

The ActionAid Uganda Weekly 21st - 28th January, 2019

Dear

Reader,

This week Stella Nyanzi has a strong message for us that we ought not to miss! AAU has also gone into partnership with TRACfm and other 19 radio stations across the country to push the agenda of women land rights and as a result, AAU last week participated in number of radio talk shows-we bring you the details [here](#).

Also find what DFID thinks about our work on Women rights and Gender Based Violence.

Enjoy!

AAU Stands in Solidarity with Dr Stella Nyanzi!



By Brenda Namirembe

On Friday 18th January, a team of activists including, the former leader of opposition in parliament, Hon Winnie Kiiza, and representatives from AAU led by the Director Programs Harriet Gimbo, Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns Manager Fredrick Kawooya and the VOICE Project Trainee Brenda Namirembe made a solidarity visit to Dr Stella Nyanzi at the Luzira Women's prison and bought for her various necessities. It was during this visit that we learnt that the Prison has a capacity of 250 inmates yet it currently houses about 450 inmates and 32 children. It was also alarming to learn that most inmates are battling with charges of murder of their children, step children or husbands. On the positive side, the prison was mostly headed by women including the Officer in charge SP Asimwe Doreen Kazoora. Dr Stella Nyanzi was arrested on charges of offensive communication after she allegedly posted a birthday poem attacking President Museveni and his late mother on September 16th 2018. She appreciated the team for checking on her and encouraged them not to give up on the fight for good governance in the country.

Nebbi GBV Shelter Saves Woman's Life



In the picture above, Amesiana the widow in maroon) looks on at her torched house.

By

Matilda

Natukunda

52 year old Amesiana Anyomirowth, a widow without child of Amoro village in Pakwach district, is among the many women amongst the Alur that have fallen prey to negative and harmful cultural beliefs.

On the 14th of January, 2018 the psychosocial support officer of the Nebbi GBV shelter attended community mediation in Pakwach district over allegations that Amesiana is a witch. These allegations began with her uncle who has been fighting to grab the piece of land she inherited from her father. He has now provoked the wrath of the entire community against her such that no amount of words would cause them to listen to reason during the mediation. One of the community members said;

“Am an army man, if you would hand her over to me; It would only be a matter of seconds before she would be no more!” Ms Anyomirowth was asked to give 1,000,000/= for consultations with the witchdoctors to prove her innocence or else face eviction from the community! Just this year alone, we have heard of 4 different women that have been murdered in the name of mob justice against witchcraft in Nebbi and Pakwach. In this peculiar situation, the police shy away and leave the matters in the hands of the cultural leaders and yet the cultural leaders have no real yardstick for delivering justice to the communities but seeing it as a source of income and opportunity to exert their power! The Psycho social support officer, having seen that there was no means of reconciling the community even with the support of the police, requested Amesiana leave the community till the violence in their hearts would be quelled. Amesiana hearkened and was resettled with her uncle that very day. Sadly at 2:00am in the night her property was set ablaze and her home burnt to ashes by unknown persons. If she was left in that community that day, we would have only heard of her death the next morning. The Nebbi Cluster WPC shelter is working with the police to ensure that investigations concluded done and the culprits prosecuted as an example to the community members.

AAU Reconciles Broken Family in Akumi Village



By

Grace

Nyaguti

63 year old Agoe Betty is married to Okwaling John Francis with 9 children from Akumi village Apopong Sub County, Pallisa District. Ms Agoe reported a case of domestic violence to Pallisa GBV shelter on in December last year. Her husband, Okwalinga had secretly wed her co-wife without her consent after living together for 41 years. This incident psychologically stressed Betty to a point of admission in hospital and the whole family was psychologically tortured and broken down. AAU's intervention helped return sanity; Mr Okwalinga said that his wife gave him the go ahead to marry his other wife as she was wholly committed to serve God at the altar which Ms Agoe denied. After a long counselling session, the parties amicably agreed to have community mediation such that the children of the first wife and Betty's children reconcile.

On 15th /01/2019, two Police Officers with Pallisa GBV Shelter staff went to Betty's home in Akumi village to attend a Community mediation organised by the family. Her, both parties expressed themselves. The children accepted to air out their grievances and forgave each other including their father and the step mother. Betty finally forgave and reconciled with her husband and this is what she had to say, "I forgive you and release you from the bottom of my heart and I request you to do what you have promised to do for me as your wife but if you don't fulfil your promise, I will go back to ActionAid"

Women's Right to Land Ownership- a Form of Women Economic Empowerment!



By

Brenda

Kugonza

Brenda Kugonza the AAU SURGE Technical Coordinator represented us during the Radio Simba talk show on Women's Land Rights. The talk show discussed women's land rights as referring to a woman's ability to own, inherit, and control land, noting that securing women's rights to land strengthens women's income generating work as well as a means of social protection. AAU talked about the barriers for women to own land such as cultural norms, limited awareness, inadequate enforcement of laws on women's rights and limited financial means for women to buy or register land. Additionally, we highlighted the legal provisions that promote and protect women's land rights including; The Convention on Elimination of All forms of discrimination against women, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (Maputo protocol). Articles 21,26,31,36 of the 1995 constitution, section 39 (1) and (7) of the Land Act. The talk show was used as an opportunity to call upon government to establish a Land Fund for women to enable them own and control land, pass the Marriage and Divorce Bill, which proposes married persons and cohabitants to decide as to how property will be owned at, during and after marriage and as well engage cultural institutions to promote ownership and inheritance of land by women and girls.

AAU Speaks out on Women Land Rights in Lira

By **Annet** **Lamwaka**

On 19th Jan, 2019 AAU represented by Annet Lamwaka, the Project Officer at the Lira GBV Shelter participated in a radio talk show on women's land rights that aired on Radio Wa.

It was interesting to have the community have their say on the major barriers for women to own land in Lango Sub Region. Many insisted that cultural barriers are the biggest hinderance to women's land and property ownership rights. One caller, Kizito Opio from Loro Sub County, Oyam district said; "Women have the right to own land but it is ignorance that makes men think otherwise. So awareness creation is very paramount. Also Men and in-laws who grab widows and orphans' land and property should desist from this behaviour as even the bible says you should not grab property belonging to orphans."

DFID Visits Bwaise GBV Shelter

By

Flavia

Nalubega

DFID officials visited our shelter in Bwaise and were overwhelmed by the stories at this here from survivors. Sally Dunkan and Betty Kasiko-both social development advisors of DFID could not hide their tears at the deeply sad narrations and thus confirmed that there is still glaring need to invest more in protecting women from abuse. One of the survivors Racheal(not real name) told the story of a sweet relationship turned sour with the boyfriend ,who turned on her pounced her, poured acid on her face and set her house ablaze-almost torching her two children along. The flip side of the story is AAU intervened, took the man to court and had him imprisoned for 14 years, and as well gave her medical and financial support to start a new life-for which she is extremely grateful. The Shelter Legal Officer Florence Akol reassured the visitors that such and more cases are what give importance to this space. From 2016-2018, 715 cases have been reported at the shelter and of these, 191 have been handled to conclusion, while 42 are still pending in court and the rest have been referred. DFID's Ms Kasiko acknowledged AAU's great work and insisted; 'We know sustainability is a challenge and we are working to ensure that there is continuity of this good work'.





NEXT

WEEK

In Kapchorwa, the Female Genital Mutilation exercise, a callous cultural habit that is practiced by the Sabin and Sebei people has picked again with over 400 women and girls cut in about the last three months. Let's be part of the fight against FGM, join the conversation on social media under the harshtag **#Saynotofgm**

A team of journalists is on ground to bring the matter to the world's attention. Watch out for the updates next week.



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