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ANNUAL
REPORT



Empowering Women to
Influence Legislation & Policy
For Gender Equality in Uganda

www.acfode.org

FOREWORD

It is with great pleasure that I present to you the Annual Report for Action For Development (ACFODE) for the 2016 financial year during which we made a number of particularly notable achievements; such as continual engagement with the legislature to bring about social policy reform; development of local capacity for the implementation of gender-sensitive legislation and tackling of negative cultural practices that result in violence against women (VAW).

We also played an important role in the run-up to the 2016 general elections; whose basis was the awareness that many of the aspiring women candidates needed certain skills to be able to compete effectively in these elections. Hence, we undertook training of the candidates and also organised dialogue meetings aimed at securing their partners' support for their political aspirations.

Another major development was the launch of 2 new projects, namely **“Strengthening Community Participation in Local Governance and Promotion of Women and Girls’ Rights in Lango Sub-region”**, particularly the districts of Amolatar and Oyam, and **“Promoting Positive Socio-cultural Practices”** in rural communities of Kisoro district.

Our crowning achievement in 2016 was holding a **National Women’s Convention** in Gulu under the theme **“Celebrating the Journey of Passion: Taking Stock and Renewing Commitment towards Gender Justice in Uganda”** in commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against VAW. Approximately 800 people hailing from the 5 traditional regions of Uganda took part in this conference; that enhanced the involvement of the rural woman in movement-building, and rejuvenated energies for a new gender equality agenda for the next 10 years. In summary, I believe 2016 was a great year during which we were satisfied with the continuing growth of our organisation.

I therefore hope you find this report both informative and interesting and that it will give you a greater understanding of the work that was undertaken by our organization in the past year. More importantly, I hope that you will gain an appreciation of the challenges faced by the Ugandan women, all of whom face some form of disadvantage in their lives, whether it be financial difficulties, discrimination, and/or abuse.

And as I prepare to hand over the helm to the next chairperson, I must say I greatly enjoyed serving with the ACFODE team and stakeholders during my 3 year term. I wish to express my deepest gratitude and appreciation to them all for their team spirit and unstinting cooperation. I will forever carry the beautiful memories of working with them in my heart.

Florence TayebwaMuhwezi
Chairperson
ACFODE Board of Directors

ACRONYMS

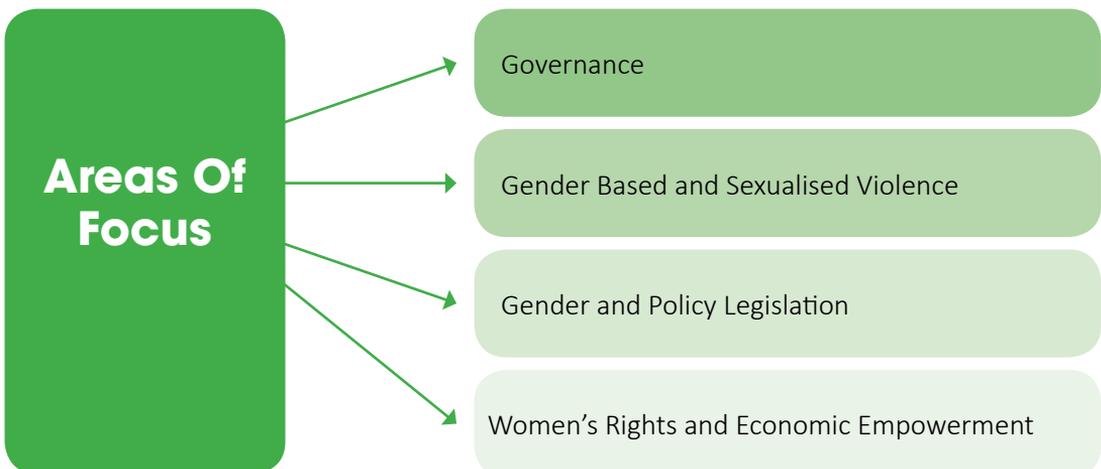
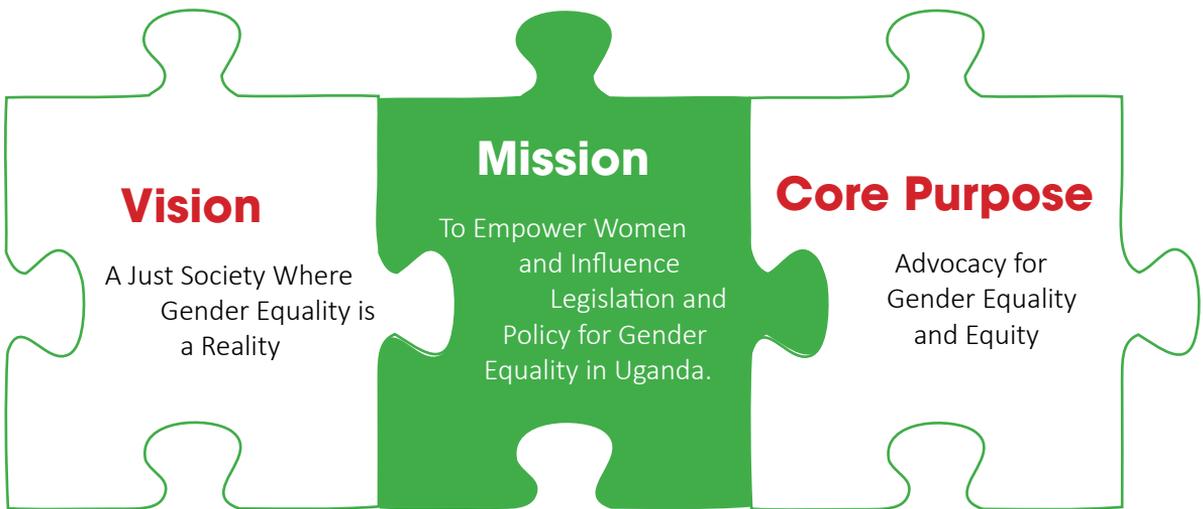
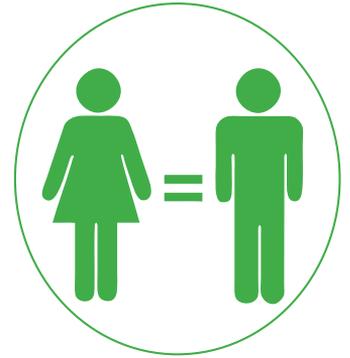
ACFODE	Action For Development
DV	Domestic Violence
Hon.	Honourable
MP	Member of Parliament
CACs	Community Agents of Change
DVA	Domestic Violence Act (2010)
VAW	Violence Against Women
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
JLOS	The Justice, Law, and Order Sector
CFPU	The Child and Family Protection Unit
CIID)	The Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Directorate
DPP	The Directorate of Public Prosecution
EOC	The Equal Opportunities Commission
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
MoETS	Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports
DIS	District Inspectors of Schools
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VET	Village Education Teams
VHT	Village Health Teams
MOH	Ministry of Health
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
EC	The Electoral Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
VSLAs	Village Savings and Loan Associations
CDOs	Community Development Officers
PWDs	Persons With Disabilities
PME	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation
UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
IRCU	Inter-Religious Council Uganda
CCFU	The Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda
ACME	African Centre for Media Excellency
MDAs	Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies
CAOs	Chief Administrative Officers
RDCs	The Resident District Commissioners
MoUs	Memoranda of Understanding
PSWOs	Probation and Social Welfare Officers
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
SCDO	Senior Community Development Officer

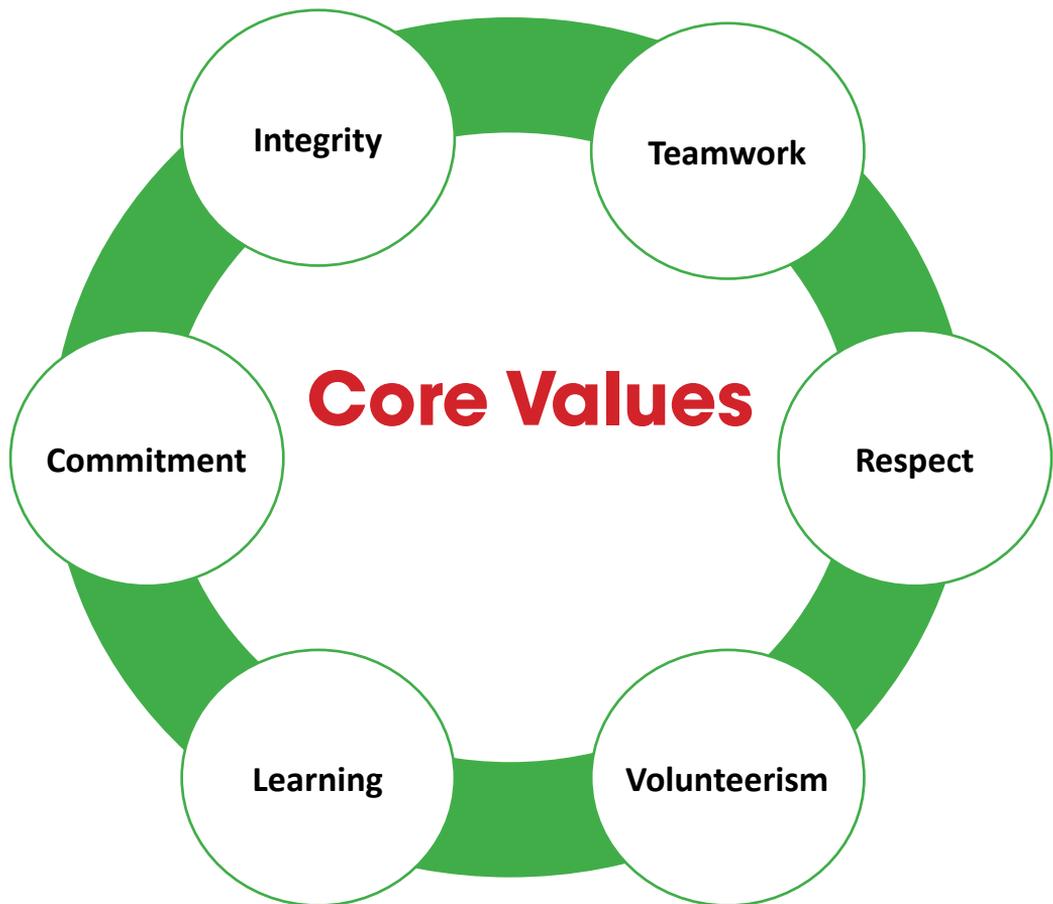
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About Us

ACFODE is an indigenous, voluntary, non- governmental women’s organization founded on November 19th 1985. Its formulation was sparked off by the United Nations third world conference on women in Nairobi in July 1985. With a few women realizing the need for an organized forum that would provide a platform for effective debate and action on issues related to women’s rights, empowerment and gender equality, ACFODE was formed.

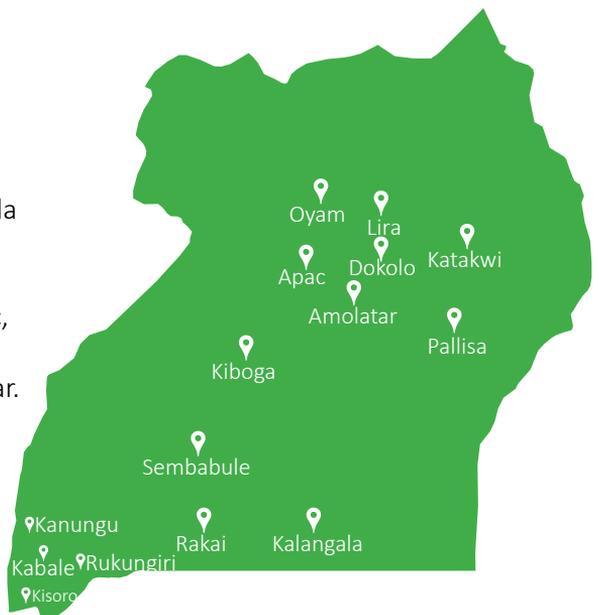




Areas Of Operation

ACFODE is a national organization, whose interventions are implemented by the secretariat based at the head offices in Kampala and her members. , ACFODE has a number of interventions different districts of Uganda namely: Rukungiri, Kisoro, Dokolo, Oyam, Apac, Kanungu, Katakwi, Kiboga, Kabale, Pallisa, Sembabule, Rakai, Kalangala, Lira, and Amolatar.

ACFODE has field offices in the districts of; Kisoro, Oyam, Apac, Dokolo and Amolatar



The Strategies: How We Do It



Research &
Documentation



Capacity Building



Community Mobilisation
& Sensitisation



Partnerships & Linkages



Strategic Engagements

INTRODUCTION

ACFODE's strategic objectives hinge on its vision and mission and thus inform our character, relations and activities. They include: influencing the formulation/review of policy and legislation that effectively promotes gender equality; contributing to effective implementation of gender-responsive laws and policies; contributing to the reduction of socio-cultural practices that cause gender inequalities; and enhancing the capacity of ACFODE for efficient and effective implementation of its mandate.

This annual report therefore sets out the activities and interventions that ACFODE undertook in 2016 and assesses them through the lens of the aforementioned strategic objectives. Much as there were laudable successes, there were challenges too; and it was the awareness of these confronts that energised us to seek out better ways, sometimes necessitating a re-orientation of our methods, to achieve commendable results in 2016.

1

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE INFLUENCING THE FORMULATION/REVIEW OF POLICY AND LEGISLATION THAT EFFECTIVELY PROMOTES GENDER EQUALITY

ACFODE is committed to building a nation devoid of gender discrimination, guaranteeing equal access to political, social and economic wealth creation opportunities for women and men, and developing a culture that places a premium on the protection of all. In furtherance of this goal, ACFODE successfully implemented a number of activities that promoted inclusive development, with a special focus on advocacy for legislation formulation and reform.

Judicial Activism and Social Policy Reform

“People in influential positions also face Domestic Violence (DV) in their homes but are usually afraid to speak out due to fear of being censured. However, organisations such as ACFODE need to reach out to them so that they are enabled to overcome this fear and thereafter share their experiences with people going through the same.” **The Hon. Judith Babirye, Woman MP, Buikwe District.**

ACFODE held a board room meeting with the Parliamentary Committee on Gender. In attendance were the ACFODE Executive Director, staff, district officials from Kisoro, including the Child and Protection Police Officer and representatives of Community Agents of Change (CACs) that were commissioned by ACFODE within the same district.

The meeting brought to the attention of the Parliamentary Committee on Gender the gaps recognized during the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (DVA, 2010) at national and local levels. These include the shortage of direct financial allocations for the DV interventions under different sectors, limited capacity to fully implement DV activities, lack of awareness of the provisions of the DVA among duty bearers across all sectors, social acceptance of Violence Against Women (VAW), and corruption in institutions that provide justice, among others.

A policy brief that outlined the recommendations on how best to address the challenges in the implementation of the DVA (2010) was presented to the committee. Some of the recommendations include widening the resource base for the implementation of the Act, conducting public awareness programmes on DV and the DVA, strengthening the capacity of key institutions to respond to DV as well as budgeting and planning for the translation of the DVA into locally spoken languages to enable the local population to understand the provisions and thereby demand the services from the mandated institutions and stakeholders.

ACFODE staff and members presenting the Gaps in the implementation of DVA (2010) to the Parliament Committee on Gender



The participants included representatives from key line ministries such as the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD), the Justice, Law, and Order Sector (JLOS), the Child and Family Protection Unit (CFPU), the Criminal Investigation and Intelligence Directorate (CIID), the Directorate of Public Prosecution (DPP), the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), members of the DVA Coalition, development partners as well as representatives of the ACFODE CAC. The participants were brought up to speed with the gaps related to the implementation of the DVA (2010) and their recommendations.

Among the key successes registered from the above activities was the need to undertake concerted advocacy efforts towards: a) establishing a Gender-Based Violence (GBV) shelter in Kisoro District that would provide temporary accommodation/shelter for victims of GBV, protection from perpetrators, counselling and legal advice, among other services; and b) submission of a critical analysis of the DVA that would be used by the Parliamentary Committee on Gender to lobby for and advocate financial allocations for the effective implementation of the DVA at the central and local government(s) levels.

ACFODE further engaged the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Sports (MoETS) and that of Health and **presented position papers on the persistent issues affecting the education and health sectors in Kiboga and Oyam Districts.**

The meeting with the MoETS was attended by District Inspectors of Schools (DIS) from Oyam and Kiboga Districts, ACFODE staff and members. The issues discussed included the inadequacy of female teachers in both districts, the absence of school feeding programmes, inadequate classrooms, furniture, latrines and staff houses, delays in the disbursement of Universal Primary Education (UPE) funds and negative community attitudes towards education, especially of the girl child.

A number of recommendations were made that comprised: an increase in the number of staff members in schools, vigorous sensitisation of communities regarding the provisions in the UPE policy about the roles and responsibilities of parents with regard to educating their children, the creation of a synergy between Village Education Teams (VETs) and Village Health Teams (VHT) in the communities to actively participate in monitoring and following up on service delivery of the education and health sectors in their communities.

Minze Richard, a policy analyst in the MoETS, reacts to the discussion during the meeting



On the other hand, the concerns raised at the Ministry of Health (MOH) strategic engagement included: limited space at the outpatient departments in both districts; late disbursement of primary health care funds; limited supply and late delivery of drugs; inadequate staff accommodation; poor staffing; and the challenge of transport for referral cases. The recommendations made were for an increase in staffing; the construction of living quarters for health workers; and making available the required funds and drugs.

As a result of ACFODE's interventions in the two districts, a number of notable changes have been realised at the local level. In Oyam District, for instance, there is an increase in staffing at various health centres, as indicated in the table below. There is also increased community awareness of the available health services. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of pregnant women who seek antenatal care and by progress in the number of children who turn up for immunisation outreach. More people are also accessing health services at government facilities and from the VHTs, unlike before, as they had opted for private clinics.

Health Center	No. of Staff	
	2015	Present
Ngai HC III	9	16
Nsala HCII	2	3
Bulaga HCII	2	3
Kyenkubya HCII	2	3
Lwamata HCIII	8	16

With regard to education, most schools in both districts have embraced school feeding programmes, with parents making contributions, which are either monetary (an agreed amount) or in kind (food items such as maize flour, beans and milk). In Oyam District the schools that have taken on this approach include Abela, Lelapala, Aramita, Ngai and Onekgwok Primary Schools; while in Kiboga

District; Kijumagwa, Kawaawa, Kisweeka, Lwamata Central, Bulaga, Lukuli, Kabanga II, St. Peter's Nsange and Nkuruma Primary Schools. Pupils' school attendance and performance have improved since they now have the energy to study, learn and be physically active.

"I'm a parent with children studying at Kijumagwa Primary School. I had the privilege of attending a grass-roots citizens' conversation facilitated by ACFODE, which gave me a chance to speak to the people present about the importance of school meals. A lot of parents seemed to think that paying school fees was the end of their involvement in their children's schooling; they were under the impression that meals and scholastic materials were taken care of by the government under the UPE programme. Together with the civil society actors, we spoke to the community members, emphasising the importance of regular meals for pupils. The school administrators present also spoke about having some problems with parents who did not want to pay any fees for their children.

From the dialogues, it was resolved that parents pay at least 10,000/- per child to the administration at Kijumagwa Primary School to cater for lunch, with some money being reserved to pay the cooks. This has improved the pupils' health and participation in class and other school-related activities." **Mr Lukyamuzi Isaac, parent, Kiboga District**

Pupils at Kijumagwa Primary School line up for porridge at break time



4

Stakeholder meetings organized, **86** Policy Makers, with women accounting for **46%** engaged.

2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE CONTRIBUTING TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF GENDER-RESPONSIVE LAWS AND POLICIES

Gender inequality affects the quality of lives of millions of girls and women. It encourages income disparities, gender stereotypes, sexism and discrimination in numerous fields such as health, education and politics. It also causes and perpetuates poverty and vulnerability in society as a whole. Furthermore, despite the many tangible benefits gender inequality gives men by way of opening up access to resources, power, authority and control, the men are in a way imprisoned by the masculinity and are sometimes rendered victims of this inequality. Hence, because of the number of people affected and the magnitude of the problems associated with gender inequality, ACFODE took the initiative to promote the equality of all persons, particularly women's rights, through different strategies, consistently deepening and advocating for the implementation of human rights instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the DVA and the Equal Opportunities Act, among others. This is in addition to using powerful mechanisms to motivate and mobilise duty bearers and rights holders, particularly the women. This was done through capacity-building activities targeted at male and female local government officials, female and male politicians and legislators, women public administrators, civil society actors, community leaders and members.

Developing Local Capacity for the Implementation of Gender-Sensitive Legislation

The majority of law enforcers who are supposed to promote justice in homes have challenges in interpreting and implementing different legal frameworks. To address such gaps, ACFODE conducted a series of trainings for 30 Local Council (LC) I chairpersons, and 60 ACFODE CACs on the DVA in Apac District. The trainings empowered the participants to effectively execute their roles as key referral points at village level by increasing their knowledge of DV, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) and the legal framework for SGBV such as the DVA. Consequently, the participants made commitment in terms of action points to address VAW/ in their local communities. The GBV referral pathway in Apac district was also streamlined as a result of the trainings.

The CACs were able to monitor and identify gaps in the implementation of the DVA; these gaps were documented in a policy brief that was disseminated at both district and national levels.

Alongside the above, they conducted community legal sessions at parish level in Kisoro district, reaching a total of 180 community members (105 males, 75 females) during which the participants

were enlightened on the VAW and SGBV legal framework, such as the DVA 2010 (on domestic violence), the 1995 Ugandan Constitution (on the rights of the people), the Penal Code Act (on early marriage and defilement), the Children’s Act, as well as the Land Act and Succession Act (on the property rights of women). This empowered the community members (specifically SGBV survivors) to recognise that they have a legal right or responsibility to exercise, know how to take the necessary action to avoid problems and, where this is not possible, know how to help themselves appropriately; and know when and how to obtain suitable legal assistance in instances of abuse.

90 →

Duty bearers trained, **3** community dialogues held, and **180** community members (**105** male, **75** female) sensitised on the DVA

Mr Birahira Ezra, a community member, sharing his concerns with the participants during one of the community dialogues held in Kisoro



Promoting Women’s Participation in Political Leadership and Decision-making

The run-up to the 2016 general elections presented a unique opportunity for women in Uganda to reflect on and position themselves for the different opportunities within their political parties and the overall political structures of their country. In order for women to speak with a unified and strong voice towards, during and after the elections, women’s issues in the country needed to be discussed broadly and the different views and opinions streamlined. Thus, ACFODE organised a number of activities aimed at enhancing women’s participation in political leadership and decision-making processes.

Breakthrough Skills Trainings for Aspiring Women Leaders

- In her relentless campaign to prepare women aspiring for the 2016 general elections, ACFODE conducted trainings for prospective women leaders across different political parties/affiliations, including independents in 13 districts of Ssembabule, Rakai, Kalangala, Amolatar, Lira, Dokolo, Oyam, Kisoro, Rukungiri, Kanungu, Kole, Pallisa and Apac.
- Those targeted were vying for leadership positions of directly elected councillors at sub-county level, district Woman Councillor, directly elected Member of Parliament, as well as Woman Member of Parliament.
- They were equipped with knowledge of effective campaign strategies and election processes such as the Electoral Commission (EC) Road Map for the 2016 general elections. As an outcome of the trainings, the majority of the participants were able to position themselves for public and party support.
- Female aspirants vying for direct seats in the aforementioned districts were facilitated to hold radio talk shows against the backdrop of direct seats being a preserve for men. This increased their visibility.
- **650 aspiring women leaders** benefited from the trainings.

Dialogue Meetings for Female Leaders and their Spouses

- The meetings sought to encourage men to support their partners' political aspirations as well as their roles and responsibilities as leaders and change agents in the communities they serve. And these were organised for Oyam and Amolatar Districts.
- **100 participants**, 44% of whom were women, were engaged during the dialogues where topics such as gender and gender roles, the significance/importance of women's participation in political leadership, balancing public and private life for women leaders, and the roles men (particularly spouses) play in support of women's political careers and overall leadership were discussed.
- Consequently, the male participants committed in writing to supporting their spouses' political and leadership aspirations. This has created an enabling environment for women leaders to effectively fulfil their public roles.
- **18 sub-county speakers** who attended the dialogues also committed to creating more spaces for women leaders, which would be used to raise motions related to women's rights, and agreed to appoint more women to sub-county executive committees. These included leaders from Etam, Agwingiri, Arwotcek, Akwon, Muntu and Namasale town council sub-counties in Amolatar District, and Minakulu, Myene, Aber, Abok, Otwal, Aleka, Kamdini, Loro, Oyam town council, Ngai, Iceme and Acaba in Oyam District.

Mentoring and Coaching Sessions for Newly Elected District Female Councillors

- **166 newly elected district female councillors** from Oyam and Amolatar Districts were mobilised to attend mentoring and coaching sessions. The trainings also targeted 51 technical leaders (51% women) and 44 newly elected male district councillors.
- The participants understood their roles as people's representatives and engaged one another constructively through experience-sharing about the challenges they would be confronted

with as leaders; and were equipped with requisite skills, knowledge and expertise in various aspects of good governance, gender budgeting, accountability and mainstreaming. Their ability to lobby for women's rights and the overall network of politically active women was also strengthened.

Reflection and Mentoring Meetings for Women Caucuses

- ACFODE further provided support supervision to women leaders' caucuses from the **8 districts**, namely Oyam, Dokolo, Lira, Amolatar, Sembabule, Rakai, Rukungiri and Kisoro. During the meetings, the participants were given an opportunity to reflect on what they had been able to do in relation to the application of the knowledge and skills they had acquired in previous trainings. They also shared and documented the successes, lessons learnt and challenges experienced, and strategised the next actions based on the most and critical issues affecting women and girls within their districts/localities.
- Among the key successes registered by the caucuses after the trainings were the enhanced ability to sensitise and generate support for women's rights from leaders at district, sub-county and parish levels, and from community members; along with negotiating for the passing of gender-responsive programmes in the district budgets, such as those that support girl-child education, and promoting women's sexual and reproductive health and economic empowerment.
- For instance, the women's caucus from Oyam and Amolatar Districts were able to sensitise local communities using existing platforms like community members, funerals and places of worship regarding women and girls' rights, DV and SGBV. Approximately 685 people (480 women and 200 men) were reached.
- By the end of the sessions, the district women caucuses had developed action plans that were informed by the 5 key issues (women and education; women's economic empowerment; women's right to political participation and leadership; women, land and property rights; and women's health) stipulated in the women's manifesto for advocacy at the local and national levels.

Experience-Sharing Sessions for Female Aspirants Who Lost in the 2016 General Elections

- These were organised in Oyam and Amolatar Districts with the aim of documenting the experiences of female aspirants in the 2016 electoral processes, assessing the enabling and limiting factors to women's participation in political leadership, and creating a forum for shared learning about how they would remain relevant by putting to use the skills they had acquired during the ACFODE trainings on women and girls' rights.
- **120 women** aspirants who had contested for positions of Member of Parliament (woman representative and direct seat), district councillors, chairperson LCIII and councillors representing different parishes in their respective sub-counties but lost the election attended.
- **Way forward** – The former women aspirants pledged to participate in different community projects, activities and programmes through monitoring public funds, fronting women issues and concerns in different fora and holding their community leaders accountable.

I emerged successful during the 2016 as a Youth Councillor, Oyam District. Despite this accomplishment, my husband was not supportive of my new role as a politician and public figure. For instance, he always forbade me from attending council and community meetings. He also deliberately refused to contribute towards managing our home. Accordingly to him, domestic chores were a responsibility solely for the children and myself. Thus, I wasn't able to execute my roles as a community leader effectively. It was after the dialogue for women leaders with their spouses organised by ACFODE that my husband realised the need to support me in both my private and public life. During the session on women's rights and gender roles and their implications for women and their advancement, my husband appreciated the need to share roles in our home and understood that women, too, have aspirations and rights, specifically the one of participation in leadership and politics.

The Hon. Auma Roseline with her husband Mr Otiemo Dominic after the dialogue in Oyam District



Ms Modesta Obote (above) reacts during a plenary discussion, while Ms Connie Atto Ogwang (below) shares her challenges during the experience sharing sessions for women leaders who lost in the 2016 general elections



Female aspirants from Kole (above) and Apac (below) districts share their experiences during breakthrough skills trainings for women leaders



Strengthening Citizen Participation in Local Governance

In Uganda, the local government is expected to offer not only service delivery centres that are closer to the people, but also to provide a system where men and women connect more effectively to the governance and decision-making process, monitor the actions and programmes undertaken by their leaders, and cause them to be accountable.

However, this remains a big challenge where the majority of the local citizens, particularly women, are uninformed about how and where they can actively get involved in the governance and decision-making processes. The problem is further compounded by the low levels of civic and political education, which present citizens with limited opportunities for accessing information about their rights and responsibilities in the governance of their affairs as well as the available avenues for their participation.

In 2016, therefore, ACFODE mobilised and built the capacities of different categories of rights holders to participate fully in politics and public policy. This was achieved through a set of activities that included: trainings for rights holders, Civil Society Organisation (CSO) actors and district leaders (technical and political); mentoring and follow-up sessions for ACFODE CACs; community sensitisation dialogues/meetings as well as public gender accountability forums. These were conducted in 5 districts of Amolatar, Oyam, Kiboga, Nebbi and Pader, and used as platforms to create awareness of gender and human rights forums, women and girls' rights, community members' rights and responsibilities, and the importance of demanding accountability from leaders.

Furthermore, ACFODE gave out a total of **126** bicycles to trained CEDAW committee members, who also serve as CACs mandated with the task of fighting different forms of social injustice and GBV through civic education in Nebbi, Pader, Oyam and Apac Districts.

As a result of these interventions, there has been an increase in public involvement in local governance, since rights holders were enabled to assess their needs, and participate in local project planning and budget monitoring for improved public resource management. Local leaders are also more accountable now.

CEDAW Committee members from Pader District receive bicycles from the ACFODE team



A community sensitisation meeting in Awelobutoryo Trading Centre, Oyam Town Council



690

The number of people including rights holders, CSO actors, and district leaders directly reached through these interventions. Women accounted for 53%.

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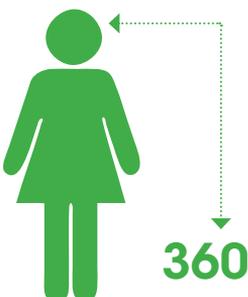
STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE CONTRIBUTING TO THE REDUCTION OF SOCIO- CULTURAL PRACTICES THAT CAUSE GENDER INEQUALITIES

“I am called Martin Ebu, a cultural leader from Chegere Sub-County in Apac District, who always harboured a yearning for positively impacting women’s lives but had no idea on how to go about it. However, all this changed after I underwent one of ACFODE’s trainings for cultural leaders on positive and negative social cultural practices. I have since been using the knowledge gained, as well as the power and influence I have as a leader to mobilise and organise different stakeholders in my community to protect women and girls’ rights by denouncing negative cultural practices such as early marriages and widow inheritance.”

One of ACFODE’s other focal areas during 2016 was implementing interventions that challenged negative cultural and social norms that perpetuate VAW/G

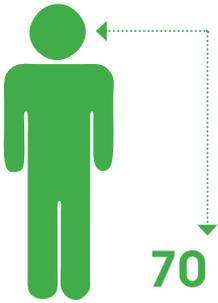
Economic Empowerment of Selected Groups

There is a growing understanding that addressing the constraints on women’s economic empowerment is fundamental to lasting, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, poverty reduction and food security. ACFODE, therefore, provided market women, model couples and Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) that benefit from the organisation’s interventions in Kampala, Apac, Kisoro and Dokolo districts with the skills, knowledge, networks and access to financial services that they needed to become successful small and growing business owners. This aimed at contributing to their economies and have a stronger voice in their societies. These spaces were also used to sensitise the participants, particularly women on their rights, and the legal frameworks that protect and promote such entitlements. Saving, loan management, record-keeping and conflict management were the other areas of discussion.



430 participants (360 female, 70 male) benefited from this intervention.

In Apac and Dokolo Districts, start-up capital ranging from 300,000/= to 500,000/- was disbursed to 12 trained VSLAs to enable them start small-scale businesses. ACFODE conducted periodical follow-up visits throughout the year to ensure the efficient utilisation of the funds. It was established that the VSLAs have increased the income levels of their female participants, hence reducing financial dependence on their husbands. Women like Modesta Akulo, from Can Okanyo Women’s Group, Kangai S/C in Dokolo, attested to this by saying:



“I borrowed 200,000/= from my VSLA. I used part of it, that is 50,000/=, to hire someone from Enterprise Uganda to teach me how to make liquid soap. I used the balance of 150,000/= to buy materials and subsequently embarked on soap-making after gaining the required skills. I was able to pay back the loan and thereafter generated my own capital. I sell to schools, lodges and offices. I also train other people but at a cost since it is business. Currently, I am the only one making this kind of soap in Dokolo. I used the profits gained to meet some of my basic needs and those of my family.”

68 model couples from Rubuguri and Rutaka Parishes in Kisoro District formed 12 savings groups at parish level as a result of the above interventions. Each couple contributes a minimum of 10,000/= to 20,000/= on a monthly basis to the groups’ reserves, from which members borrow.

In Rubuguri Parish, for instance, the monthly savings amount to 528,000/= while in Rutaka parish the model couples, who contribute a minimum of 20,000/=, have been able to save 1,290,000/=. The groups have encouraged couples to undertake joint financial planning and to cooperate in household decision-making.

Can Okanyo women’s group members in their store of maize that was acquired as a result of ACFODE’s training



Tackling Negative Cultural Practices that translate into VAW

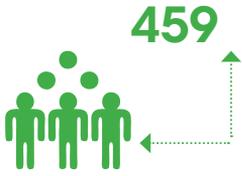
“Attending the model couple training organised by ACFODE was such a good fit. It made me realise that my wife has rights, which I need to respect. Our relationship is healthier now as opposed to the past when I used to dominate most of the decisions made in our home. I will certainly pass on this knowledge to relatives and friends such that we experience more peaceful families.” Hakuzimana Robert, model couple husband, Busanza sub-county – Kisoro District - Daisy

Awareness-creation drives such as community meetings and dialogues that sensitised rights holders and their leaders to the effects of negative cultural practices such as wife-beating, widow inheritance, property grabbing, early/forced marriages and denying the girl child the right to education were carried out in Oyam, Amolatar, Apac, Dokolo and Kisoro Districts.

Additionally, ACFODE identified and trained community leaders, including local council chairpersons, Community Development Officers (CDOs), parish chiefs, head teachers, opinion leaders, religious and cultural leaders, police officers and other community leaders on positive and negative cultural practices, and their consequences for women and girls’ rights. These leaders were later commissioned as change agents in charge of reinforcing the positive aspects of culture and advocating for women and girls’ rights. These continuous engagements with rights holders and duty bearers have led to a mind shift, where women and girls’ rights are now being respected and fulfilled. It has also created an empowered citizenry, who are in support of safe, stable and nurturing relationships and environments.

Male gender equality champions from Oyam and Amolatar Districts pose for group photos after their trainings





459 – the number of community agents of change (**100** male gender equality champions, **227** social actors and **66** model couples) identified and trained on legal frameworks for women’s rights promotion, the documentation of SGBV cases, as well as on positive and negative cultural practices, and their effects on gender and development. They, in turn, carried out **30** community dialogues during which they sensitised and reached out to **2,113** people (**902** male and **1,211** female, **55** of whom were PWDs).

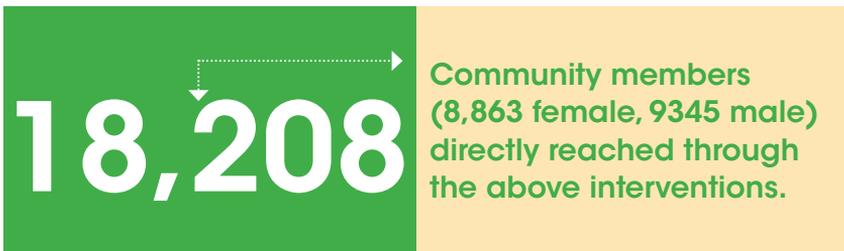


4 drama groups, namely Poyo Wii and Pibox Drama Groups (Apac District), and Chegere Corner and Acan Okun Youth Drama Groups (Dokolo District) that use performing arts (music, dance and drama) to educate people about positive cultural practices facilitated with **400,000/=** each to purchase costumes and other artifacts needed to do their work effectively.



92 survivors of SGBV 88% women, including 14 Persons With Disabilities (PWDs) were given professional emotional care and support by a full-time psycho-social support counsellor in Kisoro District, as well as the trained champions and model couples.

“My wife and I had a very violent relationship as we quarreled and fought most of the time. However, after engaging with one of ACFODE’s CAC on VAW and its effects, I resolved never to beat or verbally abuse again. Even then, the continuous trainings and sensitisations conducted by ACFODE in our communities have turned us into a model couple that are constantly called upon to speak to other couples about peaceful conflict resolution.” Rukara Deo, Busanza Sub County



Male gender equality champions from Oyam and Amolatar Districts pose for group photos after their trainings



Members of Poyo Wii Drama Group acting a role play on the effects of early/ forced marriage at Idep Primary School in Apac



Model couples in Busanza sub-county Kisoro district pose for a group photo after the training



Galvanising Youth Participation in the Women's Movement in Uganda through Mentoring

Pursuant to the challenging and changing cross-generational practices and prejudices that perpetuate inequalities between men and women, ACFODE continued to build the capacity of young women and men to understand and appreciate gender equality, functional democracy and advocacy through **inter- and intra-university debate competitions** using the British parliamentary format. Makerere University, Kyambogo University, Kabale University, Gulu University, Kampala International University (KIU) and Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) participated in the debates.

Relatedly, **ACFODE held mentoring camps for secondary school student leaders and teachers on positive social cultural practices in Apac and Dokolo districts.** These focused on strengthening the capacity of boys and girls to promote gender-responsive social cultural practices and enhance the capacity of teachers to effectively support students' efforts in promoting gender equality in schools and communities.

Equally important were the **Decide NOW! Youth Mentoring Sessions** held at ACFODE House in Bukoto on a monthly basis. Facilitated by positive adults and peer role models (mainly ACFODE members), the sessions were geared towards imparting knowledge and skills on personal and career development and entrepreneurial skills, among others.

*"With all the DecideNow! sessions I've attended, I have been able to build a positive image about my like having self-confidence. Previously, I was very shy and would find it hard to get along with my peers. This has enabled me to confront the dark parts of my life." **Katushabe Eunice, student at Makerere University pursuing a Bachelor's Degree in Social Sciences.***

Student leaders of Akokoro Secondary School working on a group task at their school. Supporting them (in a pink blouse) is their senior woman teacher



- 12 Decide NOW! Mentoring Sessions were held, targeting 118 youth (62 females, 56 males).
- 1 National Debating Competition, targeting 7 institutions of higher learning, namely Makerere University, Kyambogo University, Kabale University, Gulu University, Kampala International University (KIU) and Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) was held.
- 12 primary and secondary schools (84 student leaders – 50% female – and 12 senior women and men teachers) from Apac and Dokolo benefited from the mentoring camps.

4

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE ENHANCING THE CAPACITY OF ACFODE FOR EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF ITS MANDATE

ACFODE undertook deliberate efforts to increase its effectiveness and efficiency in fulfilling its mandate of advocating gender equality. These included:

Improving Employee Performance, Professionalism and Effectiveness

Activities designed to support healthy behaviour at the workplace and to improve work outcomes amongst ACFODE staff were carried out. Examples include: a training on **Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) for Advocacy** – a model used to empower rights holders and civil society actors to exercise their rights and make development policies work for the poor and marginalised; staff meetings and **International Treaty Reporting Mechanisms, Lobbying and Advocacy for Gender Accountability** organised by Uganda Women Network (UWONET). During this training, the ACFODE staff gained practical skills and a deeper analysis and understanding of the opportunities, processes and working strategies for a more effective civil society engagement on international treaty reporting mechanisms in order to achieve gender equality and equity.

This improved staff and, in turn, organisational performance.

Membership Accountability

4 general meetings were held in the course of the year. During the meetings: ACFODE members were given a detailed account of ongoing projects and programmes, including their impact, budgetary allocations and audited financial records. The meetings were also used as an opportunity for the general membership, the Board and the Secretariat to discuss issues concerning advancing the organisation's mandate.

17

The number of members
(5 men, 12 women) that
joined the organisation.

Internship and Volunteer Programme

In partnership with institutions of higher learning, ACFODE, through its internship programme, provided work experience opportunities to university students, fresh graduates and youth considering career advancement. This prepared beneficiaries to enter the 21st Century workforce as they were empowered with different skills, ranging from communication and writing, to public speaking, project planning and management, facilitation, research, advocacy, as well as commitment to excellence. In addition, their potential to advocate gender equality and to monitor progress towards gender justice within their communities was strengthened.



My name is Busingye Dennis Dembe. I am a 22-year-old student at Kyambogo University in my third year pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Social Work and Community Development. My maiden interaction with ACFODE was in 2016 during my first year of study at the university. By then I was doing internship and I had little knowledge about women's rights.

While at ACFODE, I had the most incredible experience that left me with no doubt that it (ACFODE) is indeed one of the best women's rights ambassadors in Uganda. This is drawn from the organisation's ability to address women's vulnerability from all angles and its ability to engage men in the fight against women's vulnerability. It is for this very unique character that ACFODE has enjoyed many impactful years.

As an intern under the Human Rights and Governance Department, I was able to learn a lot and acquired valuable skills not only in women's rights and gender equality but in other things such as report writing, minute taking, and meeting chairing. This improved my interpersonal and communication skills and boosted my confidence.

Last but not least, it gives me great pleasure to refer to ACFODE as home and I look forward to engaging myself in the organisation's activities as a new and young member in the near future.

Monitoring and Evaluation

In order to assess the success of ACFODE projects, establish enabling and disabling factors in project implementation, and also gather key stakeholder views and recommendations for further engagement, the organisation was engaged in a number of monitoring and evaluation visits on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis in her districts of operation.



40

The number of monitoring and evaluations visits, including project team meetings and follow-up visits, that were conducted.

Networking for Greater Impact

ACFODE organised and participated in events that brought together like-minded individuals, organisations (public, private, as well as civil and non-governmental) and key line government ministries to discuss and network for the protection and promotion of women's issues. In view of that, the organisation established new strategic relationships and partnerships, and gained new skills and knowledge that are now being used as invaluable sources of support.

Commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism

In commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against VAW, ACFODE held a National Women's Convention between 28 and 30 November 2016 in Gulu under the theme "**Celebrating the Journey of Passion: Taking Stock and Renewing Commitment towards Gender Justice in Uganda**". The focus of the convention was how to enhance the involvement of the rural woman in movement-building and rejuvenate energies for a new gender equality agenda for the next 10 years. The participants included rural men and women; district leaders and Members of Parliament (MPs); representatives from civil society organisations; development partners; the private sector; students; and the media.

The convention was the largest gathering on rural girls' and women's rights and wellbeing in Uganda following the launch of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Almost **800 people** drawn from the **5 traditional regions of Uganda** participated, including:

- **623 females (70% rural women) and 179 males;**
- **92 CSO representatives;**
- **22 religious leaders and 15 cultural leaders;**
- **150 young people, including 10 students;**
- **10 journalists;**
- **12 private sector** representatives from multiple businesses; and
- **2 donor agencies and 49 government representatives** (including **4** parliamentarians and 45 local council leaders from the Acholi and Lango sub-regions).

Alongside the speeches, presentations and conversation circles, many exciting special events took place during the convention. Some of the key highlights were a street march featuring the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Gulu, John Baptist Odama, as the Chief Walker, over 20 exhibitors showcasing different materials and products made by women, and other successful women from different spheres sharing I-stories of their respective journeys to the top as a means of inspiring others to believe in themselves and in a health camp during which free screening testing and counseling for breast Cancer, HIV/AIDS eye sight, pressure, diabetes, and hepatitis B were done.

To crown it all, an all-women friendly football match themed ***Kicking out VAW in Uganda*** between the

Quick Facts about the National Women's Convention 2016

- There were over **800** participants from **5** regions of Uganda.
- The participants included more than **49** government officials from more than **13** districts.
- **22.3%** of the participants were men.
- The Faith and Culture Conversation Circle convened religious and cultural leaders in the same space to discuss how to positively influence gender justice outcomes for women and girls.
- The conference held **6** special thematic Conversation Circles during which no other activity ran.
- Over **80%** of the participants had never heard about the Kampala Declaration on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).
- The Health Camp at the Convention provided free screening and testing for breast cancer, diabetes, HIV/AIDS testing and counselling, free condom demonstration and distribution, as well as blood donation services to over **100** participants during the **2** days.
- At least **150** young people attended the Convention, including **10** students.

Team Gulu and a Uganda XI selected from the other districts, which ended 2-1 in favour of Team Gulu, added the much-need colour to the 3-day event.

By any standards, the inaugural National Women's Convention was a success! It effectively galvanised powerful and unified citizen action for the prioritisation of identified gender equality programmes by the government and other stakeholders in Uganda over the next 10 years.

It was also a timely reminder to all stakeholders that there is no silver bullet that is going to solve the problems facing women and girls in Uganda. Rather, it will take many efforts, ideas, research and trial and error to achieve the ideals and aspirations of the rural woman. The convention provided a platform to showcase ideas and findings, to learn from each other's successes and failures, to make and strengthen partnerships, and to be re-inspired and re-invigorated in the participants' work towards prioritising women and girls' rights and gender justice.

Other local-level events focusing on the national theme for the 16 Days of Activism – i.e. ***“From peace in the home to peace in the world, make education safe for all”*** – were conducted in Kisoro district. These included an edutainment drama play on negative socio-cultural practices that perpetuate VAW and a legal session on SGBV. These promoted consciousness of the legal culture and an inspiration to abandon negative cultural norms such as wife-beating amongst the participants.

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Key Highlights from the Convention







Interface with Religious and Cultural Leaders

ACFODE organised an interface with religious and cultural leaders on the promotion of gender-responsive practices. The participants shared the best practices and challenges experienced in the elimination of GBV. They discussed innovative strategies, approaches and toolkits that are effective in engaging with local communities on the elimination of negative socio-cultural practices. Presided over by the State Minister of Gender, the Hon. Peace Regis Mutuuuzo, the 1-day event brought together **75** participants (**32** male and **43** female) who included MPs, officials from the MGLSD, representatives from like-minded CSOs such as the Inter-Religious Council Uganda (IRCU), the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU), development partners like Trocaire, as well as CDOs, religious leaders and cultural leaders, and representatives from the media and from academia.

Participants pose for a group photo after the interface at Silver Springs Hotel in Kampala



During the meeting, the participants made commitments to join the fight against harmful socio-cultural practices in their respective capacities in the form of action plans; new networks and allies for joint action and advocacy were created and ACFODE was able to reach out to a large network of religious leaders through its partnership with the IRCU. It is also worth noting that ACFODE's work to some extent influenced the national theme for 2017 as H.E. the President of The Republic of Uganda announced that the year would be recognised as a year of the family aiming at the promotion of family values and positive cultural practices.

75

The number of people who attended the interface, with women accounting for 57%.

Media Relations Training

The 3 day exciting course had ACFODE staff as participants. It was organised by the African Centre for Media Excellency (ACME) and took place on 28th to 30th April 2016 at the ACME offices. During the training, the ACFODE staff, specifically from the Public Relations and Communications Department, were equipped with practical skills in effectively presenting and packaging information for the consumption of the media and the benefit of organisational key stakeholders.

Partners' Review Meetings

ACFODE attended its partners' review meeting organised by We Effect in Kampala and Nairobi respectively. The meetings brought together like-minded organisations to share experiences encountered in the course of programme implementation. Some of the other issues revolved around addressing climate change, reducing poverty and empowering youth – all from a gender perspective. The events were timely as they provided a platform for shared learning and networking.

Regional Gender Equality for Sustainable Development Conference

Women and youth continue to face challenges in their efforts to access financial products and services for their economic development. Limited access to other capital assets and resources necessary for production, such as land, have also hindered women and youth from venturing into agriculture as a business. It is against this background that We Effect organised the 4th East African Regional Gender Equality for Sustainable Development Conference in which ACFODE participated. The conference took place between 27 and 30 September 2017 in Nairobi under the theme ***“Financial Inclusion for Gender Justice, Women Empowerment and Sustainable Development”***.

The event provided an opportunity for sharing, learning and forging partnerships for development and specifically for stepping up women's and youth's involvement in development programmes. It also offered a unique opportunity for the exchange of ideas, learning and networking between civil society actors and policy-makers, financial service providers, small-scale entrepreneurs, academia and gender equality champions.

National Convention for Women in Politics

Women vying for political leadership in Uganda continue to face a myriad of challenges, including the threat of violence; women leaders (incumbent and aspiring) being subject to difficult conditions such as assaults, vulgar language and intimidation; and the open MP seat not being open enough but instead being a “preserve” for male leaders and closed to women. In a country where men remain perceived as chief providers for women and their families, and where they are given more access to and control over resources both in the private sphere and the public spheres, commercialisation of politics has pushed women out of politics.

In light of this, ACFODE held a convention that drew 130 participants from a cross section of districts including Pallisa, Apac, Kiboga, Kisoro, Kabale, Kanungu, Rukungiri, Rakai, Kole, Lira, Oyam, Amolatar, Dokolo and Ssembabule, members of academia, the media fraternity, civil society, private sector representatives, female youths, political party representatives, ACFODE members, and representatives of relevant government ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

A cross section of participants during the convention



The event offered an opportunity for women in politics to reflect on the 2016 general elections processes and their impact on women's political leadership, examine women's role and presence in the public domain and strategise for the next 5 years whilst addressing women's concerns, gender inequalities and political governance in Uganda.

The national convention was also an opportunity for women in politics to: analyse and reflect upon women's presence in public office and women's voice in decision-making both at local and national level; and establish commitments to address the key issues in the Women's Manifesto 2016.

At the end of the conference, the following outcomes were agreed on:

- ACFODE and other development partners would extend the trainings or orientations on other women to contest direct seats, but not only to national, district and sub-county women leaders.
- Political parties would take a keen interest in promoting women's issues and this should be reflected in their policies and programmes.
- Civil society would focus on political skills training as opposed to generic trainings.
- The question of gender parity would be re-articulated as a right.
- The Women's Manifesto would be made into a living document.

130

Women leaders, from 14 districts of Pallisa, Apac, Kiboga, Kisoro, Kabale, Kanungu, Rukungiri, Rakai, Kole, Lira, Oyam, Amolatar, Dokolo and Ssembabule were engaged.

International Women's Day Celebrations

Key Highlight:

The 2-day conference was attended by over 400 participants, including directly elected women MPs, district council women representatives, civil society actors, selected MDAs, development partners, the private sector, academia, students, former female Members of Parliament and female presidential aspirants since 1996. A few men would also be selected based on their level of influence in the 2016-2021 development agenda

In commemoration of the International Women's Day, ACFODE, together with UWONET, FIDA (U), UWOPA and Oxfam, organised the National Women's Conference for newly-elected women leaders to interact and interface with CSOs and other stakeholders. Organised under the theme, **"Sustaining Women's Call for Parity on the Policy Agenda"**, the conference took place on 4th and 5th April 2016 at Hotel Africana in Kampala. It attracted over **400** participants from different parts of the country, including: directly elected women MPS; district council women representatives; civil society actors; selected MDAs; development partners; the private sector; academia; students; former female MPs and female presidential aspirants since 1996.

In addition, the event was used as a platform to orient both the new and the old women leaders (MPs, LC III and V councillors) on the issues of concern to women in Uganda so that they can be prioritised during their term of office and they can be held accountable at the end of their tenure. These issues were drawn from the Women's Manifesto 2016-2021. However, other issues of concern, such as climate change and tax justice, were also addressed.

The space was also used to inspire the women aspirants who lost during the 2016 general elections.

Exposure Learning Visit

ZOA Uganda (Amudat programme) facilitated an exposure learning visit for their project beneficiaries to Apac District on the 10th to 12th August 2016. The beneficiaries included: political leaders; technical leaders; leaders of youth groups; leaders of women; leaders of youth councils; leaders of women councils; and 2 staff of ZOA Amudat.

ZOA chose Apac for the exposure learning visit because of the presence of ACFODE, a partner of Diakonia in the district that had successfully implemented the good governance and gender accountability project in previous years, from June 2011 to June 2014. Most of the leaders who were engaged with rights holders (women and youth) in the previous project entitled **"Promoting Good Governance and Gender Accountability at Local Government Levels"** were voted back into office; therefore there was available experience to tap into amongst the current political leadership. During the visit, the ZOA Amudat team were able to meet with Apac District leaders who included the Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs), the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) and LCV chairperson Apac. Later, the team were taken to Ibuje and Inomo sub-counties where ACFODE implemented the above

project and other interventions. At the sub-county, the team met and discussed with the sub-county leaders as well as youth's drama and social enterprise groups that are part of the beneficiaries of ACFODE projects. The team from Amudat was able to learn and appreciate best practices from the ACFODE interventions and drew up an action plan to help them implement what they had learnt. Notably among the best practices were advocacy and lobbying skills, the importance of women's economic empowerment, gender-responsive cultural practices, working knowledge of the rules of procedure of council, women's rights and related legal frameworks.

Engagement meeting between the ZOA team from Amudat and the ACFODE women group in Inomo sub-county, Apac District



Project Launch and Inception Meetings

2 projects, namely **“Strengthening Community Participation in Local Governance and Promotion of Women and Girls’ Rights in Lango Sub-region”**, particularly the districts of Amolatar and Oyam, and **“Promoting Positive Socio-cultural Practices”** in rural communities of Kisoro District, were launched.

The 3-year project on **“Strengthening Community Participation in Local Governance and Promotion of Women and Girls’ Rights in Lango Sub-region”** seeks to strengthen civil actors’ and rights holders’ participation in governance processes, including the promotion of women’s and girls’ human rights. The key project target groups include: rights holders; child mothers; women groups; civil society actors and duty bearers, elected and appointed at both local and national levels. On the other hand, the objective of the project on **“Promoting Positive Socio-cultural Practices in Rural Communities of Kisoro District”** aims at empowering communities to exercise and promote gender-responsive socio-cultural practices in Kisoro District. The key project target groups include rights holders, district and sub-county leaders, duty bearers, social actors such as cultural and religious leaders, head teachers, health workers and model couples.

The meetings, held at the local levels, were attended by the district political and technical people, including CAOs, RDCs, LC representatives, District CDOs, CDOs, district speakers, sub-county chiefs, religious and cultural leaders, selected citizens, and representatives of the donor community, the

police, the media, the private sector and representatives of like-minded CSOs.

During the events, ACFODE was able to influence policy-makers regarding key aspects of the projects. The meetings also secured the commitment of a defined group of stakeholders to the project aims. They also provided a podium to build synergies about the project among key stakeholders within the districts.

In Kisoro, the findings of the assessment on the prevalent socio-cultural practices in the district were shared with the participants, further justifying the urgent need for the implementation of the project.

Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between ACFODE and the local government in all the project districts for ownership purposes.

Participants at the launch of the “Strengthening Community Participation in Local Governance and Promotion of Women and Girls’ Rights” project in Amolatar



Participants at the project launch in Kisoro pose for a group photo at the district headquarters



Communication and Information Sharing

Communication is core to ACFODE's work and complements its advocacy and policy-influencing work at all levels. Through communication, ACFODE mobilises women and girls in Uganda and ensures that they are better informed and are able to meaningfully engage in and influence processes using a variety of platforms and tools.

Thus, as a leading national women's organisation in Uganda, in 2016 ACFODE accumulated significant knowledge capital based in its interventions. This knowledge was considered as a public good, which development practitioners from around the country and the globe accessed, used and debated about. Considerable resources were invested in publishing and sharing internally and externally the knowledge that was generated from the organisation's programmes and projects. A rigorous process was applied that allowed high-quality materials and knowledge to emerge.

Arise Magazine – Issue 60 on the **POLITICS OF GENDER EQUALITY: The Role of Men and Boys in Promoting Women and Girls Rights**. It called for men and boys to join forces and enhance their role in helping to achieve a more egalitarian society since they are equally strategic allies in the pursuit of gender equality. **ISSUE 61**, on the other hand, was on **Exclusion, Misrepresentation & Discrimination – Insights on the Situation of Women in the Media**. It evaluated the trends in gender inequalities in the media and formulated collective and creative solutions to reduce such gender disparities; such as an increase in the participation of and access by women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication, and the promotion of a balanced and non-stereotyped portrayal of women in the media.



A rapid assessment of VAW/G in Oyam and Amolatar Districts and other forms of GBV also identified the mechanisms in place to address VAW/G as well as the challenges faced in handling VAW/G cases and other forms of GBV, and proposed recommendations. .

The assessment utilised both key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The stakeholders interviewed included district officials such as DCDOs, Gender Officers, Probation and Social Welfare Officers (PSWOs), police officers, judicial officers, officers in charge of health centres, representatives of Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs working around VAW/G, and those not directly involved in addressing VAW/G as well as a few selected community members.

The ACFODE rapid assessment team (left) during an interview with HIV/AIDS focal point person, Oyam District



The following key recommendations were highlighted by the study:

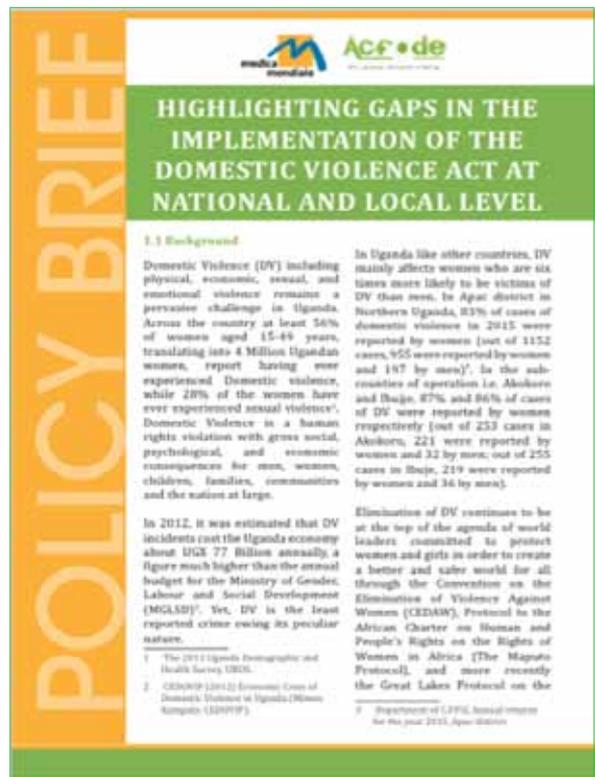
- ACFODE should conduct an aggressive awareness-creation campaign in the districts of Amolatar and Oyam focusing on different areas, including women’s rights, and understanding SGBV and VAW/G, the relevant laws and policies to address it and the referral pathways.
- Adoption of open and free discussions with stakeholders, public/guest talks, talking compounds (messages), and music, dance and drama as means of awareness-creation.
- Development and printing of education and information materials for the referral pathway and popular versions of the relevant laws against VAW/G and disseminating them to different stakeholders.
- Replication of ACFODE’s strategy of male gender champions in promoting women’s rights in northern Uganda to promote the role of men in addressing VAW/G and GBV in Amolatar and Oyam District.

- Establishing fatherhood clubs in the districts of Amolatar and Oyam to honour men who are role models as responsible fathers in their families and communities. The role model fathers can mentor the young boys in schools and communities into ideal men and fathers so that they can fulfil their normative expectations as they become husbands and fathers.

Impact Study on Women and Girls Rights and Empowerment – It assessed the impact of one of our projects, i.e. Promoting Women’s Rights Project and it aimed to evaluate how the project has promoted the rights of women and girls, especially in the district of project implementation, namely Apac. During the exercise, key informant interviews with the DCDO, the Gender Officer, the speaker and the Senior Community Development Officer (SCDO) were undertaken. Focus group discussions with 7 men and 8 women, beneficiaries of the two projects, were also conducted and their experiences documented.

Assessment of Harmful and Positive Socio-Cultural Practices in Kisoro – This assessment focused on positive socio-cultural practices that promote women’s rights and the negative ones which violate women’s rights. The positive socio-cultural practices mentioned by the respondents during this assessment included: girl-child education; sharing meals as a family; marriage; women attending their daughters’ wedding ceremonies; neighborhood watch; and village ambulance groups; while the negative practices mentioned were: women not deciding on bride price; alcoholism; women being restricted with regard to dress code, e.g. a ban on wearing trousers; domestic violence; polygamy and early and forced marriage.

Policy Briefs that highlighted gaps in the implementation of the DVA (2010) at national and local levels. Some of the challenges included shortage of direct financial allocations for the DV interventions under different sectors; limited capacity to fully implement DV activities; lack of awareness of the provisions of the DVA by duty bearers across all sectors; social acceptance of VAW; and corruption in institutions that provide justice, among others. The outlined recommendations on how best to address these challenges included widening the resource base for the implementation of the Act; conducting public awareness programmes on DV and the DVA; strengthening the capacity of key institutions to respond to DV; as well as budgeting and planning for the translation of the DVA into locally spoken languages to enable the local population to understand the provisions and thereby demand the services from the mandated institutions and stakeholders.



Project Newsletters that covered a wide range of topics such as VAW/G, the interlink between culture and gender, good governance and gender accountability, as well as women's economic empowerment and their participation in leadership and decision making processes. They documented stories of change resulting from ACFODE's project interventions.

PVC and pull-up banners, T-shirts, stickers, branded note books, pens, posters and brochures in English and translated versions containing simplified messages about the basis of democracy and good governance, and on other issues such as women's rights, VAW/G as well as SGBV, were produced.



REAL MEN don't **ABUSE** Women to show how **POWERFUL** they are!
Use Your Power to **END** Domestic Violence



ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

- 3 Who We Are
- 7 Our Organisational objectives
- 8 Why We Do What We Do
- 12 Where We Work
- 13 The Strategies: How We Do It
- 14 The Strategic Objectives That Guide Our Work



20
15

ANNUAL REPORT

Celebrating **30 Years** of
A Journey of Passion for
a Just Society



Media Advocacy

ACFODE utilised traditional media (radio, television and print) to raise awareness about pertinent issues that concern women and girls such as women's right to education, quality health, economic empowerment, women's participation in political leadership and other decision-making processes as well as their right to own land and other properties. This was achieved through the use of talk shows on radio and television, and airing of spot adverts and press conferences to convey information and also to call upon the government and other key stakeholders to rally behind the women's movement and its agenda.

Online Advocacy

Our engagement on social media has been to inform and connect, but also to use it as a mobilising tool and a key advocacy strategy to inform policy by engaging policy-makers and reaching out to them directly with our key messages. For instance, ACFODE mobilised and engaged with the online community, which includes policy-makers and other policy influencers, with timely and critical messages, aspirations and opinions shared on the following hashtags:

#TaxMPs #WomenUG
#GESD16 #WomenLeadersUG
#SOTNUG16 #UGBudget16
#IWD2016 #PostIWDUg
#womenin2016election
#Acfodedebates
#16DaysOfActivism
#BeBoldForChange

By the end of 2016, the ACFODE page and Twitter handle had a following of **4,533**, while the website views/downloads per month were close to **9,000**.



4,533



9,000

Emerging Issues and Key Learnings for Future Advocacy Efforts

Mentoring youth to be champions of gender equality and women's empowerment: There is need to engage and empower youth to be gender-sensitive in their quest for leadership and decision-making, sensitise and train them about the drawbacks and consequences of exclusion, as well as on the fact that no woman or man should be left behind or excluded on the basis of gender.

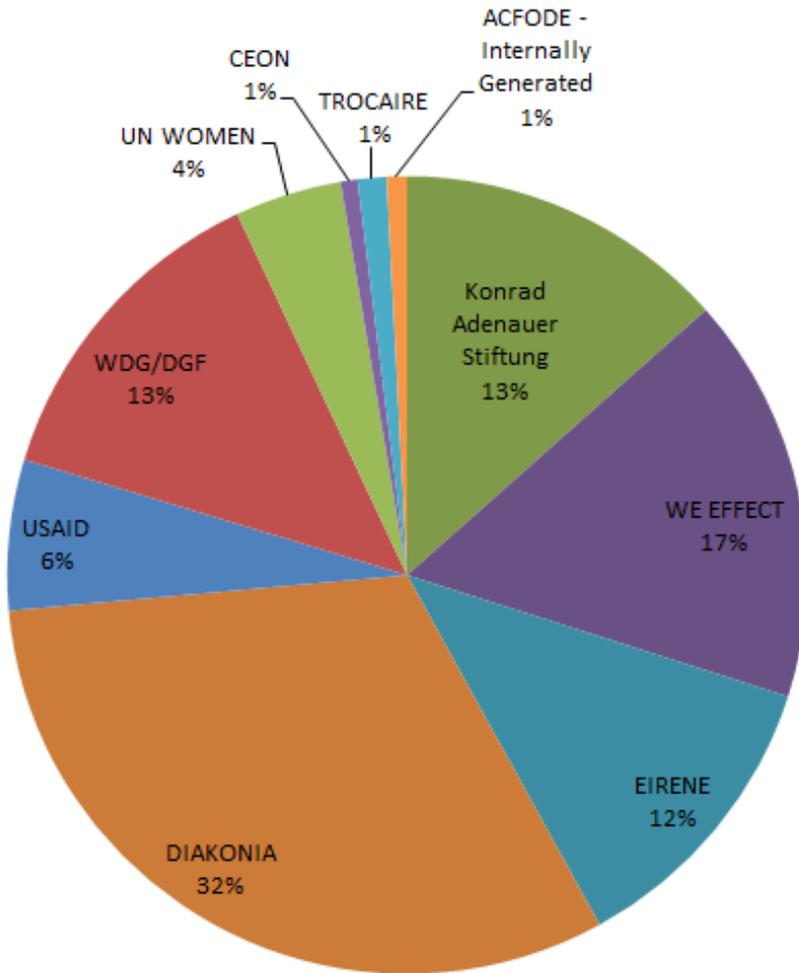
Intensifying the women's movement activities in rural areas: There is need to organise mentorship and championship activities for rural women (young and old) that will raise awareness about their rights, including their social, political and economic rights, and the rights to own and inherit property, sign contracts, register and manage businesses, and access leadership positions.

Cultural traditions and practices of the parents as barriers to girl-child education in Uganda: Education is the right of every girl everywhere and also the key to transforming both the life of the girl and the life of her community. Girls without education are denied the opportunity to develop to their full potential and to play a productive and equal role in their families, their community, their country and the world at large. Despite all these facts, Ugandan girls continue to be locked out of school and locked into inequality owing to the negative cultural traditions and practices of their parents. These include looking at bride price as a source of wealth, which forces parents to marry off their girls at a tender age and to favour the boy child over the girl child. Other barriers to quality education of the girl child include poverty, poor-quality education, child labour, poor menstrual hygiene, child trafficking, remote geographical location and inadequate infrastructure.

Limited human and financial resources for implementing policy commitments: There is need for the government and other key stakeholders to ensure that sufficient financial resources are allocated to all sectoral ministries and gender institutions for the implementation of gender initiatives.

Other key issues that emerged during programme implementation include **weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation** whereby the government has failed to institutionalise tools for the effective monitoring and evaluation of gender legislation, programmes and initiatives, resulting in difficulty in facilitating timely reporting, decisions and direction on the progress of implementation; **limited awareness** about policy and gender issues by rights holders; and **the persistent existence of negative attitudes and perceptions** about gender issues, particularly regarding women and girls' rights.

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