

ACFODE

ANNUAL

REPORT 2022



**ACFODE's Trajectory
towards Gender Equality
and Lasting Socio-
Cultural Change**

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FOREWORD

“Empowering Communities to make Gender Equality A reality”

In this report, you will find Action for Development (ACFODE’s) empowering work in Uganda, which focused on deepening gender equality in conservation, leadership, economic empowerment, socio-cultural development and rights advocacy. It highlights ACFODE’s efforts in supporting refugees and frontline communities in Kigezi, Masaka, Northern Uganda and Mt Elgon conservation area. As an organisation, we express gratitude to our supporters and stakeholders for their enduring commitment to creating lasting transformational change and empowering women and girls in Uganda. To mention but a few, we are thrilled to update you on our undertakings in environmental conservation that have led to sustainable farming practices and active youth participation in tree planting. We expanded our focus to safeguard women and girls from violence by creating awareness of the undeniable links between gender, rights, and conservation using our pocket guides that reached at least 500 individuals, serving as a vital knowledge resource.

With enthusiasm, we promoted economic empowerment for women and survivors of violence to unlock their economic potential to full recovery from post Covid-19 pandemic through training and mentorship in social enterprising and financial inclusion. Our journey taught us the importance of preserving the environment for sustainable success. We embraced financial finesse through purposeful saving and strategic investments for prosperous social enterprises. As communities we serve face challenges of poor saving cultures, extreme poverty, and lack of entrepreneurship skills, we together must navigate high-interest rates and limited resources. However, government programs like the Parish Development Model and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship offered opportunities for growing women and young people potential. Empowering women councillors with financial literacy and forging alliances with financial institutions that offer favourable loan terms can grow capital that is helpful for alleviating socio-economic burdens. Let us draw inspiration from these successful social enterprises and extend our hand to aid those struggling to recover from COVID-19 effects, helping them to thrive once more.

In 2022 again, ACFODE made significant strides in protecting women and children’s rights in Uganda. We improved the referral system for cases of violence by raising awareness about reporting mechanisms. Positive relationships were fostered between duty bearers and community structures. Sixty dialogues were held during the 16 Days of Activism, advocating for a positive response to violence. Duty bearers facilitated the reunification of families affected by domestic violence. Trained teachers established “talking compounds” and GBV prevention clubs in schools. Through the ‘STOP’ project, we supported refugees to achieve gender transformative outcomes, with 86% of rights holders accessing our dispute resolution mechanism for sexual and gender-based violence through the ‘peace huts’. Collaboration with partners and stakeholders has been crucial in this regard, and we remain committed to partnerships building. I am also delighted to share ACFODE’s Action for strengthening women’s political participation in Uganda initiative which targeted elected women councillors and their spouses in operational districts. Our efforts resulted into increased women participation in influencing gender-responsive policies.

Our success in promoting gender equality within member-based organizations especially in Kampala, Kasese and Bundibugyo districts through policy advocacy is worth celebrating. Engaging men in promoting gender equality addressed barriers to women's empowerment. Despite the challenges, we remained resilient and committed to creating lasting change and a society where women and girls’ voices are heard, rights protected, and leadership valued. We extend heartfelt gratitude to our partners, supporters, and stakeholders for their vital role in ACFODE’s success. Your unwavering support propels us forward in empowering women and advocating for gender equality.

Dr. Euzobia Mbaine Mugisha
Chairperson, ACFODE Board of Directors

PREFACE

“ACFODE’s Winning Journey: Step into the realm of empowerment, where dreams turn to reality and lasting change pulses through our mission”

ACFODE’s 2022 successes unfolded with determination as we courageously influenced policies and legislation, reshaping the gender equality landscape. By guiding fearless leaders, we safeguarded women and girls’ rights, illuminating Uganda. Amidst COVID-19’s shadows, we ignited programs, fuelling economic ascent. Behind the scenes, we fortified ACFODE’s foundation, ensuring our mandate thrives. We are dedicated to the continued crafting of awe-inspiring tales where resilience, passion, and empowerment entwine in a symphony of progress.

Welcome to the extraordinary realm of ACFODE, where boundaries crumble and possibilities soar. In 2022, we sparked a gender equality revolution across Kasese, Bundibugyo, and Kampala, reshaping policies and breaking barriers. In Kyegegwa, our STOP project became a beacon of hope in refugee camps, eradicating SGBV and illuminating a path towards resilience and a brighter future. At Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, we shattered the chains of gender-based violence, empowering survivors and challenging societal norms in Kyegegwa District. Our symphony of resilience echoed through the “Empowered to Act project” empowering women and girls to shape their destinies, influencing politics and decision-making in Kyegegwa, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko, and Kamwenge is undeniable. As guardians of nature’s majesty, we protected the Mt. Elgon Conservation Areas, fostering harmony between humanity and the environment. Despite the economic crises, we persevered, promoting gender equality in education through the Blended Learning Solution which bridged the gender divide in education, creating a future free from prejudice. In the heartlands of Masaka and Kigezi region, we stood with partners, defending women's and children's rights. These endeavours embody ACFODE’s essence, empowering women and shaping a society of thriving equality. Our desire is to see more partners join this journey of progress, resilience, and boundless empowerment as we rewrite Uganda's narrative, etch an indelible mark on the path of change and create an enduring legacy of empowerment, where each chapter inspires and uplifts.

Weathered by successive economic shocks, we dared to envision a world where gender equality was a lived reality. Through our program pillars, we set a movement that would shape history in motion. Recognizing that change required consistently engaging diverse stakeholders, and a broad coalition of socio-cultural advocates, leadership development became a crucial pillar of our work, enabling us to reach out to the younger generation, cultural and religious leaders, duty-bearers, and even those who perpetuated gender inequality. We recognised the urgency of nurturing a new generation of leaders who would champion equality and therefore through training and mentoring, we empowered women and youth, instilling in them the confidence to break silence on societal limitations and catalyse transformative change in their communities. With understanding that economic independence was not only empowering but also a catalyst for dismantling deeply ingrained social-cultural practices that perpetuated the subordination of women, we designed comprehensive programs that equip women and girls with the tools and opportunities to thrive financially.

Our goal was to create a critical mass of advocates, united in their commitment to breaking down barriers and advancing progress. As a beacon of hope, a catalyst for change, and an unwavering force, we forged a path towards a more equitable and just society, valuing and celebrating the voices and contributions of all individuals, irrespective of gender.

**Ms Regina Bafaki,
ACFODE Executive Director**

1. ACFODE'S IDENTITY (WHO WE ARE)

ABOUT ACFODE

- 1** Our vision is "A just society where gender equality is a reality"
- 2** Our Mission is "To empower women and girls, and influence legislation and policy for gender equality in Uganda."
- 3** Our story began in 1985 when a group of passionate women came together with a shared vision to create an organization that would empower women and girls and promote gender equality in Uganda.
- 4** Today, we stand tall as a beacon of hope in the heart of Uganda, driving social change and inspiring others to join us on this journey.
- 5** Guided by our visionary mission, we empower women and girls, Moulding them into powerful agents of transformation.
- 6** Our work is multifaceted and encompasses various areas, including advocacy, research, capacity building, and community engagement.
- 7** We invite you to join us on this journey, to be a part of the change that we are working towards, and to help us create a future where gender equality is not just a dream but a reality.

At ACFODE, we believe in the power of equality and the transformative impact it can have on individuals, communities, and societies. For over 35 years, we have been at the forefront of the fight for women's rights and gender equality in Uganda, tirelessly working towards a future where every woman and girl can thrive and reach their full potential.

ACFODE is more than just an organisation; it is a transformative force that is dedicated to crafting a future where a just society blossoms. We believe that every woman and girl have the right to live a life free from discrimination, violence, and poverty. We work with women and girls from all walks of life, providing them with the necessary tools, knowledge, and support to overcome the barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential. As we continue to pursue our mission, we remain committed to unleashing equality and empowering change in Uganda and beyond.

1.1. Our Focus in 2022

ACFODE's main development programming pillars remained five (5). These influenced the design, implementation, monitoring and reporting of projects as well as guided financial allocations and management.



1.1.1. Strategic Focus

Pillar 1: Policy Advocacy & Research

In recognition that the national policy and legal frameworks have not ably translated into positive outcomes in the realisation of gender equality, ACFODE

frameworks have not ably translated into positive outcomes in the realisation of gender equality, ACFODE

continued evidenced based policy advocacy to ensure that policy, legislative and institutional environments are supportive of women's and children's rights.

Pillar 2: Leadership Development

Aware that women's active engagement in political decision making is dismal compared to male representation at all levels of governance at CSO/association, government and community levels, ACFODE undertook capacity building for women and held conversations with male counterparts including spouses to promote gender equality in household and corporate/entity leadership. This was aimed enhancing women's effective participation in political decision making and supporting women's right for participation in leadership and socio-economic development.

Pillar 3: Socio-Cultural Transformation

ACFODE continued to roll out the gender transformative approaches mainly the model couple approach and male engagement which was critical in challenging the power dynamics and negative socio-cultural practices/norms that are the root causes of gender inequality and violence against women and girls (VAW/G) which often leaves them agonising and devoid of dignified living. In all operational areas, these strategies proved as trailblazers in transforming people's attitudes, norms and practices hence promoting women and girls' rights. Through the digital platforms, ACFODE amplified voices to end VAW/G and created consciousness of underlying factors that perpetuate gender inequality in socio-cultural, economic and political spaces.

Pillar 4: Economic Empowerment

In order to ensure fairness and equity in delivery of socio-economic services and products (financial products, housing products, agribusiness products) to both women and men, ACFODE strengthened local partners to undertake deliberate gender mainstreaming in economic empowerment programming. Additionally, ACFODE held engagements with duty bearers on financial inclusion of women and survivors of VAW/C in government programs. Determined to increase the number of women and youth with access, control and ownership of and social-economic enterprises and land resources, ACFODE focused efforts on creating awareness on land rights and promoting social enterprising among women and youth through different targeted trainings.

Pillar 5: Institutional Strengthening

ACFODE continued to explore unconventional institutional financing methods such as crowd sourcing, volunteers and issue-based fundraiser activities in seeking for support especially towards institutional development in order to effectively deliver on her mandate.

1.1.2. Geographical Focus & Program Reach in Numbers

ACFODE
Geographical Focus

At district level, work was spread across the country in the following regions and districts:

Regions & Districts in Uganda

Eastern Region
Kaberamaido & Mbale Districts

Northern Region
Dokolo & Apac Districts

Western Region
Kanungu, Rubanda, Kabale Kasese, Bundibugyo, Kyegegwa, Ntoroko, Kamwenge, Kisoro and Rukiga Districts

Central Region
Kampala, Kalungu and Bukomansimbi Districts

In 2022, ACFODE continued to engage at the national level with Government ministries, departments and agencies as well as partner organizations to deliver programs.

Program Reach in Numbers by Pillar		
Program Pillar	#People Directly Reached	
	Female	Male
Policy Advocacy & Research	332	268
Leadership Development	806	422
Social Cultural Transformation	20,458	2,799
Economic Empowerment	1453	428
Institutional Strengthening	151	157
Total	23,200	4,074



Program Reach in Numbers by Pillar				
Program Pillar	#People Directly Reached		#People In Directly Reached	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
Policy Advocacy & Research	332	268	-	-
Leadership Development	806	422	13,696	8,166
Social Cultural Transformation	20,458	2,799	116,805	268,024
Economic Empowerment	1453	428	-	-
Institutional Strengthening	151	157	-	-
Total	23,200	4,074	130,501	276,190

2. PROGRAM DELIVERY APPROACHES

2.1. Capacity Building & Enhancement

ACFODE played a crucial role in influencing and supporting other organisations to mainstream gender equality in their institutional and governance practices and systems. Significant to note, through her technical expertise in gender policy formulation and gender transformative approaches for tackling institutional gender inequalities, ACFODE enabled local partner organisations to review and roll out institutional gender policies and corresponding gender action plans. The duty bearers and community social actors were also capacitated in different fields including national gender policies, leadership, advocacy and economic empowerment. This enabled different organisations, social actors and duty bearers to mainstream gender in institutional governance and practices.

2.2. Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA)

Conscious that operational areas sometimes encounter conflicts with fragile contexts, that endanger fulfilment of human rights and gender equality aspirations, ACFODE continued to apply the human rights-based approach (HRBA) and “Do No Harm principle” which have kept ACFODE non paranoid and conflict sensitive in her operations. ACFODE was also able to undertake conflict analysis and strategic options that ensured participation, non-discrimination, transparency, and accountability by program target groups and stakeholders. This enabled optimization of results even in delicate conflict and post conflict contents.

2.3. Gender Transformative Approaches

ACFODE continued to promote her ground breaking gender transformative approaches of model couple and male engagement for gender equality. The transformed model couples and male gender equality champions have proved effective and efficient in promoting social norm change and gender equality as they harness involvement of influencing power structures in dismantling negative masculine systems and social norms that perpetuate systemic gender inequality at individual, household, community, societal and policy levels. Intentionally, to inculcate a culture of respecting women’s and girls’ rights, ACFODE accentuated working with boys, male youth, male spouses and gate keepers (cultural and religious leaders) as major influencers of gender equality. These have been very crucial in tackling barriers to women and girls’ social enterprising, promotion of women’s leadership and participation in political decision making.

2.4. Mobilization and Awareness creation

ACFODE reinforced gender equality groups and caucuses by facilitating their formation, organising and capacity building. Using the caucus approach, legislative women’s knowledge and skills to effectively represent the interests of their constituents and collectively advocate for gender equality was solidified. Effective alliance building around common goals of women’s empowerment and gender transformation was enhanced. ACFODE promoted the school-based gender equality clubs which harnessed the innate capacity of young people to collectively safeguard children’s rights, tackle social problems and convert them into streams of benefits for their improved collective wellbeing. Aware that access to information and participation are core for tackling gender biases, vulnerability to violence and inequalities, ACFODE promoted targeted media conversation sessions and awareness outreaches on gender equality which increased the local people’s voice and action in gendered service delivery in operational areas. These also enabled fast tracking of gender equality resolutions made during periodic policy dialogues and engagement.

2.5. Partnerships & Linkages

In the pursuance of the strategic objectives, ACFODE deployed a multi-stakeholder collaborative and partnership approach at both local and national levels. This increased chances for the program success and offered communities (including survivors of GBV) and duty bearers’ chance to meet, deliberate on gender issues, take redress actions and demand for accountability for human rights violations. Linkages unlocked symbiotic, accountable and collaborative relationships and joint action for results. ACFODE’s participation in

district, national and international level stakeholder engagements and capacity strengthening increased the strategic alliances with likeminded partners. This created an opportunity for ACFODE to have a collective voice towards a common cause and was helpful for bridging funding gaps for projects that create the conditions for women to achieve sustainable economic empowerment and financial independence.

2.6. Participatory Monitoring & Advocacy

ACFODE continued to implement the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME) model for policy advocacy. Together with targeted actors and rights holders, ACFODE carried out regular follow-ups, assessment and reporting on the programming relevance, performance and efficiency of all projects in regards to the 2022 contextual realities. Using structured monitoring tools, rights holders' and stakeholders' voices (their perceptions and attitudes) about ACFODE's performance against the program goals and effectiveness of the deployed delivery approaches were assessed. ACFODE also undertook documentation of successes, lessons learnt, practices, innovations and outcomes (intended and unintended) resulting from program actions. The findings from these processes informed reporting and facilitated collaborative learning and action at different levels with relevant stakeholders.

3. ACFODE OPERATIONAL CONTEXT

Legislatively, government enacted several laws that seek to accord equal rights between women and men in conformity with the constitution of Uganda and international commitments. These included among others the, Succession Amendment Act (2022), Landlord and Tenant Act (2022), Computer Misuse (Amendment) Act, 2022 among others. The amendments provided for gender equality, repealed provisions that were declared unconstitutional and solidified overarching principles for human rights fulfilment. CSOs and parliamentarians also renewed advocacy for enactment of the Sexual Offences Bill (2019).

In 2021, Uganda observed an increase in women's influence in top political decision-making spaces resulting from years of advocacy efforts by the women's movement. Despite this milestone, in 2022, quality issues in women leadership remained a key glaring concern which may have negative outcomes in the promotion of women's leadership in near future especially at top government levels. The advent of the Parish Development Model (PDM), operating at the lowest unit of service delivery pathway, offered opportunity for positioning women and addressing gender imbalances in development initiatives.

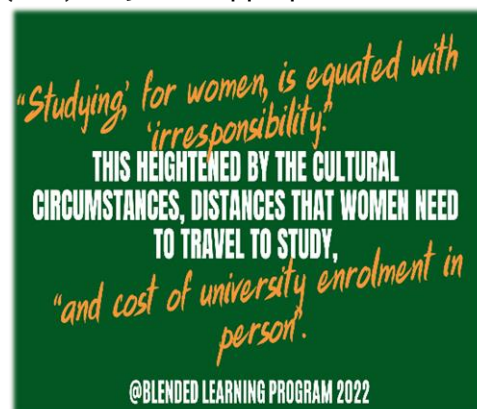
Whilst Uganda's budget slightly increased from Shs.44.7 trillion (2021/22) to Shs48.1 trillion (2022/2023), decline in resources allocation to key sectors (education, health, agriculture) was observed. For example, agriculture which is the main stay of the economy - employing more than one-third of the work force (mainly women) had a reduction of 13.2% in 2022/2023 from Shs.1.67 trillion in FY 2021/2022. The Lands sector remained the least funded which curtailed implementation of different land laws and policies thus affecting marginalised groups of people especially women and youth in claiming their land rights. The Equal Opportunities Commission, received 18.6% budget increase to address gender and equality responsiveness.

Despite increased government's investment to boost the capitalization of the SME recovery fund and other livelihood enhancement programs, the progressive economic recovery post Covid-19 pandemic has been slow with economic impacts like unstable funding loops and unemployment evident. In 2022, Uganda's economy weathered successive shocks which caused exchange rate and price fluctuations for fuel and other essential commodities. By end of December 2022, Uganda's annual inflation rate had reached a record high of 10.2% up from 2.7% in January 2022. The resultant exchange rates losses, high commodity prices and the overall increase in cost of living posed new risks to recovering livelihoods and affected program operations. With the shifting funding modalities from traditional funding streams to results oriented market-based

systems approaches, CSOs including ACFODE started exploring and adapting to new ways of resource mobilisation such as digital crowdsourcing and social enterprises.

Uganda's digital revolution is fast growing as internet penetration rate stood at 42% (19 million internet users) by end of 2022. In December 2022, Uganda launched her first ever satellite, PearlAfricaSat-1, into the International Space Station aimed at thriving digital ecosystems in Uganda. With a high-speed optical fibre cable covering over 3,900 kilometres, CSOs and government sectors adopted knowledge-based digital solutions to program delivery and resolution of development problems. Consequently, there has been remarkable rise in the use of digital technologies for e-learning, media advocacy among others. Notwithstanding the existing wide gender disparity in digitalisation, the high internet costs continued to sabotage women's (those in the informal sector) access to real time information which limits their participation in policy making and access to resources and opportunities. Moreover, women and female youth continued to face various forms of digital gender-based violence than their male counterparts. This forcing some to go offline or resort to self-censorship which directly infringes on their freedom of expression, feminist movement building and participation in decision making.

Over the years, Uganda has been revising its education system which plays a collective and central role in development. Cognizant that the Uganda National Teacher Policy (NTP) 2019 is an appropriate and much needed instrument to enhance professionalism and standardization of the teaching profession for enhancement of development, stakeholders perceived that it may have unintended negative impacts on Ugandan girls and women compared to the male counterparts due to the persistent patriarchal tendencies and socio-cultural barriers to women & girls' empowerment. The baseline survey 2022 by ACFODE and Kabale University revealed that 82% of teachers in Kigezi region, the majority of whom are women, risk losing their jobs in 2029. The establishment of innovative blended and decentralized e-learning system, along with targeted gender awareness campaigns are opportunities for increasing women's ability to continue their educational journeys.



By October 2022, Uganda was a host 1,495,688 refugees, with 118,150 refugees settled in Kyaka II (52% being women and girls¹). This massive increment in refugee population implied drastic reduction in land allocated to refugee households from the initial 100m² to 30m² for both housing and agriculture purposes per household. Besides, the continuous reduction of humanitarian aid cash rations per individual refugee limited access to basic needs in families, hence triggering SGBV cases among households in refugee community especially "survival sex" for both boys and girls². Consequently, gender inequality due to reduced livelihood options remained a reality resulting in women and girls' rights violations, tensions between the newly-arrived and long-term settled refugees.

¹ UNHCR Settlement Fact Sheet: Kyaka II (2022): Uganda - Refugee Statistics September 2022 - Kyaka II; <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/96190>

² ACFODE STOP project Mid-term evaluation report 2022

4. PROGRAM RESULTS ANALYSIS

4.1. Policy Advocacy & Research

ACFODE pursued actions that promote a supportive policy, legislative and institutional environment for realisation of gender equality in operational districts. ACFODE facilitated development of by-laws and ordinances at lower local governments (district and sub counties) that prohibit VAW/C. To bridge the policy knowledge gaps, ACFODE continued to popularise the National Housing policy and National Microfinance policy and their gender analyses among partners and duty bearers. ACFODE also supported human rights awareness among community members (women, men, and youth) and jointly with partners, monitored the implementation of gender policy instruments. They held strategic engagements with duty bearers and citizens which resulted into commitments to promote gender responsive service delivery.

4.1.1. Influencing Policy Development & Review

ACFODE organised four (4) district level review meetings and 2 national strategic meetings with key stakeholders including UWA, district officials and other like-minded civil society organizations to promote equitable, just and accountable conservation practices in Mt. Elgon area. At local levels, the joint engagements that reached **100 (47 Females, 53 Males)** district and sub county leadership were boundless in empowering and providing spaces for dialogue between rights holders' and duty bearers. At national level, the meetings informed by the emerging issues and gaps documented during program implementation were useful for evidence-based advocacy for respect and protection of frontline line communities. These spaces altogether were unmatched as they ushered in a wave of transparency and accountability that contributed to mitigation of human rights violations in the conservation areas.

Desirous to strengthen legislation on VAW/C laws at lower local governments, ACFODE held multi-stakeholder consultative discussions at sub-county level in Kanungu, Kisoro, Rubanda and Rukiga districts. The engagements that involved review of existing documentation, revealed an absence of bylaws that intently address VAW/C at sub county levels. This was attributed to lack of knowledge on the process for developing bylaws and transfer of skilled technocrats. In this regard, ACFODE supported the leaders to constitute sub-committees responsible for formulating the bylaws. So far 75% of the targeted sub-counties formed the sub-committees and are in the process of drafting the bye laws.

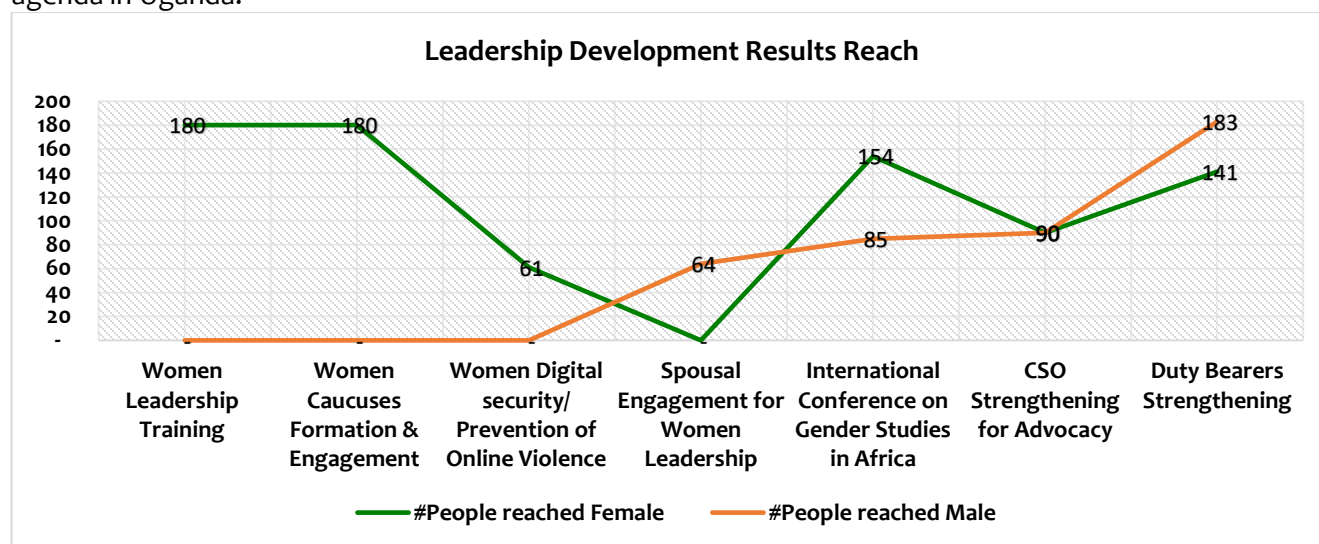
4.1.2. Promoting Policy Education and Implementation

In Mt. Elgon conservation area, ACFODE and partners facilitated community awareness engagements for frontline communities on gender and human rights. The media advocacy platforms (8 radio talk shows) and sensitisation meetings led by Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) officials and community monitors, enhanced broad base participatory conversation on rights and responsibilities of frontline communities and state obligation stated in the conservation laws/guidelines which in essence promoted accountability. ACFODE also disseminated the pocket guide on conservation guidelines and GBV prevention which enhanced the capacity of women and youth (girls) in Wanale sub-County, Mbale district to detect and prevent GBV. Precisely, **500 (285 women, 215 girls)** were reached with information on environmental conservation guidelines/laws, gender concepts and women's rights.

4.2. Leadership Development

Conscious of the vital role leadership plays in making gender equality a reality, and undeniable gaps in leadership capacity of women and men in target districts, ACFODE undertook customized training packages for technical and political government leaders, private sector leaders, youth leaders and CSO leaders. To

contribute towards protection and promotion of women’s and children’s rights, ACFODE strengthened capacities of CSOs and duty bearers to eliminate violence against women and children in Uganda. These efforts stimulated women leaders’ active role in influencing gender responsive policies and programmes at national and district levels by addressing key hinderances to women and youth leadership advancement. This was achieved mainly through equipping women leaders with knowledge and skills on their roles and responsibilities, personal safety skills including protection against digital violence, strengthening women caucuses, and spousal male engagement to support women’s participation in leadership and legislative agenda in Uganda.



4.2.1. Women Leadership Training

ACFODE conducted leadership capacity development trainings for 180 elected women councillors from 12 sub counties of Apac, Kaberamaido, Kamwenge, Kyegegwa, Ntoroko and Bundibugyo districts. Cognisant of the literacy levels of women, the learning sessions delivered through participatory methods for adult learning, focused on increasing the skills-set and knowledge of elected women councillors to ably engage in council, influence decision making processes, and strengthen networking among councillors. As a result, the women gained understanding of the gender and women’s rights to political participation as stated in the international and national frameworks. This enhanced confidence of trained women leaders to claim their right to participate in governance and decision making. Besides, their ability to protect themselves from all forms of discrimination and unfair treatment perpetrated by powerful male leaders has been improved.

4.2.2. Women organizing and caucusing

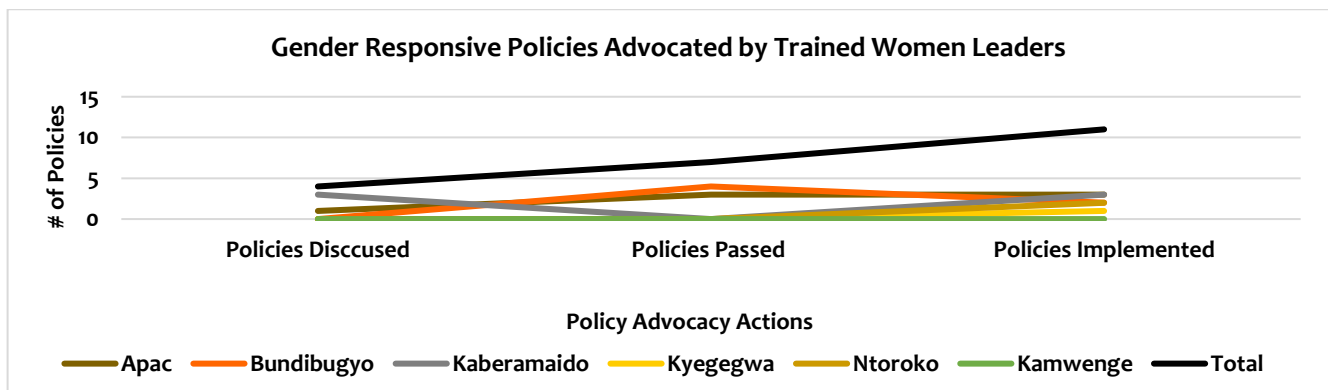
ACFODE facilitated the formation and establishment of six (6) District and twelve (12) Sub County women caucuses constituted by 180 women leaders (*legislators or councillors*) for strategic purposes. These women caucuses were further supported to hold regular reflection meetings and participate in learning workshops on legal/policy frameworks (*African Charter on Human and People’s rights, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, and 1995 Constitution of Uganda*). This enhanced their skills in women movement building, caucusing and deepened understanding of human rights and council procedures. It also solidified their ability to effectively represent the interests of their constituents.

Formed to strengthen cooperation among women leaders engaged in political life irrespective of political party inclination and socio-economic status, the women caucuses successfully helped to build a common understanding of women leader’s mandates and key gender advocacy issues which in essence were core for effective alliance building around common goals of women’s empowerment and gender transformation.

Using caucusing approach, the women leaders effectively championed women’s and girls’ issues in local government planning. They were able to defend women’s legislative priorities and increased their influence in political decision making at council levels. The women leaders caucused for delivery of gender responsive services/programs and served as “ombudsmen” and focal points that ensured gendered council debates and decisions. Through their budget appropriation role, they influenced distribution of public resources to marginalised women groups, and served as role models for other women and girls in their pursuit for equal participation in leadership and equitable benefits in communities.

Desirous to make significant changes in governance informed by the glaring gender gaps, the women leaders equipped with skills in gendered policy advocacy, undertook deliberate innovative legislative actions leading to significant policy and programming changes at district and sub county levels. Remarkably, women’s actions in advocating for gender responsive service delivery was successful in creating positive influence on gender policy implementation at district and sub county levels in the areas of women empowerment, low levels of education, teenage pregnancies, GBV and male engagement in maternal health care. Whilst all the districts reported women councillors being instrumental in deepening gender awareness and engagement by holding strategic gender learning meetings, only 3 districts (Apac, Bundibugyo and Kaberamaido) reported involvement in legislative engagement (particularly by discussing and moving motions/petitions) and budget appropriation leading to gender integration in development activities and improvement in gender responsive services delivery in target districts.

Notably, 22 gender responsive policies and programs were discussed, passed and implemented at both district and sub county levels. For instance, In Apac district, aware that institutional practices and systems are often gendered, the trained women leaders influenced the gender agenda by passing of a motion to deepen gender responsive programming to strengthen realisation of gender equality aspirations. These successes are attributable to election of women into positions of leadership in the council as chairpersons of standing committees, strategic action planning for addressing identified critical women concerns (political, economic, social), peer support and unity of purpose irrespective of their varying political affiliations.



4.2.3. Women Digital security/ Prevention of Online Violence

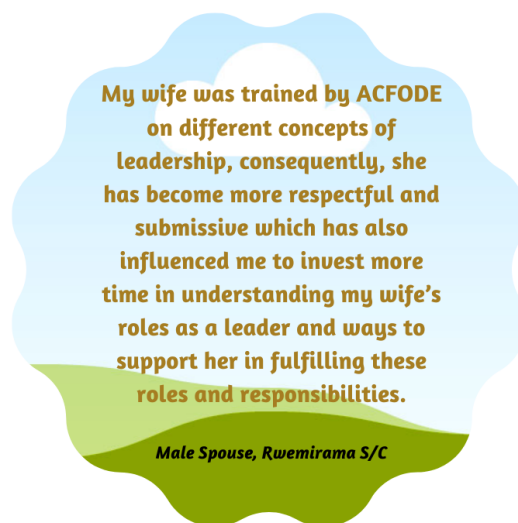
Confronted with the reality of digital systems becoming the primary sources of information for netizens and core for running government systems, women tend to suffer setback in their political leadership pursuits due to lack of the requisite digital media skills. The 2021 general ‘scientific’ elections showed that women were not adequately prepared to fully embrace and utilize digital systems for caucusing on developments issues affecting them including electioneering and political decision making. In this regard, ACFODE conducted trainings for 61 women leaders from 14 sub counties in Bundibugyo and Ntoroko Districts, which exposed women leaders to internet-based media platforms uses, digital systems security, digital/online

violence mitigation mechanisms (including protective clauses in Anti-Cyber laws of Uganda), and personal presentation skills (including public speaking). The trained women were encouraged to leverage social media platforms to inform, increase visibility of women’s contribution to development, lobby/advocate for women’s civil political rights & leadership development, mobilize resources and facilitate discussions around gender equality issues in their constituencies. Some of them have enhanced their personal security by setting strong password, emergency contacts and remained keen on internet information by cross-checking authenticity and morality in line with the regulatory mechanisms.

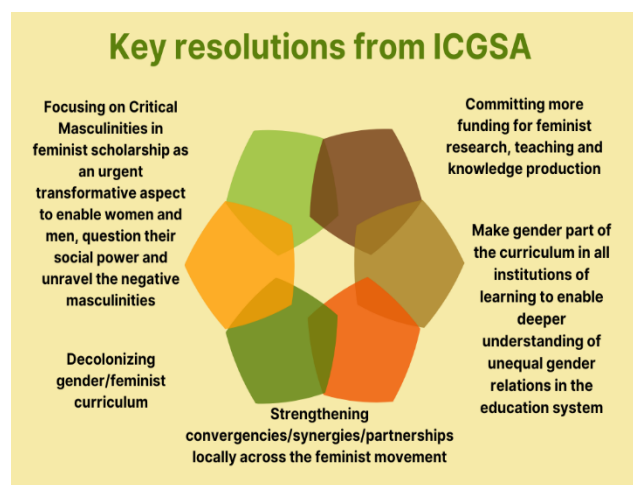
4.2.4. Spousal Engagement for Women Leadership

Mindful of gendered barriers like the limited spousal support and stereotypical sentiments faced by women in leadership spaces, ACFODE conducted engagement trainings with 64 male spouses of women leaders in Kamwenge and Kyegegwa districts. This enabled them appreciate the importance of women in leadership; understand their partner’s roles/responsibilities, support women’s political aspirations and functions as change agents in the communities they serve. Equipped with knowledge and skills necessary to hold gender transformative conversations that address the root causes of systematic inequalities at the household, community and institutional level potential, the spouses constituted into male champions³ groups for gender equality in their communities.

Through available platforms, the male champions are working to increase the visibility of women leadership, challenging the deeply rooted patriarchal tendencies and masculinity that hinders women’s participation in leadership, and spearheading campaigns on importance of women’s participation in decision making spaces. Follow-up monitoring reports revealed more positive changes highly recognisable in women’s leadership roles at household and community level, as well as individual men’s attitude towards women’s leadership although still with challenges related to ability to balance public and family life.



1.1.4. International Conference on Gender Studies in Africa (ICGSA)



ACFODE in partnership with School of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University organised the ICGSA under the theme “Africa and Gender Studies - Celebrating 30 Years of Transformation and Reimagining the Future”. The conference which was organized to take stock of the contributions of gender studies in research, policy and practice and celebrate key milestones while reimagining the future of gender studies on the continent attracted 154 females, 85 males. The conference that brought together different gender units in Africa, locates the place of gender and gender studies as pivotal in development processes in Uganda and Africa. It enabled women and men to share

³ Male Champions are men with key qualities chosen to act as positive role models for men and young boys in the community; and are men with authority to create a more inclusive culture with in the community.

experiences and examine the contribution of women and gender studies to Africa's development and the crises that have shaped gender studies.

4.2.5. CSOs Capacity Strengthening in Women & Girls rights Advocacy

Using various capacity strengthening initiatives, ACFODE empowered **36 CSOs** (Community based organisation, faith institutions, youth led groups and grassroots women rights organizations) with 90 women and 90 men to advocate for women's and children's rights. Using the VAW/C training manual which includes referral pathway, fact books on VAW/C, posters and calendars with messages on VAW/C prevention, 28 CSOs purposefully took innovative actions for the prevention and management of violence against women and children as well as promotion women's and children's rights in communities.

As advocates for gender equality and with built capacity to monitor implementation of gender laws at local government levels, the CSOs ably integrated VAW/C in their programming, and carried out community awareness campaigns on children and women's rights, how to end VAW/C and prevention of HIV/AIDS through media engagements and targeted conversations/dialogues with community members (women and men) during 16 days of activism. Overall, the CSO reached out to **13,180 indirect beneficiaries (8252 females and 4928 male)** in 6 districts of Rubanda, Rukiga, Kanungu, Kisoro, Bukomansimbi and Kalungu. This enhanced community members (women, men, girls and boys) knowledge of GBV issues, children's rights and HIV/AIDS prevention. As a result, the perceptions of communities towards VAW/G are starting to change with majority recognising that women and children's rights should be respected (86%).

CSOs held 29 advocacy engagements with other CSOs and elected leaders for prioritization of GBV and gender equality issues in districts programs during the commemoration of international women's day, 16 days of activism and other platforms reaching **250 stakeholders (120 males and 130 females)**. This increased opportunities to advocate for policies and strategies for ending VAW/C and amplify the voices of women and girls in relation to gender equality. Aware of the referral pathways and their mandates, some of the trained CSOs have been intentional in promoting survivor centred care and support by making follow-ups on case management at various referral points ensuring safety of VAW/C survivors. They were able to reach out to survivors of VAW/C and GBV with support which helped to rebuild their self-esteem and gave hope to live again. They effectively managed **81 VAW/C cases** through counselling/mediation (67 cases related to family and child neglect) and referral (14 cases).

4.2.6. Duty Bearers Capacity Strengthening to Respond to VAW/C and Promote Gender Equality

ACFODE strengthened the capacity of **324 (141 females, 183 males) duty bearers** including 120 (59 females, 61 males) elected leaders, 120 (45 females, 75 males) technocrats, 6 women leaders, 30 (7 females, 23 males) Kabale University officials, 48 teachers (24 females, 24 males) from 24 primary schools to create a conducive environment for prevention and responds to VAW/C in communities and schools in the districts of Kabale, Kasese, Rubanda, Rukiga, Kanungu, Kisoro, Bukomansimbi, and Kalungu. This was done through trainings on existing gender related laws, gender equality, roles and responsibilities in preventing (how to detect) and combating VAW/C (how to handle and respond) in their respective institutions and communities.

Consequently, the duty bearers created more awareness amongst community members on VAW/C through dialogues with community members, radio talk shows and council meetings. For instance, the trained elected leaders have reached out to **7572 indirect beneficiaries (4,764 females and 2,808 males)**. The elected leaders also managed to pass resolutions that restrict bars, night clubs and sports betting centres in order to minimize delinquent behaviour among men, adolescent boys and young women. These reduced incidences of domestic violence caused by alcohol/drug abuse, sexual harassment of young women and girls and school dropout among young boys due to sports betting. Further still, the trained duty bearers are now

more gender sensitive and resolute during case management (referral, follow-up and provision of temporary shelter to child survivors) which in essence contributed to effective handling of cases of VAW/C at different referral points.

The trained teachers formed 6 GBV prevention and social clubs comprised of **82 boys and 332 girls** in 4 schools namely of Kagano primary school in Murora Sub County, Kisoro district, Kagoye and Nyamweru primary school in Rubanda district, and Kigangazi primary school in Bukomansimbi district. This helped learners to develop self-esteem as one way to deal with stigma and enabled them to freely discuss and disclose to their teachers and fellow learners the different kinds of violence they experience both at home and school. Kagoye primary school in Rubanda district mentored **162 girls** on menstrual hygiene management. This reduced absenteeism and school dropouts among girls due to menstruation by 50% and 5% respectively. The trained teachers also utilised platforms such as parent's meetings and morning assemblies to sensitise parents and pupils on children's rights respectively.

ACFODE together with Community Empowerment Education Development and Kabale University, implemented an innovation program in Kabale, Kisoro and Kasese designed to break the socio-economic and cultural barriers women face in advancing their education and leadership careers. Equipped with skills in delivering remote learning as well as gender equality, 36 (13 females, 23 males) duty bearers provided real time support to in-service teachers (women and females) in the study centres. The women leaders also reached out to an average of 30 to 50 people on gender equality concepts and took lead roles during the 4 women' led forums in which women shared experiences and ideas on how to overcome barriers in education and live. As a result, the innovation ably contributed to bridging a gender equality gap in related to in-service women teachers in South-Western Uganda and changing mindset towards women leadership and education.

To increased knowledge on women's rights to education and participation in leadership, ACFODE carried out 3 media awareness campaign and provided assorted information, education and communication materials where by over 2 million people were reached. Consequently, **228 men and 218 women in-service teachers** were registered at Kabale University's Bachelor of Education Program. Feedback from stakeholders revealed that the innovation solved a serious problem for the in-service women teachers in their socio-economic context. The in-service teachers are using fundamental community approaches to promote the innovation and societal messaging like gender-based violence and community.

4.3. Social-Cultural Transformation

ACFODE underscores that culture and faith significantly shapes the social constructs underpinning gender equality. In this regard, ACFODE continued to promote social cultural transformation for gender equality and violence free societies using the household-based gender transformative approaches of male engagement and model couple approach (MCA). The model couple and male engagement efforts designed to challenge power disparities that negate women's voice and agency in realisation of their fundamental rights, have greatly contributed to mind-set change towards gender equality and women empowerment at household, community and institutional levels in Uganda.

4.3.1. Model Couple (MCA) Engagement for Gender Equality

72 Role Model couples (RMCs) were identified, trained and commissioned as role models to champion activism for gender equality and prevention of VAW/C at household and community level in the districts of Rubanda, Rukiga, Kanungu, Kisoro, Bukomansimbi and Kalungu. Aware of their roles and responsibilities in fighting for violence free homes/communities and the available referral pathways/ service points, the RMCs are spearheading SGBV awareness conversations. Utilizing existing community platforms such as village

meetings, VSLA groups, prayer meetings, home visits, and community gatherings to share information on GBV (different forms, dangers/effects and mechanisms to prevent it), the RMCs reached out to a total of **13,897 (8,231 females and 5,666 males)** indirect beneficiaries with messages aimed at preventing VAW/C.

The capacity building initiatives by ACFODE enhanced the couples' capacity to detect, respond and report cases of VAW/C. Equipped with basic counselling skills, and seen as role models in their communities, the RMCs positively impacted other couples experiencing intimate partner violence. The RMCs successfully managed **193** cases of VAW/C related to family neglect, physical assault, alcohol abuse and sexual abuse. Out of which, **107** cases were resolved through counselling and mediation and 86 were referred.

The awareness and counselling done by RMCs enhanced inter-personal communication among couples and household members, thereby leading to peaceful and harmonious homes, with reduced expenditure on alcohol and involvement in extra-marital relationships. Consequently, they have become the first strong and reliable links between community members and duty bearers in the VAW/C and GBV referral pathway. They continue to be approached for advice by most community members when it comes to resolving domestic violence cases.

4.3.2. Male Engagement for Gender Equality

Cognizant that attitude and behaviour change among men is core for unlocking women and girls' dreams and abilities to shape and contribute to socio-economic development, ACFODE proactively engaged men as partners, supporters and survivors of violence in their own right at household and community level. ACFODE also continued to train and mentor **272 male gender equality champions** in the districts of Kasese, Bundibugyo, Kisoro, Kanungu, Rubanda, Rukiga, Kalungu, Bukomansimbi, Kyegegwa, Kabale, Kamwenge and Ntoroko. With changed mindset about both gender equality and increased understanding of the role of women in socio economic development, the male gender champions integrated the learned lessons in their conversations with other male groups. In effect, **255,720 adult men and boys** were engaged through various media conversation platforms (using radio talk shows and sport messages), gender clubs, one on one conversations by transformed model couples and men.

In Kigezi region, through the *“blended learning solution to advance gender equality in education project targeting the 6 districts in South-Western Uganda”*, 32 trained male community leaders are championing awareness of gender equality, GBV and the socio-economic importance of women in service teachers to pursue higher education in their communities. Of these, 20 of the male leaders were able to speak to more **384 people (237 females and 147 males)** on the importance of the girl child's education, the new teacher policy, and GBV using different platforms leading to changed attitudes and behaviors of the men and women towards the learning and leadership programs. Overall, in all districts, male champions are credited for being active agents for gender equality specifically supporting women and girls' education, their leadership, access to equal opportunities and resources (business financing and land) for their empowerment and well-being like the male counterparts. They were able to reach **256,104 (237 females, 255867 males)** indirect beneficiaries.

4.3.3. Empowerment of Community Social Actors and Monitors

ACFODE capacitated community social actors referred to as 'gatekeepers' and monitors to prevent and mitigate violence against women and children in Uganda. In 2022, ACFODE trained **109 (41 females, 68 males)** social actors including religious, cultural, opinion and local leaders as well as Boda-boda association leaders on gender concepts (its dynamics), economic empowerment, SGBV and their roles and responsibilities in combating all forms of violence in their communities.

Of these, 55 (17 female, 38 male) community gate keepers were trained on VAW/C prevention using SASA methodology phase III and IV (Support and Action phase respectively) in the districts of Kisoro, Kanungu, Rubanda, Rukiga, Kalungu, and Bukomansimbi. This being a follow-up on lessons learnt from implementation of the SASA Start and Awareness phases by the community gate keepers in 2021, it further strengthened the community gate keepers' capacity to effectively prevent and respond to VAW/C. In Kyegegwa district, 54 (24 females, 30 males) social actors and refugee-led networks/committees were equipped with skills and knowledge on how to combat all forms of violence in the refugee resettlement and host communities.

ACFODE also trained and mentored **50 (26 females, 24 males)** trained community monitors in Kyegegwa Kyaka II settlement (including host communities) and Mt Elgon Conservation area. Out of these, in Kyegegwa district, 30 (15 female, 15 males) community monitors were refreshed on PME for advocacy. Consequently, the monitors constituted by selected model couples and community facilitators undertook two (2) gendered monitoring exercises for key sectors mandated to provide gender responsive prevention and responds services to survivors and targeted communities. The findings which captured the perceptions and perspectives of community members on the available SGBV prevention services have been very useful for policy dialogue during inter-agency meetings. In Mt Elgon conservation area, the 20 (11 females, 9 males) community monitors previously engaged with ACFODE in the promotion of equitable and just conservation remained instrumental in spreading information on gender equality, women rights and the importance of women's participation in communal issues.

90% of trained community social actors integrated SGBV information in their daily activities. The boda-boda riders incorporated messages on SGBV prevention and protection of the dignity of women and girls in their monthly group meetings. In Kanungu districts, the Boda-boda associations reviewed their rules and regulations to include heavy punishments for perpetrators of women and children's violations. In Murora Sub County, Kisoro district, the boda-boda association charges a perpetrator 20,000shs as fine on child neglect and 50,000shs on wife beating.

The social actors and monitors were able to cascade the empowering information, thereby reaching thousands of community women, men and youth with empowering information on gender, GBV and human rights. Using community approaches to promote the innovation and societal messaging on gender-based violence, the trained social actors sustained the conversations on gender equality and social inclusion in different programs. Through joint efforts with other stakeholders at community level within their circles of influence, the community gatekeepers engaged **13780 (7798 females, 5982 males) indirect beneficiaries** across the districts of Kisoro, Kanungu, Rubanda, Rukiga, Kalungu, and Bukomansimbi. Through existing platforms like boda-boda stage meetings, home visits, Ngozi group meetings and clan meetings, these community members were sensitized and engaged on children's rights, dangers of GBV, the different socio-cultural negative practices and how they impact differently on the lives of women and girls. This resulted into increased knowledge on domestic violence, children's rights and VAW/C among the community members. In some districts, the boda-boda associations reviewed their constitutions to include deterrent disciplinary measures for violence against women and children. In Murora Sub- County, Kisoro district, 19 out of 30 community members sensitised by gate keepers reported to reduction in alcohol consumption.

4.3.4. Survivor Centred Care and support

Working together with the trained community social actor, monitors and duty bearers, ACFODE was able to provide survivor centred services to a total of **340 (75% female) survivors** of GBV. For instance, the community gate keepers in Kigezi and Masaka sub regions region identified/received 98 cases of VAW/C. Out of which, 81 cases were resolved through counselling and mediation whilst 14 were referred using the different referral points. Child and family neglect were common occurrences noted by community gate

keepers due to the trigger factors like economic hardships. About 20% of the cases handled by community gate keepers in communities were related to alcoholism. Another 112 cases of VAW/C were identified by duty bearers, out of which, 94 were resolved through counselling and mediation in 6 districts. 53 families that had been affected by domestic violence were re-united and positive attitudes towards women and children's rights were noted. Additionally, the previously trained paralegals reached a total of **1048 community members (539 females and 509 males)** through their initiatives like psychosocial support during ART (Antiretroviral Therapy) clinics and home visits. Consequently, cases of domestic violence reported to community paralegals have dramatically reduced from 7 to 3 on average per month in regions with active social actors.

In Kyegegwa district, 105 reported cases were handled and resolved by community gate keepers with most cases relating to denial of resources, physical and emotional related violence. All together, these structures have greatly contributed to reduction in case backlog at the sub county referral pathways. The community confirmed improved SGBV services by the social actors and duty bearers as demonstrated by reduced delays in case management at lower local government levels. With the established peace hut in Kyaka II, 86% (92% of the females; 80% of the males) of targeted beneficiaries in refugee settlement and (83% of the females; all the males) in host community accessed support including psychosocial to resolve SGBV issues/cases from a functional informal SGBV dispute resolution mechanism in form of counselling, mediation, psycho-education and follow up. 75% of the targeted survivors continue to receive support in form of basic counselling and psychosocial support through safe space meetings, one on one counselling and peer support.

In Mt. Elgon area, the monitors helped to minimize conflicts and wrangles between communities and became reliable trusted links between communities and duty bearers. As a result, participation of the indigenous people in conservation and human rights protection is reported to be steadily growing.

4.3.5. Other socio-cultural engagement on GBV and Children's rights

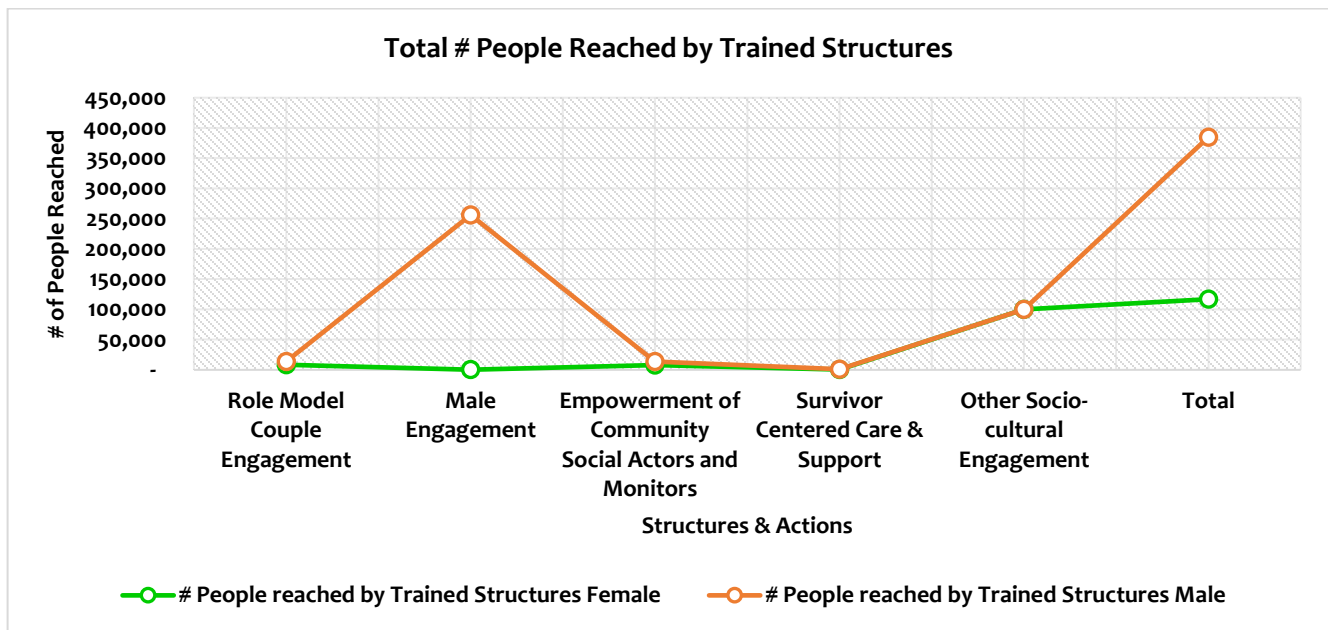
In collaboration with community gate keepers and teachers in Kanaba and Murora sub counties in Kisoro district, and Kihiki town council in Kanungu district, ACFODE conducted 5 awareness campaigns on GBV (its forms, causes and its consequences on men, women and the family members), children's rights and commemoration of the 16 days of activism. Community awareness campaigns reached out to **556 community members (291 Females, 265 Males)**. There is increased commitment among local leaders to give priority to women's concerns. *"I have not been taking cases of violence against women in my village serious but in the next village meeting I will make sure that all the committee members are cautioned to give priority to cases of violence against women and children"* - LC I Chairperson for Chuho village in Nyakabande sub county, Kisoro district.

In addition, ACFODE organised 12 community awareness engagements to educate the frontline communities in Mt. Elgon conservation area about gender, their rights and responsibilities reaching approximately **20,527 (18,954 Females, 1,573 Males)** who include community women, men, and youth. Coupled with 8 interactive radio talk shows, these enhanced understanding of gender issues and human rights for frontline communities who for years had perceived and conceded that they had no rights. The media advocacy platforms, especially radio talk shows enhanced broad conversation, interaction on rights and responsibilities of frontline communities and state obligation hence promoting accountability. More so, the integration of gender transformative awareness into capacity building, community engagements through village meetings and existing group meetings (such as farmer group forums, women and youth group) increased potential for positive results with regard to prevention of human rights violations as **759 (300 men, 258 women and 201 youths)** have been engaged through community outreaches on gender and human rights. In Mbale district, ACFODE facilitated 4 community engagements targeting women, youth and UWA officials on gender, human rights and conservation laws. With the developed/disseminated pocket guide on

conservation guidelines and GBV prevention, over **500 (285 women, 215 girls)** were reached with information on environmental conservation guidelines, gender concepts and women’s rights.

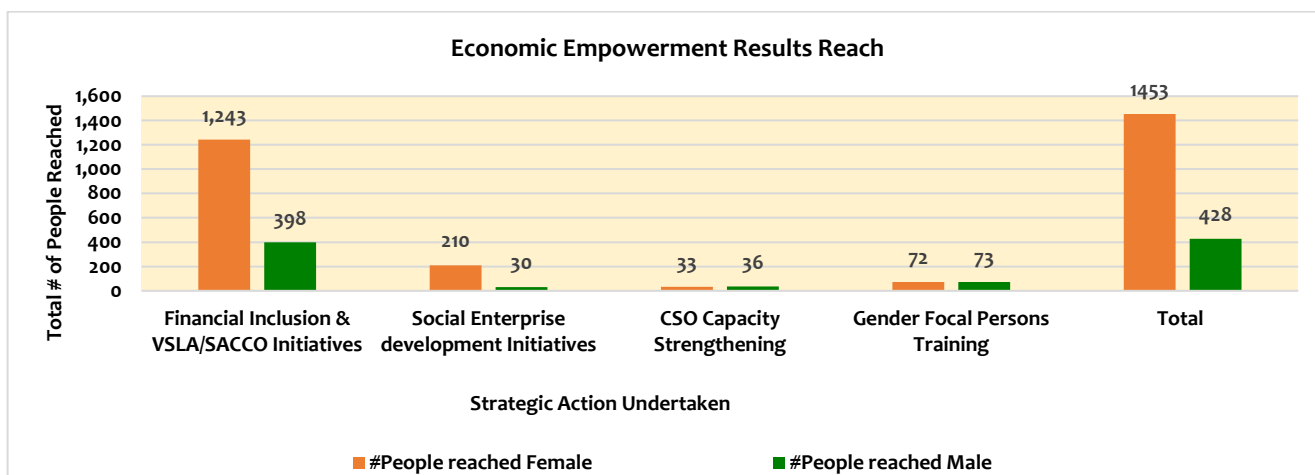
The engagement platforms have particularly been a success in fostering transparent discussions and collaboration to address natural resource management concerns and other gender issues. The direct outcome of the awareness creation has been increased women participation in conservation actions especially those who were initially not actively engaged in conservation except to exploit the resources in the park oblivious of sustainability of biodiversity and effects on human rights violations. Subsequently, community members observe changes in relationships among households of community members who participated in engagement meetings. There is a general perception among frontline community members that indigenous people and women’s voices are now being heard regarding conservation and human rights unlike before when they especially women and girls were excluded yet often susceptible to human rights violations due to their gender roles.

In Kyegegwa, 19 radio talk shows and community campaigns spearheaded by the social actors and community facilitators were conducted reaching approximately **100,000 people** with SGBV prevention and response message. Coupled with disseminated informative educative and communication materials, this is reported to have contributed to increased awareness about SGBV, girls’ education and financial planning among women, men and youth in the communities. These are now aware of the different forms of Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV), its effects, referral points and mechanisms for effective response.



4.4. Economic Empowerment

Given that economic matters affect the very core of women’s empowerment, their leadership trajectory with regard to advancing gender equality, ACFODE undertook capacity building efforts aimed at growing women’s participation in economic decision making whilst empowering them to solve social problems in their communities. This was achieved through tailored trainings (on VSLA/SACCO approaches, financial inclusion and social enterprises); engaging existing livelihood groups to adopt gender responsive financial products; supporting organisation of survivors and strengthening linkages for survivor centred socio-economic support in Uganda.



4.4.1. Financial Inclusion & VSLA initiatives

ACFODE continued to engage the SACCOs and social enterprise groups established previously to deliver gender responsive financial products to their members. Specifically, in partnership with UCCFS, the VSLAs in Apac and Dokolo districts in Northern Uganda were assessed for readiness to transform into SACCOs, signing up of financial insurance policies or gain from existing SACCOs linkages and areas for capacity enhancement agreed upon and commitments secured from the some of the groups to form a SACCO. By the end of 2022, ACFODE had supported 55 VSLAs and social enterprise groups with average membership of 28 members (22 women and 6 men).

In total, ACFODE reached out to **1641 group members (1243 women/girls and 398 men/girls)**. Membership to these groups have contributed to improved livelihoods for socio-economic wellbeing of women through savings and borrowing/loaning for investment in various income generating activities such as piggery, making liquid soap, baking and cultivation. Women have acquired assets, property such as land, houses, paid school fees for children and accessed other basic needs.

ACFODE also trained 7 model couple VSLA groups on economic empowerment in Kyaka II settlement. According to the program monitoring, 80% of couples attest to have been economically empowered. The formed VSLAs group have also created a platform for women and men to share information on SGBV prevention and management (including how to support the survivors). Group members are providing basic counselling and mediation to some of the families facing domestic violence. Besides, model couples in Rukiga and Rubanda districts: Most couples are also saving together which has enabled them to improve their housing, pay school fees for children and access all other basic necessities for example, a group of 15 model couples named Nyamweru United couples in Rubanda district formed a savings group and opened a bank account in 2022.

4.4.2. Social Entrepreneurship Initiatives for Women & Girls

In a bid to build the women leaders' capacity to start up successful businesses for addressing social problems affecting women, that in the long run can improve their socio-economic status, ACFODE conducted social enterprise development trainings for 120 women leaders from Apac, Kaberamaido, Kamwenge, Kyegegwa and Bundibugyo districts. These learning spaces, enabled the women leaders to gain in-depth understanding of social entrepreneurship with focus on identification of opportunities within the communities to start social enterprises and grow them through value addition, proper simple book keeping, branding, and management of finances (including savings). These also provided platform for broader and in-depth

interaction, sharing ideas and opinions between the district and sub county level female councillors on the different economic challenges faced by women at local levels.

Inspired by ACFODE organised trainings on social enterprises, they collectively generated social enterprise ideas to enable women become financially independent and be able to address such problems. By end of

“I thank ACFODE for workshop on social enterprise because when a woman is economically empowered, she can make informed decision and her rights are respected. Community problems can be turned into social enterprise opportunities if harnessed. For every problem solved will in turn generate financial opportunity”

Women Councillors Kaberamaido

“Our focus is to save money so that we are able to finance our campaign very well in 2026 because politics has become much more commercialized”

Apac Women Councilors

2022, 6 women councillors from Kaberamaido & Apac districts had initiated 6 profitable individual social enterprises (like bakery, tailoring workshop, cloth boutique, farm produce enterprise, fish trading, and table cloth making - crocheting) with average earning ranging from 200,00/= to 500,000/= per week. Three women collective social enterprises were initiated by trained women leaders in 3 districts. For example, In Kamwenge & Kyegegwa districts, 2 women councillors formed 2 social enterprises of shoe making businesses and Maize milling with the intention of addressing the issue of youth unemployment and provision of scholarships to keep children in school in their community.

In Apac district, women leaders mobilized and formed a VSLA group whereby each individual member saves from 4,000/= - 10,000/= on a weekly basis. These trained women leaders also cascaded the knowledge and skills gained from ACFODE training to other women and girls. For example, in Apac

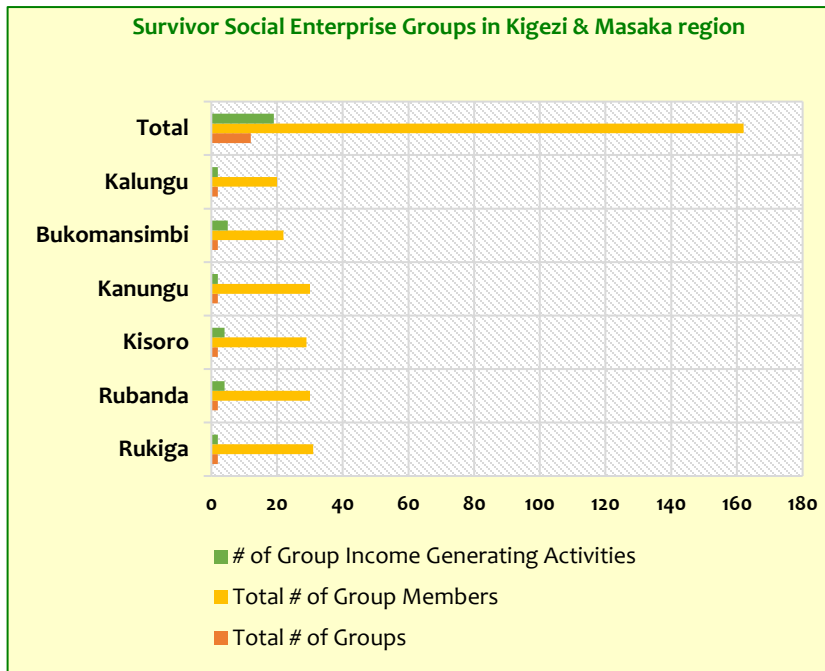
district, a woman councillor trained 2 social enterprise groups in making table cloth namely Nen Anyim women group with 26 members and Obanga Twero Child mother group with 18 members. In Kaberamaido town, a woman councillor opened up tailoring workshop where she trained 10 girls each at the cost of 500,000/=.

To contribute to improvement of survivors of violence (women and girls) access to socio - economic support and livelihood opportunities to enable them mitigate the impact of violence, ACFODE undertook capacity building training for 60 women and girl survivors of VAW/C in 6 districts of Rukiga, Rubanda, Kisoro, Kanungu, Bukomansimbi & Kalungu on business formation. This enabled survivors to share experiences on the knowledge gained and achievements made as a result of the previous engagement with ACFODE. These trainings also equipped survivors with financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills to enable them form small scale business enterprises.

The trained women and girl survivors also cascaded the skills and knowledge gained to 61 more female survivors. Consequently, **12 enterprises of 162 women and girl survivors** of violence were supported to identify social and economic problems in their communities and eventually formed individual and joint business/ social enterprises based on the identified needs, resources and talents/ passion. The culture of savings among the women has improved as evidenced by the testimonies from saving groups like Powesa and some others formed on the basis of cash rounds.

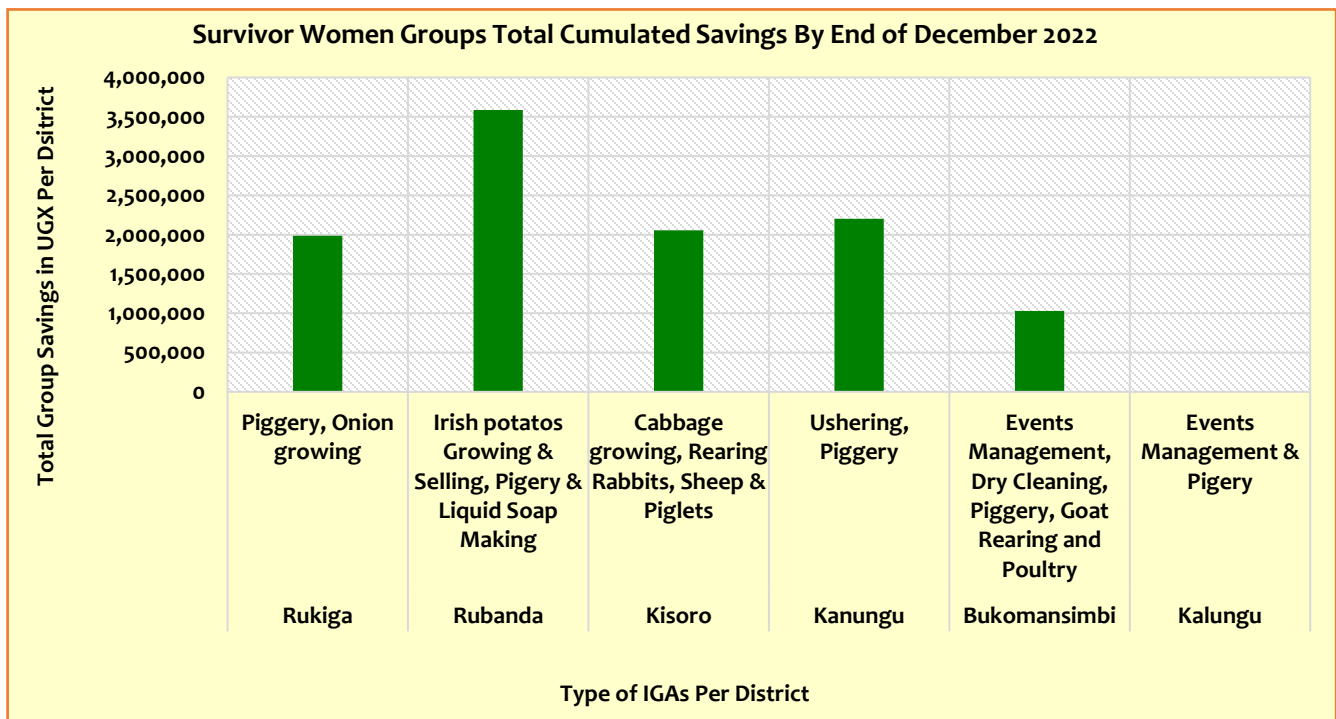
ACFODE oriented the survivor groups on existing government programs (the Parish Development Model, UWEP and Emyooga) and facilitated creation of linkages between survivors' groups with government entities and other players in the six districts. To this effect, three (3) survivor groups were supported to come up with group constitutions (namely Rutenga and Kihihi saving group in Kanungu and Kanaba survivors group in Kisoro) and this helped them to formalise/register at the sub-county.

Through the knowledge received on the government programmes and how to benefit from them, 30% of the groups registered at the sub-county while the rest were in the process. Three survivor groups were supported to come up with group constitutions i.e., Rutenga and Kihihi saving group in Kanungu and Kanaba survivors group in Kisoro and this helped them to register at the sub-county. Eight (8) members of Muko Tukore group in Rubanda received over 1 million shillings through the PDM. Two (2) survivors' groups were linked to Dreams project in Bukomansimbi to be enrolled into apprenticeship project for skills acquisition in tailoring, hair dressing, sweater knitting and crafts shoe making. The survivors have used the skills acquired to earn a living and meet basic necessities. Noted are improved livelihoods of the survivors of violence who have been able to save together and invest in income generating



activities (IGAs) both at individual and group level.

activities (IGAs) both at individual and group level.



4.4.3. CSOs capacity to advocate for Women's Economic Rights

ACFODE trained four (04) local organisations namely Semuliki Cooperative Union (SEMUCU), Mt. Rwenzori Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union (MRCFCU), Shelter and Settlement Alternatives (SSA), and Uganda

Central Cooperative Financial Services (UCCFS) on the National land policy using the Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PME model/approach for advocacy. **The 69 (33 females and 36 males)** trained partner representatives were able to raise land and policy implementation advocacy issues such as unregulated land market; contradictory land laws; multiple competing land management structures; lack of public awareness on the policy; high costs of surveying land and acquisition land titles, corruption; inadequate financing for the land sector especially at district level and negative social cultural practices that limit women's access, control and ownership of land among others.

As a result, ACFODE together with SEMUCU and MRCFCU strategically engaged **64 (25 females and 39 males)** duty bearers on gender equality, housing, land, financial inclusion and taxation in regard to effective implementation of government policies on land and microfinancing in Kampala, Bundibugyo and Kasese districts. Notably, duty bearers understanding of their roles in the protection of women's rights and prevention of GBV was increased and hence made key commitments towards promotion of gender equality. SSA together with UHCOU advocated for incorporation of gender clauses including Affirmative Action in the Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2016; UCCFS engaged government on tax exemption and tax reforms on Mobile Money; etc.

In partnership with SSA, ACFODE conducted district level land rights dialogues with duty bearers in Kasese and Bundibugyo considering the "gender gaps in access, control and ownership of land and implementation of the National legal framework". The dialogues attended by **69 (32 females and 37 males)** people including district leadership (political and technocrats), partners, members of primary cooperatives, community members among others, enhanced understanding of land rights. As a result, land advocacy issues were identified to inform the national advocacy campaign on women's land rights in Uganda.

ACFODE and partners (SSA, UCCFS, SEMUCU and MRCFCU) organised and participated in social dialogues to promote gender responsive practices and accountability in Kampala, Kasese and Bundibugyo. By extension, 36 network members and SACCOs/cooperatives (data from UCCFS, SEMUCU, SSA) promoted social dialogue on gender equality through conducting workshops and community dialogues focussing on land, financial inclusion and GBV. As a result, the social dialogues have increased awareness on women's rights among members of partner organisations and increased access to financial services by women in membership of partner organisations. Significantly, **15 women** in Kasese took on leadership in chairing the Parish Development Model enterprise groups, 10 women in Kasese took up leadership positions in the church. Some partners developed deliberate ways of ensuring that their members (men, women and young people) benefit fairly from services and products offered. For example, SEMUCU formed four **(4) women** in cocoa (WICO) rights advocacy groups. These groups advocate for the ownership and control of cocoa gardens so as to meet their daily demands since a big percentage of cocoa gardens are mostly owned by men in cocoa cooperatives and share ideas of engaging in cocoa business. MRCFCU, supported **157 women** in its membership to produce specialty coffee, beans, vanilla, and get involved in savings and credit as well as animal rearing. UCCFS designed special products that support women's improved livelihoods for example offering loans for incremental housing and digital financing for women's groups to up income generating businesses so as to also contribute to the family.

4.4.4. Training of gender focal persons (GFPs)

As a follow-up of the commitments made during gender audits, ACFODE undertook a training of **81 (40 females and 41 males)** gender focal persons from four partner organisations (constituting of staff and members) on gender, advocacy and communication skills. This increased understanding on the roles of a gender focal person, enhanced knowledge on gender analysis tools, results-based reporting, gender responsive planning, budgeting and advocacy. In addition, in order to strengthen partner's members' capacity to tackle unequal gender relations in business/work practices and processes, they were further

trained on human rights (rights to land, adequate housing and finances) and gender equality (concepts and women's reality – triple role, gender analysis and needs). As a result, the partner's knowledge and skills in gender mainstreaming in business practice has been enhanced whereby their programming practices, procedures and organisational culture is progressively being shaped towards gender equality. For instances, the gender focal persons have employed the knowledge gained in improving their programme design, budgeting and implementation for promotion of gender equality. Desirous to scale up gender work in Mbarara region, ACFODE supported UCCFS to train additional **64 (32 women and 32 men)** gender focal persons who have since increased gender awareness in the region.

4.5. Institutional Strengthening

As part of the strategy to improve efficiency, promote growth and continuity of programming and accountability for gender equality programs, ACFODE engaged in various strategic actions including human resources capacity strengthening (in the areas of in corporate governance, financial management and programming). Furthermore, to promote learning and improve accountability for results, ACFODE continued to draw from her experience in digital media engagements, audio-visual documentaries, monitoring and evaluation practices to reinforce visibility, wide learning and resource mobilisation for continued programming of rewarding models and changes being created in the lives and conditions of target groups (women, men, girls and boys).

4.5.1. Capacity building for Staff and board

ACFODE continued to gain oversight, operational, and technical support from donors like WE EFFECT among others. This strengthened the institutional systems for effective functioning post Covid-19 pandemic recovery period. The regular joint partnership meetings held virtually and physically, strengthened ACFODE's ability to deliver equitable and inclusive services to partners and target groups within geographical scope by enhancing organisational performance in planning, tracking program implementation, management of resources. The staff also participated in conflict management trainings where they gained knowledge on how to identify existing conflicts in the communities and how to address them. The financial and technical support enabled ACFODE to improve her organisational systems and practices in programming including results tracking, human resources, resource mobilisation and financial management for efficient and effective delivery of organisational mandate.

4.5.2. Strengthening Field Operations

To promote, effective and efficient planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting of project interventions, ACFODES established a functional field office fully equipped with a project assistant, motorcycle and other office running equipment (furniture, Laptop and printer) in Rukiga district. This ably supported implementation of projects in South Western region particularly in Rukiga and Rubanda districts. As a result, there is timely implementation of field activities, effective follow up of trained target groups, documentation and reporting. It has also increased ACFODE visibility and accessibility by the target group for effective VAW/C case management. Bukomansimbi and Kisoro field offices also were furnished with cameras to support documentation of processes and results.

4.5.3. Monitoring & Evaluation Systems Strengthening

Using existing monitoring tools for capturing meaningful data in line with program indicators and expected results, activity reports and monitoring updates which detailed accomplishments, lessons learnt, promising practices and emerging issues were produced for every activity completed. ACFODE also held regular physical and virtual internal quarterly review meetings for program staff. This offered opportunity for staff

to share and discuss projects' progress, achievements, emerging challenges in light of the strategic objectives and goals. These processes enabled ACFODE to react and adjust quickly in the event of changing operating conditions and enlisted information on progress towards project progress which aided generation of end of project report. This also strengthened capacity of the program field-based staff in the areas of networking, documentation and effective communication. Consequently, delivery of real time updates and reports was possible which also promoted a good working relationship between ACFODE and partners.

ACFODE undertook bi-annual participatory monitoring of program context, implementation progress and outcomes through varied approaches including tailored review/reflection sessions during project execution involving district technocrats, and project beneficiaries (community gatekeepers, survivors of violence,

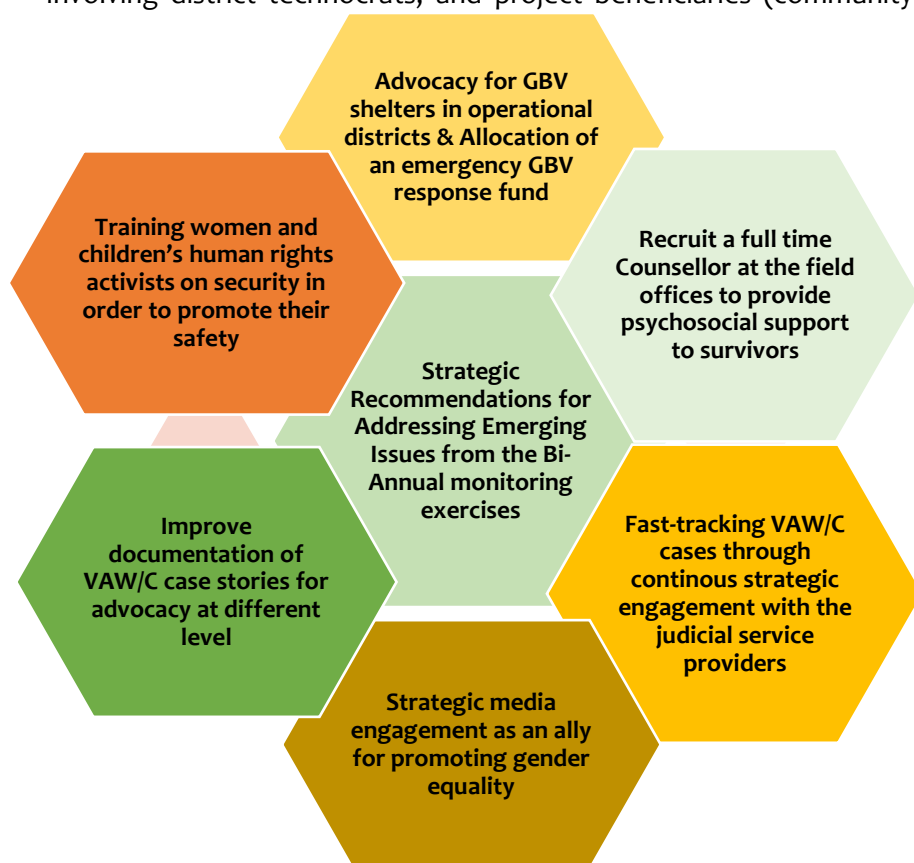
elected leaders, model couples, CSO representative, teachers and paralegals. In Kigezi and Masaka region, a total **131 participants (62F, 69M)** participated in monitoring whereby women and men shared their updates on immediate outcomes resulting from implementation of gendered action plans and commitments.

For ACFODE, in all target districts, stakeholders' recommendation expansion of the programming scope to cover more sub counties in the districts of operation in order to increase program results reach.

In Mt. Elgon Conservation areas, **83 (45 males, 38 females) people** involving CSOs, frontline community members (women, children and men), and

government leaders participated in the end of project monitoring exercises which assessed achievement of program results paying particular attention to the incremental positive/negative changes and significance of these changes to the target groups and frontline communities. The process also generated lessons learnt and practical recommendations for deepening ACFODE's work on gender and climate change/environmental conservation in protected areas in Uganda.

In Kyegegwa district, ACFODE undertook a Mid Term evaluation (MTE) to track progress in implementation of the *STOP-Prevention of Sexual and Gender Based Violence in Ugandan Refugee Settlements and their Neighbouring communities Project* and its impact on tackling the challenges of SGBV faced by the refugees and the host communities in Kyaka II refugee settlement (Itambabiniga Zone) and the host communities (Kyakatwanga village). The MTE also identified the gaps and lessons to inform future projects. The exercise which was participatory in nature to empower communities (host & refugees) and promote a sense of ownership involved a total of **68 refugees (38 women and 30 men) and 26 (13 women and 13 men) project beneficiaries.**



4.5.4. Media Engagement for Gender Equality

ACFODE continued to ran gender equality advocacy messages on social media platforms in line with the 16 days of activism theme “Orange the world; End Violence against Women Now!” The social media platforms used included twitter and Facebook reaching out to thousands of netizens (women and men).

Other strategic engagements were also promoted through the organisational website, newsletters and articles published. The following ably highlight organisational milestones in achieving strategic objectives;

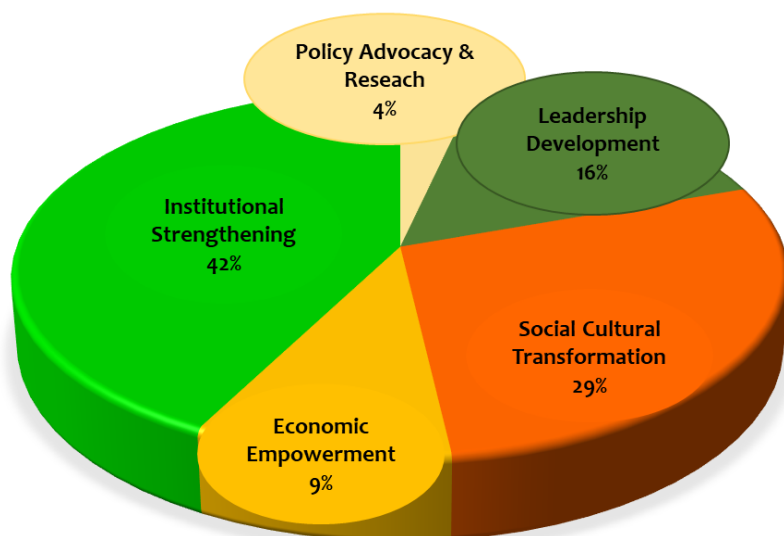
- i. ISSUE 6: JUNE 2022 NEWSLETTER focusing on Leadership Development and Economic empowerment. <https://www.acfode.or.ug/sites/default/files/Publication/Acfode%20NLtr%20Q2%20final.pdf>
- ii. ISSUE 5 JAN-MARCH 2022 Newsletter focusing on social change, leadership development, economic empowerment and policy advocacy. <https://www.acfode.or.ug/sites/default/files/Publication/Acfode%20NewsLs%20Jan-April.pdf>
- iii. ACFODE calls upon the Government to promote a comprehensive approach that protects women and girls from violence. <https://www.acfode.or.ug/news-article/acfode-ed-calls-upon-government-promote-comprehensive-approach-protects-women-and>
- iv. Enhancing gender equality in member-based organizations through policy advocacy (GEPA). <https://www.acfode.or.ug/news-article/enhancing-gender-equality-member-based-organisations-through-policy-advocacy-gepa>

4.5.5. Program Multi-Stakeholder Learning and Review Meetings

In all operational districts, ACFODE undertook multi-stakeholder reflections and learning events in which program successes, challenges and best practices were shared and key lessons for improving programming drawn.

5. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

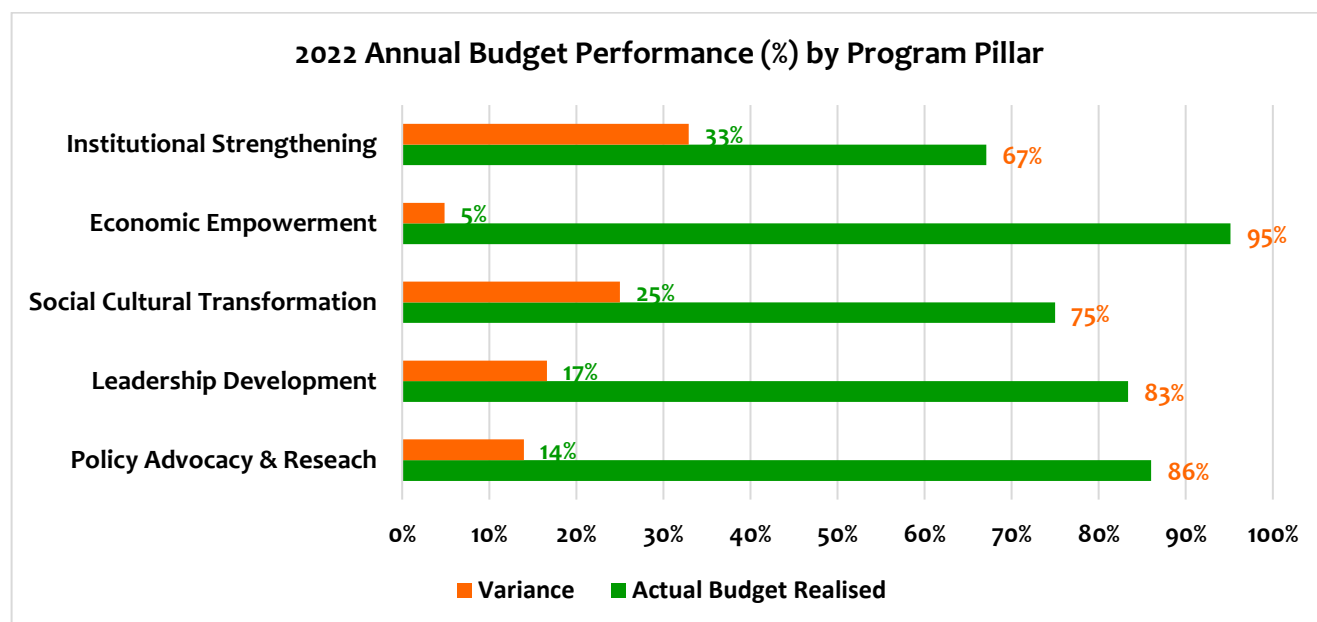
2022 Annual Budget Allocations By %Age



The organisational total budget was 2,281,743,425 Uganda Shillings. Of these, total program cost was 58% with Social Cultural transformation taking half of the total program budget. The institutional Strengthening (including personnel, administrative, capital and investment costs) was 42%.

The total actual annual budget stood at 75.3% with a budget variance of 24.7%. Of this, institutional strengthening (33%), social cultural transformation (25%) and leadership development (17%) were the most affected. Budget shortfalls were mostly due to external factors like the exchange rate losses

and global high inflation which resulted into donor budget cuts. This significantly reduced the funds available for execution of planned strategic priorities causing cancellation of some strategic actions like high level engagements with the legislature on gender responsive policies, audio-visual documentaries of program results and staff retention.



6. LESSONS LEARNT/CHALLENGES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Besides budget cuts resulting from the shifts in donor priorities, some programs experienced exchange losses that significantly reduced the funds available for projects' execution. Consequently, some planned strategic activities like high-level dialogue meeting with Women Members of Parliament, Manifesto 2021-2026 strategic engagements, Africa youth leaders debates among others were cancelled. Importantly, with the budget modification possibility, ACFODE was able to adapt to the limited resources and flexibly fitted in the changing programming conditions.

Addressing SGBV issues in humanitarian setting from a rights-based perspective is effective. Whilst most humanitarian action is predominantly skewed towards SGBV needs based response, there remains possibilities for addressing SGBV issues in a long term and sustainable manner if programming using a rights-based perspective. ACFODE's readiness and boldness to integrate rights-based gender programming in SGBV prevention and response in humanitarian/refugee setting was substantive as it enabled realisation of positive outcomes that stakeholders value. Given that socio-cultural change is a long process, rights-based approaches should be replicated to other zones in Kyaka II resettlement areas and host community villages in Kyegegwa and Uganda at large for impact.

Conflict and gender sensitivity in engaging the stakeholders is cost effective and facilitates sustainability and ownership of the program processes and outcomes as it reveals the innate human transformative potential. It also unlocks the ecosystem of acceptability by project stakeholders and harnesses their willingness to work voluntarily with determination to achieve common goals. This approach enabled ACFODE to effectively mobilize community members (female and male), local resources and duty bearers to effectively participate in program actions. It was also useful in ensuring safety of human rights activists in the contexts of threats and risks.

In all operational areas, ACFODE's Role Model couple approach and male engagement were regarded as the most effective holistic strategies for addressing the underlying causes of gender inequalities by shifting the persistent negative social cultural and transforming men's mindset. The models which transform from within, while cascading to other community members offers participating couples and individuals a chance to deeply introspect on their gender relationships and power dynamics. Cognisant of the achievements realised so far, it will be crucial for ACFODE to continue expanding the reach of these models in operational areas and contexts.

7. CONCLUSIONS

This annual report offers evidence to the accomplishments and lessons learnt in execution of ACFODE's mission in Uganda. Visibly, the programs were well focused and targeted. They worked pretty well with various stakeholders in targeted districts and nationally. Henceforth, a footprint for advancing actions that make gender equality a reality in Uganda and beyond. The joint multi-stakeholder engagements at local and national levels were unmatched as they ushered in a wave of transparency and accountability that will continue to contribute to mitigation of human rights violations and violence against women and children.

Overall, with favourable gender related policies and willingness of actors to remain true to the cause of transform Uganda's society into a better place where women and men's dreams thrive, it is anticipated that the promising advocacy strategies and outcomes will be sustained. Despite the shocks, which affected funding flow to CSOs, ACFODE and partners were able to pull through program execution. The efficiency in implementation and effectiveness of approaches deployed by ACFODE has overall been reasonably great with impressive results achieved in all the five strategic pillars. This is attributable to stakeholder's willingness to learn, cooperate, and share feedback on ACFODE's work. Outstandingly, for phased out programs, stakeholders highlight the need for more innovative programs to scale up action and consolidate the outcomes realized so far.

8. ANNEXES

Annex 1: Human Change Stories

“ACFODE's Model Couple Approach: Transforming Lives and Building Violence-Free Families”

Martin and Evaline Thakondola are a couple who have been married for 14 years and with gifted with 7 children. The couple lives in Kasese district in the Western part of Uganda. According to Martin, his life was consumed by drunkenness and violence, “I was a drunkard and I would drink until the early hours of the morning. Whenever I would get money, I would spend it recklessly on things that don't benefit my home like buying alcohol and roast beef for friends, just to show off. I reached a point where I became rude and ruthless to my wife whenever she asked for any support from me, especially if it was concerning money. I didn't know that in order for our family to be well, we had to work together. Our income was low. At the time, I didn't even know that children also have rights. I would only buy them things when I felt like it, I didn't ask them anything. When ACFODE trained us, I learned that children have certain things they need and like, but most importantly, I learnt that they have a right to make a choice. Model couple trainings changed my life. I must admit that my wife was never the root cause of problems, but it was all me.”



Like other women in rural communities, Evaline notes that before the model couple trainings, she didn't know a woman had the potential to become a leader. “I had never been given an opportunity to express myself. After the ACFODE training on women in leadership, I got courage to apply for a leadership position in our cooperative and I am currently the first female chairperson. This is the first time we have a woman in such a leadership position in our district. The cooperative is doing well, my home is equally well, and my children are all attending school because ever since my husband changed, we plan for the family together. We have purchased a plot of land in Kasese and my husband allowed me to buy land and register it in my own name. This means that the land belongs to me and I have a right over it. This was an abomination culturally but ACFODE showed us that we all had equal rights to buy land.”

Martin, who owns Kitabu Orphanage Nursery and Primary School in Kasese had in the past prohibited his wife from getting involved with the school. He stopped her from coming to the school. Presently things have changed and Evaline manages the school finances. The school has 180 pupils and 11 staff. The couple is also coffee farmers and were recognized and awarded by their local cooperative for the best coffee bean harvest.

“We have acres of land and have utilized it in the best way. Last season, we harvested 400 kgs and bought more kilograms of coffee from neighbors which we sold and earned a 2 million shillings' profit. We used the profit to construct a new building for our school,” Martin says with great pride.

The model couple has so far mentored over 30 more families to address GBV and its consequences, women and children's rights, and sensitized them to denounce cultural norms that promote early marriages for girls.

“Empowering Teachers to Combat Gender-Based Violence in Bukomansimbi: The Success Story of Kalema Laira”

“ My name is Kalema Laira, and I am a teacher at Makukuru Primary School in Kitanda Subcounty, Bukomansimbi District. Thanks to the training sessions conducted by ACFODE and We Effect on school gender-based violence (GBV). My fellow teachers and I have gained valuable knowledge and skills in handling GBV-related issues.

The training sessions covered various aspects of GBV, including how to handle problems, where to report, and to whom to report. The teachers also underwent other training sessions on creating awareness among pupils about their rights. “Some of the pupils were being violated, but they didn’t even realize it, including attempted rape or defilement,” added Kalema. Proudly reflecting on his experience, Kalema expressed that, “ACFODE has given me confidence, ideas, and skills to handle GBV-related problems. I have been actively involved in handling cases in my area, such as incidents of child burning.” He recalled a particular case where a child was burnt by her own mother, who was mentally challenged. “Using the expertise, I gained from ACFODE, I intervened by collecting evidence and working with religious leaders to resolve the matter. The child was treated, and the case was successfully resolved,” he explained.



Empowered by ACFODE, Kalema Laira confidently handles GBV-related issues.

Kalema and his fellow teachers are determined to put an end to violence against children in their communities of Kitanda and Bukomansimbi. “We make sure that these problems don’t keep happening again,” he stated. However, he also acknowledged challenges faced in the process, such as receiving demoralizing feedback during evidence collection and encountering resistance from those who protect perpetrators. “Transport challenges are also a hurdle in facilitating the cause of ending violence against women and children,” he added.

Kalema’s story exemplifies the positive impact of empowering teachers to combat GBV and creating a safer environment for women and children in Kitanda Subcounty. His dedication and expertise, gained through ACFODE and We Effect training, have made a tangible difference in addressing GBV cases and promoting a culture of non-violence at Makukuru Primary School in Kitanda Subcounty.

“Women Championing Community Transformation; From being Spoilers of Environment to Conservationist”

“ My Name is Hilda, I grew up in the community of Mbale, Wanale Sub County. Living in frontline communities always meant that we engaged in farming around Mt. Elgon conservation park with our



parents. At times we would even move beyond the park boundaries set as our parents always told us that it's our land and nobody has authority. I remember on many occasions, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) officials would chase us around and even beat us. One time my young brother survived falling over the mountain cliff.

As a young child growing up, I looked at UWA officials as murderers and people that had come to grab our land. There was such hatred for them from the whole community because we all had the same thinking. The hatred led to constant fights and killings between UWA and community.

Community would forcefully get into the park with pangas to access their “land” as UWA would protest since its safeguarding government property, which in turn would lead to a lot of scuffle and fights. We never knew how to behave while in the park and UWA officials equally never knew how to handle community once they got to the park. As a community member, I was also very ignorant of why UWA officials were in our area, refusing us to access our own National Park and cut trees the way we want, graze our animals and enjoy all the unique species in there and the fertile soils for farming.

“I no longer enter the park with pangas forcefully. I also do not force my way to the park any time as we have been given days on when to go to the park. I also know that the park is protected to avoid over encroachment which can destroy the whole water catchment area”

Years later, an organization called ACFODE came in our community and started us on a journey to mitigate the fights with UWA. They carried out community engagement meetings in which I learnt, it's illegal to enter the park with pangas and that UWA officials are not there to kill us but to preserve nature for the generations ahead of us. Through joint meetings between UWA and community, I have learnt the importance of conserving the park as it's a key contributing factor to our cool weather and it's a key water catchment area for the whole Country. I am at a point in my life where I am now an advocate of conservation. My mind changed the moment I learnt that the park is a natural resource to all not like we kept claiming. I have seen this mindset change among many of my community members too. I and other community members now know how to behave and this has incredibly brought a lot of harmony between our community and UWA. Through these joint meetings a lot of issues that previously led to conflicts were talked about and resolved. The Community monitors who live among us and were trained by ACFODE continuously visit families and use different available spaces like saving groups and farmer groups to sensitize community on their roles and responsibilities on environmental conservation. Community engagement meetings played a great role in causing the change including onboarding the local leaders.

“Overcoming challenges head on as a survivor and turning them into streams of benefits”

At 45, Nalongo Justine Asimwe has faced more burdens, challenges and experiences than most of her age mates have witnessed. She conceived at a tender age while living in Kampala city, but the cost of living was too high for her. “I returned to the village and forged on,” recounts Asimwe.



“In the village, I got involved with Semanda, the father of my children. Unfortunately, he was also not responsible and could not provide for the family.” He would do odd jobs or trade, but remained a negligent absentee father. He does not even bother to call and find out how the children are coping with studies or life in general.

“Some of the five children are now in their teens and need a father figure in their life, but I am their father and mother,” says Asimwe in a somber tone. “I used to get weighed down by the challenges and burst into tears.” This changed after the four-day training with ACFODE, which changed Asimwe’s perspective to life. Today, she has blossoming gardens of beans and bananas. In addition to that, she is running piggery and poultry projects.

In spite of her challenges, Asimwe serves as the best counsellor to women and men who have gone through her experience. “I urge women to desist from just making shopping lists and identify ways to generate income,” says Asimwe. “Soon, the man will realize that you are a partner not worth losing if the home is to keep running normally. I have since built a mud and wattle house roofed with iron sheets.”

There is food and the basic essentials in most homes. Asimwe feeds the pigs, weeds and harvests her crops. Most of it is for home consumption and the surplus is sold to buy other essentials like sugar, salt and soap.

Asimwe’s home in Hamura cell is the point of first call when community members have a misunderstanding. She shows the path when seeking justice beyond local leaders in big cases like rape and defilement.



“After Surviving GBV, then the battle not to allow Naysayers put me down must be won”

After separating from her husband, Fausta Kemigisa suffered marginalisation in the community. She was called abusive names such as “Bufumbo Bwa lema” (marriage failure.) Determined to thrive, she gathered the strength to start a new life after separating from her abusive husband called Tumwijukye.

“I was able to move on with my grief and economic insecurity, not forgetting social criticism,” recounts Kemigisa. “Today, as a single mother, I ably take care of my three children, in addition to sustaining my aging mother. I find my life easy without having to account for every minute I spend away from home or depend on a man financially,” she says.

Like fate would have it, in her cottage industry, Kemigisa’s business was crippled by the COVID-19 pandemic as clients who had ordered wedding, baptism, and okuhingira (giveaway) ceremony clothes have not picked them for more than a year.

“Business money is idle instead of multiplying. Fortunately, I recently got an order to make face masks,” Kemigisa says in celebratory tone.

“To beat the deadline of delivery, I had to employ two helping hands. On top of that a small shop serves as training school for girls. The ACFODE training I got last year with 53 other beneficiaries boosted my business skills as far as saving and exploiting existing opportunities are concerned”.



“Since then, we have formed a group of 25 members who meet every Thursday to save sh10,000 each, share business ideas and update each other on the market trends,” says Kemigisa. “Not that I encourage divorce, but I call upon single mothers and widows not to wallow in self-pity for the rest of their lives”, She Says

Kemigisha adds that what a man can do a woman too can. She argues that culture and religion have suppressed women for such a long time and it is time to extricate the gender from the ropes tying them down.

Hers is the only tailoring shop stocked with kitenge, African wear and other beauty enhancers. Until the COVID-19 outbreak, a feast or Christmas season meant Kemigisa smiling all the way to the bank.

Today, the shop doubles as a training school for tailors. It is targeting young girls who drop out of school or need the skill to earn a living. “I have more than six sewing machines,” says Kemigisha. “I intend to upgrade them when our saving scheme gains financial strength to lend me some more capital. I can do some designing given the right tools”.

Annex 2: Year 2022 In Pictorials



Figure 1: National Stakeholders Strategic Meeting, Kampala



Figure 2: ED ACFODE & Principal Settlement Officer – OPM



Figure 3: Commemoration of 16days of Activism -Kyaka II Refugee Settlement



Figure 4: Community women & youth interpreting SGBV Materials



Figure 5: Eirene Rep & ED ACFODE at Kyaka II field Office



Figure 6: Community Facilitators after the Reflection Meeting in Kyakatwaga village



Figure 7: Launch Event for the Peace Hut in Itabambiniga Zone, Kyaka II Settlement



Figure 8: Reps of Village Saving Groups receiving Saving boxes



Figure 9; Wanale Sub County women receiving tree seedlings



Figure 10: Stakeholder Meeting in Mbale



ACFODE Staff and facilitators pose for a group photo after the two days training at ACFODE house.



Figure 11: District/Sub County Stakeholders after Project Exit Meeting in Mbale District



Figure 12: Model couples Training in Kanungu



Figure 13: Model Couple Developing action plans



Figure 14: Community Gatekeeper expressing views



Figure 15: Survivor discussing during social enterprise training



Figure 16: Survivors after Orientation on PDM in Kisoro



Figure 17: Duty Bearers in group work during training



Figure 18: Training of Duty bearers



Figure 19: Survivors in plenary discussion during training



20: Participants during land rights awareness

Figure



Figure 21: Commemoration of International Women's day at ACFODE office



Figure 22: Participants expressing views during Project exit meeting in Kampala



Figure 23: Women leaders training on social enterprise Figure 24: Participants during Human Rights Day commemoration 2022



Figure 25: Community Facilitators in Kyaka II say NO to SGBV in their community

Additional pictures can be found in the link below:

<https://www.acfode.or.ug/photo-album/womens-day-celebrations-2022>

Annex 3: ACFODE Management & Staff 2022

1. Ms Regina Bafaki - Executive Director
2. Ms Joyce Nabaloga - Finance & Administration Manager
3. Ms Happy Ainomugisha - Programmes Manager
4. Ms Rebecca Rukundo – Programme Officer (Economic Empowerment)
5. Ms Belinda Kyomuhendo – Programme Officer (Leadership & Governance)
6. Ms Viola Nakkigwe – Communications & Advocacy Officer
7. Mr Lhwanzu Kitooke – Communications Officer
8. Mr Felix Ochieng – Monitoring & Evaluation Officer
9. Ms Shierly Akeso - Accounts Assistant
10. Ms Grace Kirabo - Administrative Assistant
11. Ms Miriam Lwanga – Administrative Assistant
12. Mr Allan Mugabe – Field Officer – South Western Region
13. Mr Godfrey Tumwebaze – Field Officer
14. Ms Racheal Akampurira – Field Assistant
15. Mr Bravious Beinomugisha – Field Officer (Psychosocial Counsellor)
16. Ms Shallon Ampuriire – Field Officer
17. Mr Godfrey Balyebuga – Logistics Officer/Driver
18. Ms Robinah Nanfuka – Welfare Officer
19. Ms Sheba Clare Mukyala – Volunteer
20. Mr Peter Kiyonga - Volunteer