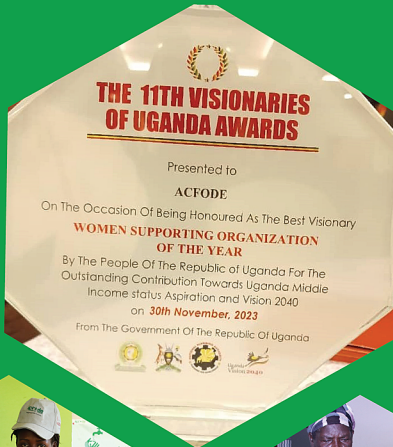




Breaking Through, Building and Binding

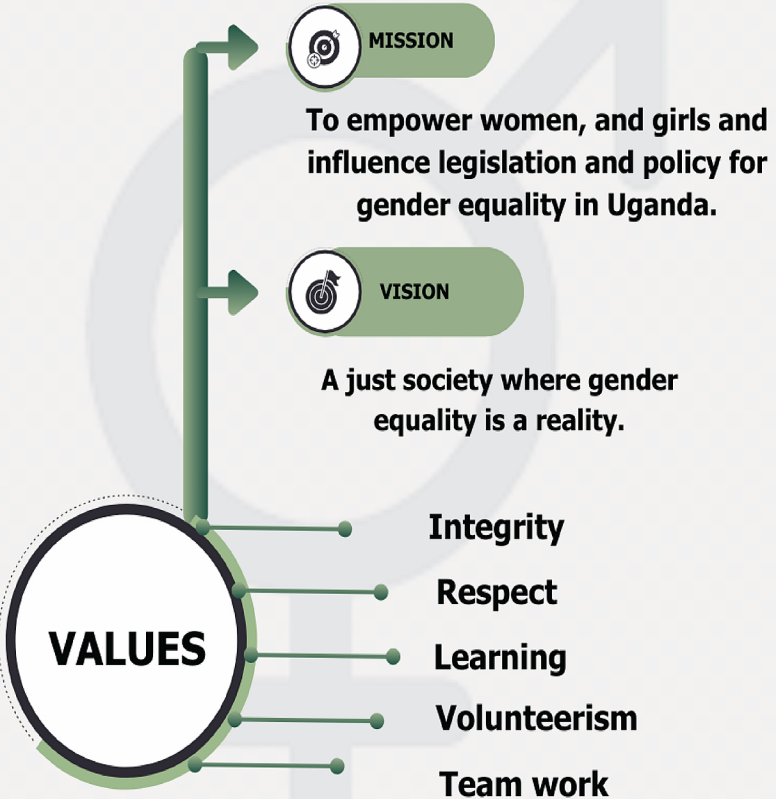


NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

Welcome to Empowerment Chronicles, your gateway to the transformative world of Action for Development (ACFODE).

In these pages, we invite you to embark on a journey of empowerment, where every story embodies the resilience, courage, and determination of women and girls striving for change.

At ACFODE, we are committed to fostering a future where gender equality is not just an aspiration but a lived reality.

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Empowering Voices: ACFODE's Debate and Poetry Event Addresses SGBV in Kyegegwa

In March this year, ACFODE orchestrated a dynamic two-day event focused on combating Gender-Based Violence (GBV) through engaging debates and powerful poetry performances. Held in Kyegegwa District, the event brought together students from 5 selected schools to discuss and confront the harsh realities of SGBV.

This was done under the project titled, "My Right No violence, Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Against Girls and Women in the Refugee Settlement and its Surroundings" funded by Eirene and BMZ with the leadership of the project officer Ms Ainomugisha Happy.

The debates and poetry performances were met with enthusiastic participation from the students, who demonstrated a deep understanding of the issues surrounding GBV. Their confidence and knowledge showcased the effectiveness of their education on such critical topics.

One of the highlights was the students' recognition of ACFODE as a reliable ally in combating violence, underscoring the organization's impactful presence in the community.

The event concluded on a high note, with Itambabiniga Primary School emerging as the winner in both debates and poetry categories. Kaborogota Primary School and Kibuye Primary School secured the second positions, respectively.

In his reflections on the event, the Inspector of schools for Kyegegwa District noted that this is an initiative they could take on as a District.

"We have carried out activities like sports, MDD and I think it is high time we put some effort in holding debates and initiatives like those in raising SGBV awareness and fostering empathy within the community." He said.

ACFODE reaffirmed its commitment to addressing issues around SGBV and promoting gender equality. The success of the debates and poetry event serves as a testament to the collective efforts of all involved, signaling a step forward in creating a more just and equitable society.



ACFODE Empowers Rural Communities Through Community Barazas

Community members in Kaberamaido during a baraza training by ACFODE early this year.



In a bid to foster inclusive governance and empower marginalised voices, (ACFODE) organized Community Barazas in Kamwenge, Amolatar, Kaberamaido and Kyegegwa Districts of Uganda.

With a total attendance of over 900 community members, including men, women, youth, and local leaders, the Barazas served as platforms for enlightenment and dialogue. Civic educators, trained by ACFODE, delved into critical topics such as gender equality, women and youth participation in politics, and citizen engagement.

The discussions unearthed prevalent challenges hindering women and youth from active involvement in leadership, ranging from educational barriers to cultural stereotypes. However, they also sparked constructive dialogues on solutions, including capacity-building programs, policy reforms, and community sensitization efforts.

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The Barazas not only imparted knowledge but also ignited a sense of empowerment among attendees. Many expressed newfound confidence in participating in political processes and community initiatives. Community leaders lauded ACFODE's initiative and called for further sensitization programs and empowerment initiatives.

Looking ahead, ACFODE plans to extend its outreach to neighboring villages and address pressing issues like children's rights and substance abuse. The impact of these Barazas extends beyond mere discussions, fostering unity, empowerment, and inclusive governance in rural Uganda.

Gender Equality Training Promotes Empowerment and Challenges Social Norms



Some of the Kasese Cooperative Union members attending the Gender equality training, in Kasese District.

In a bid to promote gender equality and challenge entrenched social norms, (ACFODE) through her unique and results oriented "Model Couple Approach" conducted a comprehensive training session for targeted women and their spouses in Kasese District.

The training, attended by 40 women from various cooperative societies, including Muhokya Farmers' Cooperative Society, Kitabu Thuyirethuthi Primary Cooperative Society, Buhanghura Coffee Farmers' Cooperative, and Katulu Farmers' Cooperative, aimed to enhance participants' understanding of power dynamics, social and gender norms, and the concept of gender equality.

A total of 80 individuals, comprising 40 men and 40 women, were equipped with knowledge on unpacking gender concepts, understanding social and gender norms, and recognizing the importance of gender equality.

The sessions also delved into economic empowerment and women's enterprises, providing an overview of different ventures and strategies for improvement, with collaboration from spouses.

However, the training also highlighted several emerging issues that hinder women's economic empowerment and challenge gender equality. It was noted that many women involved in social enterprises lacked knowledge on financial management, posing a risk to their savings due to the absence of bank accounts for their enterprises.

Negative social norms were identified as significant barriers, such as the perception that land ownership is exclusively for men, limiting women's ability to engage in agricultural businesses. Moreover, prevalent gender stereotypes were observed, with men often re-sisting women's financial independence and prioritizing boy child education over girl child education.

Unpaid care work, predominantly shouldered by women, further constrained their time to operate businesses effectively. Additionally, limited support from men towards women's enterprises, including restrictions on keeping domestic animals at home, forced women to compromise their entrepreneurial pursuits.

Despite these challenges, the training served as a crucial platform to raise awareness, challenge existing norms, and foster dialogue on gender equality within households and communities. ACFODE remains committed to addressing these issues and empowering women to realize their full potential in Kasese District and beyond.

Social Enterprise Training Boosts Kasese Women's Economic Security in Kasese District.



Ninety women from four distinct women's groups in Kasese District recently underwent intensive training in social enterprise models, a transformative initiative by the African Centre for Women's Development (ACFODE).

The groups, namely Muhokya Farmers' Cooperative Society, Kitabu Thuyirethuthi Primary Cooperative Society, Buhanghura Coffee Farmers' Cooperative, and Katulu Farmers' Cooperative, embarked on a journey towards economic empowerment through innovative means.

The social enterprise training yielded significant outcomes, fostering the identification of pressing social issues within their communities. These included poverty, climate change, unemployment, domestic violence, hunger, malnutrition, and school dropout rates.

In response, the women collaborated to establish nine social enterprises, each targeting specific challenges. Ventures such as piggery, goat rearing, coffee roasting, cassava flour processing, and direct coffee buying from farmers were initiated, aimed at eliminating middlemen and ensuring fair returns.

A member of Kitabu Thuyirethuthi expressing her concerns during the training.

Crucially, environmental sustainability was at the forefront of these enterprises. Initiatives such as tree planting, utilization of organic manure for enhanced crop yields, mulching with coffee husks to prevent soil erosion, and the production of briquettes were integrated into the business models.

Moreover, action plans were meticulously developed by each social enterprise group, outlining concrete steps to tackle identified problems. Activities ranged from appointing management teams and mobilizing finances to identifying markets and providing adequate shelter for livestock.

The training not only equipped participants with practical skills for enterprise management but also instilled a deeper understanding of the social enterprise concept. As a result, these women are poised to become catalysts for positive change within their communities, driving economic growth while addressing pressing social challenges.

ACFODE's Women Empowerment Efforts Bear Fruit in Kasese District

Economic empowerment is one of ACFODE's pillars and recently, the organisation embarked on a series of impactful initiatives that address any issues that could possibly hinder women from exercising their role to the fullest.

Initiatives like comprehensive socio-economic needs assessment conducted for four women's groups affiliated with the Mt. Rwenzori Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union.

Over 100 women and 14 men participated, revealing significant hurdles hindering women's economic empowerment. Issues such as limited management skills, lack of trust from spouses, and cultural barriers were identified.

Responding to these findings, ACFODE organized social enterprise training for 90 women from these groups. This resulted in the formation of nine social enterprises tackling various challenges like poverty and climate change. The women developed action plans and improved their financial literacy, enhancing their ability to manage businesses effectively.



A farmer from Kasese cooperative union displaying a ready for sale-pack of coffee pack, one of their products.

Responding to these findings, ACFODE organized social enterprise training for 90 women from these groups. This resulted in the formation of nine social enterprises tackling various challenges like poverty and climate change. The women developed action plans and improved their financial literacy, enhancing their ability to manage businesses effectively.

As a way of including everyone in the process, ACFODE provided gender equality training for 40 women and their spouses, addressing issues like unpaid care work and limited support for women's enterprises.

These efforts have yielded tangible results, including the growth of vibrant social enterprises and a reduction in violence against women as well as positive changes in social norms and increased women's participation in leadership roles.

Financial Literacy Workshop Equips Women Cooperators for Success



Ms. Allen Baguma the facilitator, takes participants through a financial literacy session.

Ninety women cooperators in Kasese District recently participated in a transformative financial literacy workshop organized by the African Centre for Women's Development (ACFODE), aimed at fostering economic independence and informed decision-making.

The workshop, held under the theme of "Empowering Women for Financial Freedom," focused on key areas essential for financial management. Participants were equipped with crucial skills in managing profits, making strategic investments, saving with purpose, and effectively handling finances, including cash flow, capital, and loans. Moreover, emphasis was placed on the importance of record-keeping and budgeting for sustainable business growth.

As a result of the workshop, tangible outcomes were observed among the women entrepreneurs. There was a notable increase in their commitment to diversify and expand their social enterprises. Ventures such as value addition, including the production of coffee bags, and expanding market reach beyond local communities were actively pursued.

Additionally, efforts were made to boost production quantities to meet growing demand.

The workshop also facilitated enhanced knowledge and skills in record-keeping, enabling participants to better manage their finances through effective planning and budgeting. Moreover, women cooperators exhibited improved capacity to manage group conflicts, leveraging peer learning and support mechanisms, and establishing group laws and guidelines for smoother operations.

Furthermore, the workshop heightened awareness among women entrepreneurs regarding existing government programs for economic empowerment. ACFODE facilitated linkages between participants and the Kasese municipality commercial office, ensuring continuous information sharing and support in accessing government funds and other programs aimed at fostering economic growth.

Participants also benefitted from the platform for experience sharing and learning, enabling them to exchange valuable insights and market their products effectively. Some women entrepreneurs capitalized on these connections by selling their products, such as ground coffee to fellow participants.

The financial literacy workshop proved to be a pivotal step towards empowering women cooperators in Kasese District, equipping them with the necessary tools and knowledge to thrive in their entrepreneurial endeavors and achieve financial independence.



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