



April 2—8

Dear Reader, Most people, almost everyone knows of a teen mom. Teen pregnancy rates are growing, and we need to bring awareness to that, the same way we bring awareness to all other governance challenges that our country is grappling with. Don't let another girl contribute to this statistic. In the photo are pupils from Katakwi, one of the districts that is worst hit by the teenage pregnancy challenge.

## Teenage pregnancy on the rise— Speak Out!



Some of the ActionAid Sponsored children show off their scholastic materials distributed by ActionAid during the message collection exercise. Unfortunately, their colleague Esther was not with them because she had been married off in exchange for a cow, goat and UGX110000.

Last week, ActionAid Katakwi Office learnt with sadness that fifteen year old Apolot Esther (not real names) is the latest victim of child pregnancies in Katakwi. This was revealed during the ActionAid Sponsorship message collection exercise that was conducted in the different sub counties of the district.

According to Benjamin Tukei, the AG-Cluster ActionAid Coordinator, Esther who is supported by ActionAid through the child sponsorship program was absent from the message collection exercise and this caused the officers in charge to task the parents and pupils present to look out for her. One of the parents volunteered this information, which dampened the mood for the rest of the activities.

Tukei used the occasion to inform parents that ending early marriages in the district is a responsibility for all. While referring to the ActionAid child Protection Policy which requires all ActionAid Programs to ensure that children are protected from child labour and early marriages, he tasked all parents and elders to not only protect the girls but also report any perpetrators to the authorities.

When the ActionAid team followed up Esther's case to understand the circumstances under which she conceived and probably support her to attain justice, it was discovered that the parents of the boy paid one cow, a goat and UGX110000 as bride price. Esther was found living with her husband who is only 17 years, a primary seven pupil in Akurao primary school, the same school where Esther was.

ActionAid alerted the police that acted fast and arrested the parents and the young couple for consenting to a child marriage.

The number of adolescent girls in Uganda who get pregnant before attaining the age of consent has increased to 25 per cent and Katakwi contributes almost a quarter of the cases. The rise in early child-bearing has been attributed to the patriarchal nature of the Teso region that still looks at girls as sources of wealth through bride price. However, the lack of safe learning environments also contributes to this unfortunate statistic.

The ActionAid Katakwi office is sharing notes with the different stakeholders to come up with workable strategies that will avert these worrying statistics.

## ActionAid Busiki to impart skills for Clean Environment



Children being trained to make school bags

Uncontrolled waste disposal in Namutumba continues to cause a health and environmental hazard to the villagers especially children. To curb this, ActionAid Busiki last week began its pilot program on recycling litter into bags. The program is targeting sponsored children under the theme "Recycle, Reduce and Reuse".

According to Chipu Bangira, the ActionAid Inspirator at the Busiki office, Waste management is a responsibility of all citizens and such skills should be transferred at a tender age for a better tomorrow.

In total, twenty children were taught the importance of waste management and how it relates to their health and education. They were also trained on how to recycle litter (plastics and clothes) into school bags.

Immaculate Awori, the ActionAid Program Officer in Namutumba stated that most of the children don't have school bags. As a result, their books often get soaked in the rain during the rainy seasons.

"We decided to teach them to make bags to address this, but also build a generation of young people that keep the environment clean", she said.

Speaking during the training, Viola Muyodi, a Primary Seven pupil expressed her happiness

"I am very happy that I can make my own bag to carry my books. I will tell my friends at school about the importance of not littering our environment and how to turn the litter into bags, necklaces and earrings".

Awori added that the trained children will form clubs in their schools and train their peers in waste management.

The Namutumba district Local Government lacks infrastructural and technical resources to tackle the problem of waste management hence the need to raise public awareness about good health and a clean environment.

"We have complained many times to the district council about waste management but nothing has been done to address the matter. I wish our leaders would adopt this ActionAid program so that we keep clean while making money from items such as bags made from waste", stated one of the parents.



A young girl puts skill to use, makes own school bag



Some of the children who benefitted from the training together with community facilitators.

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## Invest in Building scenarios-Security team tipped!



Arthur, the ActionAid Federation Development Director leads the scenario, building exercise after the ActionAid Uganda offices were sieged by Police

ActionAid Uganda took part in the Global Security Focal Person Conference held in Arusha, Tanzania last week. This event was organised by the Staff Security Unit of the ActionAid Global Secretariat under the leadership of the Global Security Advisor, Javeria Malik and the Federation Development Director, Arthur Larok. Uganda was represented by the Policy and Campaigns Manager, Fredrick Kawooya and the AG-Administration Coordinator, David Mugumya.

During the three days conference, 29 Participates representing 25 Countries actively participated in various exercises that bonded them as a team.

The members also updated their skills on context assessment, risk assessment, security management planning and recognised and celebrated successes.

The team gained appreciation of the various political, cultural, social and security contexts in which ActionAid works and the challenges and opportunities that they present.

Arthur, the federation development director challenged the security focal persons to understand the direction the federation is taking in order for them to be more relevant to the mission. He recounted the five major aspects in the global strategy: the deep analysis of the context and the opportunities it presents, shift in ActionAid identity to a social justice agency, the theory of change that aspires to seek shifts in power in all we do, the bias towards working with women and young people and the commitment to undertaking transformative programing.

In his concluding remarks, Arthur emphasised the major organisational shifts that seek to build an agile, unified and networked organisation with improved innovation, learning and program quality.

The ActionAid secretary General, Adriano Campolina reminded the group of the increasing political polarisation which threaten the realisation of the federation and critical objectives. He urged the team to invest in regularly building scenarios and ensure integration of security in all programs.

## Week Ahead

- The recruitment process to fill the position of the Country Director is near conclusion. The last set of interviews are expected to be conducted next week.
- ActionAid together with the Tax Justice Alliance will be in a retreat to review the Tax amendment Bills that have been tabled in parliament by the Ministry of Finance
- ActionAid will this week hold a review of the People for Change program in Lira. The meeting will be attended by Inspirators and advisors.