

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the ACFODE Newsletter where we highlight all the events that have happened within the Month and we share the good news. The Newsletter is also a collection of activities happening within the office. I hope you enjoy the reading.

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AWARD GIVING CEREMONY FOR PHASE I AND II SAUTI YA SASA MENTEES AND MENTORS



Some of the mentees at the award giving ceremony

In recognition and appreciation of mentees and mentors for the successful completion and participation in the Sauti Ya Sasa mentorship programme, ACFODE in collaboration with GIZ conducted an award giving ceremony for phase one mentees and celebration of phase II project implementation on 28th May, 2021.

The session for Phase 1 mentees was conducted during the morning session bringing together a total of 24 participants (18 mentees, 2 mentors and 6 ACFODE and GIZ project staff) the mentees were awarded with certificates of completion while the mentors present were awarded with certificates of appreciation.

There was a lot of excitement and appreciation from phase I mentees who had waiting for a long period brought about the need for adoption owing to COVID 19 pandemic.

The afternoon session of phase II mentees brought together a total of 33 participants (27 mentees and 6 ACFODE and GIZ project staff). The mentees were equally happy for thus far they had come and what they had achieved. They were however not awarded with certificates due to delayed submission of reports that constitute the mentorship database. It was agreed that upon successful completion of the mentorship database the successful mentees and mentors will receive their certificates.

MISSION: To empower women, girls and influence legislation and policy for gender equality in Uganda.

VISION: A just society where gender equality is a reality.

SOCIAL CHANGE

DUTY BEARERS' GENDER TRAINING IN KYEGEGWA DISTRICT



Pic 1 A cross section of participants after the training in Kyegegwa District

ACFODE conducted a 2 days training targeting duty bearers selected from a ranges of local government officials, police, Health workers as well as teachers. A total of 35(16 females, 19 male) participated in the training. The training focused on understanding gender and SGBV concepts in relation to power, Human rights instruments that protect and promote the rights of women and girls as well as strategies for SGBV prevention and response by the different stakeholders.

The training strengthened the participants' understanding of key terminologies such as gender, Power relations that promote gender inequalities and legal instruments that mandate women and girls' promotion and protection of their rights. The sessions enabled participants to learn that SGBV manifests in different forms as well as strategies to be employed. They also learnt about their roles and responsibilities in SGBV prevention and response. One of the participants had this to say

Participants also learnt that girls' and women's rights are human rights, and that SGBV is a violation of human rights and is outlawed by international and national legal frameworks. At the international and regional levels, SGBV is strongly condemned in the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action and the Optional Protocol of the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Women, and the Goma Declaration against sexual violence in armed conflict among others.

TRAINING OF WOMEN GROUPS AND CHILD MOTHERS IN AMOLATAR, APAC AND OYAM

ACFODE conducted 3 community awareness sessions in Itabambiniga zone and Kyakatwaga village to spearhead SGBV prevention campaigns. The campaign is aimed at creating community awareness on SGBV prevention and response measures. Community facilitators spearheaded and sensitized communities on the different forms, effects and approaches in ending domestic and sexual violence in communities. A number of informative, educative and communication materials were disseminated. This campaign provided a platform for communities to understand the roles and responsibilities of community facilitators and model couples in their communities. The community facilitators used mobile vans to sensitize communities on dangers associated with SGBV in their communities



Participatory and Monitoring Training for Community facilitators and model couples

The training explored the different definitions of community participation, Monitoring and evaluation in service provision. Participants identified gaps and challenges in accessing SGBV services, Health and other related sectors. They learnt that community engagement is key in ensuring quality service provision in refugee setting, commitments were made to engage their leaders on SGBV and health related issues. The 2-days Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation for Advocacy Training for 21(11female, 10male) selected individuals from community facilitators and model couples.

POLICY ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT SESSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

ACFODE conducted 2(two) community engagements to educate the frontline communities about their gender, human rights, their roles and responsibilities in environmental conservation. A total of 142(47 females, 95male) participated in the engagements in the two districts of Manafwa and Namisidwa. The engagement deepened participants' understanding on gender and human rights issues in their communities and referral points to support victims of human rights violation in Mt. Elgon Region. At the end of the meeting, community women and men were empowered to utilize the knowledge and skills to seek redress using proper channels and stakeholders mandated to respond to environmental related cases. Some of the highlighted emerging issues include; killings and sexual harassment by the UWA officials on women and men in accessing protected areas, land grabbing by the officials and limited involvement of women and girls in decision making processes.



Radio talk shows

ACFODE conducted 2 (two) radio talks with the aim of sharing information and creating awareness on SGBV and COVID-19 prevention in the targeted communities. Different community target beneficiaries such as model couples and community facilitators participated in the show. SGBV related cases such as teenage pregnancies, early marriages, denial of resources, alcoholism were reported as major hindrances to enjoyment of women and Girls rights. One radio talk show was held in Mbale District spearheaded by the District focal person and community monitors in Mt. Elgon region. The discussion focused on environmental protection among frontline communities and referral points in case of human violations by the authorities, the community were urged to observe the dos and don'ts while accessing protected areas for agricultural production.

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

ACFODE ENHANCES THE ROLE OF CSO REPRESENTATIVES AND PARALEGALS IN COMBATING VAW/C

In a bid to strengthen capacity towards eliminating violence against women and children in Uganda, ACFODE in partnership with We Effect and with financial support from the European Union conducted a two day's training for 60 CSO representatives and 60 paralegals in 6 districts namely; Kanungu, Kisoro, Rubanda, and Rukiga (South Western Uganda) and Kalungu and Bukomansimbi (Central Region). The training that took place in May 2021 follows a mapping exercise at the beginning of the project which resulted into identification of 30 grass root CSOs and women led groups in the 6 target districts which have a focus on promoting women and children's rights.



Participants can now ably define and describe gender and its related concepts, they can identify the causes and forms of gender-based violence, they also recognize the consequences of gender-based violence on communities, and they were able to identify the characteristics of perpetrators of domestic violence hence being able to handle them. Through the survivor centered approach, participants learnt the skills of avoiding victim blame and holding the perpetrators accountable.

"I appreciate the training so much, I have learnt a lot and I believe this is voluntary work. Whatever opportunities we shall get, let's use them effectively. We all have different

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

SASA! THE TIME FOR ENDING VAW/C IS NOW

In a highly patriarchal society, very few women have control and ownership over land and this limits their potential to get access to financial services from available financial institutions. Most of the women are poor hence increasing their vulnerability to violence from men who have power and control over them. Most leadership positions in churches and clans like clan heads are occupied by men. One of the key strategies to address issues of power imbalance that perpetuate VAW/C is use of gender and social transformative approaches. Key among these approaches is the SASA methodology. In May 2021, ACFODE conducted a two days' residential training for 60 community gate keepers from six districts including Rukiga, Rubanda, Kanungu, Kisoro, Kalungu and Bukomansimbi in the SASA together! Start phase. SASA (Start, Awareness, Support, and Action) inspires and enables communities to re-think and re-shape social norms through shifting focus away from exclusively "gender inequality" to the root cause of the problem which is "power imbalance". The training targeted social actors such as cultural leaders, religious leaders, leaders of youth groups, mothers and fathers' union groups, and boda-boda cyclists.

During the two days, participants explored how they can use their power to combat violence against women and children in their communities. They reflected on the feeling of powerlessness and recognized the relationship between violence against women and power and control. Participants further discussed the consequences of violence against women and understood the power of using questioning while facilitating activist activities. One of the key lessons was the importance of involving all actors in the fight against violence against women and children. Everyone can be an activist to inspire and support activities to fight violence against women and children.



Pic 2 A couple that attended the training in Rubanda

ACFODE EQUIPS COUPLES IN KANUNGU, KISORO, RUBANDA AND RUKIGA DISTRICTS WITH KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TO PREVENT VAW/C



The relationship between one's behaviour and the social environments they grew up in should never be underestimated. The upbringing of children has a great influence on their current perceptions about family relations. In some parts of Kigezi region particularly, Rubanda, Rukiga, Kanungu and Kisoro where ACFODE implements the PWACRU project, women were strength and endurance plus submission in marriage. On the other hand, men grew up with a belief that women and girls are a weaker sex and should therefore be submissive. Such beliefs need to be debunked.

During a two day's training for 40 couples from districts of Rubanda, Rukiga, Kanungu and Kisoro in South Western Uganda in April 2021, we encouraged social transformation and community empowerment interventions under the PWACRU project – Protection of Women and Children's Rights in Uganda, implemented in partnership with We Effect with financial support from EU.

This training helped couples to make personal reflection on how their upbringing and socialization has contributed to their current behaviour. The couples gained understanding of the meaning of the term VAW/C, they were also introduced to the legal framework related to VAW/C, basic counselling skills and the referral pathway. One of the major causes mentioned across the four districts is unequal power relations and this is due to patriarchal ideologies and practices that emphasise male privilege. Negative gender norms about male privilege and women's low status remain a challenge in Kanungu district.

"I appreciate the training so much, I have learnt a lot and I believe this is voluntary work. Whatever opportunities we shall get, let's use them effectively. We all have different spaces that can be used to create change" – a female community volunteer from Bukomansimbi district.