



PFR SIE-30670

Education: Tailoring and hairdressing training for young women regarding self-sufficiency in Tororo, Uganda - 2025

Project information

Structure	Kolding
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Project title	Education: Tailoring and hairdressing training for young women regarding self-sufficiency in Tororo, Uganda - 2025
Project start date	01/01/2025
Project end date	31/12/2025
Project location	Uganda
Soroptimist Partners (Union, Club, Single Club)	Rodding-Gram-Toftlund Birkerød Brande Sønderborg Odense Bogense/Nordfyn Denmark Esbjerg Varde Grindsted-Billund Tonder Kerteminde Ringsted Aabenraa Vejen
External partner (NGOs, companies, local government, etc.)	SI Tororo - Uganda – SIAF (Afrikanske Federation) CISU - Civil Society in Development in Denmark

Programme objectives

Economic empowerment
Education
Environmental sustainability
Health (including water and food security)
Violence against women and children

The story of your project

Please summarise your project in some sentences:

Young women in rural Uganda gain tailoring skills, empowering them with tools for financial independence, better health, and self-reliance, driving sustainable growth.

Why did your club / union choose to do this project?

The project idea was initiated in 2019 at a Soroptimist visit to Uganda concerning another project. The tailor training center is placed in a rural area in a village "Kisoko Dida" in the Southeastern part of Uganda. The poverty is high, and often girls and women drop out of school early due to family poverty, teenage marriage and/or pregnancy. Further, often the girls are removed from school due to lack of money in their families for i.e., material, schoolbooks, school uniforms and because they must stay at home to help support the families with babysitting younger siblings, house- and/or fieldwork.

In general, the level of education – especially among women and girls – is rather low and their future prospect is poverty/high degree of poverty if nothing is done. Further there is little access to health services and care for the women and their children.

The project is based on a very close partnership with SI Tororo, Uganda and a Danish steering group of 5 soroptimist from the Danish District 2 (the south of Denmark). The project is financially supported in 2025 by 13 Danish clubs and in 2024 by two additional Danish clubs as well as by the Danish Union and additional external funding from CISU - Civil Society in Development in Denmark.

The project is based upon all the 5 focus areas of the SIE organization, but especially:

- Education
- Empowerment of women
- Health & Food Safety
- Violence against women
- Sustainability

And the UN Sustainable Development Goals:

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- 4. Quality Education
- 1. No Poverty
- 2. Zero Hunger
- 5. Gender Equality
- 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
- 10.Reduced Inequalities
- 17.Partnership for the goals

How did you implement this project? What concrete actions did you take to tackle the issue you mentioned in the previous question?

The project demonstrates how education can transform lives and pave the way to achieve financial, social independence and empowerment.

The education project has completed five training courses since the end of 2021 – the first two as pilot projects. For further details look at (SIE-20527 – 1 st PFR) and (SIE-22657 – 2 nd PFR) and (SIE 25843 – 3 rd PFR) and (SIE-27985 – 4 rd PFR).

The 5' part-project – 5 th intake – has now been completed in 2025 and is described in this focus report.

The purpose of the education project is to train young women to become tailors, so that they will be able to support themselves with their new skills.

Tailoring training

The women receive training from professional tailoring instructors during a 6-8 months education course. The course starts with basic education in sewing techniques and the correct use of sewing machines following more advanced sewing techniques with the goal to enabling the trainees to sew i.e., school uniforms and clothes for sales. The women are educated in the use of ordinary, non-electrical treadle sewing machines. At the end of the school year, some students' practical skills were evaluated. Three teachers and one guard are employed in the education project.

At the tailoring school, they learn how to make uniforms, dresses and bags. The fact that the girls sew uniforms for themselves gives them sewing skills but also more self-esteem and joy. They are proud of their fine uniform. When they go to school, they gain some skills and they feel that they can contribute to the family and to the community. It gives them dignity and confidence.

Some students are approached by neighbors or their family members and asked to make school uniforms for their brothers and sisters or clothes and dresses for their mother and sisters. It is a great gain and support for the family.

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Hairdressing training

A pilot project has been initiated with a new education track in 2025, this track runs in parallel with the tailor education. The hairdressing education can include students with less good numeracy skills. The education has also been in great demand by the students.

The young hairdressing students are very young girls aged 14-18, some are young mothers or pregnant women.

Things have been purchased for the hairdressing profession such as hairdressing chairs, "Practice heads", hair remedies such as hair, braids, combs, hair treatment e.g. oils for hair treatment.

Initially, they are introduced to the different topics and hair style as well as equipment before practicing with chemicals.

The girls practice braiding techniques and different hairstyles on their classmates. This allows them to follow their previous presentation, make adjustments and improve their skills. The students also use "Practice heads" in their lessons. The lessons are primarily held outdoors as the floor in the room is dusty.

In addition, all students receive training in marketing, sales economics, and personal empowerment. They are guided in the possibility to and how to establish their own tailoring or hairdresser business or together with others. They also discuss the students' lifestyles, their menstruation, how they generate income, and how they support their education and family.

In Intake 5, 39 students have started the tailor education and 16 students the hairdressing education. 30 out of 39 tailor trainees and 8 out of 16 hairdresser trainees finished the training successfully.

The students are offered either porridge or a meal for lunch during the training course. Daily meals for mothers and children as well as the opportunity to have the children looked after by a local soroptimist have contributed to calm teaching, to increased participation and to lower dropout

rates. For some of the students, the meal offered is the only meal of the day.

When the course is completed, SI-Tororo organizes a ceremony where those who have completed receive a certificate of completed education. The certification ceremony, which is a day of celebration for the entire village, is attended by top officials and women from the Local Community, the teachers, parents and families of the students, the village and children.

The steering committee visited the Education Centre in Tororo on a trip in 2024. The trip was paid for by the steering committee's own funds. We exchanged experiences with the Soroptimists in Tororo, audited the project in terms of finances and content, heard about their challenges, participated in meetings and conversations with students and teachers, with decision-makers and representatives from the local authorities as well as Soroptimists in Tororo and other Soroptimist clubs in Uganda. On this visit, we participated in the certification ceremony, where we also mentioned that many clubs raised funds for the project.

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The Education Center

Generally, the center is now well known for its existence and its work over the past 5 years in providing and supporting women and girls, to such an extent that the local community protects it. The education has been embraced by the local community, this time it is fully enrolled, and the students are very interested.

For the local community, the center provides an opportunity for girls and young women to acquire skills for independence and development and the opportunity to contribute to their family in terms of health, education, food and necessities, and also become independent.

The education has been a contributing factor in reducing domestic violence and has directly improved the living conditions for the young girls and women and their families. Therefore, the focus areas on violence against women has been added.

The acceptance and interest of the local City Council is of great importance, as its involvement is essential for such an educational project to be a success.

$(13+35+36+25 + 5. \text{ Intake}(30+8) = 109+5. \text{ Intake}(30+8))$ - det giver 147

Quote from the final report from SI Tororo: "A lot has been achieved from the skills attained. Some girls have got their own business started, others have been supported by their spouses and others have been employed in workshops evidenced by the participation of parents and community expressing the value of the experience with their daughters' support, responsibility in the family and that life has not remained the same."

A total of 147 students have now completed the training in Tororo from the beginning with the first pilot project in 2021/2022. Of these, 139 have become tailors and 8 have become hairdressers.

Organisation and communication

The project is run by a steering group of 5 Soroptimist members from Denmark. SI Tororo coordinates all the practical work locally and looks after- and guides the girls. Some girls living far away are even taken in by local soroptimists.

We regularly receive documentation reports from SI Tororo. In those, we get information about the progress, the teaching and the women's experience and progress with their education. In the reports we can read that the women and girls change their perception of themselves i.e. through these quotes: "From nobody to a tailor" and "from nothing to something".

We are working on hiring a coordinator to facilitate operations and communication with us, the steering group.

Additional funding – CISU Denmark

With the approval of the SI Danish Union which is a member of CISU, the steering group had applied CISU for funding and in May 2024 the project was granted by funding from CISU for the coming years until the end of 2026. Out of a total budget of approx. DKK 370.000 CISU has granted 199.280 DKK or approx. 26.400 EUR.

It is with humility that we receive this support for the project, but we have experienced on our visit to Tororo that this project can to some extent be the only opportunity a young woman has to achieve a better future.

CISU Civil Society in Development is Denmark's largest member-based organisation for organisations engaged in global civil society work. Our members collaborate with local partners worldwide to advance a more just world.

CISU manages on behalf of entities such as the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs pools for funding that they are available for Danish civil society organisations, and most projects and interventions must be carried out in partnership with a local civil society partner, in our case a partnership with SI Tororo.

CISU in the World - Funding

<https://cisu.dk/en/cisu-in-the-world/>

<https://cisu.dk/en/funding/>

Did you encounter any problems in organising or running your project?

A

We find that both the steering committee and the leader (including the group behind her) of the project in Uganda want to progress and are visionary in relation to the project's future. However, the local project manager in Uganda has difficulty in getting claims sorted in time in relation to signatures, copies of expenses, etc., and thus the project is delayed, as we withhold payments until the requested documentation has been delivered.

In addition, it is experienced that communication is sometimes hampered by language problems and cultural understanding. English is spoken, but not always clearly, and therefore we do not know if everything is understood as it was intended. We therefore have a lot of written communication and are constantly working to improve this, among other things, we are working to establish regular Whats app meetings.

The project manager has many tasks, including project related as well as long distances between residence and training center. At the beginning of the project, communication went quickly and satisfactorily, but we have to acknowledge that "things take time". Long distances, insecure infrastructure and a lack of opportunities for electronic communication in many places in Uganda are major contributors to this.

B

Providing a continued meal-program also in 2025 has proven successful and is essential for maintaining a positive and productive learning environment for the girls and women.

C

Access to electricity and lighting is crucial for both education, educational opportunities and the safety of women in the area. We had an expectation that solar energy / solar cells would be the way forward, but it has turned out that it is currently not possible to have solar cells repaired in the area. Therefore, the goal is to install traditional power supply, which in Uganda is 100% hydroelectric generated.

D

There is a critical need for startup capital to support graduates, as well as follow-up initiatives to ensure long-term success post-graduation.

E

It remains a concern to ensure the safety of the classroom with the sewing machines and barber chairs and to protect our investment. The classroom lacks a solid floor to protect the machines and chairs from dust. Finally, part of the roof is missing to protect against rainwater and to ensure proper lighting so that the students can see the sewing work and hairdressing.

F

The girls safety and focus on education are challenged. The young men in the district have no work. This means that the young men hang out around the school and disrupt the girls schooling. There is a risk of early pregnancy and early marriage. The fact that the boys/men are not employed contributes to the fact that many of the girls/women have to support the entire family. In addition, a lot of alcohol is consumed by some of the boys/men, which breeds violence.

How did you solve this problem? What did your club/union learn from solving these problems that you would like to share with others Soroptimists who might find themselves in the same situation?

A

As a result of the situation and learned from previous good experiences from another project in Uganda, we will hire a local female daily operations manager for the project. The project position is time-limited, evaluation of employment will take place after 3 and 6 months. This should provide the desired progress. The operations manager must have experience with both finance and communication as well as volunteer work. The operations manager reports to our project manager, and secondarily to the Danish group.

B

The project has raised funds to continue the food program in 2025. Daily meals for mothers and children as well as the opportunity to have the children cared for by a local soroptimist have contributed to increased participation and lower drop-out rates. This gives students peace and time to focus on the lesson.

Si Tororo reports "The request for porridge come up to help the children who could make a lot of noise when hungry. Now the parents are free to work hard as children play around."

C

The rule is that you have to pay for electricity to be brought to the village in question from the nearest electricity mast – in our case about 5 km, as well as connection, after which the electricity company is responsible for repairs and renewals of the power infrastructure. The budget for power installation is around 24 million Ugandan shilling (DKK 48,000). So far, we have paid 6 million Ugandan shillings (DKK 12,000) to start the project and received a commitment from CISU that we can convert the 9 million Ugandan shillings (DKK 17,000) allocated to solar power for conventional electricity supply. In Uganda, the project have to raise 9 million Ugandan shillings (DKK 17,000) themselves, and SI District 2 will then pay the remaining few thousand DKK. All amounts from Uganda are subject to exchange rate fluctuations.

D

During our visit in 2024, the municipality informed us that they would offer students a small start-up loan. The project has also provided starting materials to selected candidates. We can also offer starter kits to students when they complete the course.

E

In 2025, the school and the local community took steps to secure the building with windows and doors, but work must continue on establishing the floor and securing the roof.

F

The local community must find projects that can support the boys with activities and or learning such as welding, carpentry, bricklaying and others. When the boys are employed, it reduces conflicts and the boys' idle time, which is unproductive. This reduces or eliminates the boys' safety risk to the girls and increases the girls' time and learning at school.

On our trip in 2024, we arranged for the municipality to get in touch with an NGO that is working with learning projects for boys.

Did the members of your club/union consider this project a success?

The Danish Soroptimists proudly celebrate a project that demonstrates how education can transform lives and pave the way to empowerment. In Kisoko Dida, a rural village in Tororo, Uganda, young women are gaining not only tailoring and hairdresser skills but also the confidence and independence to build brighter futures for themselves and their families.

Initiated through close collaboration with SI Tororo, Uganda, and supported by Soroptimist International Denmark with 16 Soroptimist clubs from Denmark in southern Jutland and Fyn in Denmark (district 2), as well as several Danish clubs outside district 2 this project has become a beacon of hope for girls and women too often denied educational opportunities due to poverty, early marriage, or teenage pregnancy.

Communication about the project

The steering committee keeps the participating Danish SI clubs updated on the status of the project with Newsletters. 12 newsletters have been published so far.

The steering committee also holds lectures in interested clubs and at public lectures around the country, where knowledge about and work with the educational project is disseminated.

It also gives the supporting Danish SI clubs security in the process when the cooperation across continents is founded on SI-values.

In September, SI-Europe has chosen to submit the project to SI to have it published in the UN in connection with the holding of The International Day of the Girlchild 11.10.2025

<https://www.un.org/en/observances/girl-child-day>

The education project was awarded the Best Practice Award for 2025 by SI Denmark, as the project met the 6 criteria set. The project is well described, is based on the focus areas of Education, Empowerment and Health, and supports a number of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Project results

Our project's main target were:

Girls

Women

Budget - Global project estimate?

10'700 €

How many people benefited from your project in total?

60

trainees, teachers, soroptimists, girls sewing uniforms

How much money did you raise?

12'935 €

How many hours have you spent to achieve this project?

750

The steering group has used approximately 750 hours on managing the project this year including reporting to CISU and project related work.

Supporting material

Images







