



## **Gender awareness training for teachers**

**Venue: Paidah Teachers' College**

**Date : 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> February 2016**



### **Background and introduction**

To enable collective action in improving girl's participation, performance and retention in schools, MEMPROW conducts gender awareness trainings for teachers with an aim of creating awareness and changing their attitude. Because of the fact that, teachers subconsciously interact with students based on gender stereotypes, by raising awareness of these circumstances, we eventually succeed in addressing such stereotypes. After the trainings, teachers appreciate that actions have a great impact on the level of participation, performance, and retention of girls in schools and therefore become gender sensitive and incorporate gender in their methodology of teaching. From 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> February, MEMPROW organised and conducted a five days gender awareness training for teachers from 12 primary and 3 secondary schools. The training was attended by 79 teachers, 60 male and 19 female and was aimed at improving the teacher's teaching skills to be gender responsive.

The training focused on;

- Gender and patriarchy
- Human rights and
- Violence against girls in institutions of learning.

### **Methodology**

- Lecture
- Exercises
- Discussions
- Group Presentations
- Plenary sessions
- Visual tools (video)

Mr. Ochunga Alex, the District Education Officer of Zombo district opened the training by welcoming teachers to the training. He thanked MEMPROW for choosing Zombo and thanked the principal of the teachers' college for hosting us. He regretfully acknowledged the fact that Zombo district was still very poor in terms of performance and this manifested itself in the statistics of the previous PLE and UCE results respectively. Of the 2114 students who sat for PLE in 2015, only 20 passed in first grade 18 of whom were boys. However, according to him, the UCE results were even worse when only 12 students passed in division one. He informed teachers that the issue of improving performance in schools should be a joint effort and the ability of students to pass exams would depend on the management of the schools which includes teachers. He continued to lament that, for every 100 girls who join primary one, only two reach primary seven and for every 100 boys that join primary one, only 12 complete primary seven. Girls do not complete school in Zombo because of the rampant teenage pregnancies. In Zombo children marry children to produce children. Zombo is second to Karamoja in teenage pregnancies. He warned teachers who defile their students and urged them to behave professionally. He encouraged participants to use the time productively and get knowledge to create change in the lives of children.

### **Teachers came for the training with some expectations as follows;**

- ❖ Getting skills in managing violence in schools
- ❖ Understanding about gender, human rights and violence against girls in our lives
- ❖ To have a general knowledge on gender, human rights and the various forms of violence in schools
- ❖ Attendance certificate
- ❖ Good liberations by the facilitators
- ❖ Moderate transport refund

❖ Getting out of pocket

**Session : Gender and Patriarchy in schools**

**Facilitator : Mr. David Mpiima**



Mr. Mpiima advised teachers to pick whatever extra skill that they can get because if what all the presidential candidates promise is fulfilled, the teaching profession is going to become so competitive and only those who have extra skills will be able to compete favourably. They were urged to take the training seriously because it was to give them extra knowledge.

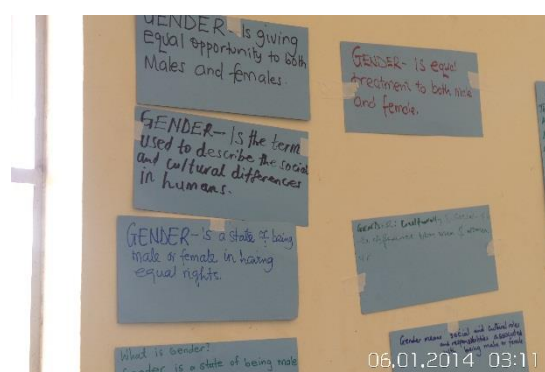
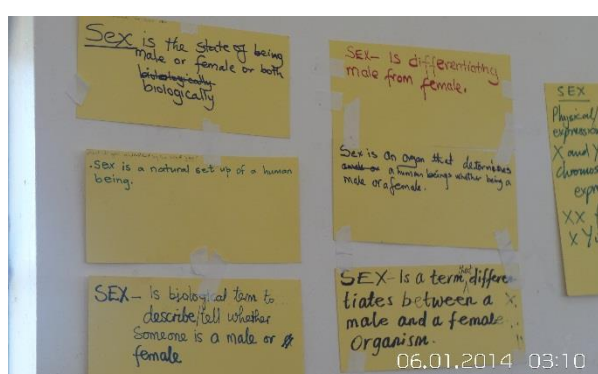
### **Exercise**

To gauge the teachers understanding of sex and gender, on yellow and blue cards they were instructed to write what they understood by sex and gender. The definitions clearly showed that teachers were aware of what sex meant, however their understanding of gender was vague. They were therefore helped to understand that gender are the socially determined differences between men and women (and also historically and psychologically determined) or simply the experience of being male or female, or the socially given attributes, roles, activities and responsibilities attributed to being male or female in a given society. Our gender identity determines who we are expected to be, how we are perceived, how we are expected to think and act as men and women because of the way society is structured.

Gender which is socially constituted between men and women is not universal but varies and amongst cultures; it varies across time i.e. what it is today, will be different tomorrow and also varies across geographical location. Gender also varies across age, class, and ethnicity e.g. in Buganda, women are not allowed to ride bicycles while other communities are permissive, and it also varies across race where white women are highly respected compared to the Blacks and

the Hispanics. Therefore, gender is not static but keeps on changing. Gender also keeps on changing according to space, educational levels, socio-economic grouping among others. Through giving the various questions and discussing answers, participant's understanding of gender was enhanced. The facilitator explained that it is us who create those divisions. We attach many things to think that a man or woman is not supposed to do this or that. Examples of the questions discussed are;

- How is an Alur boy expected to behave?
- How is an Alur girl expected to behave?
- How do you expect boys and girls to behave in schools?



## Socialisation and the sites of socialisation

### Exercise: 2

Tick where as a teacher you are most likely to locate your example when in class

Female	Occupation	Male	Notes
	Scientist	✓	Great thinkers
	Sports person	✓	More energetic
	Religious leaders	✓	Men are confident Good accountability
	Head teacher	✓	
	President	✓	
✓	Cook		
	MP	✓	
	Business person	Both are capable	
✓	House help		Have enough time
	Judge/ lawyer	✓	Critical thinkers
	Doctor	✓	
	Engineer	✓	They are strong
✓	nurse		

This exercise was meant to demonstrate to teachers how unconsciously they associate certain professions to either male or females especially when giving examples in class. This in the end misleads the students to think that some professions were made for either male or female but not both, this kills their ambitions and end up choosing softer careers because of fear. However, for a few of the presentations, some teachers wrote what they knew was right and not what they exactly do during their teaching and therefore weren't so genuine to themselves. It was noted that men fail to do certain work at home regarding it as work for women but can do it elsewhere because it is paid for, for example cooking. In the Alur culture, men are not supposed to cook. Teachers were urged to be conscious on the way they use examples at school because they have a lot of power in society that they can lead or mislead.

Teachers realised that there was need to improve and came up with ways in which they were going to fulfil this;

- To find examples that motivate students to take certain careers
- Assign girls roles for example to be class leaders
- To use guidance and counselling
- Use the hands on /practical approach to help them appreciate the given careers
- To get role models especially females to motivate them
- Doing self-evaluation as a teacher

### **Gender Division of labour**

This refers to the way society assigns activities, roles and responsibilities to men and women according to sex for example productive roles, reproductive roles and community roles. It varies across all aspects of life that is class, religion, education, as well as socio-economic realms of life. During the discussion, it clearly came out that the boys/ men are interested in the work where money is involved and the fact that they refuse to do the same work at home because they regard it as work for girls or women yet they can willingly do the same work outside their homes if it is paid for. At school the allocation of top leadership positions also favours boys. Girls are always taken as assistants and this is mostly fuelled by teachers. By the end of the discussion, the teachers realised that the kind of work that they give to boys and girls impacts on their lives as they grow up. The following questions were discussed during the session.

- List the kind of work that boys and girls do at school
- How does it impact on the lives of boys and girls as they grow up?

### **Stereotypes**

These are structured sets of beliefs about the personnel attributes, behaviours, roles of women and men and it's also a dichotomy of values like weak/strong, stupid /clever sensitive / insensitive and indecisive among others referring to men and women. During the discussion, teachers recognised the dangers of stereotyping and how it relates to girls dropping out of

school. Teachers also admitted that they stereotype students especially girls, however they justified their actions by saying that; they do it because of anger, due to ignorance, poor performance of learners, intoxication, hunger, girls giving wrong answers, failure to follow instructions, late coming, cultural beliefs and displaced aggression among others. Much as the teachers stereotype their students, they are much aware of its dangers, for example they mentioned that; It demoralises the girls, It leads to drop out, it discourages girls from learning, it leads to early marriages among others. Although teachers are aware of its dangers, stereotyping is a set of beliefs that are deeply ingrained in them that they do it unconsciously. They were advised to be conscious when communicating to students. Questions discussed during the session include;

- List Stereotypes attached to boys and girls in school by teachers
- What are the dangers of these stereotypes to the girl child?

### **Gender Needs**

During the session, teachers realised that boys and girls may have different gender needs and therefore they recognised their role in helping their students meet some of these needs. The following questions were discussed;

1. List the Needs of the girl child in your school
2. How will the lives of these girls be affected if these needs are not met
3. How can a teacher help a young girl meet some of her needs

### **Patriarchy and its manifestations.**









It was brought to the teachers' attention that some of the issues discussed earlier in the session echoed patriarchal tendencies. In a plenary discussion, teachers discussed how they can improve their own agency in schools to monitor and promote girl child rights in their schools. Teachers were advised to exercise agency; a process of awareness creation and the power to make decisions about their own lives and get involved in executing them. To enable a thorough understanding of patriarchy, the following questions were discussed during the session;

1. What is the place of men in your culture?
2. What is the place of women in your culture?
3. Is that the best women can be?
4. What can be done to uplift the status of women?

5. How can education support the cause of uplifting the status of women

***“We are not powerless; we do not need the head teachers, PTA, to create change. Give students right information because it’s what they need to make right choices” the facilitator advised.***

**Key learning points that arose from the session**

-  Due to the gendered distribution of resources, development affects men and women differently which makes it important to look at the potential impact of development on men and women starting from identification, formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of interventions, programmes and policies.
-  Women’s lack of representation and voice in decision making bodies in the community and the state perpetuates discrimination
-  Because women’s work is different from that of men, they have different development needs.
-  Across the world, women are treated unequally and less value is placed on their lives because of their gender. Women’s differential access to power and control of resources is central to this discrimination in all institutional spheres, i.e. the household, community, market, and state.
-  The law is assumed to be gender-neutral when in fact it may perpetuate gender discrimination, being a product of a culture with oppressive gender ideologies.
-  The law, when reformed with women’s input, can be a potent tool for challenging discrimination, if combined with other strategies, including capacity-building to overcome barriers to claiming rights.
-  Women have internalized patriarchal values and therefore they aren’t free from it and therefore fit from it.
-  Power and those who conform to patriarchy are accorded privileges



## Session: Human Rights

**Facilitator: Ms. Enid Nambuya**

### Objectives of the session:

- To promote understanding, appreciation, tolerance and adherence to human rights principles in our daily lives
- Respect, Promote and protect the rights and fundamental freedoms of all human beings including children in particular the girl child in school.
- Contribute to the increase in participation of girls in school activities including leadership positions and leisure.



To allow teachers to reflect on their importance in society, a question was paused; what would we do without teachers and educators? “To educate is to believe in change (Paula Freire)  
Teachers had this to say;

- We would have to be contented with trial and error method on our lives influences
- There would be no professional jobs
- We would not have the opportunity to take certain things forward
- There would be a high rate of illiteracy
- There would be no skilled labour
- Learning would be by instinct
- There would be no civilisation
- Education changes the level of knowledge
- leads to skills development
- Change of life styles
- Advancement in technology
- Education changes the level of knowledge
- It leads us to attain different professions
- It creates health awareness



This clearly portrays that without teachers our lives would be different and therefore teachers were urged to love their profession and uphold it and one way of doing this is to respect not only their rights but other people's rights too. The assessment done at the beginning of the session indicted that beating is the commonest form of punishment that teachers give. Many times we do not connect issues of rights with small things like beating but beating is a form of physical abuse. How will a child that grew up being beaten by a teacher and parents communicate in marriage? The facilitator wondered. All he knows is to inflict pain. Digging was second to beating. It was noted that if agriculture continues to be a punishment, we will not come out of poverty because students will hate it yet agriculture is the main source of income in Uganda. Other forms of punishments were sending one back home, standing in the sun among others.

It was emphasised that there are other ways in which teachers can administer punishment to students better and even aspire to be teachers. During the discussion, Participants agreed that punishing by beating does not make a student better, but can make them hate the school and the teacher, which in the end hinders learning. Teachers were encouraged to use more of counselling than beating and be in position to find out the underlying cause of the students "misbehaviour", a case in point is a student who is punished for coming to school late every day without finding out the reason as to why she or he comes late. Teachers should aspire to provide children with an education that prepares them for a happy and productive life; in which they have respect for others in a setting in which they themselves are safe.

Human rights were discussed as the rights possessed by all people by virtue of being human to enjoy a life of freedom and dignity. Teachers were made to understand that human rights are inherent, inalienable, universal and indivisible and therefore every human being is entitled to enjoying his /her rights provided she does not infringe on other people's rights, meaning rights come with responsibilities. Children's rights, women's rights, disability rights and health rights were discussed.

### **Misconduct and what it means to a teacher.**

Taking teachers through the various forms of misconduct and how they are punishable by the education commission enabled teachers to reflect on their actions as they deal with students and the community. This will probably change their negative behaviour towards their students.

Misconduct was defined as the act done without reasonable excuse by an officer, which amounts to failure to perform a duty assigned to him or her, or which contravenes any conduct of the education service or brings the education service into dispute shall constitute misconducts. A person commits an act constituting misconduct where he or she practices favouritism, nepotism, corruption, does not observe punctuality, is absent from duty without permission, insubordinate, rude and uncooperative, is lazy or produces work of a poor standard or fails to meet time lines, untrustworthy, seeks political favours or lobbies in anyway, practices political/religious partiality, discriminates learners with special learning needs and physical disabilities, falsifies records and documents, encourages homosexuality and lesbianism and any other immoral act, incites with intent to cause disobedience or strike undermining administration, administers corporal punishments. When found guilty of any of the above misconduct, the teacher shall be liable to dismissal, retirement in public interest, reduction in rank and salary,

reduction in salary for a specific period of time, stoppage from increment for a specified period, withholding increment for a specified period, deferment of increment, reprimand and the like.



Teachers should aspire to provide children with the education that prepares them for productive life in which they have respect for others in a setting in which they themselves are safe however the examples that teachers give in class either promotes or demean children for example sometimes teachers comment negatively on the cultural practices, shapes and sizes of children. Students have a right to education whereas a teacher has the responsibility to guide them to finish school. Teachers were encouraged to be cautious of the language they use. A human being has a right to enjoy his or her rights as long as he or she does not inflict on other people's lives. A human being is an organisms that communicates in words and has ability to articulate and communicate in a manner that is more superior as distinguished from other animals or the only creatures on earth that possess a brain that enables them to question who they are. Teachers were well conversant with rights for children, men and women although they sometimes abuse those rights especially the children's rights.

Teachers vowed to do the following as their role in practising human rights in schools and education institutions as well as to the general public?

- To sensitise learners, parents and community to know that children have rights.
- To report cases of abuse of human rights
- To carry out guidance and counselling
- To act as role models
- To sensitise communities on human rights policies
- Responsibility for one another
- Creation in unity and cooperation in community
- To make use of the media
- Teachers should respect children's rights
- Being knowledgeable on rights
- To let children understand their responsibility
- To implement government policies
- To invite police to speak with my class about human rights

Teachers were urged to be well conversant with rights and human rights abuses and be able to speak from an informed point of view. By the end of the session the teachers were equipped with knowledge and skills to appreciate, advocate, protect and promote rights of children especially the rights of the girl child in the school. They were to create check list and monitor the change in the school together with the students.

### **Key learning points that arose from the session**

-  Rights are to be enjoyed by all persons, male and female, young and old.
-  'A teacher affects eternity; no one can tell where his/her influence stops.' -Henry Adams

- ✚ A teacher must respect children's rights before he or she can: impart knowledge, mentor, guide and counsel, extend students understanding, facilitate acquisition of critical thinking skills, facilitate problem solving, facilitate the shaping of the future
- ✚ Parents, Teachers, community leaders and all in authority are duty bearers and students are claim holders.
- ✚ Rights come with obligations and responsibilities for the duty bearers and claim holders.

### **Session: Understanding Violence against girls in institutions of learning**

**Facilitator: Mr. Kiwanuka Deus**

#### **Exercise: The space between us.**

The session started with an exercise called “the space between us”. This exercise was meant to show participants how men and women are socialised and how the socialisation process creates a big gap between men and women. It helped them reflect and understand what is happens in communities and why they happen that way. The exercise also enabled them understand that it is not them that created the situation but have the power to deal with this situation.



Do we need to talk about violence? Does it happen in Zombo? Why do we need to speak about violence against girls? These questions were meant to gauge participants understanding of the problems of girls in their community.

In unison, participants agreed that there was need to talk about violence against girls because of the following reasons;

- In the community the rights of girls have been denied
- Girls perform poorly in schools
- Violence is forcing girls out of school
- Violence is leading to child marriages

### **Where does violence happen in the schools?**

Judging from the teachers' answers, it is evident that the teachers are aware of the places and times in which most violence occurs especially to girls in schools but they are either reluctant or lack the skills to deal with it. They mentioned the following;

- ❖ It happens in the evening for example where male teachers ask girls to take books in their homes and afterwards they begin touching their genitals
- ❖ It happens in times when children are free like break time and lunch time
- ❖ Sometimes it happens during sports times especially in mixed schools where boys start making fun of girls' bodies
- ❖ Within class. Some teachers give an exercise and instead of writing the right comments, they may write in the girl's book that 'you are good',
- ❖ Girls are bullied in class for giving a wrong answer
- ❖ Boys lock girls in bathrooms in schools where they use the same latrines and rape them
- ❖ In the bushes, hostels and dormitories,
- ❖ Within class, teachers beat students and sometimes follows it with negative comments like 'you're big for nothing' and it is the teacher to determine what reasonable beating is

Teachers were discouraged from beating students. Children understand more by talking and explaining to them than scaring them. Beating is abusing the dignity of a human being. It is not that students are not easy as many teachers claimed, but it is the teachers who fail to understand their problems. It was also noted that the study done in South Africa and Uganda indicated that most sexual violence happens in staffrooms and teachers co-operate.

### **Teachers' shared experiences on how their fellow teachers sexually violate students.**

- A male teacher hid his student's book in the door, when the girl asked, the teacher showed the girl where the book was but refused to give it to her. The girl sneaked to get her book from the door after some time and the teacher raped her.
- A teacher pretended to be giving extra support in terms of academics to a certain girl all the time but later impregnated her.
- When I was still a student, our teacher's wife fell sick and my friends and I were told to go and fetch water for her. When I brought the water, my teacher called me in the house and started showing me nude pictures and told me that I should be like that. I later reported him and he was cautioned.

The District Education Officer's office informed teachers that they were in the process of closing illegal boarding schools like Zeu secondary school where nobody takes care of the children. Children are sexually harassed at night with no one to help.

### **Exercise: Group work**

To enhance the teachers' deeper understanding of violence the following questions were discussed;

Group one: Why does violence against girls happen in schools?

Group two: What are the different forms of violence that happen to girls in schools?

Group three: Where and when does most violence against girls happen at school?

Teachers mentioned poverty, lack of proper guidance and counselling, the environment, love for money, lack of self-control by both learners and teachers, indiscipline by both learners and teachers, poor management of institutions, poor implementation of laws, ignorance, bad peer groups/ influence and exposure to pornography as the causes of violence in schools. According to the discussion, it was realised that majority of the teachers have a perception that the victim is partly to blame. However the facilitator emphasised that there is no justification for violence. There are many ways of dealing with conflicts than using violence.

### **Exercise two:**

#### **Group one: Impact of violence to girls/ women in schools**

Participants cited Poor performance both at school and at home, Child marriages, frustration Group One, School dropout, child labour and for women, violence may lead to physical deformation, divorce, unemployment, low self-esteem, no political participation, high dropout rate, high rate of indiscipline, risk of contracting HIV, it tarnishes the name of the school among others as some of the impacts of violence to girls/ women.

Participants were made to understand that violence to a girl in school will determine the category of girls we will have in future. If they miss out as girls on the available opportunities, they will miss out as women or as mothers of tomorrow. They will continue without any income generating activities and continue to be dependants on men.

#### **Group two: Impact of violence to the community**

Participants mentioned Low literacy, high rate of child pregnancies, high rate of mobility and mortality, increased poverty, malnutrition and other diseases and poor standard of living as some of the impacts of violence to the community.

#### **Group three: Impact of violence to the state**

Participants had this to say; Few women will be in high ranking positions, there will be gender inequality, low development, rights of women will be violated, shortage of qualified women personnel in given areas of work, high maternal death rate, imbalance in service delivery.

According to what was discussed by teachers, it clearly shows that they are aware of the consequences of violence at the various levels, however some teachers still think that even the girls are not putting in effort to stay in school and are partly to blame of what happens to them. For example a teacher said that when he was still a student at Erussi senior Secondary school, some girls could run away and hide in the bushes when motivational speakers came to talk to them claiming that those who came to speak to them already had husbands and therefore they should also leave them to get theirs. Secondly girls say that their husbands (boys) are reading for them.

Teachers were urged to be mindful of meaningful/ successful completion of school for girls and not just completion of school otherwise women will continue to depend on men even in their older age and this fuels violence. Teachers were encouraged to let their women have jobs and let the women own those jobs/ businesses. One cannot be the only player in the team otherwise he will feel overburdened.

### **Key learning points that arose from the session**

- ✚ The study done in South Africa and Uganda indicated that most sexual violence happens in staffrooms and teachers co-operate.
- ✚ Violence to a girl in school will determine the category of girls we will have in future.
- ✚ There is no any justification for violence whatsoever.
- ✚ .....

### **Questions/ comments**

- I wish all men are here in this discussion because they are the root cause of all these problems.
- Being a teacher I have learnt that our girls are clever but the moment they test sex they become dull. Other girls in the central study up to the university, does it mean they don't have boyfriends?
- Many women in higher positions are brutal to men.....comment
- There are women who have sex with young boys but they are not condemned...why?
- I think it is a woman's responsibility to shape her children the way she wants because they are the ones that spend most of the time with the children.

### **Action planning session**

In their respective school groups, teachers discussed and committed to positively change their schools in different ways as a means of dealing with violence against girls. They places a timeframe to the various activities and the resources they needed in order to effectively fulfil their plans. Follow up is to be made by MEMPROW and the champions (teachers who volunteered to be change agents) to the various schools. Teachers promised to do the following;

- Teaching fellow teachers what they have learnt during the training
- Sensitisation of teachers and learners during school assemblies and open days
- Sensitisation of communities including parents to change their attitude towards girls

- Teaching fellow teachers the concept of gender and patriarchy
- Guiding girls on their rights
- Eradication of corporal punishments
- Campaigning against child pregnancy
- Sensitising the community about the importance of education to girls (changing their attitudes)
- Creating awareness on the forms of gender violence through debates and drama
- Equal leadership representation
- Termly evaluation of the conduct of teachers, pupils and parents
- To help teachers and learners change their perception about gender roles, stereotype and patriarchy
- Group formation of champions

## **Conclusion**

Since time immemorial the role of teachers in shaping children has been of paramount importance, in as much as the children look upon them for guidance. Unfortunately the teachers do not seem to have taken full grasp of this responsibility. All teachers have the potential to be very good role models however, they are unaware of the influence they have. They subconsciously perpetuate stereotypes in their teaching, and underestimate the significant role they can play in inspiring their students. Through the gender awareness training therefore, MEMPROW realized change in the patriarchal attitudes of teachers when they committed to creating a violent free learning environment which in the end will contribute to keeping girls in school.