



**Weekly**  
Feb 26 - 4 March

Winners of the 2017 Economic Empowerment competition (centre) together with ActionAid staff dance to the **Strength of a woman** song lyrics during last year's Women's day at Bukedde TV. This year, a number of activities have been lined up to commemorate Women's day. Make it a point to make the Women in your life feel special. Happy women's day.

## ActionAid Joins Actors in Land Awareness Week



Above: Actors in a photo moment during the land awareness week. Below – Left: Hellen Atigo, AAU's GBV Advocate speaks to the community about women land rights. Center :Daphne Achen from LASPNET offers legal advice to a community member. Right is AAU Land Focal person, Jennipher Achalo.

ActionAid in partnership with the Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), Local Governments in Teso Sub region, Civil Society Organizations and media concluded the Land Awareness Week(LAW). The week-long event included community sensitizations, legal aid clinics and dialogues. Although majority of the activities were in Soroti, ActionAid extended its services to Magoro Sub County in Katakwi and Mukongoro Sub County in Kumi District.

In Magoro Sub county, the communities that are affected by the survey and demarcation of 300 square kilometer piece of land in Angisa by the Uganda Wildlife Authority appealed to ActionAid for support to retain access, ownership and control of their land. UWA demarcated boundaries of the game reserve bordering Karamoja and Teso sub-regions contesting that the land is a gazetted game reserve while the residents claim it is customary land. The residents appealed to ActionAid to advocate for the restoration of their land. Past efforts to settle the matter amicably without eviction have been futile.

According to Jennipher Achalo, the Land focal person at AAU, the organization will conduct further investigation and documentation in order to seek durable solutions to the problem.

**From 10,000 UGX to 500,000UGX; the cost of obtaining certificate of customary ownership of land**

In all the Districts in Teso, the cost of obtaining Certificates of Customary Land Ownership was an issue that has limited a number of people from legally protecting their land. Although the fees to be paid is UGX 10,000 as prescribed by law; in practice communities have been asked to pay as much as 500,000 UGX. The Area Land Committees justify this as facilitation for their services since they are not paid by the Local Government or Ministry of Lands Housing and Urban Development. This cost is on the higher side considering livelihood of the people in these areas.

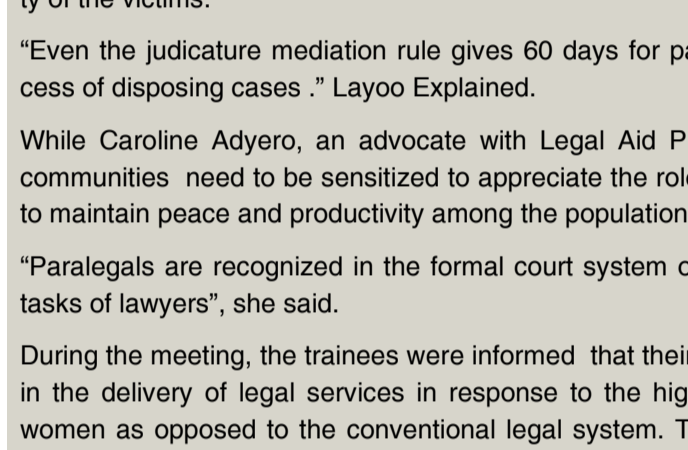
To this end, the ministry officials committed to look into this matter so that communities do not shun the process. For now the process is marred with exorbitant fees which the local communities cannot afford hence creating more vulnerability.

Through the Legal Aid Clinics, the communities were able to receive on spot legal advice and some cases were registered for further handling. The week was crowned in Soroti District with a ceremony attended by officials from MLHUD, The Teso traditional leader Emorimor, Members of Parliament, Local Government leaders, CSOs and media personalities.

For many years the land actors have focused on improving the land situation through a range of interventions. However, there are still major concerns about the increasing number of land disputes and conflicts which have resulted into land tenure insecurity, land grabbing and loss of livelihood for many small scale farmers, women and men and consequently leading to low/under/non utilization of land, low productivity, food insecurity, and poverty.

Most information on land laws is complex for an ordinary person to comprehend since most of them have not been translated into simple understandable local languages. On this basis therefore, the land awareness week is a platform to share and disseminate knowledge to the community/public on all land related policies and laws, access to justice with regard to land governance, management and administration.

## Paralegals to quicken Access to Justice: North UG



Layoo Paul stresses a point during the training of paralegals last week

At least 40 paralegals from Amuru and Nwoya districts last week concluded a training on the basics of land laws and policies. The one week training also improved their mediation skills which they will be using to settle the increasing land disputes in the districts and hence contribute to the peace building efforts in the communities.

The training that took place at Kakyero Hotel in Gulu was organized to enhance women rights to land, peace and justice.

Julius Paul Layoo, the lead facilitator and advocate with Kunuhira & Co. Advocate, stated that mediation is proving to be the most effective way of settling disputes in the community since it is less costly and affordable by the majority of the victims.

"Even the judicature mediation rule gives 60 days for parties to try mediation. It quickens the process of disposing cases." Layoo Explained.

While Caroline Adyero, an advocate with Legal Aid Project of Uganda Law Society stated that communities need to be sensitized to appreciate the roles of paralegals in offsetting cases in order to maintain peace and productivity among the population.

"Paralegals are recognized in the formal court system of Uganda and basically perform delegated tasks of lawyers", she said.

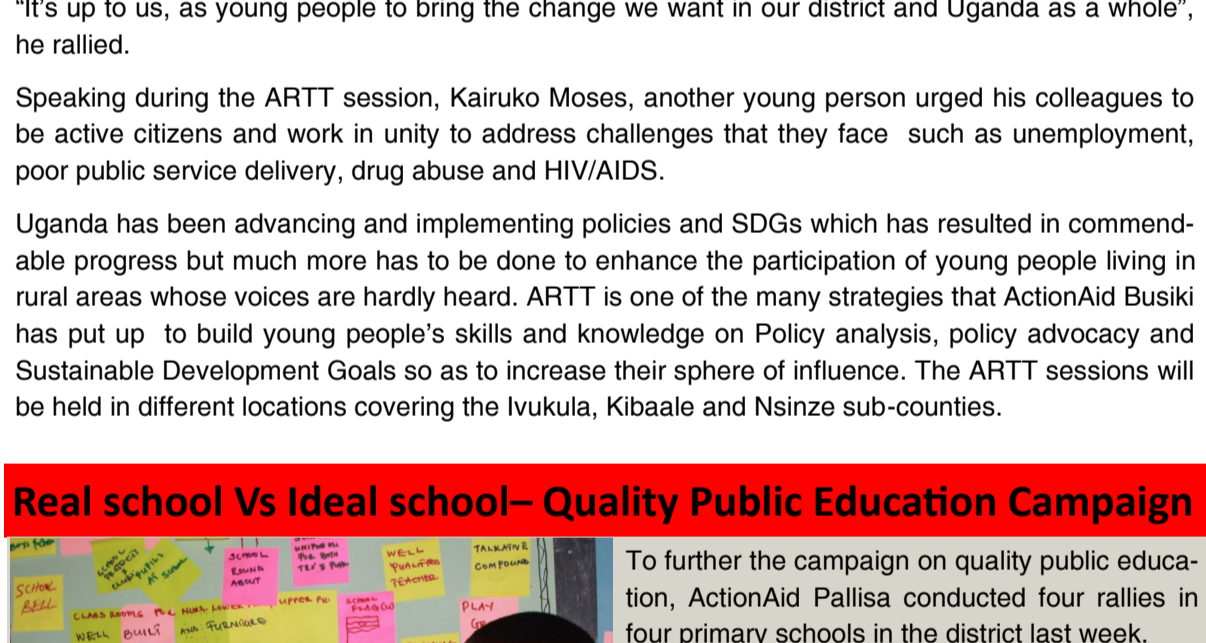
During the meeting, the trainees were informed that their functionality presents a paradigmatic shift in the delivery of legal services in response to the high demand for Justice from the vulnerable women as opposed to the conventional legal system. Their knowledge is a demonstration of how lay people upgrade in understanding civil cases at a grass root level." Adyero explained.

At the end of the training, the paralegals acknowledged their role in reducing land conflicts and violence against women in the community.

"We are going to work with traditional leaders, police, local council courts, area land committees, child protection committees and various local government institutions to handle cases in our jurisdiction and refer those that are beyond our capacity", they promised.

ActionAid previously supported the 40 paralegals with bicycles and stationary to enhance mobility and their activities in promoting women land rights and access to justice at the community.

## Busiki's Weekly youth Talk series kickstart



Immaculate Awor, the ActionAid Busiki head of office(centre) interacts with the youth during the first ARTT last week

Last week, ActionAid Busiki in partnership with Namutumba NGO Forum held its first **Abavubuka's Radical Thursday Talk (ARTT)**, a platform for young people to have critical conversations on policies in Uganda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). An initiative of ActionAid Busiki, Chipo Bangira, an Inspirator in the Busiki office believes that this weekly platform will be used to mobilize youth to come up with workable solutions to the social struggles that they face in the community.

"Young people were identified as agents of change that can empower other young people through skills building, job creation, advocates of human rights and leaders in their communities", stated Chipo.

The first ARTT session focused on unpacking the role of young people in the development and democracy building within the district.

Isabirye Eryeza, an Intern with Namutumba NGO Forum highlighted that it is all up to young people to make change happen.

"It's up to us, as young people to bring the change we want in our district and Uganda as a whole", he rallied.

Speaking during the ARTT session, Kairuko Moses, another young person urged his colleagues to be active citizens and work in unity to address challenges that they face such as unemployment, poor public service delivery, drug abuse and HIV/AIDS.

Uganda has been advancing and implementing policies and SDGs which has resulted in commendable progress but much more has to be done to enhance the participation of young people living in rural areas whose voices are hardly heard. ARTT is one of the many strategies that ActionAid Busiki has put up to build young people's skills and knowledge on Policy analysis, policy advocacy and Sustainable Development Goals so as to increase their sphere of influence. The ARTT sessions will be held in different locations covering the Irukula, Kibaale and Nsinze sub-counties.

## Real school Vs Ideal school– Quality Public Education Campaign



A pupil takes a look at the real school score vs the ideal school

To further the campaign on quality public education, the ActionAid Pallisa conducted four rallies in four primary schools in the district last week.

Shiba Namulindwa, the Program Officer in Pallisa stated that the rallies focused on creating awareness on the right to free quality public education and how tax resources are meant to pay for this public good.

During the rallies, participatory tools like **the ideal school** were used. This way, pupils, parents, Sub county leaders, teachers, and school management committees were able to assess the state of their different schools as compared to the ideal school.

The results from the self-assessments were rather saddening as all the schools lacked at least 80% of necessary requirements. These included quality trained teachers, infrastructure including desks among others.

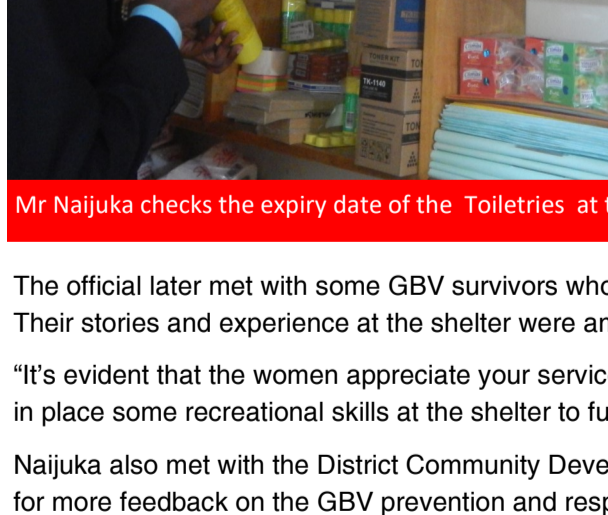
In one of the schools, (Akuoro P/S), 270 primary one pupils sit on the floor.

Okia Charles, the Head Teacher of the said school added that curriculum delivery in the local language was a challenge as many teachers and children have failed to deliver and cope with it accordingly.

"It is difficult for pupils to answer questions set in English yet they study in the local language. Secondly, some new letters in the alphabet that were introduced recently are confusing both for the teachers, and pupils. We request Government to stop this mode of curriculum delivery. Otherwise, our children are not learning at all", he said.

The Vice chairperson of Gogonyo sub county Mrs. margrate Taliba, encouraged head teachers to use school development plans in forwarding their priorities to the sub county for planning and budget allocations. She called upon all stakeholders to work together and play their respective roles to ensure children's rights are promoted at all levels.

At the end of the rallies, the parents, teachers, pupils and community members also vowed to be ambassadors in promoting education rights through development of school improvement plans. The community also requested civil society organizations to join and link them to national policy makers who will address the issues of curriculum delivery.

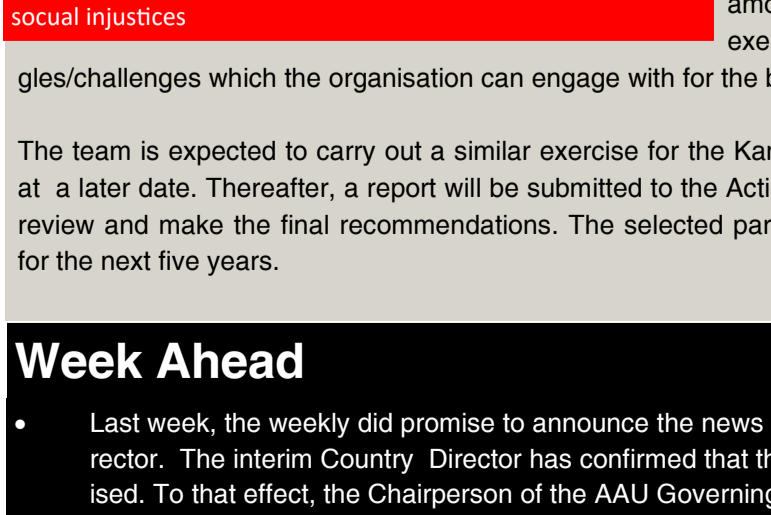


Community members score the real school.



Pupils were part of the exercise

## Mubende GBV Shelter assessed by Ministry of Gender!



Mr Najjuka checks the expiry date of the Toiletries at the shelter.

Last week, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social development sent a delegation to Mubende GBV Shelter to assess the shelter's level of compliance with the existing National Shelter guidelines. The team led by Mr Najjuka Rodgers interacted with both the program and psychosocial officer at length in regard to the operations of the shelter.

The guests paid extra attention to the sanitation, feeding, bedding, transport, first aid, security and safety of the survivors among others.

"The shelter is well equipped to receive and rehabilitate women. Thank you for the great work", stated Najjuka while having a guided tour around the shelter.

The official later met with some GBV survivors who have benefited from the services at the shelter. Their stories and experience at the shelter were amazing.

"It's evident that the women appreciate your services", he said adding that the program should put in place some recreational skills at the shelter to further engage the survivors productively.

Najjuka also met with the District Community Development officer together with the probation officer for more feedback on the GBV prevention and response services.

He will share a report on key recommendations on areas that need to be improved.

## ActionAid validates Partners



The ActionAid team validates Music for Peace organisation. The group is made up of youths who use peace to preach against social injustices

In November 2017, ActionAid invited potential organisations to express interest in a partnership to advance struggles for social justice for the next five years. Out of the 273 organisations that expressed interest, 132 were recommended for partnership by a select committee of ActionAid Staff. These will potentially form the bulk of both implementing and strategic partners.

Last week, the Partnership and Capacity Building Unit carried out a validation exercise of the recommended partners to check the authenticity of the information written in the Expression of interest documents but also assess other variables such as office space, relationship with stakeholders, rootedness among others. The team also used the exercise to scout for peoples struggles/challenges which the organisation can engage with for the betterment of the communities.

The team is expected to carry out a similar exercise for the Kampala/National level based partners at a later date. Thereafter, a report will be submitted to the ActionAid Management team who will review and make the final recommendations. The selected partners will then be formally engaged for the next five years.

## Week Ahead

- Last week, the weekly did promise to announce the news of the newly appointed country Director. The interim Country Director has confirmed that the recruitment process was finalised. To that effect, the Chairperson of the AAU Governing Board will by close of Friday share a communique on the results of the CD recruitment. We look forward to the news!

- ActionAid will join the rest of the world to commemorate International Women's Day this Thursday. A number of activities are lined up all through the different AAU offices in the Country. The weekly will feature all these in the next edition.