

Newsletter



Acfode

BREAKING THROUGH, BUILDING UP AND BINDING



SOCIAL CHANGE

Male engagements in gender transformative approaches to advance gender equality in education spheres. Training of duty bearers in Kanungu, Kisoro, Rubanda and Rukiga on the existing laws and policies and their roles in combating violence against women and children



LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Capacity building for newly elected women councillors

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Training in social enterprises for women councillors and spouses



POLICY ADVOCACY

Dissemination of the COVID-19 pandemic report on girls experiences in Kyegegwa district

International conference on gender studies in Africa

International Women's day celebrations at ACFODE House





We are excited to share the activities that transpired in the first quarter of the year 2022. ACFODE has been able to implement so many activities and we share the highlights in this Issue. We have been able to change lives in communities and we thank you for the support.

Editor Violet Nakiggwe

Editorial



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS AT ACFODE HOUSE

ACFODE joined the rest of the world to celebrate International Women's Day under the theme #Break the Bias. ACFODE collaborated with different organizations including We Effect partners namely; Shelter and Settlement Alternatives (SSA), Uganda Central Cooperative Financial Services (UCCFS) and Uganda Housing Cooperative Union (UHOCU) organized conversation circles on gender equality at ACFODE House in Kampala. In attendance were model couples, members of SACCOs, gender focal persons and gender champions ACFODE members, mentees and We Effect partners.

The conversations focused on three thematic areas: women's safety and

security; women, land and housing and financial inclusion for women. A number of issues emerged from the discussion and among them were negative influence of cultural norms, values and beliefs that do not support women's access, utilization and ownership of land, lack of inadequate security or collateral security to enable women acquire loans, lack of trust in cooperatives by the public, cyber bullying due to inadequate digital skills, lack of support for human rights defenders, and inadequate implementation of GBV policies due to limited financial resources, capacity and monitoring.

A number of strategies to improve women's security and safety; women,



CSOs joining conversation circles during women's day celebrations at ACFODE House

land and housing; and women’s access to financial services were generated from the discussions.

These strategies included; Adoption of alternative justice resolutions mechanism use of cultural leaders, LCs and local partners especially regarding communally owned land; gender inclusivity in provision of financial services; Embracing digital education and digital security trainings to reduce online violence and improve access to GBV online services;

The conversation circles provided a platform for We Effect partners and other civil society actors to synergize and profile

the work they have done in the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality.

“UCCFS has been intentional in women’s inclusion in the place of work and communities.

This has been done through women empowerment and promoting women’s rights. UCCFS has helped many women attain financial inclusion and encouragement to participate in leadership financially by designing products and services that suit women’s tastes and preferences and girl child education through providing small loans to cater for the education needs” - Ms. Mary Nshemereirwe Bwengye (UCCFS)”.

“SSA is committed to ensuring that the ideas shared today are used for advocacy at national level.

I thank ACFODE for the productive partnership and being the brain behind the model couple approach which has empowered couples to mediate cases of domestic violence in their communities, refer GBV cases to the responsible authorities to ensure that the survivors of violence get justice. However, though many women still have challenges owning land or even houses but there exist opportunities to improve this situation through a joint effort”- Brian Odella (SSA)”.



Ms. Rebecca Rukundo giving welcome remarks during the women’s day celebrations at ACFODE House

Brian Odella, from SSA giving remarks during the women’s day celebrations at ACFODE House

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER STUDIES IN AFRICA



Panelists after the ACFODE session

ACFODE joined the School of Women and Gender Studies at Makerere University to celebrate 30 years of teaching Gender Studies by convening the international conference on gender studies in Africa. As her contribution to this conference, ACFODE convened a parallel session on the broader sub theme; Gender Studies and Gender Practice- Where is the Missing Link focusing on the link between women's organising/activism and the subject of gender studies and research.

ACFODE was represented by Ms. Jean Kemitare, the Vice Chairperson who presented: Role of Gender Studies and Politicized Activism. Other CSOs on the panel included National

Youth Network, Women's Democracy Network- WDN, AVIS, NAWOU and FOWODE.

In 1991, ACFODE joined hands with the University Women's Association to

make a case for a gender department at Makerere University. It started with a passionate appeal presented by ACFODE to a conference of donors for creation of the department. Their efforts paid off in 1991 when a Department of Women Studies was established at Makerere University offering a post-graduate course in Gender Studies and later the undergraduate course as well.

The Dean School of Women and gender studies presenting a Mak 100 gift to the Chairperson and her Vice of ACFODE's Board in appreciation of the support ACFODE has given to the International Conference on Gender Studies in Africa in celebration of the 30 years of the existence of the Mak School of Women & Gender Studies. ACFODE made a financial contribution of 5000 Euros towards the organization of the conference.

CAPACITY BUILDING FOR NEWLY ELECTED WOMEN COUNCILLORS

ACFODE with support from the German Embassy held capacity building workshops for women councillors in Apac, Kaberamaido, Bundibugyo and Ntoroko districts.

The workshop sessions focused on increasing the skills-set and knowledge of elected women councillors to ably engage in council and influence decision making processes, strengthen networking and knowledge sharing among the councillors. The newly elected councillors were

equipped with the skills and information about their roles and responsibilities, advocacy, lobbying and communication skills to enable them effectively champion women's issues in local development plans and budgets.

Hon. Docus Otim the LCV female councilor for Agulu Division in Apac Municipality shared her experience on how she managed to retain her seat for the fifth term. "My performance in Council was very good; I managed to lobby for



Group Photo of Councillors in Apac district

different government programmes where women in my sub-county keep on benefiting from the government programmes such as NUSAF, Youth livelihood, former NAADS, Operational Wealth Creation among others. Most importantly, I have managed to stay in council for long because of ACFODE's mentorship programmes of female

political leaders in Apac. In every electoral year ACFODE trains women candidates on how to conduct successful campaign and after election, ACFODE builds the capacity of women leaders on how to fulfill their roles and responsibilities and this has enabled me to perform very well as a leader."

TRAINING IN SOCIAL ENTERPRISE FOR WOMEN COUNCILLORS AND SPOUSES

ACFODE conducted training workshops for women councillors and their spouses in Kamwenge and Kyegegwa. The trainings aim at building the leaders' skills and knowledge in identifying social problems and

starting successful business aimed at addressing those problems. In the long run this will improve their economic status and that of their households.

The trainings focused on understanding social entrepreneurship

in detail including identification of opportunities within the communities to start social enterprises.

Other topics covered included: market research, saving, book keeping, branding, and value addition among

others. Speaking at the workshop in Kamwenge, one of the spouses, appreciated ACFODE for including them as it improves their relationships as long as their economic welfare

DISSEMINATION OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC REPORT FINDINGS ON GIRLS' EXPERIENCES TO KEY STAKEHOLDERS IN THE KYEGEGWA DISTRICT

The study revealed that girls had been disproportionately affected by the pandemic. Kyegegwa District is one of the districts that experienced adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on women and girls in Refugee settlements. ACFODE shared the findings from the COVID-19 pandemic report with government officials, CSO representatives, and local leaders at the district and sub-county levels.

Girls living in the refugee settlement had more challenges with over 269 Female teenagers becoming pregnant during the lockdown. Some women suffered domestic violence and others experienced unwanted pregnancies. One of the suggested actions was to construct a Sexual and Gender-Based Violence shelter in the Kyegegwa district to fight against gender-based violence, developing programs that specifically target teenage mothers for entrepreneurial training to equip them

with vocational skills, psychosocial support and other educational activities. It was also proposed that the Government of Uganda, UNHCR and NGOs encourage teenage mothers to go back to school. The government arrest and give heavy punishments to GBV perpetrators so that cases of rape can reduce. There is a need for more sensitization of women and girls, educating them about their potential abilities, freedom and rights. This would empower them and build their confidence.

Continue with awareness creation sessions to communities about SGBV and its consequences on the people. Strengthen Psycho social support and counseling services especially in communities with refugees since the majority of the people have been tortured emotionally by the effects of the pandemic.



DISTRICT REVIEW MEETING IN MT. ELGON REGION

Mt Elgon region continues to score highly in improving linkages among front line communities and UWA officials. This was discovered at the review meetings organized by ACFODE in March in the districts of Mbale, Sironko, Naminisidwa and Manafwa. The meetings focused on sharing project milestones, lessons and strategies employed during the implementation process.

The local government officials pledged to integrate the community monitor structure created by ACFODE in the already existing structures such as the environmental committees for continuity of the project after closure.

Some of the lessons so far from the project included; The benefits of Community Activism as a form of social accountability and the importance of communal engagements with UWA officials, plus the involvement of both community women and men in protecting frontline communities.

ACFODE was applauded for the good work done in educating the frontline communities in understanding human rights and conservation. The participants were able to differentiate the different roles and responsibilities of the mandated offices regarding conservation, the dos and don'ts as well as guidelines in accessing the protected areas of Mt. Elgon.

Also, participants learnt the key gender-related concepts and how they apply to their daily lives, the gender roles and responsibilities and the rights of women and girls in decision-making processes.

The community engagements provide a platform for social accountability among the duty bearers and communities. The community women and men can now engage with their local leaders and share key challenges facing their access to gazetted areas with limited or no confrontation.



MALE ENGAGEMENTS IN GENDER-TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACHES TO ADVANCE GENDER EQUALITY IN EDUCATION SPHERES

ACFODE continues to engage men in gender transformative approaches aimed at advancing gender equality in Uganda particularly in Kabale and Kisoro. Over 20 male agents were engaged in understanding and appreciating the rights of women in education and development.

They were further called upon to utilize different spaces/opportunities to support women to pursue higher education and engage other men in their communities to embrace to support women in leadership.



IWD

CELEBRATING INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY IN BUNDIBUGYO DISTRICT



As part of the women's day celebrations for this year, ACFODE facilitated Semuliki Cooperative Union (SEMUCU) to organize community outreaches in Bundibugyo district. SEMUCU joined Busoru cooperative society, their affiliate in the celebrations. The celebrations were attended by District Councilors, Probation Officer, Police and SEMUCU members. The activities included cultural dances and young star dancers.

"Our cooperative society has registered a number of achievements; we are producing over 100 tonnes of cocoa annually; there is increased involvement of women in Cocoa

business from 11 in 2012 to 270 in 2021 and having permanent structures of operation. Being an affiliate to SEMUCU has helped women to be financially literate. We know how to budget for our money from Cocoa beans, airing out our voices and educating our children. Through SEMCU, I attended leadership for change course and that is why am a manager of Busoru cooperative society" - Miss. Katusiime Mary - Manager Busoru Cooperative society.

Miss. Tusabe Joyce, the District commercial officer appealed to members to educate the girl children because when you educate a girl you have

Emmy Otim

◀ The district Commercial Officer Ms Tusabe Joyce emphasizing that the women should not let themselves lag behind



Busoru Cooperative Society GM Ms Katusiime Mary encouraging women not to shy away from leadership positions

educated the whole nation". She discouraged women cooperators belonging to several VSLAs and getting multiple loans from different financial providers. "This is not good because it hinders development". She also encouraged women to join the district SACCO where they can save and buy some shares and start getting revolving loans at a low percentage.

As a way forward, the Union together with other guests agreed on the following actions; profile all women starting from LC1 to members of parliament with the help of District women leaders; revive international women's day in Bundibugyo, carry out capacity building for women

in leadership positions, form Bundibugyo District women's forum, where women will be given a chance to talk about their problems at a higher level; formation of women rights advocacy groups including religious leaders, women groups and other stake holders to talk about women's needs in the community and environmental conservation, since women are the ones who interact with the environment most of the time, they should take an initiative of conserving it through use of energy saving stoves and tree planning.



I attended leadership for change course and that is the reason why am a manager of Busoru cooperative society" - Miss. Katusiime Mary - Manager Busoru Cooperative society.



The Bundibugyo district probation officer- Miss Pamela Adong giving her speech ▲



District Family Affairs police officer addressing the women and men during the event. ▲



Tree planting at Busoru Cooperative Society as a mark for closure of the event ▲

TRAINING OF DUTY BEARERS IN KANUNGU, KISORO, RUBANDA AND RUKIGA ON THE EXISTING LAWS AND POLICIES AND THEIR ROLES IN COMBATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN (VAW/C)



▲
A group photo of participants after the training in Rubanda district

ACFODE in partnership with We Effect and with financial support from EU conducted a training duty bearers in the districts of Kisoro, Kanungu, Rubanda and Rukiga on existing laws and their roles in combating VAW/C. The duty bearers included police, prosecutors, health workers, CDOs, Probation officers, chiefs and LCs among others. The duty bearers gained understanding on the different national laws and policies for prevention and response to Violence against Women and Children, key concepts on VAW/C, GBV, causes of violence, triggers and effects, forms of VAW, their consequences, roles and responsibilities of different duty bearers, the different referral pathways, basic counselling techniques and lobbying and advocacy.

Key issues of concern raised by duty bearers included; uncoordinated referral points in handling and management of VAWC cases, inadequate resource allocations for timely management of reported cases, strong cultural beliefs and norms that demean women's participation

in decision making processes, impunity regarding VAWC, increasing cases of alcoholism, child labour, early marriages and teenage pregnancies (Rubanda has registered 169 cases in the span of 3 months October - December 2021). Pregnant girls have been denied chance to report back to school despite the government pronouncement that schools should allow pregnant pupils/students to continue with education.

"Alcoholism is contributing greatly to the occurrence of GBV and this has become rampant during the season of harvesting onions. In my parish, there are 3 villages where if a man has less than 2 wives, he cannot sit on the table of men and share a drink!" - Mr. Nsabagasani Ephraim, LC II Chairperson Muhindura Parish, Kanaba Sub County, Kisoro district

The duty bearers pledged to be change agents in combating VAW/C their respective communities.

Group photo of participants from Kisoro district after the training at Muhabura View Guest house



Ms. Mukarugero Jovia the CDO Kanaba sub county, Kisoro district emphasizing a point during the training.



Ms. Happy Ainomugisha facilitating a session during the training of duty bearers in Rubanda district



Participants during a group discussion in Rukiga district



REGIONAL INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS IN NAIROBI KENYA

International Women's Day is observed annually on March 8 and this year the regional celebrations in East Africa for Women's day were held at Movenpick hotel, Nairobi Kenya under the theme "Break the Bias" with a sub theme "Secure Women Land Rights"

The co-organizing institutions were Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) a Regional Economic Community of the Africa Union (IGAD) International Land Coalition, Landesa a global land rights organization, We Effect (a global development organization working in 25 countries in the world facilitating sustainable development through partnerships with member managed organization) GROOTS Kenya (a national movement of grassroots women-led community-based organizations (CBOs) and Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Kenya) ICRW (a global research institute with offices located in Washington, D.C.; New Delhi, India; Nairobi, Kenya; and Kampala, Uganda) and Habitat for Humanity (a nonprofit organization that helps families build

and improve places to call home) among others.

ACFODE was represented by the Executive Director Ms Regina Bafaki in the celebrations.

The event focused had three areas; Expose biases that hinder gender equality in land governance and their implications for the empowerment of women and girls; Share and celebrate planned actions and programs intended to contribute to securing land rights and achieving sustainable land management and climate action outcomes for women and girls in Africa. This will include launching the IGAD Region Multiverse of Women Coffee Table Book and the Stand for Her Land Campaign; Explore new synergies towards "breaking the bias" in securing women's land rights in Africa.

The key highlights of the day were:

i) Women and Land

Expo: This entailed a set of presentations and experience sharing from grassroots women, researchers and gender and land practitioners through photos, poster exhibitions and storytelling. A space



Ms Regina Bafaki ED-ACFODE with Ms Faith Wayua Mutuku- Regional Coordinator in charge of gender equality - We Effect at the International Women's day conference in Nairobi 2022

was provided where participants exhibited their Women's Land Rights initiatives.

ii) Launch of the IGAD

Coffee Table book: A publication of women's experiences on Land Rights in the IGAD Region was unveiled. The Coffee Table Book is a compilation of pictorials and voices of multiverse of women on Land in the IGAD region. The launch was accompanied by a video documentary, these two products shed more light on the gaps exist that still existing in relation to women land rights and called upon member states and other stakeholders to take appropriate action.

iii) Launch of the Stand for Her Land Campaign: Landesa and International Land Campaign (ILC)

launched the "Stand for Her Land" Campaign which aims at closing the implementation gap for women's land rights. The Stand for Her Land exists to support millions of women around the globe to claim equal footing in a fast-moving world through the transformative power of land rights and to engage men as champions for gender justice. Stand for Her Land has coalitions of grassroots women and civil society actors in Senegal, Uganda, Colombia, and Bangladesh and was first launched in 2018 with a Coalition in Tanzania.

PICTORIAL



A group photo of the participants at the International Women's day conference in Nairobi 2022



Ms Regina Bafaki receiving the coffee table book developed by IGAD at the International women's day conference 2022 in Nairobi



The Bundibugyo district probation officer- Miss Pamela Adong giving her speech



District Family Affairs police officer addressing the women and men during the event.



Dissemination meeting with stakeholders in Kyegegwa district, sharing report findings on the experiences on girls amid the pandemic