

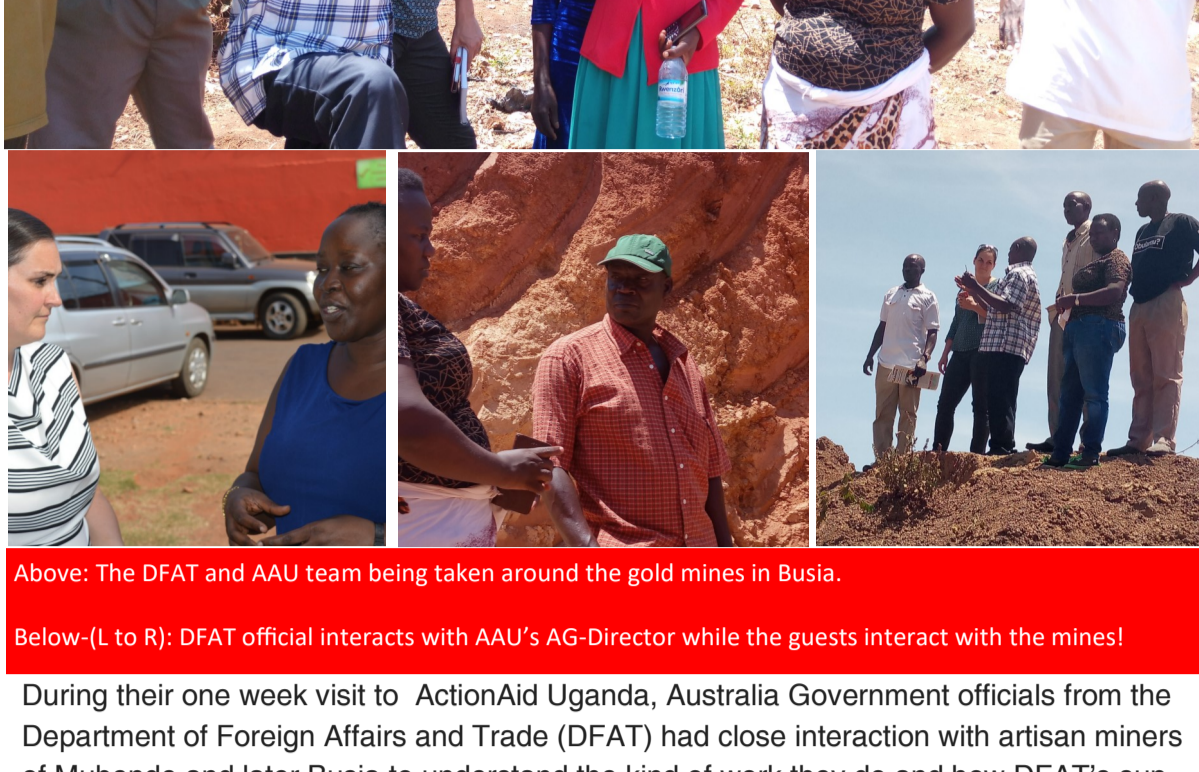


Feb 19 - 25

Last week when DFID met its partners, the talk on fraud was tough. To manage fiduciary risks and safeguard DFID's integrity, DFID set up a Safeguards unit to handle all corruption and fraud related incidents as reported by DFID partners and communities.

This, is a wake up call to all of us to ensure a corruption free zone around us ! Welcome to the weekly!

DFAT Team convinced by AAU work on Ground!



Above: The DFAT and AAU team being taken around the gold mines in Busia.

Below-(L to R): DFAT official interacts with AAU's AG-Director while the guests interact with the mines!

During their one week visit to ActionAid Uganda, Australia Government officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) had close interaction with artisan miners of Mubende and later Busia to understand the kind of work they do and how DFAT's support is helping to uplift them as they work for better livelihoods.

DFAT was awed by the sense of ownership and charisma the miners had. Ms Majdie Hordern, the Assistant Director NGO program, Performance and Quality section at DFAT acknowledged that she admired AAU's strategy goals among the communities, particularly uplifting women to stand out in communities and defend their rights.

In Mubende, Emmanuel Kibirige the secretary of Singo Artisan Miners Association (SASSMA) acknowledged AAU's support towards attaining justice in the ongoing eviction case, following Mubende miners' brutal evictions last year. He said if it had not been for AAU, there would be no hope for justice.

"ActionAid stood with us when we were evicted from the mines on allegations of trespass. They have coordinated coverage of this injustice in the media, but also availed us with legal support through a team of lawyers", he said adding that with that support, they are assured of victory in the near future.

He also expounded on the health and safety knowledge shared with miners across the years. "After equipping us with knowledge, they availed us with mining protective gear", he revealed to the guests with a tone of gratitude for the funding through ActionAid.

In Busia, the guests in company of AAU staff visited the gold mines in Tiira for a first hand interaction with the miners as they go about extracting gold. Just like their colleagues in Mubende, the Tiira small scale miners spoke about the so many gains as a result of the funding from the ANCP(The Australian NGO Cooperation Program) project.

The benefits counted off include child protection training, alternative livelihood for women miners, uplifting rights of women in mining and support towards ensuring that Busia miners attain a mining license.

At the end of their week long visit, the guests felt that ActionAid was actually under reporting the impact of its work.

"Its much more than we read in the reports. Thank you for transforming lives", stated Ms. Majdie.

The ANCP is an annual grants program which provides funding to accredited Australian NGOs to deliver community development projects. The program is currently funding two projects through ActionAid Uganda. These are the mining work in Mubende, Namayingo and Busia plus the Livelihoods Women in Agriculture project in Amuru and Kapchorwa.

AAU Katakwi commended on Transparency!



The Katakwi stakeholders after the meeting where both the 5th AAU Strategy Paper and LRP strategy were unveiled

Last week, ActionAid Katakwi office brought together all District Political and Technical leaders for the roll out of AAU's 5th Strategy Paper (Strengthening Strategies for social Justice). The AAU Katakwi team also used the event to unveil the new Katakwi Local Rights Program Strategy but also share the cluster plans and budgets with the stakeholders.

According to Emmanuel Wafula, the Katakwi Cluster Coordinator, all this information was shared with the stakeholders not only to emphasize AAU values of accountability and transparency but to also welcome them on board as partners in the struggle for social justice in Katakwi.

The Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Katakwi, Mr Lomwor Jimmy indeed commended the transparency exhibited by ActionAid and called upon his staff in the various departments and other CSOs to emulate the practice.

ActionAid has set learning points for all of us. Despite the challenges that the organisation went through last year, they still live to their values of humility, transparency and accountability", he said before pledging his support to the organisation to ensure the successful rollout of the Strategy.

The District L.C.V Chairperson, Hon Walter Elakas also commended ActionAid for its continued struggle for social justice. He however requested that the terms used in the strategy document be broken down so that the people in the communities which the strategy speaks to get to read and internalise the document for action against social injustice.

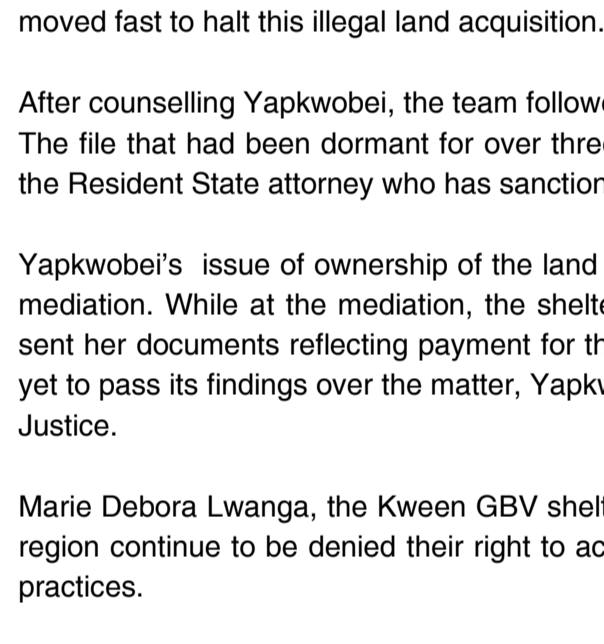
The Presidential representative at the District (RDC) urged ActionAid to also target men in its programming .

"We must educate men, sensitize them about their roles and responsibilities and their need to respect women", he said.

He thanked ActionAid for empowering the community to monitor the state of service delivery.

"The vigilance of the people of Katakwi is because of the great work by ActionAid over the past years", he concluded.

When Society continues to deny Women land!



Yapkwobei's house which as burned down.

All hope had been lost for Yapkwobei Zubeda whose small piece of land, which she had been paying for in the last 10 years was under threat.

In trying to protect her property, Yapkwobei was battered, harassed and even her modest house was set on fire in an arson case still with the police.

Yapkwobei narrated how she was assaulted by the municipal engineer as she tried to refrain him from placing boundary pegs on her land. Her assault case, despite having witnesses and a report, seemed to have stagnated.

Last week, the ActionAid Kween GBV Shelter team(where Yapkwobei sought support) moved fast to halt this illegal land acquisition.

After counselling Yapkwobei, the team followed up with the Police leadership at the district. The file that had been dormant for over three weeks quickly found its way to the office of the Resident State attorney who has sanctioned it.

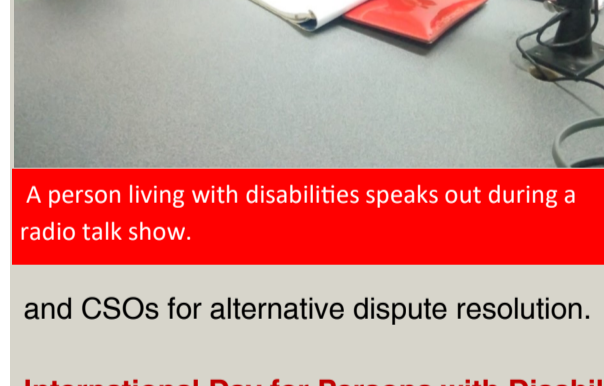
Yapkwobei's issue of ownership of the land was tabled before the office of the RDC for a mediation. While at the mediation, the shelter team supported the GBV Survivor to present her documents reflecting payment for the land. Although the mediation committee is yet to pass its findings over the matter, Yapkwobei is happy that she is on track to attaining Justice.

Marie Debora Lwanga, the Kween GBV shelter Program officer, Women in the Sebei sub region continue to be denied their right to access and own land by the patriarchal cultural practices.

"Despite various campaigns, the region has not done much to address inequalities faced by women. As women rights activists, we should move ahead and fully eradicate formal discrimination of women. We should also take meaningful steps to address substantive discrimination by negative cultural practices that has deprived women of land and property.

The recent recommendations from the Committee on Economic Social Cultural Rights to Uganda-2015, reiterates the steps Uganda should take", she said in a phone interaction.

Stakeholders trained to handle SGBV



Some of the participants at the the training last week

In the bid to provide a robust response to women's land rights, peace and justice challenges in Northern Uganda , AAU Gulu Cluster conducted a two days' capacity building training for police officers , health workers and probation officers , with an overall objective of improving response to sexual gender based violence (SGBV) while contributing to peace building and upholding women's rights.

Participants were taken through the legal framework of handling SGBV. This was done to equip them with knowledge on SGBV prevention and response system, cycles of violence, their roles and responsibilities among others. The training also aimed at strengthening the referral pathways.

During the meeting, the Probation Officer of Nwoya noted that One of the greatest obstacles in attaining justice for gender-based survivors is their silence.

"Many women believe that their voices won't be heard if they report their cases while others fear stigma and repulsion from the family and community", she said.

While closing the training, the District Chairperson of Amuru, emphasized the need for proper documentation of cases. He called for impartiality and professionalism in handling evidence and filling police form 3, diverting minor offences to cultural institutions and CSOs for alternative dispute resolution.

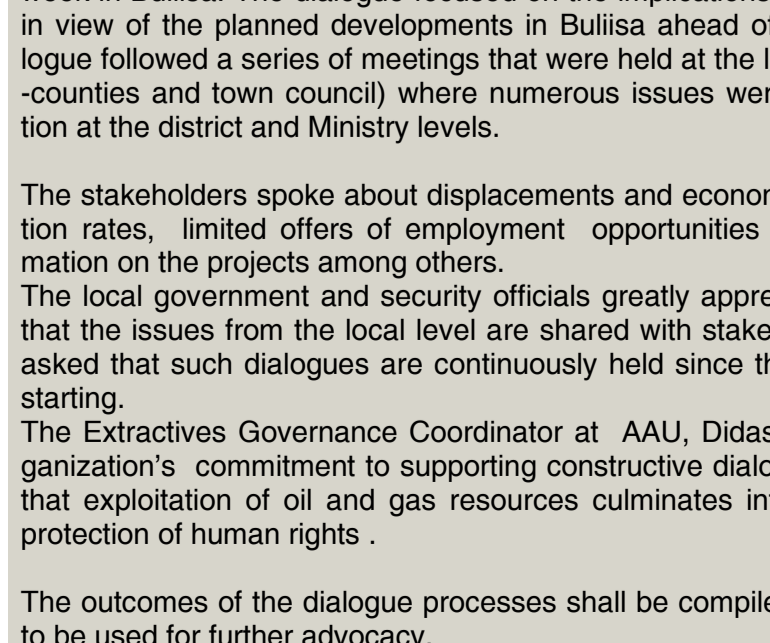
International Day for Persons with Disabilities

Still in Gulu, ActionAid joined Gulu District Local Government in the belated celebration of the International Day for persons living with disability. The celebrations were organized under the theme; **employment of persons with disabilities: a key to sustainable and resilient society for all** .

As part of the pre-event activities, AAU supported a radio talk show in Gulu to advocate and amplify the voices of women living with disabilities in Northern Uganda. The views from the listeners informed the presentation and position paper of CSOs during the celebration made by ActionAid. The same space was also used to popularize the transitional justice study report in Northern Uganda, DRC and Kenya.

[Click here for the report.](#)

DFID Talks Tough on Fraud, warns partners



A DFID auditor interacts with community members during a past review last year.

In the week ending, ActionAid grants and fundraising team took part in the **DFID Strategic Partners Meeting** held at the DFID head office in Kampwoka.

The meeting was called to update partners about DFID's strategic priorities and corporate expectations but to also gain greater understanding of partner's key challenges and ways to resolve the issues.

DFID informed its partners about the supplier review exercise which was conducted in 2016 to address value for money issues and unethical behaviour by DFID partners in supply chain. The study made critical recommendations from a wide spectrum of stakeholders in the British public and DFID staff. As a result, a new supplier code of conduct that requires compliance to the ethical principles by lead implementing and down stream partners has been instituted

Additionally, the study also recommended a reduction of entry requirements for new and small suppliers, with a provision for consortium approach in bidding for DFID contracts to enable small partners join big organizations. This has also been implemented effective 2018.

To manage fiduciary risks and safeguard DFID's integrity, DFID has also set up a Safeguards unit to handle all corruption and fraud related incidents as reported by DFID partners and communities.

"We call upon our partners to foster a culture of reporting and escalate any suspicion of fraud even prior to any investigation", stated the DFID Commercial Delivery Manager.

She emphasized that DFID will not work with any partner that doesn't safeguard its entire body of staff and comply to fraud detection, response and prevention.

"All fraud incidents should be reported to DFID program Managers", she added.

James Amedda, the Fundraising Coordinator at ActionAid in an interaction with the Weekly producer stated that the key learning for the organisation is that Risk and Fraud prevention is every one's responsibility and not a preserve of the grants and finance team.

"Risk and Fraud mitigation measures should be embedded in all our processes at all levels to act as safeguards against corruption scandals", he said.

The meeting was attended by a wide range of partners including Mercy Corps, PEAS, Maxwell stamp, Trademark East Africa, UNICEF ,UNFPA, DFID local and International staff , Government representatives and the World Bank among others.

Buliisa Residents speak out on Oil Production

ActionAid, through its Extractives Governance unit supported a district dialogue held last week in Buliisa. The dialogue focused on the implications of the oil and gas developments in view of the planned developments in Buliisa ahead of the production phase. The dialogue followed a series of meetings that were held at the lower local government level (sub-counties and town council) where numerous issues were generated and required attention at the district and Ministry levels.

The dialogue spoke about displacements and economic disturbances, low compensation rates, limited offers of employment opportunities for the locals, and limited information on the projects among others.

The local government and security officials greatly appreciated the approach of ensuring that the issues from the local level are shared with stakeholders at different levels. They asked that such dialogues are continuously held since the oil and gas exploration is just starting.

The Extractives Governance Coordinator at AAU, Didas Muhumuza reaffirmed the organization's commitment to supporting constructive dialogue and engagement to ensure that exploitation of oil and gas resources culminates into sustainable development and protection of human rights .

The outcomes of the dialogue processes shall be compiled and published in a policy brief to be used for further advocacy.

Week Ahead

- The Partnerships and Capacity building unit will conduct a validation exercise for all upcountry partners who will be working with ActionAid for the next five years. The Kampala based partners will be validated early next month.

- The last set of interviews for the position of the Country Director were conducted last week. The four finalists met with the AAU Governing Board for further scrutiny and vetting. The Governing Board is currently completing the grading and the next CD will be announced by Monday next week.