



PATHFINDER

REV XAVIER GRACE TINO

An advocate for girl-child education

Rev Xavier Grace Tino is a Home Economics teacher at Iganga Senior Secondary School. She has taught for 17 years and through her platforms of teaching and preaching, she has managed to advocate for girl-child education and justice for women.

BY DORCUS MURUNGI
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When you meet Rev Xavier Grace Tino, you may not believe the hardships she faced growing up in an area that was plagued with rebel activity.

But the jolly Home Economics teacher at Iganga Senior Secondary School says her calling was greatly molded by the circumstances that surrounded her as she grew up.

"I grew up in a turbulent period where we were squeezed by Uganda People's Army rebels and then the Lord's Resistance Army insurgency and Karimong cattle rustlers. We partly lived in Internally Displaced People's camps. Money was never available. Poverty and looting were the order of the day. My adolescent life was overwhelming and confusing. I do not wish any child to go through what I did," she says.

Because of some of the injustices she saw as a child, she has, in her 17 years of teaching made it a point to advocate for justice and girl-child education through her platforms of classroom and the pulpit.

Tino the advocate

Rev Tino says our community is still marred by unfair treatment of women and girls.

"I am disturbed by what the



Rev Xavier Grace Tino, a Home Economics teacher at Iganga Senior Secondary School, says she finds satisfaction in advocating for the girl-child. PHOTOS BY DORCUS MURUNGI

WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT REV TINO



"Rev Tino is a good counsellor and mentor for many students. Her motherly instincts have been felt as she has often supported the girls and fellow teachers."

**TEDDY NABIRYE, TEACHER IGANGA
SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL**



"I have witnessed her take keen interest in the girl-child. She has many times used her personal testimony and experiences to encourage, guide, counsel and motivate girls facing problems."

PETER OTIM, COLLEAGUE

EDUCATION

Rev Grace Tino started school at Kumi Primary School until 1989, joined Ngora High School in 1990 for high school. She joined National Teachers College, Nkozi and graduated with a diploma in secondary education. She graduated with a Bachelor's of Education in Vocational Studies from Kyambogo University in 2007 and Masters in Divinity from Uganda Christian University, Mukono in 2009.

girls go through! The public judges women harshly. When the husband loves his wife, the community imagines she is using witchcraft to seduce him. When marriage fails, the woman has contributed greatly to it. When a man commits adultery, the wife has failed to satisfy him. When a couple fails to get a child, then the woman is the cause. When a teenager gets pregnant, then the mother has not taught her good manners. Why should a woman always get judged like this?" she asks.

She says it is due to this discrimination that she uses her profession as a teacher and also preacher to campaign against these injustices every time she gets an opportunity.

"One of my students was contemplating running away from her home because of the trouble she said her parents were giving her and her parents did not understand her. I counselled the two parties until they reconciled and the parents continued paying for her education. I have also occasionally used the pulpit to raise funds to support needy girls in school with scholastic materials and their other special requirements," she explains.

Education background

Rev Tino started school at Kumi Primary School until 1989, after which she joined Ngora High School in 1990 for her high school. She joined National Teachers College, Nkozi and graduated with a diploma in secondary education.

She later joined Kyambogo University and graduated with a Bachelor's of Education in Vocational Studies in 2007.

After two years of service, she joined Uganda Christian University, Mukono in 2009, where she obtained a masters in Divinity.

The Rev Tino is also a family woman. She is married to David Okedi, with whom they have three children. "God has blessed us with three children, 16, 15 and eight years," she says.