



GYCO News

Edition 9, November 2023



Undying commitment to the Youth of Uganda

By standing with our organisation GYCO, that drives positive mindset change in youth lives through your contributions, you support us to deliver our best, thus driving growth and development especially that of our women and girls in the post-war region of Northern Uganda.

This year of 2023, we are grateful to our GYCO teams both in Austria and Uganda for their undying commitment and their dedicated service to this youth empowerment cause.

Currently GGSC-GYCO Girls' Soccer Club, which falls within our program department continue to fly our flag high by participating yet again at the FUFA Women Elite League tournaments 2023-24 that are local, regional and national which makes them act as agents of change. Moreover, when they play and interact with girls from other teams and the public in general it also builds bridges among these diverse groups through sharing.

Further, one of our main objectives in GYCO is to bring out CONSCIOUS leaders and that is why self-development trainings is a core component in our programs and initiatives, as we carry out skills and entrepreneurship trainings, this is only made possible when our staff are equipped with the right tools, frameworks and methodologies to harmonize all the activities as a team and that is why we are grateful that they were able to receive external support through team coaching.

**Our main objectives
is to bring out
conscious leaders**

We are deeply appreciative to all our donors as well, for their kindness and generosity because they understand that funds are needed by organisations like ours in order to deliver and make strides forward while taking concrete actions in uplifting the youth.

Lastly, we look forward to 2024 and our big goal still remains building the GYCO-Art and Education Academy in Unyama, at the previously acquired land. We continue to dialogue with our sponsors such as the Simacek group led by Ursula Simacek, for our intention is to establish a hub that is going to bring out artistic and creative expressions from the great lake region.

I pray that you all enjoy reading this newsletter that the GYCO team has put together for you with projections of our aspirations for the coming year.

Louise Deininger

Initiator and President of GYCO Academy

Self development training for a better future

In the GYCO trainings a strong focus is on preparing young people to develop their own business. In this newsletter we'd like to introduce further examples of successful participants of the entrepreneurship and self-development trainings:

These are a group of youths from Comboni Samaritan. Most of them are street children going through rehabilitations. We managed through our partnership to take them through self development trainings to have a changed mindset towards life.

As a result of the self development training, most of them were able to change and accepted to go back to school. Most were enrolled in vocational skilling institutes from which they are receiving education under Comboni sponsorship. Others chose to do Entrepreneurship skills trainings in liquid soap production. They are in groups and make their own liquid soap and sell it to Comboni Samaritan.



Skills to develop the own business

This year most of the activities were in Self development training and Entrepreneurship skills trainings. We trained different youths in the different villages within Gulu. We are glad that most of them formed groups where they collected resources and are currently involved in liquid soap production. They are selling the products and earning money.

This is a group of youths from Opwoyomal Village, Laroo division, Gulu city. This as the day they received training on liquid soap making.



This is the same group consisting of four individuals who teamed up and they are producing their own liquid soap.

International coaches worked with the GYCO team

In summer this year GYCO head coach Carmel Lee Paul has been part of the newly ICF (International Coaching Federation) certified team coaching Training by Erickson International as she is one of the first ICF certified Team coaches having taken part in the ICF team coaching pilot of 2022.

Part of the certification process for applying team coaches with ICF for applying team coaches is to present at least five team coaching experiences of which one or two can be pro bono.

Carmel Lee decided to offer to her colleagues to do some pro bono team coaching with the GYCO teams with the result:



“For all parties this was a great experience orbit the fact that time differences and internet problems created challenges”,
so Carmel Lee Paul.

Two great team coaching processes, one done by İşilay Cabuk (Turkey/USA) and Estee Lim (Singapore) with the GYCO team in Gulu (Sharon, Brenda, Phoebe, Mercy, Edward, Chris) and the second one with Carlo Parsons (USA) done with the GYCO Girls' Soccer Club Team (Edward, Gilbert, Junior)

Here are some quotes from coaches and participants:



Team coaching Process with Coach Carlo Parsons from USA: “Working with Edward and the GYCO GGSC Team was such a pleasure. It was clear from the beginning how much this wonderful team cares about the work that they do and their impact on the players whom they nurture and support. Their commitment to these young women and the hard work they do to keeping the club going is nothing short of heroic.”



Eward Otika, Director GYCO: “The team coaching sessions came very timely. It was at a time when the GYCO Girls’ Soccer team was stuck with financial challenges to start the season. During the sessions, the team brainstormed on different strategies to start the season using the available resources at hand. We then employed the solution focused thinking technique and managed to start the season 2023/2024.

The team cohesion was improved since every team member’ focus was on a common goal of making girls shine once again.

Our team coach Carlo was very supportive in enabling the team think outside the box and have confidence that it is possible. I recommend more of these sessions to the team members in order to keep consistent in our activities.”



Team coaching Process with Coaches Isilay and Estee Lim with the GYCO Team Gulu (Sharon, Brenda, Phoebe, Mercy, Chris and Edward)

“Estee Lim and I express our gratitude for the introduction to the GYCO team by Carmel Lee. Over the course of our five sessions together, it has been truly rewarding to witness the dedication and transformation that the GYCO team has brought about for themselves. We are eagerly anticipating the outcomes that will result from the implementation of their changes within the organization. “



Brenda: I would like to take this opportunity to thank you Carmel Lee for this coaching opportunity.

Estee and İşilay are wonderful people to work with, they were very patient with us amidst a few challenges that we faced with the Internet.

They guided us through various topics from the management to resource mobilisation strategies, in that we were able to identify the different strategies we as a team can take to achieve them. The coaching for me was a success.

As an upcoming life coach, I also learnt a lot from them regarding coaching techniques and tools.

All in all, I am blessed to be a part of the team. Thank you“



Sharon: „I enjoyed the session İşilay and Estee, it was simple and straight to the point. As a coach I will use some of the techniques they used during our session with them. “



Phoebe: “İşilay and Estee team coaching was an eye opener for me that made me see the future of the organisation items of progress and success and during the process they were so good to us as we were given space and it was no judgemental. Thanks “

GYCO's first farm crop production

As a result of the donations from "District 1910 Grant under the leadership of RC Vienna Albertina", we wrote a proposal on food crop production. At the beginning of the year, we planned and planted cassava, the local variety which takes one year to mature. The cassava will be sold, and the earnings will be used to support our own organization activities. In the near future, we shall have a youth Agricultural hub where many will learn farm skills and be empowered.

This is our farm journey from February till October:

The cassava plants are six-month-old and will be ready for harvest in the month of April 2024.

Before we could plough, this was how the farmland looked. We started by removing tree stumps.



Below was when the stems had already been planted and the first weeding was done.



This is how far we have grown. The plantation at six months.



Thanks to a great supporter

Ursula Simacek is not only one of the most successful Austrian entrepreneurs but also a passionate fighter for equal rights, a collector and promoter of contemporary art. As Austrian Consul General, she has been campaigning for women's rights in the Democratic Republic of Congo for years and in August 2023 made a generous donation of € 6000 to ensure stability in the financial resources of GYCO Austria.

The GYCO concerns of promoting Ugandan Youth, but in particular the establishment of the Art and Education Centre, are very close to her heart. The first work that Thomas Vava created for his new cycle "African Dance" is now part of her personal art collection. „It is wonderful to see how the art of the artist from Northern Uganda contributes to the cultural transfer to Austria and carries an important part of the GYCO message into the world.

Together with Ursula, we are now also working on a bridge between the neighbouring countries of the great lake region, in order to make our goals of promoting young Africans a cross-border reality.

"1000 thanks dear Uschi – we bow before you“, so Raimund Deininger.



Louise und Raimund Deininger with Ursula Simacek, one of the big supporters of GYCO.

Great support for GYCO in Switzerland

With Elizabeth Specogna GYCO has also had a strong supporter and ambassador in Switzerland for years. Elizabeth's passion for art and also the love for Uganda was the starting point for a long-term collaboration. She has already organized several charity events for the benefit of GYCO in her personal environment. This year Elizabeth proposed to invite Thomas to Switzerland to further his curiosity not only in themes for art but to broaden his scope in geographical as well as architectural realms. Thomas was commissioned to paint the view from a current real-estat project "Erlenhöhe", one of the few locations left with a nearness to the forest and the lake. Thomas embodied the importance of nature in his painting very well and signed lithographies of the original painting will be gifted to the new owners of the wonderful apartments.

The Apero gathering of new owners primarily to acquaint them with the location and future neighbours, gave Thomas the opportunity to present his painting and tell his personal story as well as the background of GYCO. "We thank Elizabeth for her strong commitment to GYCO.", so Sabine Schauer-Williams.



Thomas Vava at the get-together with the owners of the new apartments



Elizabeth Specogna (right) with Thomas Vava and Sabine Schauer-Williams.

GYCO Girls' Soccer club could finish the league thanks to a great donation

The GYCO Girls' Soccer Club had their debut season in FUFA Women Elite League which ended in June 2023. The club finished 4th on the table of eleven Clubs. But only the the top two clubs on the table get qualified for the top tier of women football in Uganda which is the FUFA women Super League. "We then took time to prepare during the off season to wait for the start of season 2023/2024 which kicked off in Sep 2023. However, our resource mobilization efforts were not very fruitful at the start of the season which nearly prompted us to withdraw from the League prematurely before end of the first round due to lack of finances for covering the costs involved in having the games both home and away", so Edward Otika, CEO of the GGSC. The GGSC embarked on searching for financial supporters to be able to complete the season.

Luckily the Club received a donation from Günter Penzenauer who willingly donated € 1.300 which will be enable the girls finish the first round of the league successfully. It will also be remembered that this not the first time Mr. Günter Penzenauer is donating to the Soccer Club. In our debut season, he sent sets of jerseys and financial support which we will forever be indebted for. "As GYCO Girls' Soccer Club, we send our sincere gratitude to Günter Penzenauer for generous donation and call upon other willing donators to a brick on this so as to enable the girls shine in their unique talent of soccer", so Edward Otika.



With the financial support of donor Günter Prenzenauer the GYCO Girls' Soccer Club could finish the league successfully.

Donation for GYCO as birthday present

In October, Wolfgang Kradischnig celebrated his 60th birthday in Grinzing and since he, like many of us, felt that he didn't need presents, he decided to support three social projects - one of which was our GYCO organization. He asked his guests not to bring presents and to donate something to the projects instead. His fantastic party raised over € 2,000 for GYCO. Wolfgang thought that perhaps other jubilarians would like to take up the idea of combining a party with something very meaningful. Many thanks Wolfgang!



Wolfgang Kradischnig asked his guests for a donation for GYCO instead of gifting him birthday presents.

20 euros for an empowered youth



We thank all our donors for your great support. With your help GYCO can carry out development programs, especially for young women and for youth in Gulu, North Uganda. With just 20 euros monthly you can help us to finance the operational costs for the Youth Center in Gulu.

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