



Meeting Point International

PROGRESS REPORT

SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL e.V



October 4th, 2023



Donor	Support International e.V
Reporting period	January- August 2023
Implementing organization	Meeting Point International
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Introduction

Meeting Point International is a Non-Governmental Organization registered by the Uganda NGO board in 2003 operating since October 1992. It is a women-led solution to not only HIV care and prevention but also women empowerment. Its areas of intervention are the two Kampala slums of Kireka, Naguru, and Sonde in Mukono district with the headquarters in Kitintale. MPI has a home called Welcoming House (WH), a safe place that hosts vulnerable children i.e. orphans, victims of abuse and violence, HIV/AIDS patients, and those who are homeless. They are well taken care of by the caretakers who stay at the premises, Rose (Executive Director), and followed up closely by the social workers in charge.

MPI through its interventions targets those suffering from HIV/AIDS, promoting education at all levels and poverty alleviation. For over three decades, MPI has been working in the fields of **health, education, protection, and livelihood** to improve the quality of life of hundreds of vulnerable families infected and affected by HIV/AIDS in Kireka and Naguru.

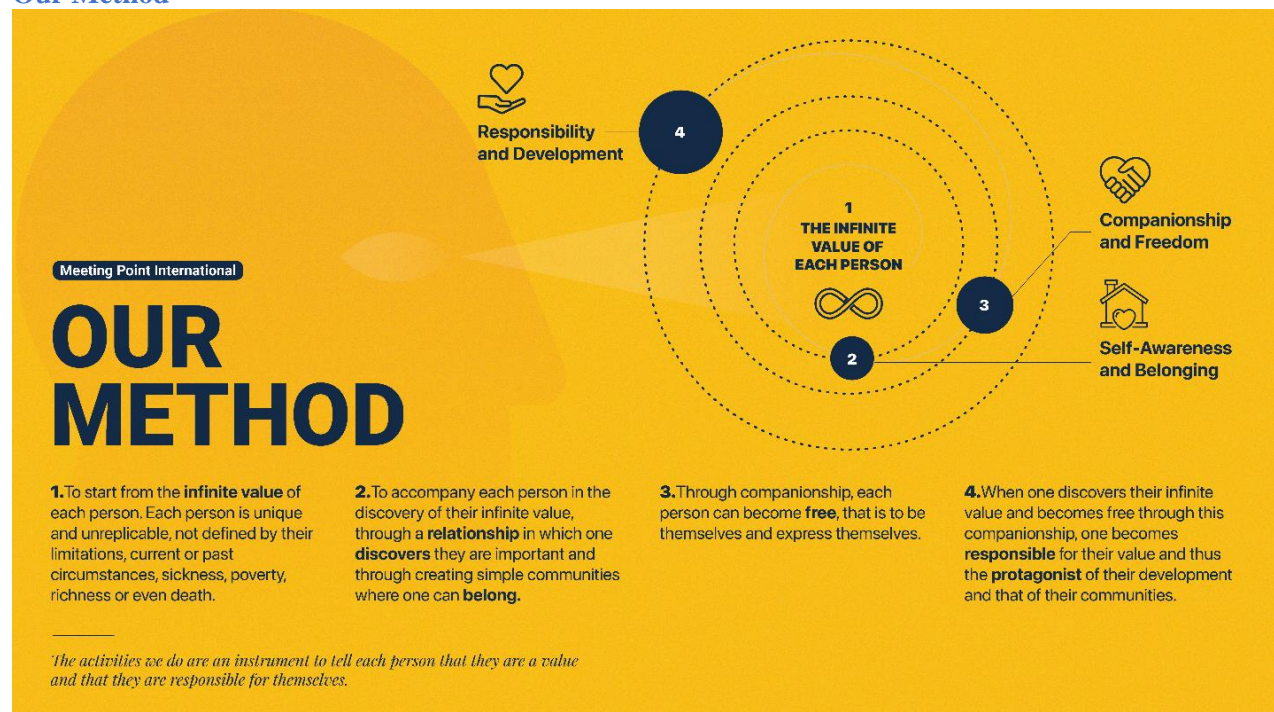
Vision

For every person to discover their infinite value and dignity, through a journey towards their own human development and that of their communities.

Mission

Meeting Point International aims at continuously accompany every person and community, prioritizing the victims of HIV/AIDS, promoting education at all levels, and committing to poverty alleviation.

Our Method





Result Area 1: Increased access to inclusive and equitable quality education and continuous learning opportunities with lifelong impacts

Activity 1.1: Payment of school fees

With your support, MPI has been able to pay school fees for a number of children in the different partner institutions which are nursery, primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. 71 children were supported during the first term while 87 were supported during the second term. The children are able to access and attain quality education which is impactful to their present and future lives.

Activity 1.2: Provision of scholastic materials

MPI has been able to provide different school materials such as books, pens, pencils, and geometry sets to the children. This is inclusive of daily transportation of the children from the welcoming house to their respective schools in accordance with the school timetables. 65 children are supported from the welcoming house through this activity.

Activity 1.3: Conduct school visits

In the pursuit of ensuring the holistic development of the children under our care, our dedicated team of



social workers has conducted school visits throughout the designated period, 17 in total. These visits serve as a crucial means to assess and nurture the well-being of the children, encompassing both their academic progress and their psychosocial development. Our commitment to accompanying these children throughout their educational journey underscores the significance of these visits. During these school visits, a range of activities have been meticulously carried out to foster a deeper connection with the children and better understand their unique circumstances:

Child Letter Exercises: Our social workers actively facilitate activities in which the children write letters to their sponsors or benefactors. Through these letters, the children are provided with a platform to articulate their thoughts, share their experiences, and express their aspirations. These exercises not only enhance the children's communication skills but also serve as a vital tool in maintaining a strong and lasting connection between the children and their generous supporters.

Dialogue with Children: Our social workers engage in meaningful conversations with the children during these school visits, creating a nurturing and confidential space where they can freely share their concerns, experiences, and any challenges they might be encountering. These dialogues serve as invaluable windows into the emotional well-being of the children, their educational requirements, and any additional support they may require. By encouraging open dialogue, we ensure that the children feel heard and supported on their educational journey.



Individual Understanding: Through personal interactions with each child, our social workers gain profound insights into their unique backgrounds, interests, strengths, and challenges. This personalized approach allows us to tailor our support and interventions to meet the specific needs of each child, thereby maximizing their potential for success.



Activity 1.4: Conduct adult literacy classes for beneficiaries

During this period, MPI's Adult Literacy teacher continued her lessons in Kireka and also resumed teaching the women in Naguru. In Kireka, the beneficiaries have been divided into two groups: **Nursery Group:** This group consists of women who are in the early stages of learning basic English skills. The nursery class has been focusing on topics such as letters, sounds, syllables, and word formation. **Primary Group:** This group includes women who already possess elementary knowledge of English. The primary class has been delving into more advanced subjects, including

verb tenses. Both classes engage in interactive learning through role play and dialogue exercises. The teacher assigns homework to ensure that the women stay actively engaged in their learning. During the second quarter, the classes in Kireka shifted their focus to mathematics. Adult literacy education plays a crucial role in these women's daily lives, especially in their businesses where effective communication with customers and accurate sales accounting are essential skills. Through dialogues with their instructor, the women have expressed their enthusiasm for the classes. They have also shared how their children are always eager and delighted to see their books, highlighting the positive impact of education within their families.



Result Area 2: Improved economic well-being of the beneficiaries'

Activity 2.1: Train HH members in SPM and FL

A financial literacy training was conducted for the women both in Kireka and Naguru by KCB, a bank with whom we have a collaboration. The training equipped the participants with knowledge regarding the use of money focusing on needs and wants. The training had a total of 170 women participants, including 146 from Kireka and 24 from Naguru.



Activity 2.2: Mobilize HHs, and train, form and follow up VSLA groups



AVSI Graduating to Resilience's team held 2 meetings (1 in Kireka and 1 in Naguru) to analyse the dynamics of the VSLA, collect all relevant information about the present groups and their needs, current statuses and challenges encountered (for the old groups) in order to plan the VSLA trainings. Following these first meetings with AVSI's personnel, MPI's projects office organized 2 meetings (1 in Naguru and 1 in Kireka) to collect the actual names, numbers and other important data for each group, and to collect the photocopies of their national IDs. MPI managed to register a total number of 8 groups: 2 in Kireka and 6 in

Naguru.

Rose denied the old groups who still have pending debts to register and told them they first have to clear their debts. During the second quarter, a training of trainers in VSLA was conducted at Meeting Point International (MPI) for a group of 15 social workers and 3 program managers. The training aimed to enhance the participant's skills as trainers in the field of Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) methodologies. The training was conducted over a period of 5 days and facilitated by two experienced trainers from AVSI. It included a combination of practical and theoretical sessions, presentations, question-

and-answer sessions, and instructor-led activities.



The training curriculum encompassed the following key areas: (a). Introduction to VSLA Methodologies: Participants were introduced to the concept of VSLA methodologies, including their objectives, principles, and benefits. (b). VSLA Group Formation: The process of forming VSLA groups, selecting members, and establishing group rules and regulations was covered in detail. (c). VSLA Savings and Loan Management: Participants learned about the procedures and best practices for managing VSLA savings and loan transactions. (d). Record Keeping and

Financial Management: The importance of maintaining accurate records and financial management within VSLA groups was emphasized. (e). Training Techniques: The participants were trained on effective training techniques, including designing training modules, delivering presentations, and facilitating group discussions. (f). Monitoring and Evaluation: The training covered methods for monitoring and evaluating VSLA programs to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability. (g). Case Studies and Practical Exercises:



Various case studies and practical exercises were provided to allow participants to apply their knowledge in real-world scenarios.

Having acquired the knowledge, the social workers were assigned to the different groups and they commenced training and follow-ups in September. Each social worker was assigned to a group to follow. Among the new groups to be trained are Sanitizer, thank you Jesus and God is good. For the other groups, the social workers collect monthly data while guiding the groups to prepare for next year when they will reorganize the groups.

Activity 2.3: Mobilize learners to pay DIT assessment fees, enroll them for assessment, organize for the assessment day, collect and hand out the certificates and transcripts

The 30 students from LGHS who trained from the farm were assessed by DIT under the Horticulture farmer modular level. The students did a practical assessment where they were asked to make a vegetable nursery bed and transplant a seedling to the main garden. The results of the students were received in August and all the students were certified as competent horticulture farmers.

Result Area 3: Improved healthy lives and well-being of the beneficiaries

Activity 3.1a: Conduct psychosocial activities



Meeting Point International (MPI) conducted a total of 75 psychosocial activities for women residing in the Kireka and Naguru slums during the first and second quarter. The initiative was led by Auntie Rose, with support from the women and MPI social workers. The following psychosocial activities were conducted by MPI for the women in Kireka and Naguru slums: (a) Drama: Drama workshops were organized, enabling the women to explore their acting skills, share personal stories, and raise awareness about social issues affecting their community. (b) Dancing: Regular dance sessions were organized,

allowing the women to unleash their creativity, express themselves through movement, and experience the joy of dancing together. (c) Storytelling: Storytelling sessions were held, providing a platform for the women to share their life experiences, and inspire others through narratives. The psychosocial activities, in particular the dances performed when welcoming new members make the women feel free and to easily belong.



Activity 3.1b: Conduct community dialogues

The meetings and community dialogues held by Rose and the Social workers were centered on themes such as: how to protect children from harmful practices - such as witchcraft that is increasing nowadays among the youth, or joining gangs, health and hygiene, physical exercise, school fees and children's attitude at school, the value of the person, how MPI helps to face reality without fear, VSLA preparation. During these dialogues, the women learn from each other as they share information about the different topics of discussion. A total of

22 community dialogues were held in both Naguru and Kireka during the reporting period.

Activity 3.2: Organize recreational activities for beneficiaries

During the first quarter, a spiritual exercise for the secondary and university students was organized at Comboni Retreat center Namugongo. The main aim was to accompany the youths spiritually which helps them live life concretely valuing each life gift especially their education. In attendance were some students supported to attend by SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL. A total of 42 students attended the activity among which were children from the welcoming house facilitated by SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL funds.

Activity 3.3: Conduct physical exercises/yoga

MPI has a personal trainer called Yaya who normally leads yoga and physical exercise sessions. This activity helped in introducing the women to mindfulness techniques, promoting physical well-being, and encouraging inner peace physical and mental health. 9 yoga sessions were conducted during the reporting period.



Activity 3.4: Conduct follow-up visits

MPI conducts follow-up visits that are home and office visits as part of its social work activities to accompany the beneficiaries in their daily lives as well as assess the general situation of households. Through the home visits, the social workers are able to: assess the overall condition of the house, including living arrangements, sanitation, access to basic amenities, and safety measures. They note any concerns or issues that require attention. Engage in conversations with the women and other household



members to understand their specific needs, challenges, and aspirations. This dialogue helped to build rapport and trust, enabling the social workers to provide appropriate support and guidance. Based on the assessment and dialogue, social workers also have been able to offer guidance and counseling to address specific challenges or issues faced by the households. This included advice on parenting, healthcare, education, or accessing relevant social services. Additionally, MPI welcomes the children it supports to its main offices in Kitintale on a daily basis. This activity allows social workers to meet the beneficiaries face-to-face, understand their actual needs, and plan appropriate interventions. The office visits provide an avenue for MPI to connect directly with beneficiaries, understand their actual needs, and ensure that the resources and support are targeted appropriately. Office visits facilitate regular communication and ongoing support for the beneficiaries, ensuring that MPI can effectively address their needs and empower them towards a better future. 124 home visits and 830 office visits were conducted during the period.

Activity 3.5: Provision of health services

During the reporting period, with the funds from SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL, we were able to purchase drugs in response to the medical situation of one of the children. On the other hand, with the availability of our dedicated team of two nurses and our doctor, we have successfully implemented a healthcare support program to assist our clients. The following activities were carried out: Our nurses provided essential medical care to clients in two locations: The nurses administered basic medical treatments, including medication, wound care, and minor procedures, ensuring the well-being of our clients.

Activity 3.6: Conduct health sensitizations



Health and Hygiene dialogues were conducted for both the women in Naguru and Kireka Slums. The dialogues focused on addressing health issues identified through the home visits as well as those identified by the nurses as they provide medical attention to the beneficiaries. Among the main issues discussed included: The importance of maintaining good hygiene practices to prevent illness and promote overall well-being. Exploring common health issues in the community and discussing preventive measures. Encouraging healthy habits, such as handwashing, sleeping under a mosquito net, proper sanitation, proper way of taking a bath, and regular health check-ups.

Result Area 4: Increased awareness and response capacity to violence.

Activity 4.1: Conduct child protection dialogues

1 child protection dialogue was conducted during the reporting period. The dialogue was conducted by Aunt Rose to address the growing unethical habits among the children, especially witchcraft as well as remind parents of their role in their children's upbringing by always being present. In the dialogue, women



with concerns regarding their own children are advised accordingly and reminded of the need to have a relationship with their children. The dialogue was conducted in Kireka and 180 women attended.

Activity 4.2: Linkage of child cases to alternative care

Through Support International, MPI has been able to provide constant basic needs to the children in WH such as: medical care, food, safe water, bills, maintenance works, etc. This has benefited all the 65 children at the WH. The support can further be subdivided in the following areas

Type	Description
Food and nutrition	The WH has 5 Caretakers, with 2 of them mainly dedicated to preparing meals for the children. All the persons at the WH are being provided with 3 time's meals (Breakfast, lunch, and dinner). With the funds from Support International, MPI is able to buy nutritious food for the children such as maize flour, milk, wheat flour, posho etc. Additionally, other foods such as chicken, vegetables and fruits are supplied by MPI farm in sonde to ensure the children have a balanced diet.
Hygiene and sanitation	MPI is responsible for making sure that the children live in a clean, healthy environment to avoid hygiene-related illnesses. Therefore, among the caretakers are personnel dedicated to ensuring cleanliness in the house. Additionally, MPI provides all needed cleaning materials that are purchased by the procurement officer such as detergents, moppers, toilet paper, brushes, etc.
Healthcare	With the professionalism of the two nurses in Naguru and Kireka, MPI is able to provide primary medical care to its beneficiaries among which are the children of the welcoming house. Special medical attention is given to children with severe health complications with some children referred to partner hospitals such as Nsambya Hospital, SAS Clinic, Benedict Hospital, Kitintale Hospital, and Mild May where they are provided the right treatment to respond to particularly severe situations like HIV. Through the assistance of the Executive director and the procurement officer, MPI has also been buying and storing its medicine and other medical equipment at a dispensary in the Kitintale office. The medicines are also used for treating children
Transport, utilities	Besides nutrition, hygiene, and health care, MPI through the support given by SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL is able to cater for the utilities of the house such as water, electricity, cooking gas, etc. to enable a conducive environment for the children, MPI also has a van that is used to take children to and from school as well as to health centers in case of emergencies. This has ensured that the children are safe on the road.

Result Area 5: Increased staff capacity and knowledge

Activity 5.1: Organize capacity and knowledge-building sessions for MPI staff

During the period, MPI held a session about WHO IS MAN? For all its personnel. The session was led by the executive director, Rose Busingye. It was a 2-day session to remind the workers about the methodology of MPI that puts the value of a person at the center of our work. Additionally, child safeguarding training for



all staff was carried out. The training aimed at educating the staff about the child safeguarding policy of MPI and getting feedback on activities that may be incorporated in the policy implementation. 31 staff gained knowledge regarding the child safeguarding policy.



Result Area 6: Others

Activity 6.1: Gift Money

During this period, some children supported by SUPPORT INTERNATIONAL received gift money from their sponsors. With the guidance of Rose and the social workers attached, gifts were bought for the children. The gifts indicate the beautiful relationships the donors have with the children reminding them that they are important through the gifts.

Challenges:

Meeting Point International has encountered significant challenges related to inadequate space for women in Kireka, as the current facility cannot accommodate more than 200 women. It's evident that the number of attendees at the weekly meetings is steadily increasing, leading to a shortage of meeting space.



Mitigation:

To address this issue, Meeting Point International (MPI) has initiated a project known as "A Place Where I Belong." This project's primary objective is to construct a versatile community center in Kireka (Acholi Quarter), with the aim of establishing a multifunctional space capable of catering to the various needs of Meeting Point International and the community at large. The community center will encompass offices, a medical clinic, a meeting hall, and external areas for outdoor activities such as tennis and basketball courts. The cornerstone of this mitigation strategy is the construction of the multipurpose community center, which will serve as a central hub for diverse activities. Having a dedicated space will empower the community to implement a wide array of initiatives aligned with different Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Here's how the project aligns with various SDGs and addresses community needs:

SDG 3 - Good Health and Well-being: The clinic within the community center will offer medical services, promoting better health and well-being among community members.

- SDG 4 - Quality Education: The center will host adult literacy classes and provide a space for educational activities, enhancing literacy and offering quality education opportunities.
- SDG 5 - Gender Equality and Psychosocial Support: The community center will provide psychosocial support and promote gender equality through sensitization programs and community meetings.
- SDG 8 - Decent Work and Economic Growth: The project will provide training opportunities for Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), financial literacy, and Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) training, fostering economic growth and decent work opportunities.
- SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities: By providing a communal space for gatherings and activities, the project will address the need for public spaces in densely populated urban areas like Kireka.

The construction of the community center not only resolves the issue of inadequate space but also establishes a platform for the community to engage in a variety of activities that promote individual and collective growth. The center's diverse range of activities ensures that it becomes a focal point for holistic community development. Efficient and well-managed construction processes are essential to meet the community's needs as quickly as possible. Furthermore, ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be critical to assess the center's impact on beneficiaries and make any necessary adjustments to maximize its effectiveness. In conclusion, the "A Place Where I Belong" project presents a comprehensive approach to addressing the challenge of limited space for community activities while simultaneously advancing multiple SDGs and fostering community development in Kireka. The work of the center has been divided into phases and as of this report the first phase is done and MPI is looking for funds for the second.



Lessons Learnt:

- **Holistic Approach:** Meeting Point International (MPI) has successfully demonstrated the effectiveness of a holistic approach to addressing the needs of people. By focusing on the value of each person in the different activities which are education support, economic empowerment, psychosocial activities, healthcare, and child protection efforts, MPI has been able to make a significant impact on the lives of beneficiaries and the community. Through activities such as child letter exercises, school visits, and interactions with the beneficiaries, we are able to understand and address the unique needs of each beneficiary.
- **Capacity Building:** Conducting capacity building sessions for staff, including child safeguarding training, is essential for ensuring that the organization operates ethically and effectively in its mission to support vulnerable populations. The capacity-building sessions not only equip the staff with the knowledge to help them in their work but also help them incorporate the approach of MPI in their work since the focus is always on the value of the person.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborations with organizations like KCB and AVSI have enabled MPI to provide financial literacy training and support for Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA), expanding its impact in economic well-being. We look forward to more partnerships with different service providers to achieve the objectives of MPI in the different thematic areas.
- **Community Engagement:** Community dialogues and activities, such as drama workshops and storytelling sessions, have helped foster a sense of community and promote important discussions on various topics, including child protection and health. These have helped us as well to identify the challenges being faced by the beneficiaries thus designing projects aimed at addressing these challenges. We aim to continue such dialogues with the beneficiaries in addition to the home visits.

Areas for Improvement:

1. **Funding:** There is a need for additional funds for the second phase of the community center project. Continued efforts to secure funding and financial sustainability should be a priority to ensure the project's success.
2. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Ongoing monitoring and evaluation should be a core part of MPI's operations to assess the impact of its programs and make data-driven adjustments for improvement.



This will not only aid in the implementation of activities but as well as support the development of new proposals to current and potential donors and reporting.

3. Sustainability: MPI should continue to explore avenues for making its programs more self-sustainable in the long term, reducing reliance on external funding sources.
4. Child Protection: While child protection dialogues are mentioned, a more detailed strategy for preventing and addressing child protection issues, especially in the context of vulnerable populations, should be developed and documented.
5. Scale and Reach: Consideration should be given to how MPI can expand its reach to impact more beneficiaries, either by replicating successful programs in new locations or by exploring digital and remote support options.
6. Increase production at Sonde: During the reporting period, some of the foods supplied at the welcoming house were from the farm in Sonde. With increased investment, the farm can increase the production of healthy foods needed in the diet of the children therefore reducing the need to buy from external providers.



Pills of hope



"There is no greater gift than this education. It is evident that when you love yourself, the same love is spread to everyone and everything around you automatically. The teachers of LGHS love to say "We educate the heart through reason".

Pascal and Kafrika



"Who am I to be welcomed the way I am?"

Tina



"Do I know who I am now? Yes, I do. I am a value', not because of what I possess or who I am but because I am a human being. Everyone around me is equally a value and I ought to treat them the way I would like to be treated".

Koreyo Phiona