFT: BKTRUS33
Intermediary Account: 04438106

UGX Account

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Account Number: 2290241474