



Weekly
February 22—28

As we count down to Women's day, the Weekly publication will feature men who stand up for Women. Mr Okware from Nebbi stopped beating his wife. He now goes an extra mile to reduce the burden of care work on her. He cooks and washes for her three times a week. Isn't he exceptional?

The unresolved land disputes in Amuru and Nwoya!



(Left) Kacherina Achayo points to her land that was grabbed. Right-Above is Achan, who was denied access to her late husband's land because she has no boy child. Below is Lina Achayo. She has spent money trying to gain back her land in vain.

Kacherina Achayo, 78, a mother of four whose husband died in a camp during the LRA and NRM conflict in 1991 said that her 6 acre-piece of land was grabbed by neighbouring communities while the rest was encroached on by Alokolum gok primary school. When she complained about her land being grabbed to the district authorities, she was instead arrested and detained for two weeks on allegations that she practices witchcraft.

"Previously, I used to work on people's gardens in return for food. Unfortunately, I developed a back problem and my health has deteriorated. I have a feeling I will die from hunger very soon", she narrates in a frail voice, with tears welling in her eyes.

Asked what her immediate need is, Achayo says that she wants to gain back access and control of her land so that she can hire it out at a fee that will support her welfare and medical bills. She lives in constant fear for her life, since many women in her situation have died under mysterious circumstances

Achayo's case is one of the 8 land cases involving women and widows that we encountered during a one week visit to Amuru and Nwoya. With funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Australian Government, ActionAid is implementing the Women Land Rights Project in Amuru and Nwoya. The project will ensure and Women, Widows and Orphans gain Access and control of land. Click [here](#) for Achayo's video and more stories.

The conflict between the LRA and the Ugandan Government left more than 1.7 million people displaced. It has also led to sluggish development, abject poverty and division among communities. The problem has mainly affected widows, orphans and the elderly. During the insurgency, all people were forced into IDP camps, but were surprised to find encroachers on their land on return. According to the Anaka Subcounty, Nwoya district land committee chairman George Okello, land grabbing mainly affects widows and women.

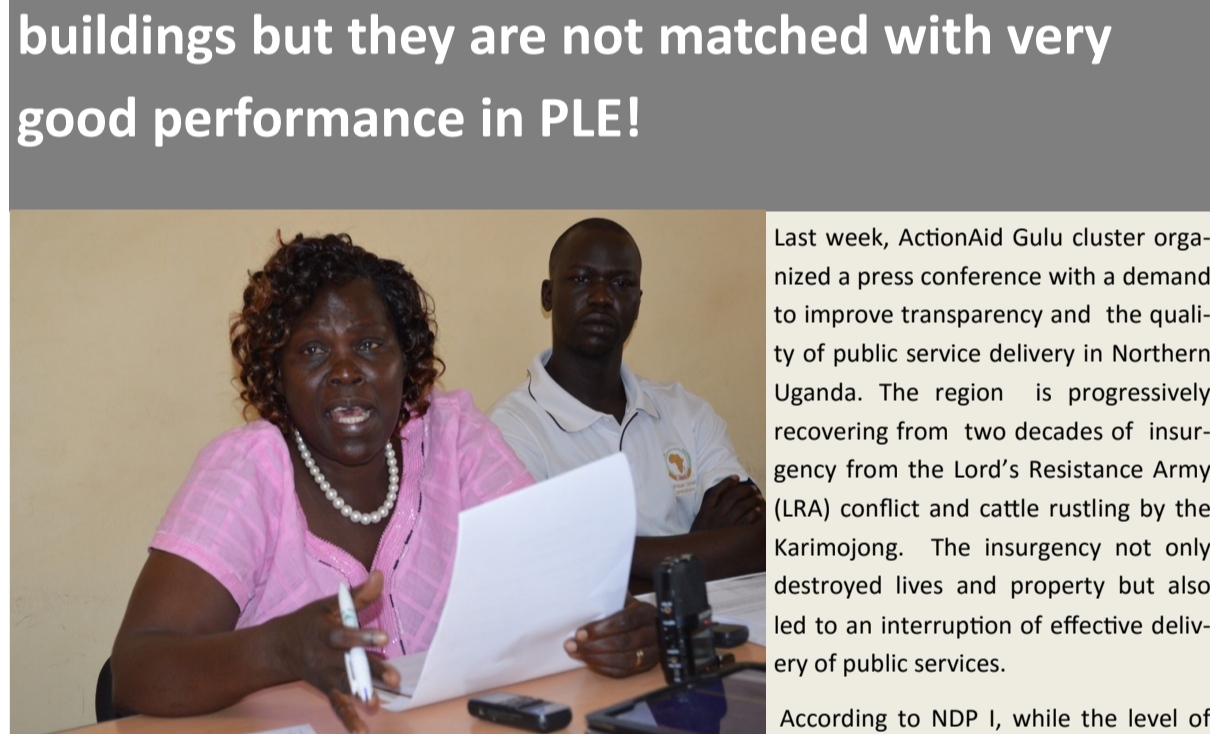
"The captives returned home and faced a lot of difficulty in accessing their land, re-establishing their rights to the land, and defining boundaries, hence bloodshed," the chairman said.

The District Police Commander of Nwoya collaborated this, stating that they receive more than 20 land cases a week.

"While the country celebrates peace in Northern Uganda, it should pay attention to the land wrangles that arose because they are a cause of insecurity", he said.

He added that relatives, neighbours, families and clan members of Acholi region have resolved to violent means to reclaim their land which at times leads to bloodshed.

Betty Ochan: Gulu has very good Primary school buildings but they are not matched with very good performance in PLE!



Hon Betty Ochan, the Gulu District Woman MP addresses the media.

Last week, ActionAid Gulu cluster organized a press conference with a demand to improve transparency and the quality of public service delivery in Northern Uganda. The region is progressively recovering from two decades of insurgency from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) conflict and cattle rustling by the Karimojong. The insurgency not only destroyed lives and property but also led to an interruption of effective delivery of public services.

According to NDP I, while the level of poverty in Uganda has declined from 56% in 1992 to 24.5% in 2009/10, the poverty decline has not been experienced uniformly across the country with Northern Uganda lagging behind the rest of the regions.

To address the high poverty levels and low progress in attaining equitable social-economic development in northern Uganda, the Government of Uganda through the Office of the Prime Minister implemented affirmative action development programs like the Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) I & II, the Northern Uganda Social Action Funds (NUSAF) I & II and ALREP.

The Woman MP of Gulu District, Hon Betty Ochan, while addressing the over 30 press men and women stated that inspite of the heavy investment in the region, challenges have persisted in key sectors such as Primary Education, Primary Health care, Agriculture and Water & Sanitation.

"There was a programmatic mismatch by heavily investing in the physical infrastructure at the expense of addressing the psycho-social needs of the people, adequate recruitment and remuneration of health workers and teachers as well as mobilizing communities to participate in the planning and monitoring of public services", she said.

ActionAid and the people of Northern Uganda called on Government to develop a customized Agriculture extension delivery framework to address the farming communities with emphasis in value chain management.

"We also demand that Government, with immediate effect stops grabbing land in the region under the guise of the Compulsory acquisition of land for development. Government should also Decentralize the Planning, budgeting and Implementation of the North and North Eastern Uganda Affirmative programs to the affected districts", read part of the press statement.

SFR Project Improving Lives!



Some of the AAU staff during the review and reflection meeting last week

Last week, four staff from Uganda went to Nairobi for a review and learning workshop for the Securing Food Rights (SFR) project. The meeting drew participants from ActionAid Kenya and ActionAid Australia, both of which are implementing the project.

Currently in its last year, the five year project is tuned to increasing access to sustainable basic services for 4500 poor and marginalised small holder farmers in Uganda, Kenya and Australia. In Uganda, the project is implemented in the five districts of Katakwi, Bukedea, Kumi, Amuru and Nwoya.

At the review meeting, participants agreed to the fact that the project has improved the quality of life in the communities.

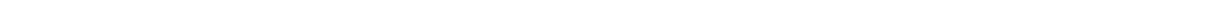
"Farmers are now owning productive resources such as ox-plough. These have facilitated them to open large pieces of land and this has in turn increased their food productivity. Farmers now have enough food at home and are selling off the surplus to address other family needs such as school fees and other investments", stated Mathias Mulumba, the M&E officer of the Project in Uganda.

"The SFR project validates the ActionAid Theory of Change. Women farmers have explored alternatives; they are engaging and influencing Policies both at the local and National levels", said Grace Nicholas, Senior Programme Coordinator, AA Australia.

Sally Henderson, the Senior Program Coordinator of AA Australia added that the SFR project has provided alternative models for development for small scale holder farmers. She noted that these farm with low carbon emissions and feed over 2billion people in the world. In Uganda, over 85% of the Country's food needs are met by small scale holder farmers.

While the project is coming to an end in June, the Project team are working hard to ensure that they secure a project extension from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of the Australian Government, the current funder.

Story of change for the week!



Thanks to mediation and counselling from ActionAid Uganda's Women Protection Centre (WPC) in Amuru, Agweah Nighty and her husband are now living peacefully together.

Nighty's husband would hit her with anything he could get and he would threaten her and the children. At one point Nighty felt so much pain that she

WEEK AHEAD:

- Preparations for this years Womens' day are in progress. We shall be unveiling our activities in the next Weekly publication.
- The AAU programs leadership team is in Royal Suits Bugolobi for a review meeting to assess progress made by the directorate so far.