

## PAA LAND DISPUTE

NICKSON OGWAL - ACTIONAID UGANDA

The land wrangles in Apaa, Amuru district causing fierce clashes between the communities of Acholi in Amuru and Madi in Adjumani are like a bad dream that keeps coming back. AAU's Nickson Ogwal was hosted on NTV news to educate the world about the Apaa land conflict. Welcome to the Weekly!

## ActionAid Calls for Action on Land Conflicts in UG!



The AG-Country Director, Christine Aboke during the press conference stated that people living in poverty can only achieve levels of economic independence and secure livelihoods if their rights to land are secured and assured!

ActionAid, together with other Civil Society Organisations last Friday organised a press conference with a demand that Government revisits its commitment to gazette the East Madi game reserve which has been a source of disputes and violent conflict over the years.

"The Government should further scrutinize the procedures and processes undertaken during this gazette for equity, fairness and justice to the parties", stated Christine Aboke, the AG-Country Director at ActionAid.

The press conference was held at the AAU offices and was attended by other CSOs such as Oxfam, PE-LUM, SEATINI, LASPNET among others.

The development follows the fresh violence that broke out between the Madi and Acholi in Apaa Village, Pabbo Sub country in Amuru District over land. Five people are reported to have been killed and over 200 grass thatched houses burned down. Several images of community members with arrows stuck in the backs, mouth and necks, deep cuts among others have been seen. Many of the injured are currently getting treatment in Gulu.

Fredrick Kawooya, the Policy and Campaigns Manager at AAU urged the religious, cultural and political leaders to peruse dialogue, peace, reconciliation and mediation as non violent means to resolve the land conflict and disputes.

Fred added that the Madi-Acholi conflict is not a tribal dispute as many are framing it but rather a conflict over land that the Government wants to give to an investor.

"We advise that there should be free prior informed consent of all community members to ensure inclusiveness and social acceptance before land is allocated for any activity or investment" he said.

The CSO's also called upon the Justice Bamugemereire led Land Commission to immediately pursue the Apaa case as an emergency and come up with concrete recommendations to address this unique problem as well as other similar problems across the country.

A 2014 report by the Makerere University-based Refugee Law Project observed that the conflict in Apaa had become inevitable with frequent disagreement between the conflicting parties (the Madi ethnic group of Adjumani and the Lamogi/Pabbo clans of Acholi in Amuru) resulting into violence. The conflict, according to the report, has mainly been sparked off by torture and evictions occasioned by the operations of Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) in securing/reclaiming land in the area for a game reserve.

Some of the members in the community told the project researchers that UWA has since 2010 been responsible for violent and forceful eviction of people from their homes on allegation that they have encroached into East Madi Wildlife reserve. However, the Uganda Wildlife Authorities have consistently declined to comment on this land conflict and only keep advising the public to view the map of the area at the Lands Ministry Offices.

On a recent visit to Amuru, the AAU Communications Officer, Ms Samanya spoke to the residents on the disputed land about the conflict. Many of them believe that the boundary is in the stream of River Zoka, which separates Adjumani and Amuru districts. They also believe that during the colonial era, the British used physical features to demarcate boundaries unlike the government approach of surveying the land and planting mark stones.

One of the residents Jebe Onenorach, 35, who says he was born on the disputed land and only vacated in 2004 at the height of the Lord's Resistance Army rebels insurgency, claims that even his ancestors lived on the said land, showing the family graveyard as proof.

ActionAid will proceed to meet with the cultural leaders and pursue dialogue with the affected communities to ensure that a lasting solution to the conflict is found. Keep reading the Weekly and mainstream media for updates.

## Local Rights Strategy Development Kick-Starts!



Action during the Strategy development in Lira.

Last week, staff from ActionAid Local Rights Programs (LRPs) convened in Mbale (for the LRP in the East) and Lira (for the LRP in the North) to develop the respective five year Local Rights Strategies.

The one week process was informed by the recently approved 5<sup>th</sup> Strategy Paper with a mind of linking it to the local context.

According to Shiba Namulindwa, the Program Officer in Pallisa Cluster, the LRP strategies were drawn systematically to respond to the needs of the local communities where ActionAid is rooted.

The meetings involved a lot of learning and feedback as the different teams presented their context analysis.

During one of the presentations in Mbale, Aggrey Kibet, the Pallisa Cluster Coordinator challenged the team to take the strategy development as a personal process aimed at strengthening struggles for justice for the poor and excluded communities rather than an office task.

Harriet Gimbo, the Programs Director added that there needs to be an honest analysis of the different contexts that the teams operate in if we are to have a successful five years against injustice.

"Let us ensure that the language and implementation approach is simple and tailored to address the needs of the people we work with", she guided.

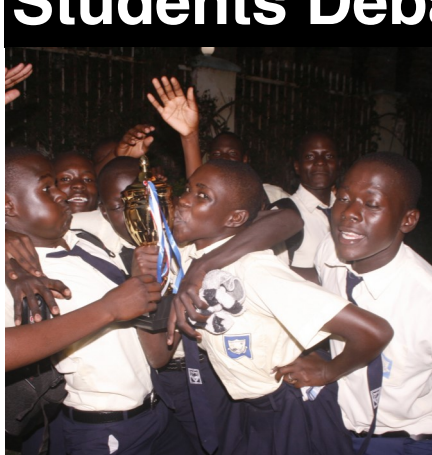
During the meeting, the Fundraising team shared the fundraising and guided on strategies that should be used to raise funds to roll out the LRP Strategies under development.

The first drafts of the Strategies will be reviewed and further polished. The process is expected to be completed by end of July.



The Program Officers from the LRP in the East work on their Strategies.

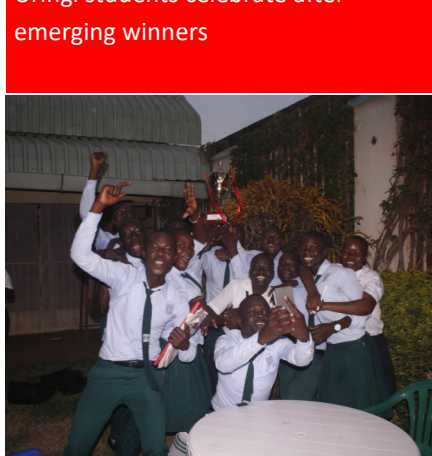
## Students Debate corruption!



Uringi students celebrate after emerging winners



Harod, the best Opposer makes his submission while Cynthia, the best Proposer cites an article to emphasize how corruption is a systematic problem.



Sunrise SS took second position

In the bid to build a corrupt free Generation, ActionAid has for the past year been taking the anti-corruption campaign to schools through the anti-corruption debates, anti-corruption clubs and introduction of corrupt free zones.

Last week, the Students of Uringi, Angal, Sunrise and Pakwach Secondary Schools in Nebbi faced off in a heated debate under the motion: **Inefficient Government Systems have Hampered the Fight Against Corruption in Uganda.** The debate competition was attended by Political and Religious leaders from Nebbi, teachers, CSO representatives, Police among others.

Uringi Secondary school that opposed the motion won the competition after convincing the audience that it's not the systems but rather the individuals in the different offices that hamper the fight against corruption. Rwothomiyo Harod, the best debater of the day argued that the different offices in the different offices continue to threaten and intimidate whistle blowers and this makes them (whistleblowers) to shy away from raising an alarm against the corrupt practices in the offices. He added that there is a deliberate delay in the disposal of corruption cases.

However, the win did not come easy as the proposers, led by Afoyomungu Cynthia from Sunrise Secondary school argued that corruption is a systematic rather than an individual problem. She added that Civil servants often seek for bribes because of the very low salaries but also because their employment terms are permanent and pensionable. She demanded that the system be changed so that their salaries are increased and their employment contracts renewed every year.

Both Cynthia and Harod won a cash prize of UGX50000/= for their brilliance, eloquence and informed debate. Uringi SS, the winning school and Sunrise SS, the first runner ups all took home trophies.

## Reflections from Washington

In our 'Reflections from Washington' this week, we ask:

**"Is ActionAid Uganda one of the Big Ego and Logo NGOs"?**

Our CD, in Washington DC for a Fellowship writes that, "like in other countries, 'civil society activism is in flux' in Uganda."

He critiques conventional civil society and NGO activism in Uganda and provides a cautious praise for non-formal protest movements like the Jobless Brotherhood and Dr Stella Nyanzi's "Pads4Campaign".

In the think-piece paper attached in this email, you will find details of his arguments and writing to which he welcomes feedback directly to his email [arthur.larok@gmail.com](mailto:arthur.larok@gmail.com)

## WEEK AHEAD:

- This week, the AG-Country Director Christine Aboke, the AAU Governing Board Chairperson Dr. Consolata Kabonesa, and the Deputy Chairperson Mr. Nicholas Opiyo are in Myanmar taking part in the ActionAid International Directors' forum and General Assembly.
- AAU is currently hosting a team from ActionAid Denmark. They are in the country to support the development and establishment of the Global youth platform, a youth convening place.
- The Programs Director will attend the UN Refugee summit in Munyoyo this week.
- The Finance Director will attend CSO leaders' meeting at Royal suits in Bugolobi this Thursday.