

THE PEER PALS MAGAZINE

**VOL 1
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**EMPOWERED
TRANSFORMED
PRODUCTIVE**

HOPE | RESILIENCE | SISTERHOOD

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ABOUT



Nile Girls Forum is a young women led organization that focuses on elevating resilient girls and young women with emphasis on Gender Transformative Education, Peace Building, Sexual & Reproductive Health & Rights, Climate Justice, Economic Empowerment, Gender & Internet Governance.

Through our programs, we facilitate the development of aspirations, of self-worth and of achievement of girls and women from the grass roots to become competent leaders.

Vision

An empowered, Transformed and Productive Girl who can actively participate in shaping peace & justice in her community.

Mission

To create solutions and platforms that groom vulnerable girls to realise their life potential & contribute to sustainable peace & development.



THE PEER PALS MOVEMENT

A community of adolescent girls and young women that strives for equal opportunity where:

- Leadership is nurtured.
- There is meaningful participation in decision making processes.
- Informed choices are made on education, sexual and reproductive health.
- Life skills and economic skills are developed.

ONE ON ONE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR NILE GIRLS FORUM



Peer Pals: Hello, please tell us about yourself?

Pimer: Hello, I am Pimer Peace Monica, a very passionate driver of girls and women's rights. I am the founder and Executive Director of Nile Girls Forum. I was born and raised in Zombo District, West Nile sub region in Northern Uganda

Peer Pals: What inspired you to start up the Peer Pals Movement?

Pimer: I was born in a rural community and grew up in a host community where I saw girls and women facing many challenges because of the lack of agency, their inability to self-govern and belief in themselves, they are do not speak for themselves, demand for their own rights, or even be represented in decision making spaces.

This sparked a desire in me to start the Peer Pals Movement, were we mentor adolescent girls and young women so that they can be able to influence decisions at all levels.

Peer Pals: Do I need to be a student to join this movement?

Pimer: No, the movement is open to both adolescent girls and young women in and out of school. It is a diverse movement engaging young women with disabilities, affected by displacement, and those living in urban slums.

Peer Pals: How can an adolescent girl or young woman join movement?

Pimer: The movement is open, interested parties can join. Currently we accept applications on a rolling basis throughout the year. You can fill in a form, write an email to or call for further guidance. We also use the already existing structures, for example recommendations from the partner organisations, district structures and recommendations by Peer Pals.

The form filled in is both digital and hard copy. It is a needs assessment to identify interests and expectation to see how best to position them based on their interests inline with the strategy of the movement.

Peer Pals: Any word of encouragement to the adolescent girls and young women?

Pimer: Keep your integrity. It will unlock more opportunities for you. When you get to do a task, give it your best shot. Good things always come to people who work for it.

PIONEER PEER PAL

My name is Pimer Patra Enid, and I am proud to be the first-ever Peer Pal at Nile Girls Forum. My journey started in 2018, during my Senior Six at Warr Girls Secondary School in Zombo District, when Ms. Peace visited our school for a session on menstrual hygiene. She spoke with such passion and care—it deeply inspired me. After the session, I approached her and expressed my interest in volunteering during my vacation. Her response was encouraging, and that moment marked the beginning of a life-changing journey.

Since then, I've been exposed to countless opportunities that have shaped who I am today. The Peer Pals Movement officially began in 2020, and I take pride in witnessing its growth—from one girl to over 200 adolescent girls and young women across four districts.

One of the greatest milestones in my journey was transitioning from a Peer Pal to a full-time staff member at Nile Girls Forum. In June 2024, I was promoted to the role of Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Officer. This was a dream I never imagined possible when I first joined.

In the beginning, I was unfamiliar with the NGO world, but Nile Girls Forum gave me a platform to grow, learn from my mistakes, and thrive through teamwork. Even while pursuing my studies at university, I was able to contribute during holidays. To my fellow Peer Pals: remain focused and committed. Give the movement your best, and trust that beautiful things will follow.

**“Stay focused, give your best,
and beautiful things will
follow.”**

**Pimer Patra Enid, Pioneer
Peer Pal**



08 / PEER PALS LEADERSHIP



ANYANGO DANIELLA MICHELLE
PRESIDENT 2024/25



ATUHAIRE JOAN MUGASA
PRESIDENT 2023/24

I'm thrilled to address you in this edition of our magazine. Our union is not just a group but a community of peers willing to experience, support and build lasting friendships. Our engagements are exciting with heartwarming stories and meaningful connections that every moment has contributed to our vibrant Peer Pals family. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey, here's to more shared moments, deeper connections and continued growth of the Peer Pals family.

In a world where girls have no shoulder to lean on, Nile Girls Forum gave us a shoulder through the Peer Pals Movement! A group of resilient, vibrant, fun, young, passionate and smart girls driving positive change through a strengthened sisterhood cutting across Four districts of Uganda which include Arua, Zombo, Terego and Kampala. An inclusive movement that does not discriminate girl's despite their compounding vulnerabilities. A range of impactful activities, fun experiences and great visionary future prospects we dive you into our world

PEER PALS LEADERSHIP



PATIENCE AUMA
CORDINATOR



AWEKO ESTHER
SECRETARY

“Together, we’re nurturing leadership, informed choices, and economic empowerment for adolescent girls and young women.”

“Connecting with peers is like unlocking a world of shared experiences, meaningful bonds, and lasting friendships. Together, we create a tapestry woven with understanding, support, and unforgettable moments.”

Navigating Sexual and Reproductive Health of young people (SRH)



Did you know that adolescents aged 10 to 19 years constitute a significant part of the population with 15-19 years constituting 34.2% while children less than 15 years contribute to 50% of Uganda's population[1].

[1] UBOS 2014 (check)

According to the 2018 National Sexuality Education Framework, young people are continuously exposed to uncensored sexually explicit and obscene material

which often portray inaccurate information about sex and sexuality. This is done through the internet, social media, mass media outlets such as newspapers, radio, TV, telecommunications, etc. There is also an increase in the consumption and abuse of alcohol, drugs and substances among the youths. Yet these behaviours predispose the youth to risky sexual activities that may lead them to teenage pregnancy, school

dropout, acquisition of sexually transmitted infections including HIV and AIDS. In addition, young people, especially girls are exposed to sexual and gender-based violence including rape and sexually harassment.

All this further underscore the need to equip the young people with appropriate knowledge, attitudes, values

and skills to help safeguard their lives while they grow, develop, and learn so as to achieve their goals in life accordingly.

PEACE&SECURITY, DISPLACEMENT AND SRHR

“Sexual violence in conflict remains one of the most dehumanising tactics of war and demands international justice for all survivors”

HOW TO SUPPORT

- Meaningfully engage young people in policy design processes.
- Create youth friendly spaces in health facilities.
- Disseminate age appropriate SRH information to young people.
- Keep girls in school
- Economically empower young people



CLIMATE JUSTICE

Did you know? “Women and girls experience the greatest impact of climate change which amplifies existing gender inequalities.”-UN Women

Climate justice is about recognising and addressing the unequal impact of climate change on different communities and promoting fairness in climate action.

It seeks to ensure that those who contribute the least to climate change are not disproportionately affected by its consequences.

Climate justice also advocates for the inclusion of marginalised voices in decision-making processes and the equitable distribution of resources to support adaptation and mitigation efforts.



“Young people are not only victims of climate change, they are also valuable contributors to climate action’

“Quality climate change education can play a pivotal role in reshaping the way we handle the risks and effects of climate change.”

VVOB – Education for Development

(Right) The ED, Nile Girls Forum at the COP 28 in Dubai, December 2023



WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

“Economic empowerment is the ability to make and act on decisions that involve the control over and allocation of financial resources”

“Rejeshha” is a Swahili word meaning “to restore.” The Rejeshha Program is an economic empowerment initiative under Nile Girls Forum, a young womenled social enterprise committed to building the capacity of adolescents and youth.

Through skills training in creative arts, financial literacy, business development, employment readiness, and access to markets, Rejeshha equips young people with the tools they need to increase household incomes and transform their economic futures.



Economic empowerment fosters womens agency, enabling them to advocate for their rights, challenge discriminatory practices, and participate in decision making processes that shape economic policies and systems



**ALL PROCEEDS GO TO THE
PEER PALS MOVEMENT.**

**SALE POINTS: FAIRWAY
HOTEL IN KAMPALA
CONTACT US ON
256785199199 (WHATSAPP
AND CALL) TO PLACE AN
ORDER**

/ PEER PALS

STORIES OF IMPACT



WATHEMBU JILDA
ZOMBO DISTRICT

Hello, I am Jilda, a young woman with disability from Zombo district. I got to know about the Peer Pals Movement through Nile Girls Forum-PISCCA Project. The learnings from the Peer Pals on SRHR motivated me to get involved in the movement. Being part of the Peer Pal movement has empowered me, I, together with the Peer Pals with disabilities advocated for disability friendly beds in the health facilities in Zombo district. Through this movement I have gained confidence to openly express myself, I have acquired advocacy skills, I am now aware of my rights as a young woman with a disability. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my perspective. As someone with a disability, it's important to me to have a platform where I can express myself.



NELLY WILLIAM
BIDI BIDI SETTLEMENT

I am a refugee from South Sudan, currently living in Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, I am a single mother of four, and I am happy to be in Peer Pals Movement. I joined Peer Pals Movement in 2023. Since then, my leadership skills have improved in the settlement. I have participated in online and physical trainings. I am now more aware of my rights as a woman affected by displacement. I have had exchange learnings with young women living with HIV and teen mothers. My highlight was a training where I represented Uganda together with other young women affected by displacement in Nigeria, Niger, Mozambique Kenya, Guatemala, and Honduras, for a virtual community film making series workshop for women affected by displacement for the online Global South Women's Forum 2023. I used to fear to speak in front of people but through peer pals am able to talk to them in English. I know my value and people now treat me with respect.



OCOKURU LILLIAN
TEREGO DISTRICT

STORIES OF IMPACT

I now know more about my SRHR, i am a better leader and i share the learnings with my peers in Aii vu sub county.

Through Nile Girls Forum under the We Lead Project, in October 2023, i travelled to Mombasa, Kenya for a workshop on Religion and SRHR.

Since i was born, i had nether flown in an aeroplane nor gone outside my district, not even to Kampala city in Uganda. I only used to hear about the Indian Ocean. I got the opportunity to see it in Mombasa.

I am proud to be part of the Nile Girls Forum through the Peer Pals Movement. I encourage young women to join this movement.

I advise adolescents to abstain from sex, test for HIV, and those living with HIV to adhere to their medication.

I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude for the incredible internship experience i had at Nile Girls Forum.

I received positive remarks 85% with 4 CUs and i am truly honoured to have chosen this organisation and Patra- the agency supervisor that supported me.

I am also excited to currently volunteer as a Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning assistant.

ESTHER

INTERN- KYAMBOGO UNIVERSITY

MENTORSHIP BY AWEKO ESTHER

Mentorship is a relationship between a more experienced or knowledgeable person(mentor) and a less experienced or knowledgeable person(mentee). A mentor provides guidance and feedback to help the mentee develop personally or professionally.

As a young woman, i have learned from female leaders who serve as my role models for example the Executive Director of Nile Girls Forum.

Mentorship provides a platform for girls to develop critical skills in decision making and problem solving. It also encourages girls to voice their opinions, share ideas and take initiative in driving positive change within their communities. As girls progress through their mentorship journey, they not only benefit from the guidance of their mentors but also become mentors, passing on the knowledge and inspiration to future generations. This cycle of mentorship perpetuates a culture of empowerment and leadership, creating a ripple effect of positive change in the world.

Through the Peer Pals Movement, mentorship sessions are held on Saturdays on different topics including but not limited to advocacy, business development and leadership.. The movement helps young women to build their confidence, and explore different career paths.

QUOTE

“The movement helps young women build confidence, explore different career paths”

WELL BEING ARTICLE

BY **ATUHAIRE JOAN MUGASA**

Nurturing Your Well-being as a Peer Pal

Personal development! A vast topic with a number of merry go-rounds from character, to hygiene, to career choices and pathways to mention but a few. In the close range of a young woman, how about we focus on self-actualization. A concept we usually get to hear about from our mothers during the “advising session” re-echoing continuously about the kind of woman you should grow up into nevertheless into the woman society expects of you. What about the woman that you want to grow up to become? Ever thought about that? Well come down this road with me as I pitch you into self-actualization!

It's quite a rough path diving into adulthood as a young woman. With no sense of direction rather at some point succumbing to the system - the patriarchal system. In most cases, Soo many girls allow themselves to seek asylum from men because they are seemingly hopeless on what's next for their lives. Even when they have accomplished probably a degree! It all has to start with your Identity! What do you think of yourself? This is an important question because the empires of the future are the empires of the mind! Identity comes from within to the outside. Whatever you think of yourself will consciously reflect through the kind of person you are.

In this case, learn to think of yourself as positive, strong and capable!

From this, you will challenge your way of thinking by taking bold steps and doing things you thought were impossible. Never look at yourself as weak or vulnerable. Have a “Why” in whatever you are doing. The reason behind your “why” is your actual push factor into your greatness.

Decided to be the chosen one! Be the woman with higher purpose. This will give you a great price and worth. This will also enable you to create the positive impact that you wish to create in any aspect of your life. Finally, embrace Feminism strongly, the values and principles are a door to becoming the great woman you want to be.

Don't allow yourself to be a victim of the system. Push beyond your limits! Each goal is a stepping stone on the journey to something greater.

Former Peer Pals President 2023/24

“THE EMPIRES OF
THE FUTURE ARE THE
EMPIRES OF THE
MIND”

RISING IN PEACE BUILDING.

In a world fractured by violence, inequality and division, a new kind of peace is rising. One that is not silent, passive or fragile but one that is rooted in strength, justice and inclusion. I know you could be wondering what I meant to say, let me take you on board. What I simply mean is “feminist peace building”

Feminist peace building is a courageous and transformative movement that dares to imagine a world where peace is not merely the absence of war but also the presence of equity, care and dignity for all. It further means healing wounds, reforming institutions, getting rid of oppressive systems and building bridges where others have built walls.

As we reflect into our history, Women and marginalized voices have been excluded from formal decision-making spaces around the wars and peace yet they have always been at the Frontline where they are defending homes, communities and the future as well hence Feminist peace building recognizes this history and honors the resilience, wisdom and power of those too often left unheard and forgotten.

When I said Feminist peace, I mean Girls in classroom, not refugee camps, I mean Girls Not Brides and lastly, I mean spaces where truth, justice and repair are priorities over silence and denial. Mind you, Feminist peace building is not soft, it is brave and bold. It requires us to speak truth, thrive on equality and challenge norms that normalize violence.

To every adolescent reading this beautiful piece, you are the future of peace. Your voice is not too small. Your dreams are not too big, you carry the strength of those who came before you and the limitless possibility of what comes next. You do not need to wait for titles, degrees or permission to begin. Remember, feminist peace building starts with how you speak, how you listen, how you stand up and how you care. I will say it again -Do not wait but rather start where you are, learn, unlearn and grow, refuse to be silent when speaking up matters but above all , believe that peace is not a distant dream but it is something that you shape with every choice, every word and every day. As I pen down, Feminist peace building is not a job for someone else but it is a calling for all of us and it begins now.



Scholar Driwaru
Peer pal -Nile Girls Forum

MENTAL WELLNESS: A JOURNEY OF SELF DISCOVERY BY PATIENCE AUMA

In today's fast-paced world, where the demands of work, family, and personal life can often feel overwhelming, it's crucial to prioritize our mental health. Mental health is an integral part of our overall well-being, influencing how we think, feel, and act. Just as we prioritize physical health by exercising and eating well, it's equally important to nurture our mental health. However, unlike physical ailments, mental health issues are often less visible, making them easier to ignore or dismiss. Ignoring mental health can have significant consequences, affecting every aspect of our lives. Untreated mental health conditions can lead to impaired cognitive function, strained relationships, decreased productivity, and even physical health problems.

Recognizing the signs of mental distress early on and seeking support can prevent these issues from escalating. However, we can maintain our mental health through Self-Care which involves Engaging in activities that bring you joy and relaxation, whether it's spending time outdoors, practicing mindfulness, or pursuing hobbies. Social Connection is also helpful through Cultivate meaningful relationships with friends, family, and community members. Social support plays a crucial role in maintaining mental resilience. Healthy Habits is also needful which involves Prioritizing sleep, nutrition, and exercise. Physical well-being is closely linked to mental health, so taking care of your body is essential. Stress Management is very vital as well which includes Developing coping strategies for managing stress, such as deep breathing exercises, meditation, or journaling. Seeking Professional Help is needful especially If you're struggling with your mental health, don't hesitate to reach out to a therapist or counselor. Seeking professional support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

How do we also break the stigma around mental health? Despite growing awareness about mental health, stigma still surrounds seeking help for mental illness. This stigma can prevent individuals from seeking the support they need, leading to unnecessary suffering. It's crucial to challenge these misconceptions and promote open conversations about mental health. By normalizing discussions about mental wellness, we can create a more supportive and compassionate society.

conclusively prioritizing mental health is essential for leading a fulfilling and balanced life. By recognizing the importance of mental wellness, practicing self-care, fostering social connections, and seeking support when needed, we can cultivate resilience and thrive in the face of life's challenges. Let's work together to break the stigma surrounding mental health and create a world where everyone feels empowered to prioritize their well-being.

BODY POSITIVITY

BY KAWALA BRENDA

Body positivity refers to the assertion that everyone deserves to have a positive body image, regardless of how society and popular culture view ideal shape, size, and appearance. Every girl must love their physical looks regardless of how one looks. Depending on who you ask, body positivity can mean:

- Appreciating your body
- Feeling confident about your body
- Loving yourself
- Accepting your body's shape and size

Body positivity focuses on identifying strengths and non-physical characteristics for example, there are girls with disabilities but they possess multiple skills which exposes them in the community.

Some girls and women alike all around the world look in the mirror and think "I am too small, too fat or too curvy but through body positivity, one can boost their confidence and accept oneself for who they are, giving them room to associate freely. Even though body positivity exists, still many women think about their bodies in so many negative ways. These thoughts lead to harmful behaviours such as, eating disorders, discriminating themselves, failing to study, mental illness among others.

Body positivity movement is thus meant to create a positive self-image shattering the negative aspects related to one's body and this can be achieved through collective actions.

One of the major goals of body positivity is to address some of the ways that body image influences mental health and well-being, having a healthy body image plays a role in how people feel about their appearance and even how they judge their self-worth.

In conclusion, having a negative body image is associated with an increased risk for some mental conditions including depression and eating disorders.

"Your uniqueness is your superpower"



"EVERY GIRL MUST LOVE THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY LOOK."

HOW SOCIETY INFLUENCES BODY POSITIVITY

BY KWIKIRIZA DAISY PRECIOUS



In a world that is so obsessed with the concept of universalism, where some people set standards and others just imitate them, a lot of people struggle to conform. They try as much as they can to align their ideas, plans and life goals with everyone else's so as to fit in. For some, this change is so deliberate and wholesome that they end up losing themselves in the process. Unfortunately, this cannot be done with one's body; at least not until recently and even then, not completely. The truth of the matter is that we cannot all look exactly the same way, because of different factors like genetics, heritage, food habits, level of physical activity among others.

The problem here is the idea that there is a universal standard for beauty. That "beautiful" is a category, and for someone to fall in that category, there are certain qualifications especially regarding their bodily appearance. It can range from a full bust, a straight nose, a flat tummy, long legs, clear skin to mention but a few. And as you may notice, most of these are female body parts; and that's because the pressure is even higher for females. As a result, we have certain people being held out by society as "beautiful", and the rest of the world aspiring to become like them. This normally calls for taking up habits like dieting, dressing a certain way, rigorous physical exercise and in very extreme cases, plastic surgery. Eventually, people lose not only their physical appearance but also their identity, because they spend most of their lives trying to be like someone else.

And it is very convenient to blame the "copy cats". To wonder how they can be deliberate about transforming from their true selves to what other people are, so much so that in the end, they are neither! But what few people, if any ever do, is to acknowledge the role of society in this. The small comments that keep being made about certain people's bodily appearance, that come to affect their self-image. The occasional expensive jokes that gradually start to feel as truth to the recipient when said over and over again by different people. The fact that society continues to slowly but steadily send signals to them about how "different" they look.

I dream of a world where people embrace not only their ideological differences, but also their physical differences. Where we do not base on others' bodily appearance at first glance to make many presumptions about them, which might in turn affect how we relate to them. The way we relate to them then affecting how they feel about themselves. And the vicious cycle goes on and on. It is very easy to preach self-acceptance, but it is equally important that we acknowledge the contribution of a positive environment in building body positivity for the individual. And this is not unattainable. As the human race, we have come from way too far in attitude adjustment and perceptions that it would not require much for us to change this. We just have to decide to accept each other beyond the barriers of physical appearance and everything else they represent. There is beauty in difference, and enough space for all of us in the world! And decide soon we must!



THEY ALSO HELP
JUMP TO TOPICS OF
INTEREST

ENGAGEMENTS



Session on climate justice



Grace and Lillian at Arua One FM



Mercy, Joan and Michelle during a conference by our partner CEHURD



Patience and Faith during a FGD of Restless Development Uganda



Peer Pals on West Nile TV



Peer Pals from Terego during a training

• PICTORIALS



Peer pals affected by displacement in Terego district



A group photo with peer pals in Kampala

PICTORIALS



Peer Pals affected by displacement from Arua District



Peer Pals with disabilities from Zombo District

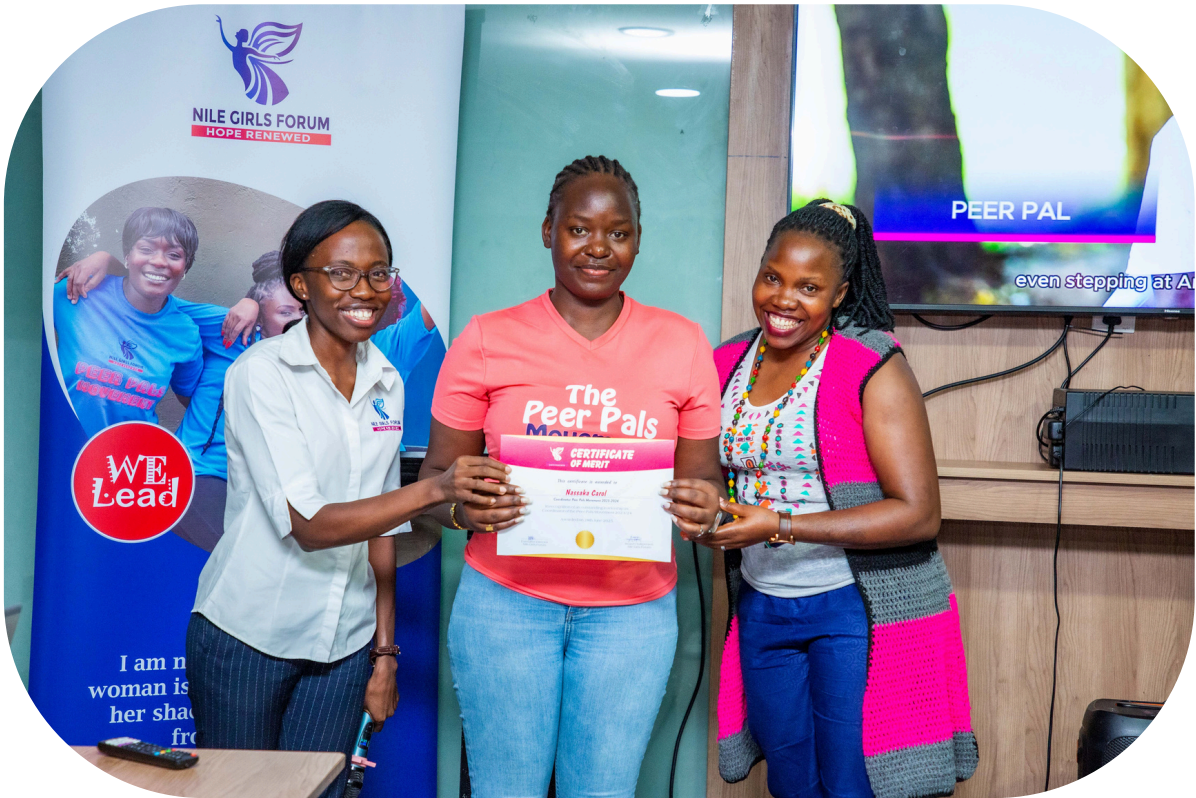
PICTORIALS



Peer Pals affected by displacement from Terego District



Some of the Peer Pals from Kampala City, some of them live in urban slums



Carol peer pal receiving a certificate



Peer Pals group photo in Kampala

WE DELIGHT IN WORKING THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS



APPRECIATION TO THE PARTNERS THAT HAVE SUPPORTED THIS MOVEMENT

1. SRHR ALLIANCE UGANDA
2. CENTRE FOR HEALTH, HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEVELOPMENT (CEHURD)
3. HIVOS
4. EMBASSY OF FRANCE IN UGANDA
5. RESTLESS DEVELOPMENT UGANDA
6. REACH A HAND UGANDA
7. FAIRWAY HOTEL AND SPA
8. GIRL UP INITIATIVE UGANDA
9. SMART GIRLS FOUNDATION
10. WARM HEARTS
11. AFRIYAN
12. EAST AFRICAN FEMINIST PEACE NETWORK
13. MOSAIK EDUCATION



WOULD YOU LIKE TO PARTNER WITH US, WRITE AN EMAIL TO NILEGIRLSF@GMAIL.COM OR INFO@NILEGIRLSFORUM.ORG



The
Peer Pals
Movement



For more information
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