actionaid Uganda Weekly

June 26– July 02

Mr David Manyonga, the Civic Space and Governance Advisor attending a training on art and creative activism at Makerere University Kampala

AAU staff trained in Art and creative activism, a new tool of campaigning

Last week, Actionaid Uganda, in collaboration with the Centre for Applied Human Rights (CAHR) and Politics Department at the University of York organised a training in art and creative activism that brought together artists, academics, activists and development practitioners.

The training explored how to deploy creative methodologies, specifically the use of fictional future scenarios, to trigger debate and shape alternatives. Among others, the training discussed tools such as disruptions, performance and translation through local cultural expressions of dignity, resistance, claim making, and utopias as reference points to identify and reframe international development, promote new and emerging practices and visions that articulate local priorities that have the potential to be genuinely transformative.

"We learnt that while there is an increasing interest in the use of creative participatory methodologies in development (e.g. theatre, film, storytelling), their potential is too often limited by dominant cultures of development that privilege elite assumptions about priority agendas," Mr Fredrick Kawooya, the Campaigns Manager, who was one of the trainees, acknowledged.

Yet, outside the context of traditional development projects, new social movements and activists are increasingly using creative and artistic approaches to challenge hegemonic paradigms and to fight for social change. Actionaid created a network that will critically explore how art and creative activism can articulate, shape and help deliver development alternatives privileged by those whose voices are often marginalised in development debates.

Defilement rates alarm leaders in Katakwi!

Participants taking part in analysis of issues during the Reflection Action Training at Panyango in Katakwi

The Day of African Child is commemorated on 16th June every year in remembrance of the Soweto Uprising that took place in south Africa on 16th June 1976. This was a time students matched in protest against the poor quality of education and they demanded to be taught in their own languages. Katakwi district commemorated this belatedly on 28th/06/2017. The theme this year is ***"Accelerating protection, empowerment and equal opportunities for children in Africa by 2030".***

The event was graced by one of the children from Usuk Primary as guest of honour. During the celebrations, children reported teachers turning them(young girls) into wives, which the Katakwi LCV chairman Hon. Walter Elakas strongly condemned. The head teacher of Magoro Primary School was publically condemned for defiling a Primary Seven girl aged 15.

"If parents, teacher and civil society leaders cannot protect our children, who should then protect them ," Mr Elakas asked. He called upon the office of the CAO to immediately interdict the said head teacher and should make it public to act as an example to the rest of the community.

"Such people should not be left loitering in the communities because they are beasts and inhuman," he added.

The LCV chairperson and the CAO Katakwi urged the office of LC3 to start acting in addressing the issues affecting children and called upon all child right actors to combine forces with the district in fighting the vice that has deeply rooted itself in Magoro Sub County. According to Hon. Elakas, 87 cases of defilement this year alone have been reported by police, ActionAid and Katakwi Children Voice.

Children decry violation of their rights during community PRRPs

Last week, Pallisa LRP conducted a participatory review and reflection process (PRRPs) which is an ActionAid's tradition of getting feedback, reviewing and reflecting on performance, generating lessons and identifying key priority areas that respond and address community needs. This exercise was also meant to inform our operational program priorities in 2018 under the new AAU strategy.

The meetings covered 3 districts specifically in; Gogonyo, Buseta and Naboa sub counties and attracted over 250 participants. It was during the reflections that children presented a spellbinding analysis on violations against their rights from their own perspective. In their touching presentations children moved those in attendance. From their messages, it was clear that directly and indirectly, children faced the brunt of rampant violations especially regarding service delivery deficits in communities.

Children are in group work analysing their rights violations in Gogonyo sub county during Community PRRPs

"Teachers don't teach us to learn, health workers steal medicines to stalk their clinics, parents don't provide for our needs including pads because when you ask mummy for something she simply says go away I don't have money. As a result children are exposed to sexual harassment from old men in exchange for small gifts" Peace Gimbo a 13year old said in her presentation. The lack of parental care, love and guidance has pushed many young girls into pre-marital relationships for survival and eventually dropping out of school due to early pregnancies.

Children appealed to all stakeholders to recognise, protect, promote and respect their rights. They called on ActionAid and partners to undertake massive sensitization on children's rights and support parents through entrepreneurship skills development to facilitate them engage in income generating activities to address poverty which is the prohibiting factor for some parents to providing for their children. They also argued community members and all other stakeholder to fight corruption to help streamline access to services especially education and medical care for children!

However, from the reflections it was also noted that ActionAid has made significant strides in supporting women enjoy their rights through women empowerment, facilitating peace and unity in families thus giving many children stable homes. With the development of the new LRP strategy, strengthening people's struggles (2018-2022)", the information and feedback from the community will be paramount in informing our plans and aligning them to responding to relevant community needs in the context.

Nebbi completes Second leg of Reflection Action Training

Participants take part in a discussion in Panyango

Nebbi Cluster currently has 19 Reflection Action groups, these spread across the two sub counties of Panyango , Nyapea and Atyak sub counties. The first Training having been held earlier in April in Zombo, was followed by the second leg in Panyango sub county.

From the first leg of the training, it was realized that this kind of training required a great Focus on the Reflection Action Cycle and the use of Tools, which was what would support the different groups in their analysis of their issues.

The women from Panyango proved that they are a force to reckon with, as they supported us understand the context of Panyango, analysis rights, vulnerability and power. What was evident was that the problem of Heavy work load, which all participants agreed came first, when prioritization time came. Women blamed this heavy workload on their inability to fully participate in government funded programs and other activities that would lead to their own personal growth.

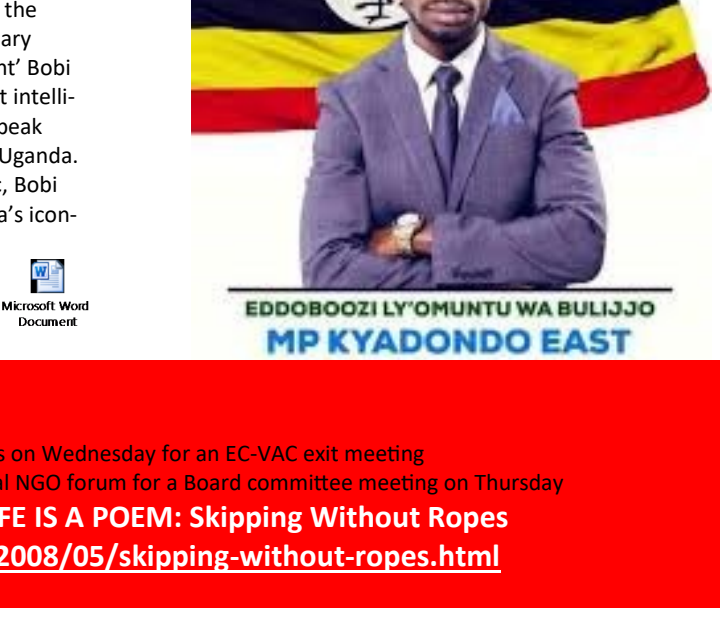
The 3 day training saw the Nebbi team assisted by cover all the 3 stages of the Reflection Action and later come up with Draft Action plans that groups will tailor for themselves once in their original groups.

The chair person of Pacego women's club thanked Action Aid for their continued support in building their capacity and committed that Pacego as a partner would continue to support the groups in sessions and also in providing items like stationery.

Ford Foundation unveils 1.6b funding for extractives governance

The Extractives Governance unit received a fresh round of funding from Ford Foundation, the third of this kind to support expansion of influence and participation of youth in the extractives sector in Uganda starting March 2017 until March 2019. The new project titled 'Power in People, influencing people in power' shall be implemented in five oil and mining districts of Nebbi, Nwoya, Buliisa, Hoima and Mubende and it is worth $500,000 (1.65bn).

A staff inception meeting was held in Masindi at which, 20 staff members across all implementing units and clusters attended and drew an implementation plan for the two years. Mr Stanley Wobusozi, the then acting Programmes Director, while relaying Ms Harriet Gimbo's message, emphasised the need to have specific focus areas since the budget is limited. He further pointed out that no lobbying work shall be funded and that Ford is interested in working with the youth (school going and non-school going).



Participants listen to a presentation during the Ford Foundation Phase III inception meeting for district leaderships of Nebbi, Nwoya, Buliisa

Partner and community project inception meetings were later held, in Mubende and lately in Hoima. In Mubende, the district leadership agreed to work with ActionAid to ensure that the mining communities access justice, and that the young people stand up to defend their rights within the mining communities.

"The project is timely because there are serious challenges facing mining communities but the district is limited by financial resources. There is need to do a thorough stakeholder mapping to ensure proper targeting and resource efficiency," Chairman L.C V of Mubende, Hon. Kiwanuka Amooti told the meeting and confirmed that the district will provide office space for the Mubende office.

The Hoima inception meeting brought together district leaders of Nwoya, Nebbi, Buliisa and Hoima who welcomed the project and showed support towards ensuring that we go a long way in ensuring beneficial outcomes through transparency and good governance. Hon. Bessi Ajilong, RDC of Nebbi cautioned the project implementers to take caution and not raise expectations among the youth lest it culminates into more challenges. She expressed concern over the use of social media to mobilize youth since it can be difficult to control what transpires through the same.

Reflections from Washington

When the Ghetto President defeated both the Country's President and the People's President

By Arthur Larok

There is a common conspiracy in Uganda that Museveni was declared but may not have won the 2016 elections and that Kiiza Besigye, Museveni's main challenger to president of Uganda for the last 4 elections was the one popularly elected but victory stolen from him in an election that both domestic and international observers concluded were below expected standards of free and fair.

It will be difficult to know for sure who won the 2016 presidential elections but what is never in doubt is the emphatic victory, in the Kyadondo East Parliamentary bi-election, of the self-proclaimed 'Ghetto President' Bobi Wine (Robert Kyagulanyi), perhaps one of the most intelligent and popular musicians with bold songs that speak about about many social and political injustices in Uganda. Notwithstanding the differences in style and music, Bobi Wine is perhaps Uganda's Lucky Dube, South Africa's iconic reggae maestro killed in 2007.

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arthur.larok@gmail.com

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Week ahead

1. The Ag Country Director will be at the EU offices on Wednesday for an EC-VAC exit meeting
2. The Program Director will be at Uganda National NGO forum for a Board committee meeting on Thursday
3. An inspirational poem ; a must read **LIFE IS A POEM: Skipping Without Ropes** **http://lifeisapoem314.blogspot.ug/2008/05/skipping-without-ropes.html**