

NEWSLETTER

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the ACFODE Newsletter where we highlight all the events that have happened within the two months and we share the good news. We also share our field activities under our different programmes. COVID-19 lock-down affected some of our activities but we are grateful to be back to implementing our activities, our office is open and working while observing the COVID-19 SOPs. I hope you enjoy the reading the Newsletter.

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Reflection meetings for civic educators in Moroto, Gulu, Pallisa and Kamuli districts



Participants in Kasese attentively listening the message concerning their land rights and negative social and cultural norms affecting their rights to ownership of land.

Land awareness campaign in Bundibugyo and Kasese.

ACFODE with financial support from We Effect conducted a land awareness campaign together with Shelter & Settlement Alternative (SSA) and the Justice centres. This took place on 24th and 25th August 2021 in Kasese under Mt. Rwenzori Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union (MRCFCU) and on 26th & 27th August 2021 in Bundibugyo under Semliki Cooperative Union (SEMUCU).

In 2020, ACFODE facilitated four (4) partners i.e. MRCFCU, SEMUCU, UCCFS, and SSA to monitor and document advocacy issues in the implementation of the legal framework on land as well as documenting issues that affected women about land.

The findings from the exercise informed a report that highlighted gender gaps in access, control, and ownership of land by women and

146 PEOPLE

PARTICIPATED IN THE LAND AWARENESS CAMPAIGN



“We women are still violated and our rights to land have not been recognised. Most especially incase of divorce ,most of us are usually not helped to own the land we purchased together with our husbands. Some leaders who would help us are also cornmen, corrupt and tend to side with our husbands. I thank ACFODE for always enlightening women about their land rights on radio Messiah and also reaching out to us today in our communities to educate us about our rights to own land and showing us where we can run to incase our rights are violated”. - Masika Anna of Twatikanaye cooperative society in Kasese district.

youth, implementation of the national legal framework on land and women's concerns in regards to land as well as recommendations to duty bearers, civil society actors and the community.

It's against this background that ACFODE organized a land awareness campaign to address the gender gaps previously identified. It was also used as a platform to sensitive communities about the negative norms and social-cultural practices that hinder women and youth from owning and controlling land as well as enlightening the communities on the existing land rights, laws and policies.

In Kasese, a total of 146 (74Female, 72 Male) people which included; Kirembe United Farmers & Muhokya, Twatikanaye Coffee Farmers, Kitabu Thuyirethuthi Cooperative, and Kihungu Kasebere farmers participated in the land awareness campaign. In Bundibugyo, 125 (55 Female, 70 Male) people from Bubukwanga COU, Hakitegya PS, Busoru, and Buganikere attended the campaign.

Training of elected leaders on their roles and responsibilities towards preventing (vaw/c) in Kanungu, Kisoro, Rubanda, Rukiga and Bukomansimbi.

ACFODE in partnership with We Effect and with financial support from the European Union conducted a two days training for elected leaders on their roles and responsibilities in preventing Violence against Women and Children (VAW/C) in Rukiga and Kanungu districts on 24th to 25th, in Rubanda and Kisoro districts from 26th to 27th and on 30th & 31st August 2021 in Bukomansimbi district.

The training targeted female, male and youth elected leaders from the project target sub-counties of Kashambya and Kamwezi in Rukiga district and Rutenga & Kihihi in Kanungu district, Kanaba and Murora in Kisoro district, Muko and Nyamweru in Rubanda District and Bigasa and Kitanda in Bukomansimbi. Each sub-county was represented by 10 elected leaders at the sub-county level and as well as a District woman and male representative of that particular sub-county at the district level.

During the training, participants were equipped with knowledge and information on VAW/C, the relevant legal frameworks and referral systems, knowledge and skills for the prevention and management of VAW/C in the communities, and how to prevent and respond to VAW/C through lobbying and advocacy. The training was attended by a hundred (100) elected leaders (52 Females, 48 Males) inclusive of 14 People With Disabilities..

Some of the emerging issues included; the denial of justice to survivors of violence i.e. most PWD girls have been infected with STDs like HIV/AIDs on top of being made pregnant and afterward, they are abandoned, Knowledge gaps in conflict resolution mechanisms and gaps in property rights in Rukiga



Participants pose for the group photo after training in Bukomansimbi.



“The training is so good that I wish it would be extended to all the sub-counties within Kanungu district, because most men are violating women and children’s rights ignorantly due to lack of information” noted Hon. Tukwasibwe Judith is the district female councilor for Rutenga sub-county.

100 PEOPLE
NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ATTENDED THE TRAINING INCLUSIVE OF 14 PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES



Participants posing for a group photo after the two days training at Muhabura view guest house in Kisoro municipality.

district. Also, there is a tendency of women elected leaders forgetting to fight for the rights of the vulnerable women in their communities.

The training focused on the following tenets such as team work, peer to peer partnership, outreach, advocacy, and how to create sustainable solutions for the community problems.. The leaders requested for the provision of copies of the translated constitution especially Chapter Four (4), more capacity building training for local

leaders in the legal framework they are operating under, training of local leaders in conflict resolution and the referral pathway.

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sex and gender this training has opened my eyes and I have learned a lot from it which am going to be sharing with my electorates.

“Thanks to ACFODE and keep engaging us so that we can learn more and I believe our family relationships are also going to improve. Noted one of the male participants from Rutenga sub-county in Kanungu district.”

“In our village when a man loses the wife, the children tend to chase away their father from their mothers’ property, such cases have been happening and I would just look on without knowing what to do but now that I have acquired some knowledge on the existing legal framework, I will be using it as my reference while counseling such survivors. In addition to the above, fathers-in-law are also over controlling their daughter-in-laws and taking away their land after the death of their husbands”. Noted Hon. Sibomana David from Kanaba sub-county in Kisoro district

Hon. Munezero Peace the Lc III chairperson Murora sub-county in Kisoro district also admitted that she had been ignorant about the relevant laws in regards to women’s and children’s rights and noted that in her sub-county some parents were forcing their daughters to get married against their own will hence violating their rights.

Reflection Meetings for Civic Educators in Moroto, Gulu, Pallisa and Kamuli Districts

ACFODE trained 80 key stakeholders over the past years in each of the districts to generate awareness on women's right to political participation and gender equality and enlist support for the same among the population. The Civic educators were tooled with gender-responsive civic education handbooks, gender-responsive civic education illustrative posters, t-shirts, and project flip chart stands. Since then, civic educators have facilitated several community Barazas on women's right to leadership and political participation, using existing structures such as sermons/services, group meetings, among others.

The civic educators were also facilitated with radios and have organized over 20 listener clubs' conversations on women's political participation, leadership, and gender equality. Together these activities have reached over 5000 people and the civic educators share their successes of their interventions.

GULU DISTRICT

The community dialogues inspired young women to come up and take leadership positions at the local council level. More women have taken up leadership positions in community groups and institutions like chairpersons of VSLA groups and



Reflection Meeting in Palaro Subcounty, Gulu District



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cooperatives savings societies, a position that was occupied by men. More women have been appointed in the executive positions of LCIII Council of Palaro sub-county. Community dialogue and radio talk shows have led to the reduction of teenage pregnancies.

This was evidence by the data of antenatal got from Palaro Health Centre III, i.e. (620 teenage pregnancies in 2018, and only 410 teenage pregnancies in 2020).

Also as a result of dialogues with leaders of Acholi cultural institutions, Women have taken up leadership positions in Acholi cultural institutions locally known as "Gang Ker kwaro" at all levels.

PALLISA AND KAMULI DISTRICTS

Women stood for key positions on both affirmative and directly elected positions in the just concluded elections. Many men now tolerate their women when they decide to participate in elective positions within their communities not like before. More men champion female participation in positions of leadership for example many women are now allowed by their spouses to participate in community leadership endeavors like Village savings and loan associations, women are now leaders of the water user and road user committees in their communities. In the last Local Council, I and II elections women won many.



Reflection Meeting for civic educators in Kamuli district



Ms Auma Stella the Current Woman Councilor Five from Katikekile sub county, Moroto district, sharing her past election experience

MOROTO DISTRICT

The engagement meetings by the civic educators have led to an increase in the number of women that are at lower / Village level leadership decision making position, which is a great achievement, the women have gained confidence to meaningfully engage men and community members on issues affecting their communities.

For example Auma stella a civic educator and councilor said that; “ Despite the election malpractices of changing results, with the knowledge I got from the different interaction with ACFODE, I managed to resiliently follow up with my results and got my justice, there was a polling station where I got 150 Votes and registered was one hundred but I rectified

that issue by consistently following up and gathering enough evidence that backed up my allegations”,

This is Joshua Loyit, a resident of Lia Village in Katikekile Sub County – Moroto District. He supported the woman MP contestant during the previous elections. He said that; “unlike the rest of campaigning agents who were paid, my candidate never had money to either pay me and other men in my team, it was my own commitment and love for change triggered by the many trainings I attended about gender inclusion and support to the female contestants.

I used my own motorcycle to mobilize for votes for my contestant despite the fact that we lost”. He added that his contestant never had money to

buy votes but never the less, she was the second runner up in primaries. Some challenges he expressed where the interferences from the security agencies in a discriminative manner because they could have been paid up by the incumbent, the other was politics of deceit because in areas where his contestant had many supporters,

they were informed that there will be another day for such voting and that made supporters only vote the incumbent, high illiteracy levels made voting privacy interfered with.

He discouraged the monetized campaigns and advised for civic education not only prior to the election period but rather as early as two years before election period. He urged men to support their wives, daughters and change the gender stereotypes and patriarchy mindsets; he strongly advised that the change starts with the civic educators and from family levels.



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STORIES OF CHANGE IN KYEGEGWA DISTRICT REFUGEE SETTLEMENTS AND HOST COMMUNITIES

ACFODE in partnership with EIRENE eV International Christian Service for peace and with financial support from BMZ is implementing a project titled; **STOP-Prevention of sexual and Gender Based Violence in Ugandan Refugee Settlements and their neighboring communities in Kyaka II Refugee settlement.** The project is implemented in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement Itambabiniga zone and Kyakatwaga village host communities in Kyegegwa District and here are some of the stories of change.

THE MODEL COUPLE TRAINING HELPED SAMSON UNDERSTAND THE BENEFITS OF GIRL-CHILD EDUCATION.

Birungi Jean and Samson Beiza are Congolese couple from Kyaka II refugee settlement and they share the benefits of undergoing the model couple training on SGBV Prevention and response within their communities. Before attending the Model Couple training by ACFODE we had a lot of misunderstandings in our home due to poor planning and communication. My husband didn't think educating our two girls was important after all they were to be married off. Jean was an extravagant wife who spent all

their savings from Mupokero (cash distribution) on luxury things such as necklaces, makeup, and clothes and had no balance for basic needs yet the whole family was using one form to receive money. After attending the training we got knowledge on how to solve domestic violence issues, learned basic counselling and also mediation and it is everyone's responsibility to end the violence because before we used to see a couple quarrelling or fighting and just ignore them. "Since I joined this project of ACFODE I have learned how to plan for my money especially saving and managing my finances". Says Jean



Birungi Jean and Samson Beiza

We were taught about sharing responsibilities as a couple, live peacefully in our home, and learned about equal human rights. "My life is no longer the same because I now look at things differently. I accepted to educate my girls and boys I now know that I'm bringing up responsible ladies unlike before when I thought my efforts in bringing up girls or educating them was a loss". Says Samson

THE MODEL COUPLE TRAINING TRANSFORMED EPHRAIM AND HIS FAMILY

Ephraim Ruhiye is a refugee from Burundi with his wife and 2 children from Kyaka II refugee settlement and he shares the benefits of undergoing the model couple training on SGBV Prevention and response within their communities.

Before Acfode came to Itambabiniga, specifically Humura village, there was a lot of economic violence which would happen at the time of cash distribution where men used to get money and run with it to the bars and hung out with other

women living their families in need. Women were under looked and could not take up any leadership positions or influence decision making at home. Personally I had never recognized or listened to any suggestions from my wife and thought I was the man, head of the family and therefore, no one else at home could advise me. There was also poor planning and budgeting in our home yet I earn from construction job and from my piggery project and this would lead to low economic progress.



Ephraim Ruhiye

Since I joined this project my life has totally changed, I learnt how to handle my family issues, how co-exist peacefully with my family. From this project I have learnt financial management, I am now able to plan for earnings and it has helped me to develop my projects. I have acquired knowledge about SGBV, basic counselling, mediation and interpersonal skills. I have also used the same knowledge to create peace and harmony in my home through having equal participation in decision making and forgiving my wife where she goes wrong.

ADVOCACY FOR EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF GBV LAWS AND POLICIES

Through advocacy and GBV laws and policies trainings, community members have been transformed for example Mr. Kenneth Odyek who was elected as LC 3 chairman of Bobi sub county and has in turn advocated for increased budgeting for GBV concerns to 600,000/= which has facilitated buying books for LC 1 leaders to record GBV cases.

ACFODE through the community-based approach has built the capacities of 24 community (men and women) called the GBV advocacy group members who champion the advocacy for the

implementation of GBV laws and policies in Omoro and Lamwo from four sub counties namely and conducted a training on 26th and 27th August 2021 where the GBV Advocacy group members were reflecting on the project intervention for the last 4 years as this is the last year of implementation.

One of the notable changes has been increased monitoring skills from the trainings and participating in the quarterly monitoring exercises which have enabled the AGMs to monitor offices of the duty bearers and the LC 1 structure and thus also provide them with

the knowledge on the GBV laws and policies and GBV response. In addition they did community sensitizations against GBV, the causes and effects of GBV. As a result, the community members are aware of the reporting channels and referral pathways.

Increased knowledge about GBV, GBV laws and policies and GBV response by the duty bearers and community members, through participation in the projection activities, the AGMs have sensitized the communities on GBV and its dangers in the communities and through follow ups on the cases in the communities, some of the perpetrators have been arrested

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INCREASED BUDGETIN FOR GBV 600,000/=
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FACILITATED BUYING BOOKS FOR LC 1
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24 IT HAS BUILT THE CAPACITIES OF 24 COMMUNITY
- 

INCREASED MONITORING SKILLS
- 

COMMUNITY SENSITIZATIONS AGAINST GBV,
- 

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GBV

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Reflection meeting with community monitors in Mbale, Manafwa, Sironko, and Namisindwa

ACFODE in partnership with The Swedish Foundation for Human Rights conducted training of community women and men from the districts of Mbale, Manafwa, Sironko, and Namisindwa in Eastern Uganda. The training was aimed at equipping community monitors with knowledge and skills on gender human rights, roles, and responsibilities as well as policies and guidelines governing protected areas. Commitments and action plans were developed to strengthen their community engagements within the different districts and several achievements have been noted by the community monitors.

A total number of 130 (40 men, 51 women, and 49 youths) were engaged through community outreaches, including village meetings. Some of the benefits of the training were, improved community relations with Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and local leaders through community sensitizations on referral pathways in handling human rights violations among the targeted communities. Community members are now aware of the different departments, offices within their reach for proper reporting and handling of human rights violations and there was establishment of linkages to other community-based organizations in environmental protection.

In Mbale district, the community monitors established a relationship with Bungokho Rural development center (BRDC) and Mt. Elgon tree growing Enterprise (METGE) which has since led to the free distribution of seedlings to the community. Through these engagements, gender and human rights sessions have been extended.

Some of the community monitors in Mbale District have introduced the GALS approach and Vision Road Journey (VRJ) among the youths. This is aimed at engaging the youth in productive ventures rather than conflict with UWA. These two approaches



encourage families to respect, promote and embrace the participation of both women and men in decision-making processes.

The community monitors launched a girl child vocational learning center in Sironko District. This is an initiative by the trained community monitors in response to the high teenage pregnancies and idleness of the youth due to school closures.

The Centre focuses on elevating the girl child in income-generating ventures, understanding of human rights and dangers of early marriages and teenage pregnancies. The identified youth are trained in beekeeping and tree planting in their different communities.

The community monitors have spearheaded community awareness campaigns on the dangers of early marriages, teenage

pregnancies, Rape, and Defilement and called upon parents and guardians to be vigilant in this school closure period.

The monitors pledged to utilize the available platforms and spaces to educate frontline communities on human rights to conservation, gender, and well as referral pathways for handling conflict in their communities.



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