



UGANDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAMME

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THE 2-GENERATIONS APPROACH TO EDUCATION



Children and their parents making home visions



A student facilitating during parents workshop

Definition: The 2Generation Approach is a process of facilitating functional literacy as a collaborative venture between the girl child/student at the URDT Girls School with her parents or guardian. It is a non-formal arrangement in which at every beginning and end of term the parents are exposed to what their children learnt during that period and select themes which are useful for generating action plans for home transformation.

Background:

The URDT Girls School invented the 2GA as a model to education in 2002 as a departure from specialized learning in which fundamentals that enable dignified life are not care to education viz VALUES, VIRTUES, PRINCIPLES as key resources. It offers a series of interconnected activities to enable the students become all-round visionary leaders in their homes and communities. The school has a clear aspiration for leadership development of the girl child: she has the opportunity to start at primary five, all the way to university level and from the basics of these fundamentals to the advanced at African Rural University. The parents and students are introduced to principles of System Thinking-the intra and interconnectedness within and between development disciplines of agriculture, health, environment, economics, peace and democracy. That way they also appreciate their role in community governance and often over time they offer leadership to transform their communities.

Although URDT has other institutions of learning, the 2 Generations Development Model was designed to:

- a) Benefit members of households that are social economically disadvantaged in society. One girl child is selected from the family out of many children not going to school. The selection criteria are rigorous. On admission to the school the child and her parents are invited for a week's orientation in mindset change. What is stressed is that poverty, powerlessness and hopelessness are not biological but ideological-social economic construct that is imposed on a section of people to make them live by fate. The second point is to let them know that they have the innate power and wisdom which they can tap on to transform their quality of life and that of their households.

- b) Create a mental picture of the life they want and that of the household. There are methods and techniques for developing a clear picture of what they want. It is called a mind map. They discuss in pairs using the test question: IS THIS WHAT WE TRULY WANT? If the answer is yes, then they agree that what they have in mind and on paper is what they want TO CREATE TOGETHER. They then draw the picture on a paper (manila or newsprint) for further reference
- c) Next, they together look at what they have (Current Reality-accurate description of what is: including the good and bad) in relation to what they want. They then see and appreciate the discrepancy or difference
- d) These two elements create a structure of relationship called Structural Tension-triggering the desire to take action for the tension to be resolved
- e) They look at the actions they will take to resolve this tension i.e., move from the state they are progressively to the desired state (vision which is the pull force rather than the problem)
- f) The consensus is (preferred rather than agreement) between the child/student on the vision, current reality and actions to be taken leads to ask for roles and due dates for each action

At this stage of collaboration to create a better life at the household level spells a shift from the DOMINANCY to PARTNERSHIP relationship a resource which is absent in a patriarchal set up. As it is well known, the girl child is normally at the lower rung of the family ladder. In this model she becomes **an epicentre** for change. The same process is transferred home to engage with other siblings to enrol onto the vision initiated by the girl child at school and her parents. The family members, depending on the evolved capacities of each, contribute to the realization of the family vision a basic aligned production unit. This is an example of a CARING ECONOMY IDEOLOGY

“Awakening the sleeping genius in each of us” is the motto of the Uganda Rural Development and Training program (URDT) since its inception in 1987. URDT’s mission is to enable the people of Uganda to create for themselves, peace, prosperity, health, freedom, and happiness. We are aware that though socially marginalized, the poor have innate power, wisdom and ability that they can tap to transform the quality of life and that of their communities. Therefore, well and above introducing them to principles of creating, we look at production, productivity issues, sanitation, hygiene, nutrition, marketing and environmental concerns especially climate change and restoration of damaged environments. These domains become a basis for developing projects which we call **Back Home Projects**. These are developed during the learning period of students and their parents to become family projects for improved standard of living. Instead of being looked at as projects of the school going girl, they are looked at as family projects which other members manage while the student is at school

URDT aims at developing a pool of value driven educated female leaders who are committed to take up transformational roles. The students learn to become socio – economic change makers in their homes and communities and as such get prepared for future leadership. In this approach, the students and their parents/guardians learn together, develop a shared vision for their home, apply systems thinking and plan for actionable steps together

By using the 2GA to education, the schools specifically aim at:

- i) the parents and guardians to increase their desire to learn and improve their quality of life
- ii) their children to participate in the development of their home without fear of child labour and to shift the thinking that children will be useful only after they finish their studies and have become adults
- iii) evolving leadership capacities of the child to create aspired conditions based on the shared vision and values and skills of both the child and her parents
- iv) Providing a demonstration effect. Over the years URDT noted that the parents in rural communities did not look at investment in girl child education as worthwhile. Throughout her learning period she is translating theory into marketable innovations and products. That is the poor households will seriously invest in their girls’ education by seeing others enjoying concrete returns to that investment- almost right from the first day the girl enters the school, changes at home are evidenced as the children study.
- v) Parent take on a different relational role of mentoring rather than managers and administrators as they practice in real life: the Principles of Creating, Systems Thinking and the five pillars of Sustainable Development.

- vi) The home offers an experience of rural community engagement that is essential for bonding with community members.
- vii) Evolution of voice among the voiceless and emergence of leadership from the marginalized members of society.

It is important to note that the 2GA promotes academic success as well as skills development for the girl students and parents. It enhances household cooperation as parents see the girls as valuable resource persons. The school's educational approach bolsters gender equality, sustainable agriculture, health, prosperity, peace, freedom and happiness in the students' homes and communities.

STRATEGIES USED / INTERVENTIONS BY THE URDT SCHOOLS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE STUDENTS, THEIR HOMES AND COMMUNITIES.

- 1. The school's inborn co – curricular programme.** Besides the national curriculum, URDT schools offer an integrated student development-oriented curriculum that aims at educating the students on development management, their rights and obligations and supports their physical, emotional, spiritual and mental development and well-being. The methods include; debates, essay writing, art and crafts, physical education, music, dance and drama, games and sports and agribusiness practices and ICT. The subjects focus on providing the students with life skills and knowledge on leadership, gender responsiveness, hygiene and nutrition, maintaining physical and psychological health among others.
- 2. End of term learning weeks.** We organise every term at least one learning project with the aim to enable the student think beyond topics in class and relate them to their own world, hence become better life managers. The teaching is done around a relevant and inspiring theme. The end of term learning weeks starts with the teacher's development workshop which lasts for five days, teachers train the learners for five days and the learners train their parents on the day of closure of each term.
- 3. Home development activities/ training of parents and guardians.** We promote learning for the two generations and therefore also train the parents and guardians and support them to develop their life purpose and skills through parents workshops. There are two types of parent workshops;

one is to educate the parents what the students have learned during the term and can be applied in their home situation. These workshops are held at the end of the term and are facilitated by the students and the parents take the role of the students. They teach parents about development-oriented issues based on the relevant and inspiring theme. They teach parents about development related issues like nutrition, sustainable farming methods, home sanitation, personal hygiene, appropriate technologies and effective leadership among others.

Other parents workshops are meant to address specific training needs of parents and guardians and are facilitated by the School Community Development Officer with support from the extension staff of URDT. They are decentralised as opposed to centralised conducted in one of the homes in each sub county.

- 4. Back home projects.** BHPs are a number of interconnected activities carried out in the homes of the students over a period of time with the aim to improve their standards of living and relationships. BHPs are part of the 2GA to facilitate transformation. They are one of the URDT schools' strategies for ensuring transformation in the homes of the students and provide them with leadership skills. Hence BHPs serve a dual purpose; i) at the level of the individual student (improve their leadership skills and become facilitators of change/change makers; ii) at the level of their homes (home improvement).

The URDT schools do not promote a blue – print for BHPs. We rather enlighten the students and homes on the possible types of projects they can embark on and encourage them to choose and design projects that tally with

their vision and values, assessment of the current reality, their opportunities, resources, talents combined with knowledge on development issues and home transformation processes. Examples of BHPs include:

- **Economic development:** projects aimed at improved farming methods, food security and stable income
- **Personal development and physical care:** self-awareness projects, nutrition and food security, sanitation and hygiene, prevention of early pregnancies, HIV and AIDS.
- **Socio – political development:** creating, respectful, loving and gender conscious relationships and human rights
- **Appropriate technologies:** learning to make energy saving equipment, bathrooms, drying racks, rain water harvesting, appropriate latrines among others. We expect that the students' communities will also develop as a result of role modeling.

5. **Home mentorship.** Each teacher is assigned a specific number of students together with their homes to mentor. The teacher ensures that the students and their home members have adequate guidance through physical visits and virtual engagements using e-learning. Students and their home members receive extra guidance on the visionary approach in relation to back home projects for health, peace, freedom, prosperity and happiness.
6. **Community development activities.** We organise community-oriented projects and consciousness raising campaigns on development related issues and advocacy that focus on political, social and economic spheres to include; popular theatre on corruption, domestic violence, girl child education. The students become trainers and facilitators of change through MDD, role plays and poems. The students also do consciousness rising through organising and moderating radio programmes on the URDT's Kagadi Kibaale Community Radio – KKCR. Through this exposure, the students improve their leadership and communication skills.
7. **From fragmented to continuum of learning.** URDT pays attention to both the form and substance of education so that there is build up of knowledge, skills and mind set with evolving capacities. At lower classes, the child learns basics of creating and systems thinking. At advanced level they dive deeper into the mechanics, orientation and spirit of creating and model development by looking at different archetypes for developing effective interventions

Education for Rural Transformation Value Chain

The URDT Schools enable young women from the community to access the 2 Generations Approach to education. It enables girls to become visionary leaders and change makers in their homes. After completing Advanced-levels, they join the University. After graduation, they go back to communities as Rural Transformation Specialists to work with the communities through the Epicentre strategy. As co-creators, the graduates also give feedback on the relevancy and application of competencies gained and do participatory action research. The model homes of the URDT Girls School students host ARU students during their field practicum and internship for mentorship on the journey to become rural transformation specialists.

