INTRODUCTION

Action for Rural Women’s Empowerment (ARUWE) is implementing a four year youth skilling program (2014 to 2018). The program aims at promoting entrepreneurial and skills to enable youth create employment. The program targets both in school and out of school youth.
ARUWE is proud to bring the stories of beneficiaries from the skills improvement through tailoring. The project has benefited both in school and out of school youths in Vvumba community.

Meet the beneficiaries

PROSSY NANKWANGI

Prosy is an 18 year old from St Joseph SSS Vvumba who enrolled for the tailoring classes in June 2016 and completed in April 2017. Since she didn’t have enough school fees to further her formal education, she had to end in ordinary level.

“Because I had acquired the tailoring skill, I was able to set up a business in tailoring. In June 2017, I bought a sewing machine on hire purchase at Ugx 180,000. In a month I earn between Ugx 45,000 to Ugx 50,000 (USD 12.5 to USD 13.8). I use Ugx 30,000 (USD 8.3) to pay for the sewing machine since I got it on hire purchase for 6 months. This leaves me with a profit of Ugx 18,000 (USD 5). I reinvest half of my profits into the business to acquire working material. I get my orders from parents who bring the uniforms of their children. My future plan is to get tenders from at least 3 schools to make uniforms. In that way I will have stable clientele. I also want to get a location in the trading centre where I can station my business to attract more clients. My challenge is limited knowledge in business planning hence I want to be educated in the same. I am so grateful for the support given to us through the vocational skills training. Because of that, I am able to sustain myself even after school”, said Prosy.

The pictures below show some of the uniforms- a dress and short that prosy has tailored for a primary school.
My name is Gauda and I am 15 years old. Early this year, I dropped out of school from senior two because my parents didn’t have enough funds to keep me in school. Fortunately I had acquired the tailoring skill from the vocational institute. I was able to borrow a sewing machine from one of our family friends and I started tailoring. I have been tailoring for 4 months now. My clients are girls of my age, adult women and younger boys. I sew skirts, dresses, blouses and shorts. I earn between Ugx 80,000 to Ugx 100,000 a month (USD 22.2 to USD 27.7). From this I am able to save Ugx 25,000 (USD6.9) for myself and I spend the rest on taking care of my 3 siblings since my mother cannot ably take care of the family. Given the opportunity, I would love to go back to school and also practice tailoring. In this way, I will acquire both formal education and develop practical skills.

Gauda in her work shop at Kumusalaba village
Hearing Agatha’s story leaves a bitter sweet feeling. Much as she is earning from the tailoring, she is missing out on the development processes of children her age such as playing, interacting with peers, being taken care, education, etc. Such is the plight of many young girls from vulnerable families. They are forced to go into the labour market earlier on in life to make ends meet. Since formal education is too costly for them, increasing accessibility to vocational skills is a good alternative. They can further be equipped with formal skills such as records keeping, costing and pricing, business planning, health and development, etc through couching, mentoring and training as well as exposure visits.

**MBIDDE DAVID**

David is 16 year old in senior three from St Joseph SSS Vvumba. He enrolled for the tailoring classes in June 2016. Since he could not afford to pay the tuition fees, he was allowed to get the skill on student loan. This meant that after he learnt, I was to make school uniforms as a way of paying his tuition. This arrangement is working out well and not only is he paying his tuition but he also earns a small commission of UGX 3,500 (USD1) from every shirt he makes. David comes from a very vulnerable home hence the school has decided to meet his
school fees for his formal education as he keeps providing the service of tailoring school uniforms. In this way, David is kept in school as he also earns his upkeep.

David making a shirt at the St Joseph SSS Vumba

SYLVIA BIIRA

My name is Biira Sylvia. I am 22 years old from is aged 22 female from Kiwundugulu village, Mulagi Sub County. I am a mother of one but also taking care of another relative’s child. Through ARUWE vocational skills program, I was able to attain the skill of hair dressing in 2017. Since I hadn’t acquired capital to set up my own business, I got employment in a nearby saloon from which I earn Ugx 40,000 per day. I am able to meet my household need. In addition, at the end of the month I can save Ugx 50,000. Currently I have Ugx 350,000 in savings which I keep in my savings group. I am planning to get a loan to set up a saloon near my home. In this way, I will be able to earn more and even create employment for someone else. I also want to get more skills in entrepreneurship so that I can further be equipped in business management.
Meet 28-year old Aisha single mother from Kigando village, Mulagi Sub County. Aisha was supported through the hair dressing skilling program. Having attained the skill, she got a job in a nearby saloon. From her work, she managed to save Ugx 680,000. She used her savings to acquire a loan from Community Fund MFI of Ugx 1,500,000 with she established a saloon in Kiboga town council. On a good day, Aisha gets over 8 customers for plaiting, retouching, weaving, treatment and styling. She charges according the hair style. For example she plait a weave at 25,000shs, treatment at 8,000shs among others. She earns about 60,000shs per day and manages to save on average 800,000shs per month. From her saloon business, Aisha has managed to pay her rent, school fees for her 3 siblings and she can support both her parents and child with basic needs. She also employs two girls on part-time basis. Out of her savings from the saloon business, Aisha has also started up a boutique to increase on her source of income. Aisha is happy to be self-reliant and she is able to cater for her child without asking for support from the child’s father. In 2 years, Aisha plans to have a big saloon with manicure and pedicure, bridal services and a whole sale shop of cosmetic, hair pieces and brides. Her only limitation is the capital and proper business management skills.
Aisha serving one of her clients in her saloon

The stories above show the change and also the need to further invest in empowering the youth with knowledge and skills so that they can develop in socio-economic aspects.

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