

Acfode

Breaking Through, Building Up and Binding



NEWSLETTER

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INSIGHTS AND UPDATES



EDITORIAL

In the realm of gender equality, Action for Development (ACFODE) stands tall as a leading force in Uganda. This renowned organization, driven by a member-based approach, has dedicated itself to the advancement of women's rights and the promotion of gender equality. Over the span of three decades, ACFODE has tirelessly advocated for women's empowerment, eradicated violence against women and girls, and tirelessly fought for a more balanced society. Anchored by a strong vision, mission, core values, and purpose, ACFODE remains unwavering in its commitment to stability and sustainability, igniting a path towards gender equality.

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VISION

A just society where gender equality is a reality.



MISSION

To Empower Women and influence legislation and Policy for Gender Equality in Uganda.



CORE PURPOSE.

Advocacy for gender equality and equity.



CORE VALUES

Integrity

Learning

Volunteerism

Respect

Teamwork

Equity and fairness

ACFODE Hosts Networking Event on Digital Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality

“It was an honor to host this networking event in partnership with Crossroads International, celebrating International Women’s Day under the theme of ‘Digital: Innovation and Technology for Gender Equality,’” said Ms. Regina Bafaki, the Executive Director of ACFODE, as she welcomed the participants.



ACFODE ED, Ms. Regina Bafaki addressing participants at the Networking event for women and youth

Empowering Women Through Technology.

In a groundbreaking event aimed at harnessing the power of digital innovation for gender equality, ACFODE (Action for Development) hosted a networking event in Kampala, Uganda, which brought together 38 participants, including representatives from technology-led organizations, to engage in discussions on utilizing media platforms for networking and partnership-building to boost entrepreneurship and careers.

This event served as a tribute to International Women's Day, celebrating the achievements and potential of women in the digital era.

One of the highlights of the event was the compelling keynote address delivered by Hon. Ritah Akankwatsa the woman MP for Mbarara City emphasizing the need to address challenges faced by women in Uganda’s digital space.

She emphasized that approximately 46% of women in Uganda have experienced bullying and stalking online, shedding light on the urgent need for stricter measures to protect women's rights in this era of technological advancement. Her address served as a call to action, urging all participants to work collectively towards creating a safe and inclusive digital environment for women.

Mr. Kidega Moses, from Uganda Youth Network, emphasized addressing women's issues before bridging the gender-tech gap, He highlighted that **“Land inheritance and domestic violence hinder progress; focus is crucial for inclusivity and empowerment.”** Moses stressed combatting corruption and promoting transparency, enabling rural girls' digital inclusion. He explained, **“Corruption hampers women's tech access; addressing it empowers girls in the digital era.”** The event facilitated strategies for an inclusive future.

Some of the participants suggested solutions like digitalization of key strategy in advocating for gender responsive budget, creating networking spaces for women in digital innovations, ensuring online safety and empowerment as efforts that will encourage women to participate in actively in digital spaces and empower the future.

The ACFODE networking event, in collaboration with Crossroads International, highlighted the transformative potential of digital innovation and technology for gender equality. By addressing challenges and promoting inclusion, women can shape a future where technology empowers and advances their rights, fostering an equitable society.



A group photo of panelists ,participants and organizers of ACFODE's networking event for Women and youth in technology at Skyz Hotel in Kampala.

ACFODE and EIRENE Empower Community Facilitators to Create Lasting Change in Kyegegwa District

As the sun began to set over the picturesque landscape of Kyegegwa, a profound sense of hope and determination filled the hearts of the community facilitators who had gathered for the training session. They had embarked on a journey of knowledge and empowerment with ACFODE and EIRENE, and their lives were about to be forever changed.

With each passing moment, the participants became more engaged, their eyes sparkling with newfound understanding of their role in the community as facilitators, equipped with the knowledge of monitoring and evaluation, they were determined to actively advocate for positive change in their communities. MS. Ainomugisha Happy's passionate explanations resonated deeply within them, igniting a fire of inspiration and motivation.



Participants engaging in peer discussions

Throughout the training, the facilitators explored the Participatory Monitoring Evaluation (PME) model for Advocacy Cycle management, the importance of accountability and identified key areas where efforts could make a difference in addressing sexual and gender-based violence and promoting service delivery.

With newfound skills and knowledge, they were prepared to advocate for improved services, challenge negative cultural practices, and foster a safer and more inclusive environment.

“The impact of our collaboration is truly remarkable,” said Ms. Ainomugisha, Programmes Manager at ACFODE. “These community facilitators have undergone a profound transformation, uniting with a shared vision of a society free from violence and inequality.”

The collaborative efforts of ACFODE and EIRENE reverberated far beyond the training room, touching countless lives and igniting positive change throughout the district. “We believe in the power of knowledge and collective action,” emphasized Mr. Kato, the facilitator. “These facilitators now carry the torch of knowledge, illuminating the path toward a brighter tomorrow.”



During Session 2 on the PME Model, the facilitator engages with community facilitators

Armed with the Participatory Monitoring Evaluation (PME) model and unwavering support, the facilitators eagerly embraced their mission. **“We are ready to navigate the complexities of policy advocacy and engage with key stakeholders,” expressed one facilitator. “Our voices will be heard, our actions will inspire, and we will tirelessly work to uplift the marginalized and vulnerable,”** added another.

The impact of ACFODE and EIRENE’s collaboration in Kyegegwa District is set to make history. Their commitment to empowering community facilitators has created a ripple effect that promises lasting change. **“We are witnessing the seeds of transformation taking root,”** stated Ms. Ainomugisha.

“Together, we are gradually realizing our vision of a society where violence and inequality are eradicated, one step at a time.”

In Kyegegwa District, the partnership between ACFODE and EIRENE has ignited empowerment and transformation. The community facilitators, armed with tools and knowledge, are agents of change. With unwavering dedication, they shape a future of safety, inclusivity, and flourishing. The flame they’ve sparked illuminates a path towards boundless possibilities.

“Empowering Change: Model Couples and Social Actors Unite to Prevent SGBV in Kyaka 11 Refugee Settlement.”



Model couples and social actors pose for a photo after the 2-day mentorship session at Kyakatwanga Catholic Church in Kyegegwa Sub County.

In a trailblazing collaboration, ACFODE and EIRENE e.V., fueled by the unwavering support of The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development, orchestrated an extraordinary two-day mentorship session. Within the enchanting confines of Kyakatwanga village, model couples and social actors united, igniting a powerful movement to construct a sanctuary devoid of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). This enthralling gathering set the stage for an awe-inspiring transformation, arming these remarkable individuals with the wisdom and capabilities needed to etch an indelible mark upon their beloved community.

A Journey of Reflection and Action.

Through an immersive mix of interactive methods, the mentorship session provided participants with a platform to reflect on their crucial roles and responsibilities in preventing SGBV. Together, they delved into the understanding of GBV and SGBV, shared their personal experiences and challenges, and ultimately developed action plans that would pave the way for a better future. The session's focus on peer-to-peer learning and experience sharing fostered a sense of unity and empowerment among the attendees.

During the session, inspiring stories emerged from the participants, demonstrating the transformative power of ACFODE's engagement. Mr. Byamukama Paul shared how his harmonious relationship with his wife was strengthened, leading them to form a saving group and train others on financial independence. Umar, a dedicated social actor, testified that ACFODE's training had made his work easier, significantly reducing cases of SGBV and domestic violence in the community. These testimonies underscored the tangible and positive change brought about by the mentorship session.



A group of social actors participating in a discussion.

Building a Network of Support.

The mentorship session went beyond individual growth. Participants engaged in discussions on the role of duty bearers in ensuring access to justice for survivors of SGBV. They learned about alternative means of seeking justice and were encouraged to establish connections with district and local authorities. This network of support would prove crucial in addressing SGBV cases effectively and swiftly, further strengthening the resolve of model couples and social actors in their mission.

This prompted one Mr. Kwebiha Methodious, area counselor of Kyakawanga sub-county to commend the model couples and social actors for extending their knowledge and skills to uplift the entire community, leading to a significant reduction in SGBV and domestic violence cases.

A Beacon of Hope.

The mentorship session marked a pivotal moment in the ongoing efforts of ACFODE, EIRENE e.V. and The Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation & Development to create peaceful families and communities. Through ambassadorship for girl child education and aligned roles in preventing SGBV, these model couples and social actors have emerged as beacons of hope. Their dedication and commitment resonate through the headline, "Model Couples and Social Actors Trained to Prevent SGBV in Kyaka 11 Refugee Settlement."

In the wake of this transformative event, the path toward a future free from SGBV grows brighter. With increased awareness, knowledge, and a strengthened network of support, these empowered individuals are set to make a lasting impact, ensuring the safety and well-being of every member of Kyaka 11 Refugee Settlement.

Breaking Chains, Building Hope: Transforming Uganda's Landscape for Women and Children

In a revolution of compassion, the Protection of Women and Children's Rights in Uganda (PWACRU) project has stormed onto the scene, igniting a powerful movement to defend the rights of women and children across the nation. Powered by the steadfast support of the European Union, We Effect, and ACFODE, PWACRU's unwavering mission is to forge an environment where policies, legislation, and institutions empower communities and shatter the chains of violence rooted in age-old gender norms. Embarking on this audacious odyssey, PWACRU sets its sights on six districts, vowing to herald an era of transformation.



A contented couple, positively impacted by ACFODE training on preventing violence against women and girls, share their success story of improved livelihood and family well-being..

The path has not been without its challenges. The relentless grip of the COVID-19 pandemic has cast a shadow, exacerbating the plight faced by women and children, leading to an alarming surge in violence. Root causes such as poverty, alcoholism, economic disparities, mistrust, and oppressive control over women's bodies have fueled the flames of this pervasive issue.

The urgency of the project cannot be overstated, given the distressing prevalence of gender-based violence in the targeted districts that have been intensified by the pandemic with rising cases of sexual abuse, rape, child marriage, and defilement.

As PWACRU strides forward, it confronts the formidable barriers of negative gender norms, corruption, bias, resource constraints, and a lack of training among local leaders. Yet, against all odds, the project has made remarkable headway. Inspiring stories abound, recounting the reconciliation of broken marriages, the economic uplifting of community gatekeepers, and a tangible reduction in violence against women and children.

In Bukomansimbi district, the intervention of PWACRU brought a man back to his wife and children, healing the wounds inflicted by a second marriage. Meanwhile, in Kisoro district, the transformative power of ACFODE's training propelled Mr. Paul Mahigirane, a dedicated community gatekeeper, toward a brighter future, enhancing his family's livelihood.

In Nyakiga cell, Town Ward, Kihihi Town Council, Kanungu District, model couples spearheaded peer-to-peer sensitization on gender-based violence, positively impacting the lives of individuals like Mr. Tibereba Jackson, a retired UPDF soldier, and Ms. Achan Josephine, among others.

In the face of adversity, PWACRU has taken a resolute step towards eradicating gender-based violence in Uganda. Its impact reverberates, carving a path toward a brighter, safer future where women and children can thrive, unburdened by the shackles of oppression. With each stride, PWACRU moves closer to forging a nation where every individual is cherished, where rights are upheld, and where the echoes of resilience drown out the echoes of violence.

From Bondage to Empowerment: ACFODE's Innovative Couple Model Creates Life Transformations in Uganda

In the heart of Uganda, a remarkable initiative called the Model Couple Approach (MCA) is sweeping through communities, leaving behind a trail of transformed lives and shattered stereotypes. Spearheaded by Action for Development (ACFODE) in collaboration with We Effect, and with invaluable support from the European Union, the MCA stands as a beacon of hope, determined to prevent violence against women and children while championing gender equality.



Two hearts beating as one - Charles Sebugwawo celebrates the joy of togetherness with his wife Molly (Model Couple from Bukomansimbi, Uganda).

At its core, the MCA is a community-based intervention that works hand in hand with couples, families, and entire communities to challenge deeply ingrained gender roles, dismantle power imbalances, and foster effective communication skills.

Through a meticulous selection process guided by local leaders and Community Development Officers, couples are chosen to participate in a series of workshops, group discussions, and individual counseling sessions. This comprehensive approach aims to empower them with knowledge on gender dynamics, social norms, violence prevention, and counseling, providing a fertile ground for reflection and transformation of attitudes towards violence prevention.

However, the MCA is far from being a solo endeavour. Collaborating with local organisations such as women's groups, community-based organizations, and village savings and loans associations (VSLAs), the MCA weaves a tapestry of unwavering support around couples, creating a community environment that fosters gender equity and thwarts domestic violence at its roots.

The program has effectively reduced violence against women and children while promoting gender equity. The profound testimonies of couples who have experienced the transformation first-hand stand as powerful evidence of the program's success.



Grace Matovu and his wife Gloria, spreading love, hope, and empowerment to all. A couple devoted to sharing the message of women's and children's rights through the power of the Gospel.

One such testimony comes from Charles and Molly Sebugwawo, a couple residing in the central district of Bukomansimbi, he attests to how the approach has breathed new life into their relationship, enabling them to jointly take charge of family projects and strengthen the bonds of love and understanding. Despite the challenges they face, such as ensuring their children's education, they strive to be a model couple, inspiring others in their community to

The success stories of model couples trained by ACFODE are echoed across different districts. follow suit. From the community-conscious work of Matovu Grace and his wife, Gloria, to the inspiring efforts of Frank

and Joseline Kanyandeko, couples have risen above violence within their homes, becoming agents of change and champions for the prevention of violence against women and children.

ACFODE's Executive Director, Ms. Regina Bafaki, considers the MCA a powerful tool for social change and advocates for its expansion to reach more regions in Uganda. With its comprehensive approach and growing support, ACFODE is paving the way towards a brighter, violence-free future for women and children in Uganda.

ACFODE Hosts A Knowledge Café on Gender and Social Norms

Gender and social norms play a pivotal role in shaping our societal fabric. These norms are the unwritten rules that dictate how individuals should behave based on their perceived gender. From expectations around career choices to expressions of emotion, these norms have a profound impact on our lives.

On 8th July, ACFODE hosted a knowledge café to discuss the gendered social norms and their impact on gender equality. The knowledge café themed **"Barriers, opportunities, and approaches to social and gender norms change"** was attended by development partners, civil society organizations, and government representatives.

The event was organized as interactive café discussions, intended to encourage participants to share practical ideas and approaches to addressing gender and social norms while also documenting strategies for change.

Ms. Regina Bafaki, the Executive Director, appreciated the partners that made the success of the activity possible and pledged the continued engagement in ensuring that the shared ideas are put into practice.

"I would like to sincerely thank Care International in Uganda for their collaboration and support through the East African Learning Collaborative. With their assistance, we secured a small grant that enabled us to



A group photo taken by participants and ACFODE officers at the knowledge café in Kampala.

organize this unique event. As an organization, our specific objective focuses on transformative socio-cultural and gender norms change, making it imperative that we continue this battle.”

Dr. Annah Kamusiime, a PhD Researcher, with the International Institute of Social Studies Erasmus University Rotterdam and a Director of Programmes at Nascent Research and Development Organization delivered a keynote speech. She highlighted the fact that changing gender norms is a long-term, multi-generational process.



Dr. Annah Kamusiime delivering her speech during the Knowledge café

“Our research shows that when we engage males as partners and when they understand the burden of unpaid care on women, they are more open to sharing responsibilities in the home. However, achieving true requires the investment of time and resources as well as supportive laws and policies”

Dr. Angela Nakafeero, the Commissioner of Gender and Women in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, commended



Participants discussing a given task during the knowledge café session

the work of government and CSOs in addressing gender and social norms in the country.

She said, **“Uganda has made significant progress in terms of the policy framework, affirmative action and development indicators. However, transforming social norms remains a challenge. Despite having policies against child marriage, female genital mutilation and violence against women and girls, these practices persist. I appreciate and commend Care International for leading and working with other partners in the initiatives to transform social norms, values and practices.”**

The knowledge café received applause from participants, who considered it a valuable platform for knowledge sharing and addressing critical issues related to gender equality. One participant, Ms. Georgina Asizu, remarked, **“The knowledge café was one of a kind! So much was unpacked about the theme within a short time, yet very powerful. It was a moment for partners to learn, re-learn and network.”**

ACFODE Launches a project in Kyegegwa, Amolatar and Kaberamaido Districts

Action for Development held inception meetings for the project titled; **Enhancing Women and Female Youth Awareness and Political Participation in South Western Uganda**. This project is being supported by the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights. The meetings were held from July 19th to 20th, 2023 in the districts of Kamwenge, Kyegegwa, Amolatar and Kaberamaido.

The project’s goal is to increase understanding of gender equality and the importance of women’s participation in decision-making while also increasing the participation of women and youth in democratic processes.

Ms. Juliet Akwir Ayo, the Deputy CAO of Kyegegwa District, commended ACFODE for introducing a project addresses the challenges of women lagging behind in decision-making.



Ms. Happy Ainomugisha at the extreme left with participants of the project launch in Kyegegwa District

She remarked, **“This project shall act as a platform for Women to speak up about the pressing issues especially those that are health-related which in future shall inform a gender-inclusive budget for the District.”**

In Amolatar district, leaders highlighted some of the challenges the project needs to address. Ms Daisy Ekaa Awongo, Deputy CAO pointed out, **“Amolatar is one of the Districts with the highest rate of teenage pregnancy and domestic violence against women, which affects their self-esteem and political participation. Therefore, in order to successfully advocate for women's participation in politics, we need to address Gender-based violence and sensitise of the communities about the dangers of early childhood marriages.”**

She also credited ACFODE for skills of the women councillors; **“I always attend council and have observed that female empowering female councilors and said “I always attend council meetings and have observed that female councilors are more active in legislation compared to their male counterparts, and that is why I give credit to ACFODE.”**

In Kaberamaido district one of the beneficiaries of a previous project shared how it had impacted her leadership journey. She said, "I want to thank ACFODE for coming back to implement another project in Kaberamaido.

“I want to thank ACFODE for coming back to implement another project in Kaberamaido District Local Government. In 2021 I attended the ACFODE mentoring of female aspirants in political leadership, and I used the skills and knowledge gained from ACFODE training to successfully campaign and win the election. I am also currently the secretary Health and Education.” said Hon. Damalie.

The project was well received in the districts, they pledged their support and to mobilize citizens to participate in the project activities. The leadership noted that it was timely given the upcoming elections.

ACFODE Holds Project Inception Meetings with Partners in Eastern Uganda



Ms. Rebecca Rukundo speaking to partners during a project inception meeting.

Action for Development held project inception meetings in the Eastern Uganda with three of its partners: Busoga Growers Cooperative Union in Jinja, Mt. Elgon Agro-forestry Communities Cooperative Enterprise (MEACCE) in Mbale and Bushika Integrated Area Cooperative. These meetings introduced a 5-year project funded by We Effect titled **“Enhancing Gender-Inclusive Programming and Service Delivery among Member-Based Organizations.”**

Mr. Moses Makuba, the General secretary of BGCU, appreciated ACFODE’s work in ensuring that gender equality in their organization. He said, **“We are very grateful and glad that you have come. We are confident that you will support us in addressing the gender gaps in our organization.”**

During these meetings the cooperatives identified various challenges including limited ownership and control of land and assets such as coffee plantations by women, limited decision-making and participation in markets by women, child and family neglect especially by men, high cases of Gender-Based violence, and low participation of women in leadership.

ACFODE appreciated their openness and willingness to bring positive change to their cooperatives. Ms. Regina Bafaki, the Executive Director, pledged to work closely and ensure these issues. She said, **"We are excited to partner with you. We are enthusiastic that this project will empower you, your families, communities, and the cooperative."**



ACFODE team addresses leaders of BIACE in Jinja

ACFODE also held gender audits for the partners, a number of gender gaps were identified, including a lack of awareness of gender law within the organisations, gender inequality in policy formulation, and the denial of women's rights to own land and coffee plants.

However, several participants, including family heads appreciated the need to include their wives and women in leadership spaces. One male participant from MEACCE stated,

"The knowledge given to us has helped me to realize that I have been the controller of the coffee in the family, I excluding my wife but now am going to give her some responsibilities. I am going to give some coffee to my children."

Following the audit, ACFODE will work with the partners to develop gender-responsive policies to ensure that both men and women participate and benefit equally in the cooperatives.

ACFODE calls for the end of violence against women and girls in Uganda

Violence against women and girls remains a significant issue in society, despite several policies and laws against it. Ms. Regina Bafaki, the Executive Director of Action for Development, called on stakeholders to join hands and hold each other accountable to end violence against women and girls in Uganda.

During the handover of the Protection of Women and Children's Rights in Uganda (PWA-CRU) REPORT at the regional multi-stakeholders meeting held in Masaka on March 29th, 2023, Ms. Bafaki emphasized the need for stakeholders to play their roles as duty bearers and utilize available mechanisms to combat violence against women and children.



Ms. Regina Bafaki, ED, ACFODE delivering her speech during the stakeholders meeting

She stated, **“Stakeholders need to play their roles as duty bearers and hold each other accountable by utilizing the available mechanisms, as violence against women and children affects everyone in society. You all need to work collaboratively as a team and remain**

unwavering in your efforts to protect the rights of Women and Children in Uganda.”

The project’s work was appreciated by the beneficiaries of Districts of Kanungu, Kisoro, Rubanda, Rukiga, Bukomansimbi and Kalungu. Mr. Andrew Ochen the Chief Executive Officer of Kalungu District commended ACFODE for providing a platform for the Women in his area to assert their rights when abused.

“On behalf of Kalungu District, we pledge to always follow up on perpetrators of violence against women and children and take such engagements seriously”

The project reached 56 percent female and 44percent male in the target districts, and the trained duty bearers are now the positive change makers.

Trained duty bearers in the target districts have contributed to creating a conducive environment for raising awareness on VAW/C and effectively managing cases related to it. As a result, 53 families affected by domestic violence have been reunited, and positive attitudes towards women and children’s rights have been observed. This includes an appreciation for girls’ education and the adoption of shared responsibilities within households.

Ms. Bafaki called upon all stakeholders to work collaboratively as a team and remain unwavering in their efforts to protect the rights of women and children in Uganda.

ACFODE End of Project Monitoring Process in Bukomansimbi, Rukiga and Rubanda districts

The monitoring team aimed to assess the progress, document the achievements attained, lessons learnt and existing opportunities to be explored by ACFODE and partners in continuing to enhance the rights of Women and Children in Uganda.

With funding from We Effect, ACFODE contributed towards the enhancement of Women's and children's rights in 6 Districts of Kanungu, Kisoro, Rubanda, Rukiga, Bukomansimbi and Kalungu in a 3-year project.

According to the findings by the monitoring team, several achievements were made by ACFODE. *The duty bearers Built the capacity of 30 Grassroots local organizations to advocate for women's and children's rights.*



A group photo of participants during the project monitoring visit by ACFODE

They also built a capacity of 120 (60 females and 60 males) Duty bearers (Police, Prosecutors, Health workers, Parish Chiefs, LC1s) and 48 Primary school teachers (24 females and 24 males) to create a conducive environment for prevention and response to VAW/C.

ACFODE Identified and built the capacity of 90 Women and girls who are survivors of violence, 60 Model Couples (60 women and 60 men) and 60 (20 females and 40 males) social actors to spearhead gender transformation for violent-free households in targeted communities.

Overall, it is perceived that the model couples and duty bearers especially police and CDO have benefited more than other target groups. Significant to note, the model couples have reduced the workload of key duty bearers at sub-county levels and VAW/C case backlog. Before the project, these duty bearers were overwhelmed with VAW/C cases. Through peer-to-peer counselling, they have been able to handle minor cases of VAW/C at household levels and refer to complicated as the referral pathway.

According to the Community Development Officer of Bigasa in Bukomansimbi District, there has been a remarkable reduction in the cases of Violence against women and Children.

“The risks have been reduced in Bigasa-Subcounty Bukomansimbi District which is known as the most problem sub-county. Before the project action, the sub-county recorded more than 7/10 cases on a daily basis. However, with sensitizations in villages like Mukosa which was so violent to women and girls, violence has reduced. In Mukosa village now in a week, 5-7 cases are reported with some days reporting none. In Kisala D village where issues of women's inheritance were rife, the cases have reduced – it takes a month without a case.”

Young boys and girls spearhead the fight against GBV in Kyaka II

Action for Development continues to advocate for the rights of women and girls in Uganda by creating awareness of the existing gender and social norms in our community and how they limit access to the needs of the victims.

Children under the age of 18 are the most affected people when it comes to being victims of gender-based violence that usually manifests through sexual assault, bullying, and emotional torture and this is usually carried out by those closest to them.

Kyaka II, a refugee camp with a large population of children, both from and out of the country, was a very opportune area for ACFODE to mentor the young ones under a project titled, **“My Right: No Violence”- Prevention of Sexual and gender-based violence against girls and women in the refugee settlement Kyaka II and its surroundings.”**

Due to the positive impact of the project, 5 schools participated making a total of 172(107 girls,65 boys) both in and out of school who were able to use this platform to share their personal experiences in regard to GBV.

One community youth from Humura village, Itambabiniga zone, shared, **“My parents did not support me to stay in school instead they encouraged me to get married so that they can get money for survival. Even the provision of basic needs like sanitary pads, books and school uniforms were never valued nor provided. I urge parents to support their daughters to stay in school and avoid unwanted**

pregnancies and suffering.”

The head teacher of Kibuye Primary School, one of the 5 schools that participated in the training pledged continuous support for GBV victims.

This is a very timely engagement for us as staff and the pupils and unique since most of these forms are experienced on a daily basis by our pupils. I thank ACFODE for selecting our school to be part of this great initiative and pledge our support towards the establishment of GBV prevention clubs in our school. Kairu Richard, Head Teacher Kibuye Primary School.

Following the capacity building session, 4 Gender Based Violence prevention clubs were formed to spearhead the spread of information among fellow age mates in the school community as well as their home areas.



A group photo of participants during the project monitoring visit by ACFODE

At Action for Development (ACFODE), our These would ease the creation of awareness through peaceful co-existence, peace-building in families as well as avoiding drug abuse.

unwavering commitment to advancing the rights of women and girls in Uganda remains at the forefront of our mission. We recognize the pivotal role that awareness plays in addressing the deeply entrenched gender and social norms within our community, which often serve as barriers to accessing the needs of those who have suffered.

In Uganda, it is the children under the age of 18 who are most vulnerable to the devastating effects of gender-based violence (GBV). This insidious problem manifests through sexual assault, bullying, and emotional torture, often perpetrated by those closest to them.

One of our initiatives, **"My Right: No Violence - Prevention of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence against Girls and Women in the Refugee Settlement Kyaka II and Its Surroundings,"** sought to make a difference where it matters most. Kyaka II, a refugee camp with a significant population of children from both within and beyond the country, provided the perfect opportunity for ACFODE to mentor the young ones.

Thanks to the positive impact of this project, five schools enthusiastically joined our cause, totaling 172 participants (107 girls and 65 boys), both in and out of school. This platform gave these young voices a chance to share their personal experiences regarding GBV.

One community youth from Humura village in the Itambabiniga zone shared, **"My parents did not support me to stay in school; instead, they encouraged me to get married so that they could get money for survival. Even the provision of basic needs like sanitary pads, books, and school uniforms were never valued nor provided. I urge parents to support their daughters to stay in school and avoid unwanted pregnancies and suffering."**

The head teacher of Kibuye Primary School, one of the five schools that participated in the training, pledged continuous support for GBV victims.

Kairu Richard, the Head Teacher, expressed, **"This is a very timely engagement for us as staff and the pupils and unique since most of these forms are experienced on a daily basis by our pupils. I thank ACFODE for selecting our school to be part of this great initiative and pledge our support towards the establishment of GBV prevention clubs in our school."**

Following the capacity-building session, four Gender-Based Violence prevention clubs were formed.

These clubs are poised to be champions for change, spreading information among their peers in the school community and beyond. Their mission: to promote peaceful co-existence, peace-building within families, and to steer clear of the scourge of drug abuse.

Celebrating World Food Day: ACFODE enhances women and female political participation



Panelist sharing views during the world food day celebrations hosted by ACFODE and its partners in Jinja.

In a vibrant celebration on October 25, 2023, Action for Development (ACFODE) and its partners convened at the Source of the Nile Hotel in Jinja to mark World Food Day. This global event, observed on October 16 each year, focuses on achieving zero hunger, aligning with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal No. 2.

"Water is life, water is food, leave no one behind," the celebrations emphasized the critical role of water in global food security. ACFODE collaborated with partners such as Busoga Growers Cooperative Union and Bushika Integrated Area Cooperative Enterprise to organize a water dialogue, attracting 45 participants, including district leaders and cooperative representatives.

The dialogue featured presentations, a dynamic panel discussion, and insights shared by model farmers. Key speakers underscored the link between water and gender-based violence, emphasizing the need for water safety and efficient utilization. Model farmers shared success stories, highlighting the transformative impact of irrigation on crop diversity, continuous food supply, and increased farm income.

Challenges faced by farmers, including the lack of sprinklers and insufficient storage facilities, were openly discussed. Despite obstacles, participants exchanged valuable practices, such as water harvesting, mulching, and community-based initiatives.

The event culminated in a set of recommendations, advocating for irrigation practices, supporting women in farming, promoting water conservation, and creating market opportunities for farmers. As participants return to their communities armed with newfound knowledge, the hope is that these insights as part of the input from ACFODE and partners, will spur sustainable water practices, moving us closer to a world with zero hunger and resilient food systems.

Empowering community: Enhancing service delivery through training

Leadership development: ACFODE trains women and female youth in political participation.



Participants in a group discussion during the T.O.T training in Kaberamaido.

ACFODE held a 2-day refresher training, where a total of 25 dedicated community members, including 15 women and 10 men, came together to sharpen their skills and knowledge. The focus of this training was to reinforce the critical role of participation, monitoring, and evaluation in our ongoing efforts to improve service delivery.

During the sessions, participants were reminded of their essential responsibilities in monitoring services related to addressing Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), especially at health centers and within the police force. Particular attention was given to the access and utilization of these services by young people within our community.

It was emphasized that monitoring isn't merely a routine task; instead, it serves as a powerful tool for advocacy and lobbying. By actively monitoring, we can advocate for better services, and resources, and provide concrete evidence of what is transpiring at the grassroots level. This data becomes our voice in demanding positive changes.

One crucial aspect discussed during the training was the need to continually sensitize parents about their roles and responsibilities in child protection and the provision of basic needs. Our community's children are our future, and we all play a role in ensuring their well-being.

Since its existence 38 years down the road, ACFODE has continued to uphold its strategic pillar of leadership development with results visible and clear from the beneficiaries taking part in leadership positions, especially the female youth.

With support from the Swedish Foundation for Human Rights to implement a project titled;

Enhancing Women and Female Youth Awareness and Political Participation in South Western Uganda.



Participants in a group discussion during the T.O.T training in Kaberamaido.

The project was implemented in areas of South Western Uganda in the Districts of Kyegegwa, Kaberamaido and Amolatar.

As a way of implementing the project, ACFODE carried out a Training of Trainers (T.O.T) where over 100 both female and male were equipped with skills in civic education.

The training was aimed at increasing understanding and appreciation of Gender Equality and the importance of women participation in decision-making and increased participation of youth and other marginalized groups in civic and Democratic process.

Various topics were discussed including; women’s right to participate in leadership and decision making, understanding democracy and institutions in multiparty democracy, citizen participation, facilitation skills and method of adult education.

Mr. Wilson Belinda, the Senior Labour Officer thanked ACFODE for the work it is doing towards inclusive training of outstanding future leaders.

He went ahead to call upon the trainees to refrain from segregation as inclusive engagements are the way to go where by nobody is left behind.

Women in Uganda are underrepresented due to weak institutional, structural, cultural barriers and negative attitude that discourage their participation, more so, they lack civic and political Education, which is key in their political participation.

ACFODE tirelessly continues to train women and youth to get equipped with civic Education because it gives them a voice to advocate for their rights, empowers them to vy for political positions in their communities, builds and strengthens their capacity in leadership, boosts their confidence and creates awareness in governance.

Empowering Women: ACFODE's Social Enterprise Training Ignites Change in Kasese

In a resounding stride toward economic empowerment and gender equality, Action for Development (ACFODE) recently conducted a transformative social enterprise training for 85 women co-operators under Mt. Rwenzori Coffee Farmers Cooperative Union (MRCFCU) in Kasese district. This initiative is part of a broader one-year project in collaboration with Womenstrong International, aimed at increasing economic security and opportunities for women in cooperatives in Kasese district.

The two-day training, guided by ACFODE's participatory approach, delved into essential topics. Participants gained a profound understanding of social enterprise as a business with a social purpose, emphasizing the pivotal role of people, profit, and the planet. Through group work and discussions, the women actively participated in formulating plans for viable social enterprises, addressing identified problems, needs, and innovative solutions.

As the sessions unfolded, participants shared key takeaways during a recap on the second day. Insights included the importance of starting small, utilizing existing resources, and the need for effective problem-solving in business.

The training successfully resulted in the formation of eight social enterprise groups, each equipped with comprehensive plans for implementation. Despite challenges such as language barriers and the complexity of certain sessions, the commitment of the participants, along with translation support, ensured a fruitful outcome.

ACFODE remains dedicated to its vision of a just society where gender equality is a reality. This initiative signifies a significant step toward achieving this vision, as women in Kasese are now poised to embark on a journey of economic empowerment, turning their entrepreneurial dreams into tangible, sustainable realities.



Participants in a group discussion during the T.O.T training in Kaberamaido.

Transforming Women's Lives: ACFODE's Initiatives in Kasese District

In collaboration with Women Strong International, ACFODE is at the forefront of a one-year project titled **"Increasing Economic Security and Opportunity for Women in Cooperatives in Kasese District."** This transformative initiative seeks to empower women economically, ensuring increased incomes and asset ownership by 2024.

In our recently concluded Social & Economic Needs Assessment, women in this area were found to encounter several impediments to their socio-economic participation in the development process undermining their positive contribution to their communities.



Members of the Mt. Rwenzori Coffee farmers' cooperative Union participating in the training conducted by ACFODE in Kasese.

The women from Mt. Rwenzori Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union (MRCFCU), that brings together four women's groups, highlighted socio-economic needs, knowledge gaps, and skills deficiencies as being key among these challenges, that ought to be addressed through a holistic approach to women's empowerment.

The findings underscore the resilience of women in Kasese, who, despite facing challenges such as limited access to resources and adverse climatic conditions, are actively engaged in enterprises such as coffee, vanilla, and cocoa production. Additionally, our needs findings also emphasize the significance of market linkages, value addition, and male engagement for sustainable women-led economic growth.

To address these findings, ACFODE is championing strategies that include capacity building, crop financial services, value addition support, market linkages, male engagement, and climate-resilient measures, with the hope that these interventions will create lasting impact and transform the lives of women in Kasese district.

ACFODE is committed to fostering a just society where gender equality is a reality. The organization continues to advocate for positive change, ensuring that women in Kasese and beyond have the tools and opportunities needed to thrive in today's world.

Acfode Board, Members And Staff Get Training On Legal Framework Governing Ngos

In a bid to maintain a cutting edge with organizational running, AFCODE held a timely training for its board, members and staff on legal frame works that regulate NGOs. The training came just in line with ACFODE’s mission which is partly to influence legislation and policy for gender equality in Uganda. During the training, policy frameworks were explained by Peter Magera, the facilitator, an expert of over 10 years in NGO legal frameworks.

The Executive Director of Regina Bafaki welcomed all the members for the training and specifically recognised the board members and SAUTI YA SASA alumni. She mentioned that the training would focus on the legal frameworks since most of the members were not well versed with the laws that govern NGOs. She said; **“Some organisations were closed since they were not compliant with the law. This training will enlighten you about the current legal frame work.”**

MS Carol Bunga Idembe, a board member lauded the initiative for the training and noted that it is important for NGOs to work within legal frame works as it creates a conducive environment for both operations and good working relationship with funders. Recommendations were made for more trainings of the same kind for members to get well versed with policy frameworks across all fields.

ACFODE has held past trainings with staff and CSO’s on understanding concepts in its line of service and adhering to legal commitments. Moving forward from the training AFCODE is devoted to do as taught by acquiring certificates , timely renewing of its permit and keeping clean accounts among others.



Acfode Staff And Members Pose For A Group Photo After Attending The Legal Training.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENTS

Empowering Voices for Gender Equality in Uganda

The air buzzed with anticipation as representatives from Action for Development (ACFODE) gathered in a vibrant conference room, ready to embark on a transformative journey. Organized by the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), this four-day training program aimed to cultivate gender-responsive communication skills, igniting a flame of change in the pursuit of equality. Divided into two captivating sessions, the program set the stage for a brighter future.

Led by the esteemed Emilia Rubooga from the Busara Center for Behavioural Economics, the initial session unearthed profound research findings. It became apparent that religion-played a pivotal role in shaping policy makers' and influencers' perspectives, exposing the gap between theory and practice.

As the baton was passed to communication strategists Juliet Atim and Sean Oseku, the room filled with anticipation. Like skilled maestros, they delved into the art of effective communication, revealing its profound impact on shaping behaviours. Their guidance peeled back the layers of Uganda's media landscape, shedding light on the relationship between mass media and gender representation. Inspired by the ground-breaking media content audit report presented by Judith Atim, Sean Oseku, and Stephen Akena, this session became the catalyst for transformative change.

The women from Mt. Rwenzori Coffee Farmers' Cooperative Union (MRCFCU), that brings together four women's groups, highlighted socio-economic needs, knowledge gaps, and skills deficiencies as being key among these challenges, that ought to be addressed through a holistic approach to women's empowerment.

The findings underscore the resilience of women in Kasese, who, despite facing challenges such as limited access to resources and adverse climatic conditions, are actively engaged in enterprises such as coffee, vanilla, and cocoa production.



Juliet Atim, a skilled facilitator, leads an engaging session on framing and effective communication strategies to influence behaviour in a professional setting.

Additionally, our needs findings also emphasize the significance of market linkages, value addition, and male engagement for sustainable women-led economic growth.

To address these findings, ACFODE is championing strategies that include capacity building, crop financial services, value addition support, market linkages, male engagement, and climate-resilient measures, with the hope that these interventions will create lasting impact and transform the lives of women in Kasese district.

ACFODE is committed to fostering a just society where gender equality is a reality. The organization continues to advocate for positive change, ensuring that women in Kasese and beyond have the tools and opportunities needed to thrive in today's world.

With newfound knowledge and inspiration, participants set out to craft a hybrid communications strategy, honing their skills to engage elite decision-makers. Their mission was two-fold: to propel pending gender legal and policy frameworks into the spotlight they deserved, and to forge connections that would resonate with influential figures. Through a comprehensive review of existing strategies using a SWOT analysis, strengths were acknowledged, weaknesses were identified, and the path to progress was illuminated.

“We must harness the power of our unwavering dedication to the rights of women and girls,” remarked one participant, their voice resolute. “Consistency in media relations and coverage will serve as our beacon, amplifying our message far and wide.”

Yet, as the group delved deeper, they acknowledged their weaknesses. **“We lack a tailored framework for crafting and packaging messages on gender policies,”** admitted another participant. **“Our unified communications platform needs to be fortified, providing us with a robust advocacy tool.”**

Amidst the sea of opportunities, threats emerged, demanding their attention. **“Policymakers' preconceived notions and deep-rooted social and cultural barriers stand in our way,”** voiced a participant, their determination unwavering. **“But we shall dismantle these barriers, one by one, for the rights of women and girls cannot wait.”**

From the collective wisdom of the room, powerful recommendations emerged. **“Let us champion the concept of the public good,” suggested a participant, their conviction unwavering. “Together, as one voice, we shall set the gender policy agenda in collaboration with the media.”**

“Storytelling is our strength,” declared another participant, their voice filled with passion. **“Let us involve selected journalists in our projects and empower our staff and field officers to weave narratives that resonate with stakeholders.”**

The training emphasized the need for campaigns that drive real behaviour change, nurture relationships, and secure funding by showcasing impact. Alternative perspectives to frame vulnerability emerged, highlighting the skills and strengths of individuals, using inclusive language, and captivating visuals.

ACFODE and We Effect Unite to Protect Women and Children's Rights in Uganda: Regional Multistakeholder Engagement a Success!

In the pursuit of a society where women and children are safe from violence, ACFODE and We Effect joined forces to organize a transformative regional stakeholder engagement in Masaka. This momentous gathering brought together duty bearers and project beneficiaries from various districts to discuss and protect the rights of women and children in Uganda. The event was a response to the crucial need for collaboration and coordination within the referral system, as identified during a project review meeting in October 2022



A group photo captured the successful ACFODE and We Effect regional stakeholder engagement at Maria Flo Hotel in Masaka, aimed to protect women and children's rights. The stakeholders identified key emerging issues, including inadequate collaboration and coordination within the referral system.

Diverse group of participants, including district officials, police officers, teachers, social actors, and paralegals, among others, convened for this momentous occasion. Representing the six project districts of Bukomansimbi, Kalungu, Kisoro, Kanungu, Rubanda, and Rukiga, their shared objective was to celebrate project achievements, address key emerging issues, and devise actionable recommendations to strengthen response mechanisms against violence directed at women and children.

The engagement commenced with a warm welcome from Ms. Regina Bafaki, the executive director of ACFODE, who expressed gratitude to the local governments for their continuous support throughout the project's journey. She fearlessly pointed out that those responsible for protecting the rights of women and children were often the ones violating them, urging all stakeholders present to hold each other accountable.

Mr. Ochen Andrew, the Chief Administrative Officer of Kanungu district, echoed Ms. Bafaki's sentiments, thanking ACFODE and We Effect for organizing the meeting. He emphasized the need for an extension of the project, as the vice of violence against women and children continued to persist. On behalf of Kanungu district, he made a solemn commitment to relentlessly pursue justice for the victims of such atrocities.

Dr. Paddy Kayondo, the Resident District Commissioner of Kanungu district, added his voice to the chorus of gratitude, commending ACFODE and We Effect for championing gender equality and preserving African values. He highlighted the positive impact of their model couple approach within the district, which encouraged healthy relationships founded on respect, trust, and effective communication.

During the engagement, Ms. Rukundo Rebecca, the project coordinator, presented an overview of the project's accomplishments, as well as key emerging issues and recommendations from the six target districts. Notably, this encompassed the training of civil society representatives and paralegals on violence against women and children (VAW/C), advocacy, and case management.

By delving into the social expectations placed on girls, women, boys, and men, participants explored the root causes behind the escalating violence in their communities.

Couples attending the engagement emphasized the pivotal role of healthy relationships in eradicating VAW/C. They highlighted the active involvement of men in preventing violence and creating a supportive environment for women and children. ACFODE facilitated discussions on gender roles, shared information on existing laws, and emphasized the necessity of community coordination and collaboration.

Throughout the discussions, participants identified specific challenges, including the management of juveniles and a lack of transportation, and made collective commitments to address these issues. The establishment of a child wellbeing committee and a gender desk to investigate violence against women were among the proposed solutions. Stakeholders suggested quarterly meetings for child wellbeing committees, with active involvement from ACFODE.

The regional stakeholder engagement organised by ACFODE and We Effect has shown promising outcomes in the pursuit of protecting the rights of women and children in Uganda. The actionable recommendations developed during the event highlight the urgency for program extension, advocacy, media engagement, and partnerships to support survivors of violence. By implementing these strategies, we can strive towards a violence-free society that values equality and respect.

Celebrating 20 years of the Maputo Protocol

Action for Development, represented by the ED Ms. Regina Bafaki, participated in the 20-year commemoration of the Maputo Protocol. The Maputo protocol is an international human rights instrument established by the African Union in 2005 to guarantee comprehensive rights for women and girls in Africa.

The 20-year celebrations marked the significant achievements among the states that have ratified and domesticated the protocol. During her address, Hon. Aisha Jamwa, the Chief Guest at the Maputo celebrations, emphasized the need to address the gaps that still exist to ensure the rights of girls and women are respected.

“As we mark this historic opportunity and celebrate 20 years, we must assess the gaps that exist and come up with recommendations that will bring meaningful impact in the lives of African women.” Hon. Jamwa said.

In commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Maputo Protocol, we celebrate not only a milestone in the advancement of women's rights in Africa but also a testament to the power of international collaboration and dedication. This groundbreaking agreement has paved the way for progress in gender equality, reproductive health, and women's empowerment across the continent. Action for Development pledged to recommit to its principles and ensure that the next 20 years bring even greater strides towards a more just and equitable world for all.



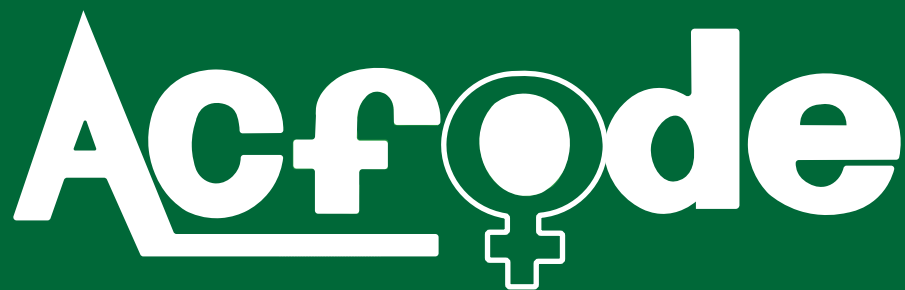
ACFODE ED, Ms. Regina Bafaki (4th left) during the Maputo At 20 celebrations in Nairobi

CONCLUSION

As we wrap up this quarter's edition of the ACFODE Newsletter, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you for being part of our community. Your support, engagement, and passion for our cause are what drive us forward.

In this newsletter, we've delved into some critical issues that impact our community, from environmental sustainability to empowering our youth. We've highlighted the incredible work of our officers and shared inspiring stories of positive change.





Breaking Through, Building Up and Binding

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