

# NEWSLETTER



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**MISSION:**  
**VISION:**

To empower women, girls and influence legislation and policy for gender equality in Uganda.  
A just society where gender equality is a reality .

# NEWSLETTER

## Editorial

**W**elcome to the end of year 2021 ACFODE Newsletter. We appreciate the overwhelming support throughout the year as we implemented all our activities. We are happy to say that despite the COVID-19 lockdown, we managed to hit some milestones in 2021. This issue features some of the major events we had as we closed the year. See you in 2022! Editor Violet Nakiggwe



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## ACFODE VIGIL IN COMMEMORATION OF 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM

**A**CFODE commemorated the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence from 25 November to 10 December 2021, under the global theme set by the UN Secretary-General's UNiTE campaign: **"Orange the World: End Violence against Women Now!"**

The celebration event was held at ACFODE house on 10th December in partnership with We Effect and European Union. Our partners, ACFODE members and some of the project beneficiaries who have walked with us over the years were all present to commemorate this day.

In her opening remarks, **Hon. Monica Amoding Chief Guest- 16 days of Activism Vigil**

It is sad that women are still losing their lives over domestic violence and the numbers sky rocketed during the COVID-19 pandemic which opened up a gap that will take long to close. There is more to do and we need to double our efforts to end Gender-Based Violence especially after the tough COVID-19 times". We all need to continue with creating awareness and breaking silence.



**Jean Kemitale- Vice-Chairperson ACFODE Board** while delivering her speech, Jean called upon everyone to reflect on their individual efforts towards ending Gender-Based Violence in communities and appreciated all partners that have been with ACFODE for the 36 years of ACFODE existence and the ACFODE members

"Women need to enjoy their fundamental rights in the future and live a violence-free world. It's encouraging to know that policymakers are progressive about making policies that promote human rights internationally and nationally which is a strategic move in ending Gender-based Violence"



**Regina Bafaki -Executive Director ACFODE-** said that all activities carried out during 16days of Activism were aimed at calling upon us as individuals and organizations to action to end violence.

“As we commemorate 16 days of Activism, we need to be more vocal about ending violence. We ought to stop normalizing violence in our society and practices that promote gender violence and inequality. I applaud the efforts of the different players in ending gender-based violence and let’s continue championing ending violence against women in our communities”

While the 16 days of Activism have ended we all need to continue the campaign to fight against gender-based violence. Stopping this violence starts with believing survivors, adopting comprehensive and inclusive approaches that tackle the root causes, transform harmful social norms, and empower women and girls.



## NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

**A**CFODE in partnership with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung held a national youth conference aimed at facilitating conversation, debate, and discussion on the impact of COVID-19 among the youth on gender, governance, and leadership; education and entrepreneurship. Over 100 youth leaders across the four regions of the country, joined the discussion both in person and online to share their thoughts on how the pandemic has affected their lives.

Young people were encouraged to leverage the mass adoption of digital media following the pandemic for entrepreneurship, to make connections and build networks, advance their education and careers and to mobilize around causes and issues on the advancement of youth rights.

"As Ben city, we went to all border points of the country simply spraying each truck that was entering the country and within a short period we had Government and other Partners join us to curb the spread of COVID 19 at the border. We managed to get these partnerships through digital awareness of the work we were doing. Therefore, my encouragement to everyone here is that let us maximize the digital space to advertise the kind of work we do, the expertise we have among others..." - **Odio Bernard, CEO BenCity.**

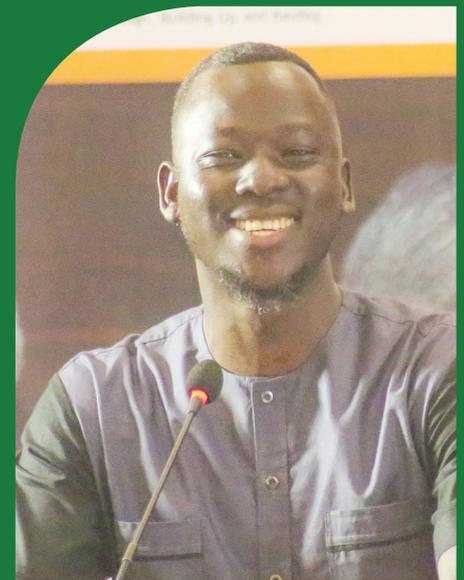
The pandemic presented an opportunity for policy makers to embrace new ways of learning that incorporate technology, participants agreed that this should however be realistic in terms of quality, inclusion, equity for all students in this economy in which the country is operating.

"There is work being done in Civil society, entrepreneurship, and creative spaces on emphasising practical alongside theory skills. I believe what needs to be done is to standardize policies so that these conversations are adopted for that shift to happen. We also still have a lot of work of engaging teachers, parents, and the children to understand and appreciate the importance of having a practical skill in one's life."  
- **Beatrice Kamakune - Uganda Debate Society.**

The overarching recommendation was for young people to get back to their spaces and organize ourselves better; there are different governance spaces for the young people that they need to exploit and these include: civil society spaces, entrepreneurship and membership spaces. "Mobilization is temporary while the organization is permanent because you create structures therefore the National youth council should focus on organizing the youth to be able to contribute to the future we want to see."  
- **Emmy Otim.**



**Beatrice Kamakune - Uganda Debate Society.**



**Emmy Otim**



**Jacob Eyeru - Chairperson National Youth Council**



**"There is work being done in Civil society, entrepreneurship, and creative spaces on emphasising practical alongside theory skills.**



*Panellist discussing efforts, successes and challenges encountered in the fight against GBV in Bundibugyo.*

## 16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM IN KASESE AND BUNDIBUGYO.

**A**CFODE with financial support from We Effect and in partnership with Semuliki cooperative union (SEMUCU) and Mt Rwenzori coffee farmers' cooperative union (MRCFCU) organized half day strategic engagements with duty bearers in Bundibugyo and Kasese on 7th & 8th December.

The meeting participants were political leaders such as councillors, technical leaders like DCDOs, probation officers, health officers, opinion leaders, mothers union, and youth leaders.

The purpose of the strategic engagements was to commemorate 16 days of activism under the "End violence against Women now" and to share the progress and efforts in eliminating GBV in Bundibugyo

and Kasese districts. The meeting also focused on developing strategies for sustaining the achieved change as well as putting in place by laws on GBV and other gender responsive by-laws.

Participants made commitments towards eliminating VAWG through preaching/teaching the four (4) principles of gender equity i.e. core creation, core blessedness, companionship, and co inheritance by the religious leaders, opinion leaders (bishops) pledged to work hand in hand with CDO's office in handling GBV cases.

The District gender focal persons committed to disseminate information around GBV and gender equality issues through organized gatherings,



*"I commit to increase sensitization of communities about cultural and social norms that disarm women and girls of their rights."*

Sensitization on radio about GBV and child protection, working with the police, RDC office towards eliminating GBV.

Councilors committed to advocating for quarterly budget increment towards the district community services department to be able to cater for GBV work and increasing awareness on mindset change.

“During lockdown, there were a lot of GBV cases. My office worked together with justice center, UGANET and community focal persons where 825 cases of GBV were registered from January to September 2021 out of these, 805 were female and only 20 were male.

1945 cases of teenage pregnancies were registered, out of this cases, less than 45 were registered in police while the rest are silent in communities where parents side with perpetrators after being bribed” - Bundibugyo

District gender focal person Ms Adong Pamela grace

“I commit to increase sensitization of communities about cultural and social norms that disarm women and girls of their rights. We will greatly consider areas speaking for women and those that do not in order to realise positive changes.

Women’s status is key and when women are empowered, all society is empowered. I thank ACFODE and MRCFCU for the model couple approach they have been using to change negative mind-sets. I ask all of you to join hands in the fight against GBV and let’s utilise the office of the prime minister of the Rwenzuru kingdom which has airtime in 3 radio stations”. Ms Mbambu Naome – Representative of the prime minister of the Rwenzuru kingdom



Group Photo

**TRAINING OF WOMEN AND GIRLS SURVIVORS OF VIOLENCE IN FINANCIAL LITERACY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN KISORO, KANUNGU, RUBANDA, RUKIGA, BUKOMANSIMBI AND KALUNGU DISTRICTS**

**A**CFODE in partnership with We Effect and with financial support from the European Union conducted a two days training in financial literacy and entrepreneurship for survivors of violence. The training took place on 22nd to 23rd November 2021 in Bukomansimbi, Kanungu and Rukiga and on 25th & 26th November 2021 in Rubanda, Kisoro and Kalungu districts. Participants were equipped with knowledge on entrepreneurship (starting business with available resources and knowledge), selecting, planning & management of an income generating activity, book keeping (daily tracking of the business), cash and risk management,

saving and loans management, making a simple business plan.

Survivors were encouraged to join saving groups to benefit from such trainings and also benefit from joint savings as a start-up capital for their ventures. The number of SGBV survivors is on the increase especially in Kanaba sub county due Covid 19 lock down that led to continuous closure of schools.

“Thank you teacher (Facilitator) and ACFODE for this training. Now, am going to utilize the available resources that are around me which I was not paying attention to, I have learnt that my brain is my capital.” - Namwebe Viola(survivor of violence)Bigasa

sub county in Bukomansimbi district. “I am going to revive my business which had collapsed by putting into action the knowledge I have gained and the little capital I will get. This training has taught me not to do business I have no knowledge about and also to start small.” - Namanda Sophia (survivor of violence) Kitanda sub county in Bukomansimbi district.

“I have been personally doing business of wine making without taking any records to know whether I have been making profits or losses but starting from today am going to make sure that whatever I do I take note of everything and at the end of the day I will be in position to

know whether to continue with the business or diversify to another lucrative business. I have really appreciated the training and I wish it would be extended to all survivors in the district so that they can be able to leave independently without relying on perpetrators”. Uwinana Rebecca from Murora sub county in Kisoro district



Participants pose for a photo after the two days training in Kalungu.



Survivors in a group practicing how to do daily tracking of their businesses during the training in Bukomansimbi.



Rubanda participants after the survivors training in financial literacy and entrepreneurship.

## ANNUAL REFLECTION MEETING FOR PARTNERS WORKING WITH ACFODE



Mr. Ashaba Denis of UCCFS sharing ACFODE's impact in mainstreaming gender at UCCFS.

ACFODE with financial support from We Effect facilitated an annual reflection meeting with board members and staff from partner organizations i.e. SSA, UCCFS, MRCFCU and SEMCU on gender mainstreaming. The meeting provided a platform for partners to share achievements from the partnership with/ interventions of ACFODE, lessons learned challenges & recommendation. The meeting took place on 2nd December 2021 at Fair way boutique Hotel in Kampala.

Partners applauded ACFODE for engendering their organisations and ACFODE's technical support in helping them in developing the sexual harassment policies, gender policies, anti-corruption policies among others. They also thanked ACFODE for facilitating trainings in gender and related concepts, supporting partners to conduct gender audits.

Partners committed to continue working with ACFODE after the project period, document successes as a result of working with ACFODE, continue hosting radio programmes to sensitize communities about GBV.

"As UCCFS, we thank ACFODE for facilitating us in gender mainstreaming which has resulted into fairness in terms of resource distribution with high budget allocated to women issues. ACFODE also conducted gender audits for UCCFS, which helped us to identify gaps in management, board and this guided us to make changes when developing work plans. Now, as UCCFS, we have a robust gender sensitive reporting system where gender disaggregated data is captured" **Ashaba Denis – Operations Manager and Gender Focal Officer UCCFS**

"Thank you ACFODE for always facilitating the radio talk shows which have greatly enlightened listeners who call me to intervene in GBV cases by advising them and those I cannot handle; I do refer them to justice centre. One of our Model couple in Bundibugyo called Tumwebaze Steven and wife from Ntotoro cooperative society legalised their marriage as a result of the model couple trainings conducted and facilitated by ACFODE". **Kobusingye Kuruthum, Project Officer SEMCU.**

"I thank all of you our partners for the good work done amidst Covid. Thank you for being open to ACFODE to share challenges you faced, which helped to guide our interventions for instance selection and change of criteria for the model couples. This has been a journey of commitment and resilience. When one is able to identify challenges and work on them, they will always achieve a lot. We Effect is proud of all partners for the good reporting exhibited among partners. Through this partnership, we have been able to learn from each other. Thank you UCCFS for the support towards our VSLA and social enterprise groups, SSA for the land awareness campaign, MRCFCU and SEMUCU who have encouraged ACFODE to start cooperatives of coffee and Cocoa growing in her other areas of operation. There has been increased visibility among partners due to joint campaigns and also I acknowledge improved relationship among the different partner organisations i.e. board, staff". **Ms Regina Bafaki – Executive Director ACFODE.**



Ms. Kuruthum Kobusingye of SEMUCU sharing the project achievements.

Ms. Regina Bafaki giving the opening remarks during the reflection meeting with partners.

**LAUNCH OF THE PEACE HUT IN ITABAMBINIGA ZONE**

**A**CFODE with financial support from Eirene launched a peace hut in Itabaminiga zone, Kyaka All refugee settlement. The hut was officially launched by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). The peace hut is a community driven structure, where the trained community facilitators from refugee and host community address SGBV in peer support groups and resolve conflicts. The peace hut has meeting schedules to ensure sex-segregated and mixed-sex meeting times (safe spaces). Cases for conflict resolution will be submitted to the community facilitators and then scheduled for a mediation session. Partners were present in the launch of the peace hut and applauded ACFODE for the work done in refugee communities and fighting against Gender and sexual violence.

“The peace hut will help the community solve a lot cases. Previously, we didn’t have a proper meeting place in our area and many people used to come to my home to solve misunderstandings. As a community we embrace this new space and I encourage everyone in the community to utilize this space to settle any conflicts. We appreciate what ACFODE has done in our community especially the trainings about how to handle GBV, the cases have atleast reduced due to awareness” John Byaruhanga, a community member



**A representative from EIRENE, Ms. Augusta and ACFODE Executive Director at the launch of the peace hut**

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*Partners were present in the launch of the peace hut and applauded ACFODE for the work done in refugee communities*”



**Community members embracing the launch of the Peace Hut**



**The Executive Director ACFODE- Ms. Regina Bafaki giving her remarks during the forum**

## NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS' FORUM ON THE STATUS OF FRONTLINE COMMUNITIES' IN MT. ELGON REGION

ACFODE organized a national multi-stakeholder forum to share the baseline findings on the status of Human Rights in the Mt. Elgon Conservation Area. The forum brought together 75 leaders in Mbale region and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) participants. The forum provided a platform to take stock of the events in the Mount Elgon Conservation Area and for the different duty bearers to account for their actions in the course of their work.

ACFODE shared findings of a baseline study with policy makers and the report on the conservation Laws and policies in Uganda at a National Forum for stakeholders. ACFODE and Uganda Wildlife Authority pledged to work together to protect the rights the people

living near conservation areas around Mount Elgon National Park in Uganda particularly in the districts of Mbale, Sironko, Manafwa, and Naminsidwa.

This is in partnership with the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights (SFHR) under the project; Promoting Equitable, Just, and Accountable Conservation in Mount Elgon Conservation areas that aims at advocating for the respect, protection, and fulfillment of rights of frontline communities living.

The participants came up with strategies to ensure meaningful participation of frontline communities and entire body of citizens in the governance of the conservation areas.



**A cross section of stakeholders after the National forum on Conservation**

**STAKEHOLDERS MEETING TO SHARE FINDINGS FROM THE GENDER ANALYSIS ON THE REFUGEES ACT 2006 AND THE REFUGEES REGULATIONS 2010**

ACFODE organized a breakfast meeting with 25 stakeholders on 17th December 2021 to share recommendations with policy makers on how policies can be made gender responsive for the benefit of women and girls in refugee settlements.

The meeting key stakeholders were from OPM, MGLSD, UNHCR, Partner organizations who shared findings on the gender Analysis of the refugees Act 2006 and Regulations 2010.

The key recommendations included; The representation of MGLSD on the Eligibility Committee to provide technical support on gender, equal representation of women and men on the Eligibility Committee, a member from civil society and the host community to assist and advice based on local realities as well as a confidentiality clause that prohibits members of the REC from sharing or disclosing any information pertaining to a refugee or an asylum seeker to a third party except in the course of his or her duty is provided and with the consent of the Commissioner among others.



**Stakeholders pose for photo after the meeting**