



# CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY WITH UNITY FOUNDATION!

Created in 1991, Unity Foundation is a Luxembourgish NGO officially recognized by the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA).

Unity Foundation collaborates with a **network of local partners** in Latin America, Africa and Asia, and its main objective is to provide financial resources to the **educational projects** they carry out within the framework of three lines of action: (1) **Community Schools (CS)** are dedicated to the schooling of children from preschool level, (2) the **Preparation for Social Action (PSA)** program builds the capacity of youth and adults who wish to take concrete action to contribute to the well-being of their communities, and (3) the **Training Centers** are designed to train and support organizations promoting CS in ten African countries. A fourth line of action, **Development Education**, consists of Luxembourgish projects that raise awareness among young people from 11 to 30 about development issues by encouraging them to become protagonists of social change.

All the projects supported by Unity Foundation are **co-financed by the Luxembourgish Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs**.



Unity Foundation

O N G D E P U I S 1 9 9 1





## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear readers,

The year 2022 at Unity Foundation has begun with the signing of our new five-year framework agreement with the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MFEA), which will fund 78% of the budget of international projects supported by Unity Foundation through 2026. With the support of the Ministry and yours, we will be able to continue to accompany our partners as they reach out to new communities, integrate more children and youth into their programs and schools, and train teachers and tutors.

All of these projects are conducted in a way that promotes and ensures equality between women and men and between girls and boys. In everything they do, our partners seek to identify the challenges girls and women face and empower them to become active agents of their own development and that of their communities. These values and ambitions also animate the projects implemented by Unity Foundation in Luxembourg, in schools, youth centers or during public events.

On the occasion of the International Women's Day, here are some stories that testify to the commitment of these women who take their destiny in their own hands and participate in the development of their communities.

We hope you will join us again this year to support them!

Fernand Schaber, President of Unity Foundation

## PROMOTING EQUALITY

*The world of humanity is possessed of two wings: the male and the female. So long as these two wings are not equivalent in strength, the bird will not fly.*

— Baha'i writing

This quote sums up the spirit in which Unity Foundation and its partners seek to promote equality between women and men, whatever the project supported or the activity organized. In many countries, the rights of girls and women are not respected, resulting in discrimination against girls and women at different levels: from the priority given to the education of boys, to physical and sexual violence, to the

lack of opportunities given to women to develop, to speak out and to participate in the decisions that affect them. Unity Foundation and its partners are working to create an environment within communities that ensures women's full participation in the development of their communities, equal opportunities for education and empowerment, and an equal voice in decision making.

As a result of these efforts, by 2021:

52%

of students in community schools are girls

78%

of community school teachers are women

58%

of PSA program participants are women

44%

of tutors in the PSA program are women

## RAISING AWARENESS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF GIRLS' EDUCATION AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In Malawi, our partner Bambino Foundation is committed to empowering not only women, but also girls. To this end, Bambino Foundation has set up spaces for discussion and consultation using a film *Mercy's Blessing* as a tool to initiate inspiring conversations.

Girls' education and women's empowerment are two topics typically discussed by participants in these spaces. Men, boys, women, and girls participate fully in the discussions and share the importance of girls' education, which prevents early marriage and gives



women the opportunity to be empowered and actively participate in building society. Discussions with parents, especially young mothers and fathers, highlight the fact that the advancement of women in society is possible when men and women participate together in the education of their children.

Bambino Foundation also ensures that women have spaces to discuss issues that will enable them to develop economically. For example, in one region of Malawi, a group of women have created a community bank, which allows them to support their families and pay school fees for their children.



## THE IMPACT OF A FEMALE LEADER ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY



The chief of the Khonsolo community in Malawi has always been a man; he has supported the development of the community and its school, but it was noted that having only male chiefs created difficulties in involving women in the development of the community: women were not attending meetings and were not fully participating in the development of the school. Faced with this problem, Bambino Foundation had a conversation with the chief about empowering women. **These fruitful exchanges led the community to decide to select a female chief who would work hand-in-hand with the male chief.**



After electing a female chief, the community noticed that the number of women attending meetings increased. The community school teacher also observed that the number of children went from 30 to 104 in a short period of time. **The newly elected chief helped the community understand the importance of early childhood education.**

**The women have also started to get involved in the development of the community by sharing responsibilities.** They arrive in the morning to clean around the school, they draw water for the students to wash their hands and drink, they make bricks and paint the school. As a result of the women's involvement, the community plans to build more school buildings and a house for the teachers, and to create a food program to which community members will contribute maize, soya and groundnuts that the women will take turns cooking.



# “IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BOTH THE WOMAN AND THE MAN TO RAISE A SUCCESSFUL FAMILY”



**A few years ago, a group of PSA participants from the Naminya community in Uganda committed themselves, with the support of our partner Kimanya-Ngeyo Foundation, to promoting the well-being of their society.** They were inspired by their tutor and by various PSA program documents and other texts, such as newspaper excerpts. They were assisted by farmers and community members who also participated in this effort to bring about positive change in their community.

Through the many meetings, the women of the Naminya PSA group are engaged in meaningful conversations and have adopted a lifestyle that continues to improve their lives. **These discussion spaces allow them to address topics such as how to help their children develop intellectually, morally and spiritually.**

Thanks to the members of the PSA groups, children's classes have been created, which have improved their education and allowed the women to participate even more in the community. **They have also initiated many projects in the field of agriculture.** They have created collective gardens where they grow tomatoes and bananas, and have started individual projects such as pig and chicken farms, which have increased their income.

**Similarly, small savings groups have been encouraged by the women of Naminya, spearheaded by the PSA members.** These savings groups allow women to save small amounts according to their individual incomes. Small loans are thus granted with low interest to those who wish to improve their small businesses and projects. This activity has really helped them to improve their lives and increase their incomes.

The PSA program also raises awareness of gender equality and the importance of women developing their qualities and skills. Today, women in the Naminya community explain:

*“We have learned that for the community to develop, it starts with us, so whatever information and knowledge we gain, we disseminate to the community through conversations. **During the few months of the pandemic, it was important to educate the community on how to keep their family members healthy, including eating a balanced diet and washing their hands.** As women, we have learned that **it is the responsibility of both the woman and the man to raise a successful family, so we don't just wait for the men to support the household alone.** We have developed different qualities and skills. We can say that our lives have improved greatly.”*



## “START WITH LITTLE AND ADVANCE LITTLE BY LITTLE”: KELLY'S STORY



Kelly lives in the community of Los Monos, in the municipality of Lorica, Colombia, where our partner FUNDAEC implements the PSA program. She is 25 years old and is part of the PSA group for which her older sister is the tutor.

**She started raising chickens a year and a half ago. This experience has given her the technical and administrative skills to support the project.** She also had the support of her family, who worked as a team so that everyone could benefit from the fruits of this labor.

Unfortunately, the project was abandoned due to rising costs and unstable weather. Kelly decided to start two new activities: pig farming and a store. Both activities are doing well and serving the community by providing food and meeting some of the needs of the people:

*“I decided to create a small store, because my*

*neighborhood did not have one that was accessible to people, and so I could provide basic products to families. It's a great experience because I see that everyone benefits, since they don't have to travel to buy certain things. **Little by little, with the profits, I was able to invest and expand my store and meet the basic needs of the community. I have had the store and the pigs for more than a year now, and my wish is to continue and to teach others by example that one can start with little and advance little by little.***

*Currently, I have invested my own funds and I have a small loan from the bank that I am about to finish paying back. With the profits from these two projects and the help of my husband, we were able to buy a motorcycle, because we needed this means of transportation for errands. Later on, we plan to build our own house and expand the store to offer more products to the community.*

*There are several reasons why I decided to start these initiatives. One was seeing others who have gone through the PSA program create their businesses and do very well. The second was the need to earn money, because I didn't have a job and neither did my husband. We realized that it was viable to start our own business, even if it was small, and that we could earn money to help us meet our household expenses. **The third was to develop skills that I didn't think I had, which were hidden inside me because of fear and lack of experience.***

*Thank God, I can attest that if you want to do something, you can. There is no excuse for not starting a business in the community. There is a lot to do, and we need to take action and take the first steps to start our own business and contribute to the economy of all.”*



In 2021, Unity Foundation, in collaboration with the European Business University (EBU) in Luxembourg, organized a series of online workshops over three weeks for young African students. On this occasion, Unity Foundation encouraged the students to share the lessons learned from the workshops with members of their community through discussions, actions or artistic expressions. Nabalayo Khameme, a Nigerian student, wrote this poem to share her thoughts.

**To each their own?**

Challenges, concerns, cries, crimes, continue to crush us  
 Carrying each the loads of many sources, places and people  
 To tell, or not to tell, share, they say, it becomes a solution  
 Take none for granted, or hostage, but listen, feel, and embrace.  
 Choice there is always a Choice

**We are all from everywhere, someone, somewhere, and somethings**  
**A people enjoyed by shared experiences of the globe together as one,**  
**That a few find some raised ground, is not enough, we must face head**  
**on that which ails us**

**Forget not where we emerge from, where we lay to rest, and the needs**  
**to uplift**  
 Choice there is always a Choice

Within sacrifices our opportunities are born  
 Within our privileges are choices to elevate others  
 Choices are grown and harnessed in sacrifice and privilege  
 Size, time, portions and numbers not a factor  
 Choice there is always a Choice

**Speak we must even when the fear rages on**  
**Change, can only find a home where voices rise to be heard**  
**In singular action like collected dew, ripple effects turn into a stream**  
**Act! Even when single, alone and outnumbered**  
 Choice there is always a Choice

Many beautiful hearts float around the air  
 Tap into the beauty of the faces that bear the hearts  
 Act more from the place of humanity rather than the place of gender  
 To all, our rights emerge, like it is to take in oxygen we are all the same  
 Choice there is always a Choice

**To serve, embrace it as a way of life**  
**A lifestyle of service a choice, privilege and a sacrifice**  
**Strength is drawn in taking your decisions now, Act! Now!**  
 Choice there is always a Choice!

*Nabalayo Khameme – December 2021*

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- Actions
- Community
- Development
- Equality
- Teacher
- Girls
- Program
- Responsibility
- Agriculture
- Rights
- School
- Emancipation
- Women
- Independence
- Projects
- Sisterhood





# WORK IN PROGRESS 2022

The year 2022 promises to be a busy one at Unity Foundation!

Unity Foundation now supports six partners on three continents. All our activities in Luxembourg and internationally will be summarized in our 2021 annual report which will be published soon and will be available on our website. Do not hesitate to contact us by email if you wish to receive a printed version.

In Luxembourg, Unity Foundation is preparing to conduct new workshops in schools, in the context of the OWODOF consortium and with the support of May Taherzadeh, the director of the short film Mercy's Blessing. The Southern FilmFestival will resume soon and we hope to see you at one of its events.

See you soon!

## EVERY DONATION COUNTS!



### OUR BANK ACCOUNTS

CCPL: IBAN LU03 1111 1326 8384 0000

BIL: IBAN LU39 0028 1030 9750 0000

BCEE: IBAN LU33 0019 3755 0535 4000

As Unity Foundation is an NGO accredited by the MFEA, **all donations made in our favour are tax deductible.**

Each contribution, no matter how small or large, helps us to support our partners in carrying out their education projects.

### WHERE TO FIND US?

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## VIREMENT

Un caractère MAJUSCULE (BLEU ou NOIR) ou signé par case en cas d'écriture manuscrite

Code BIC de la banque du bénéficiaire <b>B I L L L U L L</b>	EUR ou	Montant
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