GIRL UP INITIATIVE UGANDA
STRATEGIC PLAN
2022-2026

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Executive Summary

Over the next five years (2022 – 2026), Girl Up Initiative Uganda's programming will be guided by this Strategic Plan (SP), whose overarching theme is **"healing from the past and ready for the future."** The SP outlines our ambition of pushing forward our vibrant social movement of empowered, autonomous girls and young women, as well as our desire to scale up proven and high-impact approaches in new districts of Bukedea and Nebbi and the operational and organizational changes needed to achieve our goals.

Uganda is in the lower category of countries with low progress on the three basic dimensions of human development, which includes: i) a long and healthy life, ii) access to knowledge, and iii) a decent standard of living. According to the 2020 Human Development Index, Uganda is ranked 159th out of 189 countries. This is reflected in the situation of young people in Uganda with their unemployment standing at 13.3%, high poverty level, school dropout rates at 58.96%, teenage pregnancy at 25%, high rates of child marriage, and increasing incidences of gender-based violence (GBV).

This new Strategic Plan presents an opportunity to serve the most vulnerable and marginalized girls, boys, and young women, more deeply and effectively than before. We shall continue consolidating our holistic community and youth-led approaches in the urban slums of Kampala as well as expand to new districts of Bukedea in the far East and Nebbi in West Nile, Northern Uganda. Our presence in Nebbi will enable us to intentionally reach out to the refugee community from bordering South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

The overall goal of the strategy is to contribute to the increased and sustained well-being of **34,000** girls, boys, and young women in communities that promotes their rights and gender equality. **Out of the 34,000 targeted beneficiaries, 80% will be in Kampala while 20% will come from Bukedea and Nebbi districts**. This goal will be achieved through three main program domain objectives:

1) *To increase the number of girls, young women, and boys who have autonomy over their bodies and enjoy quality Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) information and services.*

2) *Increase the number of girls and young women who are economically self-reliant, resilient, and have improved livelihood.*

3) *Increase enrolment, retention, and completion of formal education, and life skills learning among the most vulnerable adolescent girls, young women, and boys in a supportive school environment.*

Organisational, human resource management, and resource mobilization objectives were developed to enable us to achieve the above programmatic goals and objectives.

This new Strategic Plan is aligned with the National Development Plan III (NDP), aimed at achieving Uganda's Vision 2040 goal of elevating Uganda to middle income. The strategy is also aligned with the global Sustainable Development **Goal 3, 4, 5, 8 and 13,** connecting our work to broader, universal goals**.**

In addition to expanding to new geographical locales, this new strategy has a strong focus on mindset change and prioritizes the use of proven models and approaches, such as

gender-transformative programming, which tackles root causes of development challenges; peer-led community models, for sustainable, locally-driven change; and digital innovations, to meet the needs of an increasingly digital world. Also, cross-cutting themes like climate change and advocacy and influencing will be key in enabling holistic, community change and ownership.

The strategy was developed through a participatory process where different stakeholders, including staff and board members, contributed to the analysis of the organisational environment and selection of strategic choices/direction over the next five years.

Introduction

This Strategic Plan sets the pace for Girl Up Initiative Uganda's (GUIU) growth and directionality over the next five years (2022-2026). It spells out where we are coming from; where we are; where we want to go; and how we can reach there—given the context and projected resources. This plan provides a roadmap for accomplishing set goals within the context of GUIU's mission. It is built around human rights and feminist theory with its overall theme of **"healing from the past and ready for the future,"** conceptualized from programs designed to lift vulnerable girls, boys and young women from the pitfalls of the COVID-19 pandemic and empower them through knowledge, mentorship and skills to be autonomous and resilient. Through these interventions, girls and young women will have the confidence and leadership abilities to take on abundant opportunities to harness their full potential in life—leading to a more developed, equal and healthy Uganda. This Strategic Plan also spells out GUIU's ambitions of consolidating achievements from holistic, community programming and scaling up proven programmatic models to two districts of Bukedea, in the far East, and Nebbi in the North.

Situational Analysis

Uganda is a landlocked country situated in East Africa. It shares borders with Kenya in the East, South Sudan in the North, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the West, Rwanda in the Southwest and Tanzania in the South. Uganda is about 241,551 sq. km; of which 199,807.4 sq. km. is land and 41,743.2 sq. km. of fresh water and swamps cover. The country owns abundant natural resources including mineral and oil reserves, wetlands, biodiversity and freshwater. Over a third of its land is arable and the climate allows for two harvests a year. And as such, agriculture contributes close to 80% of Uganda's economy.

Uganda has an estimated population of 37.58 million people according to the Population and Housing Survey 2015 (2015; UBOS). This population is predominantly made up of young people with more than half (78%) aged 30 years and below – making Uganda one of the countries with the youngest population in the world (World Bank, 2017). The life expectancy in the country is around 58.5 years, with males being 56.7 years and 60.5 years for females.

Uganda's development is guided by a 30-year strategy named Vision 2040, launched in 2013. The overall goal of the vision is to see Uganda grow into a middle-income country by 2040. This ambitious framework is guided by a series of six National Development Plans (NDP)– each designed to last for five years. NDPI and NDPII have already been implemented and right now, Uganda has embarked on NDPIII. NDPIII aims to implement this vision by prioritising sustainable, resource-led industrialization with the aim to create inclusive growth, employment, and sustainable wealth. It is supported by programmatic and regionally-based planning and has five objectives:

1. *Enhance value addition in key growth opportunities*

2. *Strengthen the private sector to create jobs*

3. *Consolidate and increase the stock and quality of productive infrastructure*

4. *Enhance the productivity and social wellbeing of the population*

5. *Strengthen the role of the state in guiding and facilitating development*

Uganda has made important commitments to uphold global and regional legal agreements for human rights and justice and ratified/accessed all of the core nine global human rights conventions, except for the Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance. It has also committed to additional global and regional agreements, including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; and the Protocol of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol).

The Ugandan government has put in place a range of laws and policies to protect, promote and fulfil these global and regional legal frameworks. These include the 1995 Constitution, on which laws are founded, and which guarantees all citizens over 18 the same rights and civil freedoms. Customary law is constitutionally protected and constitutes an important source of legal decision-making, often in parallel to national law. Customary law that does not offend the Constitution will be upheld. Additionally, the country has put into place a strong body of policies and strategies to promote girls' rights.

However, despite the legislative and policy measures, in 2019 Uganda ranked only 131st out of 162 countries in the Gender Inequality Index. This low ranking is mainly driven by high adolescent birth rates, poor literacy levels, and limited participation of women in the paid labour force.

The Situation of Youth and Girls in Uganda

Uganda's young population is faced with numerous challenges ranging from unemployment, teenage pregnancies, child marriage, and gender-based violence, among others. **Almost a third**

of adolescent girls in Uganda give birth before their 18ᵗʰ birthday and over 34 % were married or in a union by the age of 18. Moreover, a fifth of them gave birth and a quarter of them were married before the age of 15. With these figures, Uganda continues to rank among the 20 countries with the highest rates of Child Early and Forced Marriages (CEFM) worldwide. And of the high adolescent birth rates, **42% of all pregnancies among adolescents in Uganda are unintended.** Key reasons for this are low levels of knowledge on SRHR, inadequate health services and low availability, accessibility and use of contraceptives, particularly for adolescents. The high numbers of teenage pregnancies (25%) and child marriages significantly contribute to Uganda's disease burden and mortality as well as affect the country's progress as a whole. For instance, almost 1 in 5 (17.2%) of mothers who die while giving birth in Uganda are teen mothers according to 2016 statistics from Uganda Health Demographic Survey. Also, infant mortality, high school drop-out rates, and unemployment are heavily linked to teenage and CEFM, demonstrating their detrimental impact on Uganda's progress.

The closure of schools for almost two years (between March 2020 and Jan 2022) to respond to the global COVID-19 pandemic has had major long-term effects on children's education. The longer children, especially girls, are out of school, the less likely they are to return. The closure of schools not only interrupts learning but also disrupts the protective environment that a school provides, leading to heightened levels of domestic and gender-based violence and child abuse. Economic hardship coupled with school closures has contributed to a surge in levels of child labour and unpaid care. Many girls and boys, especially those living in poverty, had no choice but to support their families to survive the harsh economic environment.

Trend analysis shows youth unemployment in Uganda worsening with the unemployment rate for youth aged 18–30 standing at 4.5% in 2013, 4.9% in 2015 and more than doubling to 13.3% in 2016/17 compared to the decline in the national unemployment rate to 9.2% in 2016/17 from 11.1% in 2012/13 (Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), 2017). This has contributed to the high dependency burden on the small section of the employed population and worse still to the high crime rates and gross violation of girls' and young women's rights, especially in urban slums and rural regions of Uganda.

Almost 30% of women aged 15-49 years report having been subjected to physical or sexual violence by a current or former intimate partner in the past year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in incidences of sexual abuse and gender-based violence (GBV) in Uganda. According to the 2020 Police Crime Report, domestic violence increased by 29% from 13,693 cases in 2019 to 17,664 in 2020, while the number of children defiled also increased by 3.8%. An analysis from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) shows that there has been a 24% increase in post-rape reports during the pandemic. Increased social and financial pressure due to job loss, fears for the future, close confinement with an intimate partner, and school dropout are considered the most common causes of the increase in violence.

Fueled by high adolescent and adult fertility rates, a growing youth bulge has created significant problems for the Ugandan labor market, affecting young people in particular. An estimated one million young people enter the labour market every year, which runs significantly short of generating the jobs needed. Consequently, many young people are underemployed and engage in precarious, non-rewarding and inconsistent work which is poorly paid. **83.5% of the population aged 15 – 29 works in informal jobs. Driven by strong gendered expectations around women's and men's role in society and access to financial and productive resources, this figure is 10% higher for young women than for men**. Agriculture and subsistence farming – although otherwise dominated by adult women – have become a critical catchment for young men in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. These factors contribute to young women being twice as likely to be unemployed as young men, but also to urban youth being more likely to be unemployed than those living in rural areas.

About Girl Up Initiative Uganda (GUIU)

GUIU is a locally-rooted non-governmental organisation (NGO) that envisions a **gender-equal world where girls are supported to thrive and lead.** With a mission **to build a vibrant movement of girls and young women through transformative leadership, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) education and skills development**, GUIU has been operating in Uganda since 2012, GUIU has a well-established, trusted presence in the five divisions of Kampala Capital City, focusing on the vulnerable and marginalized girls and young women living in the resource-deprived slums of Kampala.

We strive for gender equality in education, health and decision-making processes. We aim to remove barriers to girls' full participation within school environments, the economy and leadership spaces so that they are given the opportunity and tools to escape the cycle of poverty and systemic oppression.

Our Values

Engagement and Proximity. Our staff team are members of the communities they serve, giving them an intimate and unique insight into the challenges youth face day-to-day.

Sustainability. Our holistic model and curricula equip girls, boys, and women to challenge negative gender norms and know their human rights. They grow the leadership abilities to share knowledge and create their own movements to enhance gender justice within their communities.

Community Collaboration. We work in close partnership with schools, communities, and young people to co-create relevant, impactful programs based on the ever-changing needs of women and girls in our communities.

Inclusivity. We believe in the extreme value of girls and young women—in all of their diversity. We recognize that without including all, we are leaving everyone behind.

Key Achievement from the Previous Strategic Cycle

- GUIU successfully piloted and implemented the Boy Champions Project in 7 schools by the end of 2021.
- A Training of Trainers (ToT) program was conducted where more than ten coaches were brought on board, on top of the in-house coaches
- Two residential Big Sisters Camps have been successfully implemented—one in 2019 and one in 2021.
- Increased number of iNGOs and renewed long-term contracts with them like Plan International Uganda and Terre des Hommes Netherlands, among others.
- MEL has been strengthened with an additional staff member to properly assess all of the programs.
- GUIU has adopted a more proactive approach to fundraising and donor stewardship through the creation of an internal fundraising committee.
- There was team growth to 26 full-time staff and three volunteers by the end of 2021.

Lessons Learned from the Previous Strategy Cycle

As an organisation, there are lessons we have learned from the previous Strategic Plan and will be addressed and emphasised in this new Strategic Plan:

- In regards to Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL), we have recognised a need for us to overcome key challenges in MEL to be able to measure the outcomes of our work at strategy-level, as much as at project-level and in line with international MERL standards. In this Strategic Plan, we need to ensure that we set the projected course of project MEL standards, significantly improve documentation and information management, and better build knowledge management and learnings into the program and project cycle, including with stakeholders.
- We have learned that adolescent girls in private schools equally need the information that is given in AGP just as those in the public schools, as they go through the same challenges. During the previous strategic cycle, we were able to roll out the AGP in five private schools and the results have been enormous.

- Gender-transformative programming must be explicitly spelled out as an integral aspect of all of our programs and projects, which was not the case in the previous SP. But, in this new Strategic cycle, we will come out strong and intentional on gender-transformative programming as our main delivery approach, which will enable us to tackle the root cause of development challenges rather than responding to symptoms. Additionally, emphasis will be put on meaningful youth participation throughout the lifecycle of program implementation.
- Resilience triggers innovativeness in programming—in 2020, our programming was halted with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to school closure, which impacted our core in-school programs. The resilience of the team enabled us to co-create creative ways of reaching out to adolescent girls and boys, resulting in our two COVID-19-specific interventions: Bringing Voices Together Project and the Community Classrooms Project.
- Involving teachers in planning and facilitation is a good way to scale our in-school programming to reach out to more girls and boys. In this way, we can improve our overall program and organisational sustainability, while strengthening the capacities of teachers to carry forth critical knowledge.

Direction: Taking these lessons learned into account, we seek to focus more on building a strong niche in areas of gender-sensitive and friendly SRHR, skilling young girls and women for economic prosperity, and girls' leadership. We will achieve this by consolidating and strengthening what we are good at, rather than introducing new programs. For instance, strengthening our areas of niche such as our adolescent and youth engagements, skilling and vocational training, girls' education and leadership empowerment, community engagements, SRHR knowledge-sharing, and youth-led approaches.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths	Weakness
In the next five years, we hope to capitalize on the following strengths to achieve our strategic goals:	*Some of the weaknesses/challenges that we need to address include:* ● MEL systems operationalization needs to be improved and strengthened. ● Limited understanding of legislation and statutory requirements.

• The strong governance structure of GUIU; that is, the US board, Ugandan Board, ED, and her staff will contribute significantly to the realisation of this new strategic plan. • The young, energetic and enthusiastic staff with a good work attitude and willingness to learn provides a good foundation for this SP. • Mazuri Design Hub: This social enterprise provides a huge potential in growing local and sustainable income as well as providing a foundation for achieving objective two. • There's a great sense of teamwork and working well together, which is a good organisational value to promote during this SP as such values are needed to achieve the strategic goal. • Strength in communication, innovation and accountability will improve visibility, growth in reputation, and donor retention, as well as expand our funding portfolio. • Resilient and innovative: Adapting to the changing environments and situations (e.g, COVID-19 response work and restrategizing) • We are physically located within the community we serve • We have strong foundational systems in place, giving us a solid jumping-off point for growth • Compliance with the existing legal framework	• Not so strong marketing approaches are in place to attract donors, especially unrestricted funds. • An unclear cost allocation policy and guidelines that creates a big risk of having higher operational costs than programmatic costs. • Limited reach. (e.g. we are limited to only Kampala) • Lack of some policies, e.g. lack of volunteer's policy, whistleblowing policy, conflict of interest policy • Location of offices in a residential setting can cause distractions and disruptions.
Opportunities	**Threats**
We consider the factors below as opportunities we need to exploit if we are to achieve our goal and objectives in the next five years:	• Shrinking NGO space in Uganda

● Partnerships: We have opportunities for growing our partnerships beyond what we already know. Most donors nowadays focus on local partners/ indigenous organisations. ● Although space for civil society organisations (CSOs) is shrinking, the legal frameworks in Uganda still provide a great opportunity for us to achieve our strategic goal. ● The escalating poverty level and rights violations, especially among the very most vulnerable girls and young women, give us an opportunity to serve and cause a lasting improvement in the lives of vulnerable girls and young women. ● We have receptive communities we work with (e.g, the schools, key leaders, etc).	● High monetary expectations from the community and other stakeholders threatens sustainability and ownership of our programs. ● Fragile political environment coupled with negative political perception on NGO work ● Duplication of our work by other organisations ● Funding uncertainty and ever-increasing competition for donor funds. ● Inflation and fluctuating prices due to local availability. ● Pandemics (e.g. Covid). ● Severe weather events due to climate change and degradation.

The Rationale for Strategic Choices

GUIU's strategic choices were influenced by the following factors:

i. There are gross violations of girls' rights to education/skills development, sexual and reproductive health, and protection, which the government acknowledges as priorities to address. These are prevalent in development and refugee settings.

ii. Consultations with children and young people revealed that the areas represented in this SP are priorities to them and had been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

iii. The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on Ugandan society. Although COVID-19 is a health crisis, its impact is not limited to health alone. The economy and well-being of people, especially young girls and women, have been severely impacted by the negative knock-on effects of COVID-19 and lockdowns. Lockdown measures, such as the closing of schools, some businesses, and restricted movements—including the stay-home measure and the government's prioritisation of COVID-19 over other vital demands—reversed the

gains that Uganda had registered before COVID-19, especially education gains. Many girls, boys, and youth who were in school are likely not to go back to school either due to lost interest in studying, pregnancy and young motherhood, FECM or financial setbacks. Worse still, many people, especially young people whose livelihood depended on small businesses, have lost their jobs as most businesses collapsed during the long lockdown. As a result, the country is anticipating a continued increase in GBV, crime and extreme poverty. These most heavily affect vulnerable groups such as girls and young women living in slums and rural areas. GUIU's five-year strategy is intentionally designed to support the most vulnerable girls and young women in recovering from the impact of COVID-19, as well as influence decisions that enable them to achieve their full potential.

iv. Working in the slums of Kampala has made us come face-to-face with the effects of climate change and the urgent need for action by everyone. Increased urbanization has put a lot of pressure on natural resources like swamps, lakes, forests and green spaces, resulting in frequent floods, air pollution and poor disposal of plastic wastes. Mainstreaming climate change into our programming will be part and parcel of this strategic period.

v. GUIU is positively recognized by peers and external stakeholders for being strong in skilling girls and young women as well as championing the leadership potential of girls in its area of operation. Due to this, we are in a strong position to influence policy and practice across all levels.

vi. There is good potential to develop and further build on strong partnerships and alliances, especially with local and East African organisations.

Strategic Direction

Our programs will focus on the theme of **"healing from the past and ready for the future."** This is because our Strategic Plan is conceptualised around programs that aim at lifting girls, boys and young women from the pitfalls of the COVID-19 pandemic and empowering them to gain age-friendly knowledge and skills to be autonomous, resilient and empowered. Through these approaches, girls, young women and boys will have the personal toolkit to seek opportunities and harness their full potential in life.

Strategic Goal: By 2026, Girl Up Initiative Uganda will contribute to the increased and sustained well-being of **34,000** girls and young women in communities that promote their rights and gender equality. **Out of the 34,000 target, 80% will be in Kampala while 20% will come**

from Bukedea and Nebbi districts. This goal will be achieved through three main program domains:

1. Gender-Responsive Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)

The overall objective of this program domain is <u>to increase the number of adolescent girls and young women who have autonomy over their bodies and enjoy quality, age-appropriate SRHR information and services.</u> Throughout the implementation of our previous strategy, we learned that in a patriarchal society like Uganda, which is predominantly controlled by the male, gender shapes all aspects of sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) outcomes. Therefore, our SRHR interventions will address the gender norms, power imbalance, gendered perceptions, and expectations, as well as practices that limit adolescent girls, boys, and young women from realising their SRH rights. Priority will be given to the most marginalised and vulnerable adolescent girls, boys, and young women living in the slums of Kampala and the new expansion districts of Bukedea and Nebbi. Our target is to reach **20,000** adolescent girls, boys, and young women – with the majority in Kampala (80%) while the rest from the new district of Bukedea and Nebbi (20%).

Domain Framework

Program Objective	Theory of Change Outline	Outcomes	Proposed Interventions
SPD1) Increase the number of girls and young women, aged 10-24, who have autonomy over their bodies and enjoy quality SRHR information and services.	If vulnerable adolescent girls and boys are provided with gender and age-sensitive, comprehensive information and life skills on SRHR, they will be able to make safer sexual choices and decisions to enable them to have autonomy over their bodies and future. Building mutual partnerships with other like-minded NGOs and government	**SOC1.1)** Adolescent girls and young women have positive behaviours, attitudes, and self-confidence regarding their SRHR.	**SI 1.1.1)** Empower adolescent girls, boys, and young women with knowledge; the right attitude; and life skills on gender-responsive SRHR to enable them to make safer, informed sexual decisions. This will resultantly support girls and young women to have control over their bodies and future; but also contribute to the reduction of teenage/unplanned pregnancy, HIV and other STIs, unsafe abortions, child marriage, and other

	institutions, like health, education, police, and judiciaries help adolescent girls and young women sustainably access a broad range of services that one single entity may not be able to provide. Engaging parents/ guardians and community members in community dialogues create a supportive and enabling environment that promotes the realization of SRHR among young people and reduces sexual violations such as defilement, rape, child marriage, and cross-generational sexual abuse.		sexual violence, as well as promote safe delivery and maternal healthcare for adolescent girls and young women. **SI 1.1.2)** Support improvements on access, availability, and provision of youth-friendly and gender-responsive health services. **SI 1.1.3)** Build a sustained social movement of adolescent girls who are capable of influencing and taking over decision-making platforms to amplify the voices of excluded/vulnerable young people at all levels.
	Involving boys, men, religious and cultural leaders in advocating for girls' rights and empowerment leads to the realization of gender equality and the reduction of sexual gender-based violence. Strengthening community and health service-based services to respond to school-related gender-based violence (SRGBV) will enable survivors of violence to overcome shock and trauma and regain a full	**SOC 1.2)** Parents, primary caregivers, and other family members support their adolescent girls to make healthy and informed choices related to sexual and reproductive lives and marriage.	**SI 1.2.1)** Community dialogues on positive parenting, harmful practices, sexual violence, and positive masculinities related to SRHR including taking action in creating a supportive environment for young people's SRHR realization. **SI 1.2.2)** Engaging key influential gatekeepers such as religious, cultural, and male community leaders to take action in support of the realisation of

	and healthy life. Supporting the establishment of youth, peer-led community and in-school networks not only strengthens sustainability but also creates a reliable youth-friendly environment.		SRHR for excluded and vulnerable adolescent girls, boys, and young women.
		SOC 1.3) Community and health facility services are inclusive, gender-sensitive, and responsive to the needs of adolescent girls and young people.	**SI 1.3.1)** Support and promote SRHR and SRGBV youth referral services using community outreach, mobile services, and other relevant strategies to better respond to the needs of adolescents and youth for SRGBV, family planning, SRHR information, counselling, commodities & supplies. **SI 1.3.2)** Strengthen capacities of facilities and staff to provide adolescent, gender-responsive, and inclusive services.

Models

We shall build on our strong community peer structures and program models that are proving to yield significant results in enabling adolescent girls, boys, and young women to make informed decisions regarding their SRHR. Our focus will also be on gender responsiveness to SRHR as the main approach to delivery. Below are the current flagship models as we look forward to innovating others in this strategy.

- Champion of Change (CoC) and peer-to-peer learning
- Gender-sensitive sexual and reproductive health service provision (public and private sectors)

- Digital innovation, including social media outreach.

2. Skilling and Employability for Girls and Young Women

This program domain will be key in supporting our efforts in helping marginalised and vulnerable girls and young women recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. We shall continue with our flagship social enterprise, Mazuri Designs Hub, to help us achieve the program objective of increasing the number of girls and young women who are economically self-reliant, resilient, and have improved livelihood. Our target is **10,000** girls and young women.

Domain Framework

Program Objective	Theory of Change Outline	Outcomes	Proposed Interventions
SPD 2) Increase in girls and young women who are economically self-reliant, resilient, and have improved livelihood.	Providing skills development opportunities for vulnerable and excluded girls and young women through apprenticeship, vocational training, and leadership skills, enabling them to be employable, economically empowered, self-reliant, and recover from the pit-holes of the COVID-19 pandemic. Introduce savings groups as a platform to provide girls and young women with life, market-oriented, technical, and business skills, as well as engaging parents, peer youth, and the wider community in support of girls' career development and	**SOC 2.1)** Poor and marginalised girls and young women are skilled, employable, and self-reliant.	**SI 2.1.1)** Provide training and skilling opportunities to girls and young women through apprenticeship, vocational, and entrepreneurship skills-building through our flagship Mazuri Designs Hub. **SI 2.1.2)** Mobilise families and community leaders to support gender-equal and inclusive access to opportunities in education, training, and resources to support employment pathways for girls and young women.

	equitable distribution of labour. This is an effective approach to increasing girls' and young women's capacity to build assets and access decent income-generating opportunities to meet their basic needs and become economically independent. Connecting freshly skilled young people to established businesses not only accelerates their learning but also helps them break through competitive markets.		**SI 2.1.3)** Innovative, supportive training for young girls and women on developing climate-smart businesses that conserve the environment and yet improve livelihood development. **SI 2.1.4)** Promote and support youth savings groups for both in-school and out-of-school adolescents and youth as a platform for the delivery of life skills and entrepreneurship, as well as linkages to market-oriented technical and business skills development and market opportunities training (Youth Savings Groups). **SI 2.1.5)** Support girls' social movements to advocate for the inclusion of marginal groups into government, youth, and women's economic empowerment programs.
		SOC 2.2) Girls and young women with improved and sustained livelihood.	**SI 2.2.1)** Build strong linkages of girl-led enterprises to already established businesses. **SI 2.2.2)** Establishing new markets for products and services of girls and young women businesses.

Models

Skilling young girls and women will be modelled around Mazuri Designs Hub and will additionally focus on exploring other innovative apprenticeship, vocational, and climate-smart businesses. Youth savings groups, using the Village Saving Loan Association Plus model, will act as a platform for which to initiate skills development and training on savings, financial management skills, and entrepreneurship.

3. Quality, Gender-Sensitive Adolescent Education

Education is one of the sectors that has been heavily affected by COVID-19 with Uganda's National Planning Authority already estimating up to 30% of the 15 million learners who were in school before the pandemic will not be able to return to school. This is attributed to increased levels of poverty, teenage pregnancy, child marriage, and child labour, among others. Girls, especially those living in slums and rural areas, are most affected.

This program domain aims to expand our efforts in supporting vulnerable adolescent girls to return to school; attain formal, quality education and life skills; be confident leaders, role models, and advocate for girls' rights in their communities, homes, and schools. The overall objective is to increase enrolment, retention, and completion of formal education and life skills learning among the most vulnerable adolescent girls, young women, and boys in a supportive school environment. We project to support up to **1,000** most marginalised adolescent girls and boys with scholarship funding for basic education (primary and secondary). In addition, we estimate to indirectly empower **10,000** adolescent girls and boys with life skills and leadership learning.

Domain Framework

Program Objective	Theory of Change Outline	Outcomes	Proposed Interventions
SP3) Increase enrolment, retention, and completion of formal education and life skills learning among the most vulnerable adolescent girls, young women, and boys in a supportive school environment.	Providing educational opportunities and platforms such as scholarships, mentorships, coaching, and formal learning in schools not only improve girls' intellectual ability but also increases their self-confidence and	**SOC 3.1)** Vulnerable girls and young women accessing quality education and training.	**SI 3.1.1)** Strengthen the Adolescent Girls Program (AGP) to provide girls with scholarships, skills, knowledge, & tools to develop their self-confidence and voice to thrive as leaders in their schools and communities.

	strengthens their ability to take on leadership responsibilities in communities, home, and school.		**SI 3.1.2**. Improve parents' and caregivers' knowledge, confidence, and skills to provide psychosocial, material, and financial support as well as a safe environment to their adolescent children, especially girls. **SI 3.1.3)** Conduct regular capacity building and mentorship sessions to enable girls and young women to take up decision-making spaces. **SI 3.1.4)** Create platforms and opportunities for girls and young women to take action and lead in influencing decisions in their families and community.
		SOC 3.2. A school environment that supports children, especially adolescent girls to enjoy learning and achieve their academic potential.	**SI 3.2.1**. Build teacher capacities and commitment for gender-responsive teaching and inclusive learner-centred methodologies, social and emotional learning/psychosocial support **SI 3.2.7:** Support boys engagement activities that re-enforce positive masculinities that promote gender equality.

			SI 3.2.2. Support and promote the involvement of learners in improving the learning environment, emergency risk planning, and school-based climate change initiatives/waste management.
			SI 3.2.3. Build the capacity of school management and governance structures to ensure that schools are accessible, supportive, protective, and safe for adolescent girls including the most marginalised (i.e. survivors of violence and those living with disability).
			SI 3.2.4 Support interactive dialogues with parents, students representatives, school management structures, and teachers on factors that affect the performance of children in schools.
			SI 3.2.5 Support advocacy initiatives that promote gender-responsive and inclusive national and local education policies.
			SI.3.2.6 Promote and support participatory school governance and accountability mechanisms in schools

			and with school authorities.

Crossing-Cutting Domains

i) Advocacy and Influencing

In this Strategic Plan, we shall strengthen our advocacy and influencing work in all our interventions and at all levels: that is, community, sub-national, and national levels. Our advocacy and influencing will take a three-throng approach; i.) policy influence, ii.) budget advocacy, and iii.) social and behaviour changes. We shall model our influencing works using our youth-led and participatory advocacy under the championed social accountability tools such as the Young Citizen's Scorecard to hold service providers and the government accountable for commitments made.

The key aspect to consider in our influencing work is participatory and collective advocacy. This will involve joining coalitions, alliances, and entering partnerships with mind-like organisations to have collective voices in pushing for changes on persistent issues.

ii) Environment and Climate Change

Climate change and degradation are now the greatest challenges that face humanity in this century and across the globe. Rising temperatures and changing weather patterns are now a reality that needs urgent action. In Uganda, and particularly in Kampala where Girl Up Initiative Uganda operates, there is pressure on natural resources from the bulging population and human activities whose effects are already being felt from the floods in the slums and prolonged dry spells. Across our programme interventions, we will support the creation of opportunities to help girls, boys, and young people to understand the causes and consequences of climate change that will contribute to them adopting environmentally and socially responsible behaviours, influence their families' behaviours, and contribute to building more resilient and peaceful communities. Building climate awareness into life-skills development will better prepare young people to be more prepared and resilient in the face of the impact of climate change, as well as offer an entry point for leading climate-smart action in their communities. As part of our engagement with school governance, we will support education authorities and schools to do emergency risk planning and school-based climate change initiatives, such as waste management, connecting with early warning systems, conducting DRR assessments, and planning to put gender-responsive and inclusive contingency plans in place.

Other interventions include youth savings groups and social protection measures, such as emergency support. We will also prioritise connecting young people to green innovation

through linkages to market-oriented technical and business skills development and market opportunities.

iii) Gender-Transformative Programming

Strengthening gender-transformative programming will enable us to address the root causes of gender inequality, other than the symptoms. We shall apply this across our program interventions where girls, boys, and young women will be empowered with knowledge, positive attitudes, and skills to challenge gender norms, expectations, perceptions, and practices that reinforce negative masculinities and power imbalances. We shall do this through out-of-school and in-school peer programs, community dialogues, and advocacy campaigns.

Alignment to SDGs and NDP III

SP (2022 -2026)	NDP III (2021 – 2025)	SDG GOALS
SD1: Increase the number of adolescent girls and young women who have autonomy over their bodies and enjoy quality SRHR information and services.	Increase in the proportion of the population accessing universal healthcare. Reduce maternal death from 336/per 100,000 to 299. Reducing Total Fertility Rate from 5.4 to 4.5.	**Goal 3:** Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages **Goal 5:** Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls **Specific Targets:** Ensure <u>universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights</u> as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences. By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births. End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced

		marriage, and female genital mutilation By 2030, ensure _universal access to sexual and reproductive healthcare services_, including family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programs.
SD2: Increase in girls and young women who are economically self-reliant, resilient, and have improved livelihood.	Enhance the productivity and social well-being of the population. Reduction of Youth unemployment rate from 13.3% to 9.7%. The employment-Population Ratio increased from 47.5 to 69.8 Population below the poverty line reduced from 21.4% - to 18.50%.	**Goal 8:** Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. **Specific Targets:** By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.
SD3: Increase enrolment, retention, and completion of formal education and life skills learning among the most vulnerable adolescent girls, young women, and boys in a supportive school environment.	Increase primary to secondary school transition rate from 61 to 79. Improve retention of pupils and students in school from 35 to 55.	**Goal 4:** Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all **Goal 13:** Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts **Specific Targets:**

		By 2030, ensure that <u>all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education</u> leading to relevant and Goal-4 effective learning outcomes
		By 2030, <u>eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations</u> Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning.

Funding, HR, and Institutional Objectives

1. Funding Objectives

For us to be able to finance our strategy in the next five years, we shall need to grow our fund portfolio to a total of **USD 4,763,209** (UGX 17 billion) over the five-year period. This will require strengthening our resource mobilisation mechanisms and expanding both the restricted and un-restricted grants. Below are the strategic interventions to be undertaken:

i.) Donor Mapping: A donor mapping exercise will be conducted in the first year of this strategic plan. The rationale of this exercise is to enable us to focus our time and energy in understanding the aspects which make some funding opportunities better fit our requirements as compared to others. In other words, this exercise will help us match our strategic goals, interests, values, and current needs with that of prospective donors. It will also give us the idea on:

- Which prospects can be explored further for detailed profiling by research;
- Which prospects are high/medium/low priority as per set parameters;
- Which opportunities are low hanging fruits and need immediate attention;
- What our short term/long term timelines should be.

In the end, we should have a donor matrix, which will be updated annually by the resource mobilisation team, together with the GUIU Executive Director.

ii.) Developing or Upgrading Current Resource Mobilisation Strategy: This strategy will define the resource mobilisation structure including personnel, interventions to be undertaken, and targets to be met. Below are key interventions to be included in the resource mobilisation strategy:

Focus will be on i.) maintaining the current funding and providing quality donor relations as well as; ii.) identifying or expanding individual, foundational, and INGO.

i.) Maintaining current funding/providing quality donor relations

- **Good documentation of success stories:** This will help the fundraising team in Uganda and US demonstrate the lasting improvements donors are creating through GUIU in the lives of vulnerable girls, boys, and young women. This brings satisfaction and inspiration to the donors to continue giving.
- **Creative and proactive engagements of individual, foundational, and INGO donors:** This includes the provision of regular updates and timely communication to all donor bases. Increasing the use of digital platforms for reaching donors at different touchpoints will be critical.
- **Good compliance practices:** Adherence to funder and other stakeholders' procedures and guidelines spelled in the funding agreement documents. These may include reporting timelines, quality of reports, audits and fewer deviations, etc.

ii.) Expanding individual, foundational, and INGO funding.

- **A fundraising annual target has to be set to raise the funds needed for implementing this ambitious SP:** The team can consider raising a 20 -100% fund increase on the previous annual fund. For instance, if GUIU had USD 100,000 annual funds in FY21, then the FY22 target should be USD 120,000 or 200,000.
- **The US board and resource mobilisation team will develop fundraising campaigns targeting individuals, foundations, INGOs,, and private companies:** New innovative marketing strategies are needed and deliberate efforts should be put into creating connections to new foundational donors, and creating partnerships with corporate sponsors,
- **Growing local income:** Develop and roll out a local fundraising strategy based on market research and cost-benefit analysis. Mazuri Design Hub provides a great social enterprise and huge potential to raise sustainable income to supplement donor funding. There will be a need to develop a growth strategy for Mazuri Design Hub.

- **Entering teaming agreements** with established iNGOs like World Vision, Save the Child, and Intra-Health International, among others. This will build on our work with Plan International and Terres des Hommes and will enable us to take advantage of the changing donor funding landscape that prioritises funding local partners. Secondly, strengthening relationships and networking with line ministries and departments in government will enable us to advocate for the government to prioritise the needs and service provision for vulnerable girls, boys, and young women.

Funding Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Interventions
To grow unrestricted funding by at least 10% by 2024.	% Growth of unrestricted funding, including individual donors, annually Expansion to two programme areas: Bukedea and Nebbi.	Increase outreach to new donors and strengthen relationships with the current donor base. Strengthen a good accountability mechanism.
Grow the value of strategy-aligned grants.	% growth in strategy aligned grant funding	Increased promotion of the core project model to donors Enhanced monitoring of strategic alignment of grants
Grow local income.	$ raised from local fundraising products and approaches	Develop and roll out a local fundraising strategy based on market research and cost-benefit analysis.

2.) Operational Objectives

Operational Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Interventions
Enhance organisational agility.	% Improvement in turnaround time for key services and tasks. Our Voice indicators measure organisational agility.	Conduct process improvement on various business processes. Roll out and implement risk connect for effective risk management.

	Overall ratings in Global Centre risk-based internal audit and external audits	Utilise technology to automate key processes.
Enhance monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and learning to facilitate effective progress toward strategy objectives.	% of programmes that are regularly collecting and disseminating data (output & outcome) on strategy performance % of programmes that meet the minimum data quality standards	Standardised and automated monitoring systems in place. Implement learning labs to strengthen Monitoring & Evaluation capabilities. Utilise available technology in information and knowledge management.
Enhance external engagement and collaboration with government and civil society.	Number of successful partnerships per technical programme. Percentage of effective partnerships maintained with key government ministries	Revised partnering guidelines. Develop government relations framework and guidelines.

3.) Human Resource Performance Management Objective

HR Objective	Key Performance Indicator	Strategic Interventions
Improve the ability of staff to demonstrate and live out GUIU values, mindsets, and behaviours.	% of key talent retained % reduction of disciplinary cases reported	Implement an organisational-wide personal development program. Implement staff wellness and well-being programme.
Strengthen organisational capabilities to deliver this Strategic Plan.	% of key talent identified and developed % of competent women in leadership roles	Implement robust talent management and development programme. Enhance the reward and recognition system.
Strengthen organisational governance.	Rating for the board Critical Success Factors assessment	Strengthen induction and orientation of board members.

	% of board resolutions and recommendations implemented	Creation of strategic board committees.

Appendix

i.) Uganda National Planning Authority. (online). http://www.npa.go.ug/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/VISION-2040.pdf

ii.) Uganda National Planning Authority (2020) Third national Development plan (online) https://www.health.go.ug/cause/third-national-development-plan-ndpiii-2020-21-2024-25/idem

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iv.) UNICEF Datahub (2021) referring to 2016 DHS data (online) https://data.unicef.org/resources/data_explorer/unicef_f/?ag=UNICEF&df=GLOBAL_DATAFLOW&ver=1.0&dq=UGA.PT_F_20-24_MRD_U18.&startPeriod=1970&endPeriod=2021

v.) UN Women Data Hub (2021) Uganda (online) **https://data.unwomen.org/country/Uganda**

vi.) Girls Not Brides (2021) Atlas of Child Early and Forced Marriage (online) https://atlas.girlsnotbrides.org/map/

vii.) UNFPA (2021) Reaching adolescents and youth with integrated SRHR services through community outreaches in Northern Uganda. (online) adolescents_factsheet_017.indd (unfpa.org)

viii.) Human Rights Watch / ISER (2021). *I must work to eat – Covid19, Poverty and Child Labor in* Ghana, Nepal and Uganda (online) https://www.hrw.org/node/378738

ix.) UN Women (2016) Uganda Data and Statistics https://data.unwomen.org/country/uganda