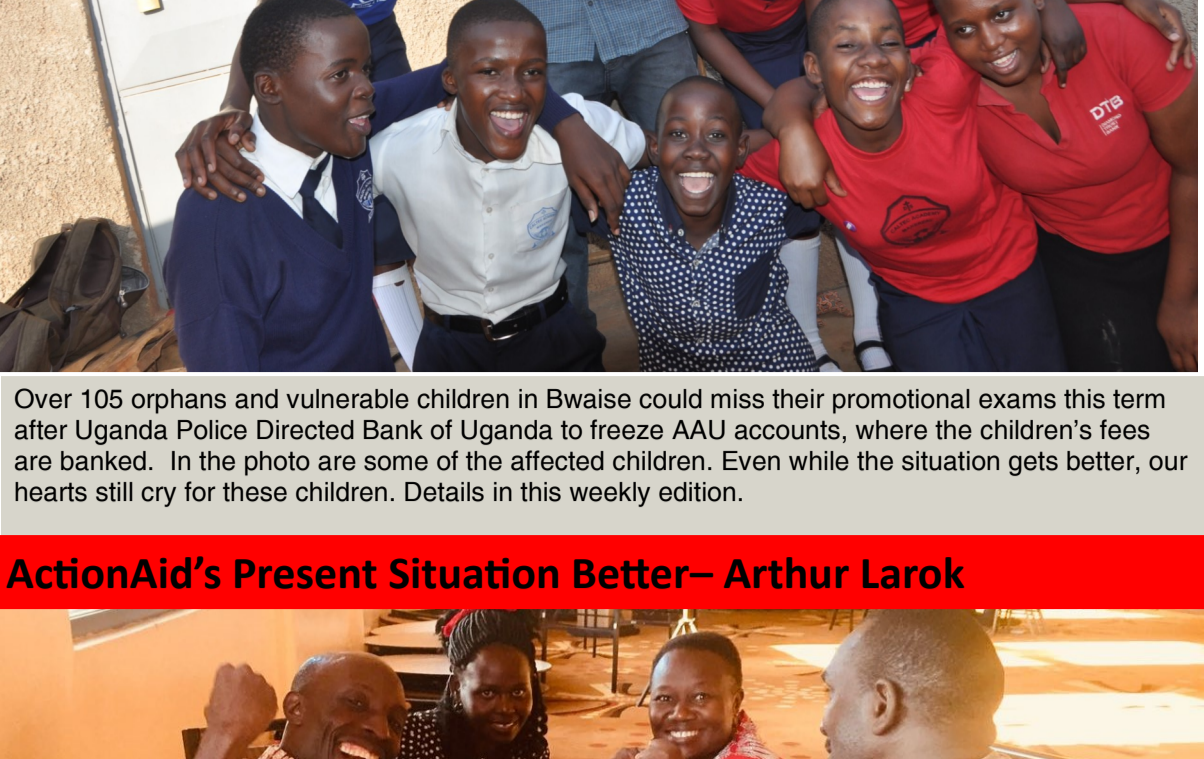


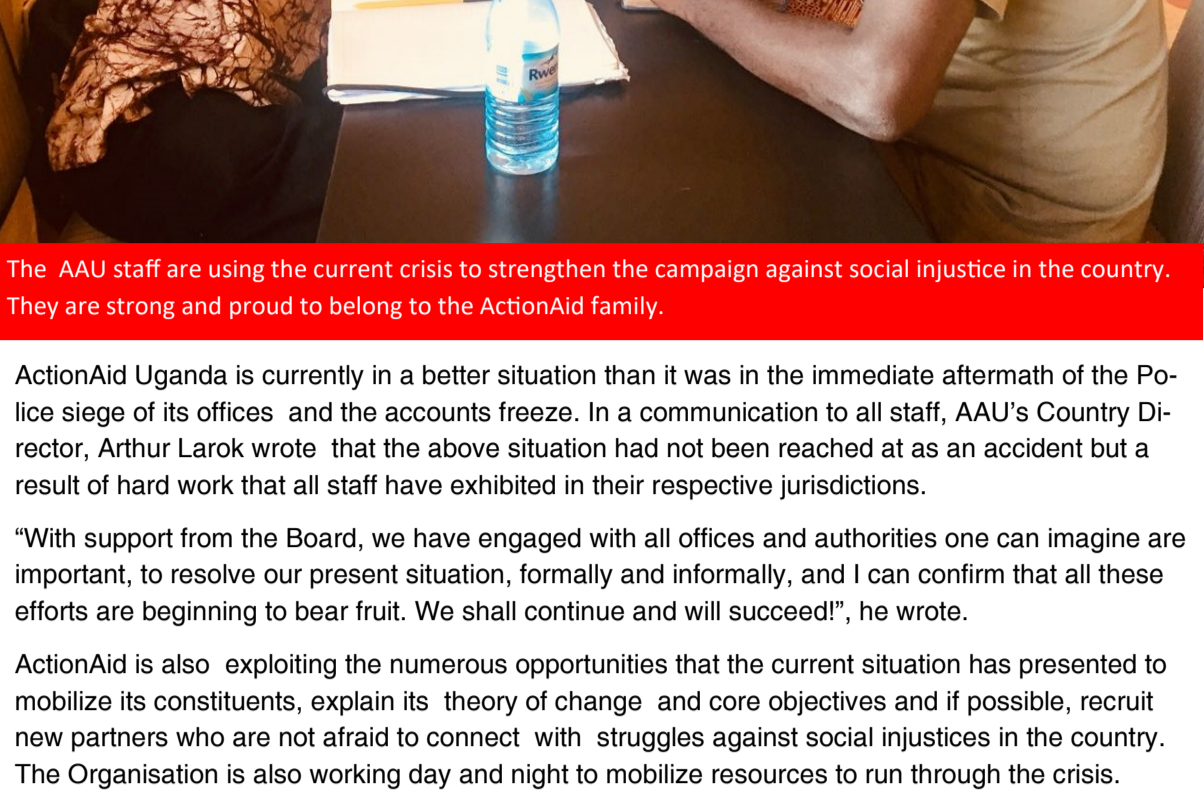
Weekly

Oct 30 - 5 Nov



Over 105 orphans and vulnerable children in Bwaise could miss their promotional exams this term after Uganda Police Directed Bank of Uganda to freeze AAU accounts, where the children's fees are banked. In the photo are some of the affected children. Even while the situation gets better, our hearts still cry for these children. Details in this weekly edition.

ActionAid's Present Situation Better– Arthur Larok



The AAU staff are using the current crisis to strengthen the campaign against social injustice in the country. They are strong and proud to belong to the ActionAid family.

ActionAid Uganda is currently in a better situation than it was in the immediate aftermath of the Police siege of its offices and the accounts freeze. In a communication to all staff, AAU's Country Director, Arthur Larok wrote that the above situation had not been reached at an accident but a result of hard work that all staff have exhibited in their respective jurisdictions.

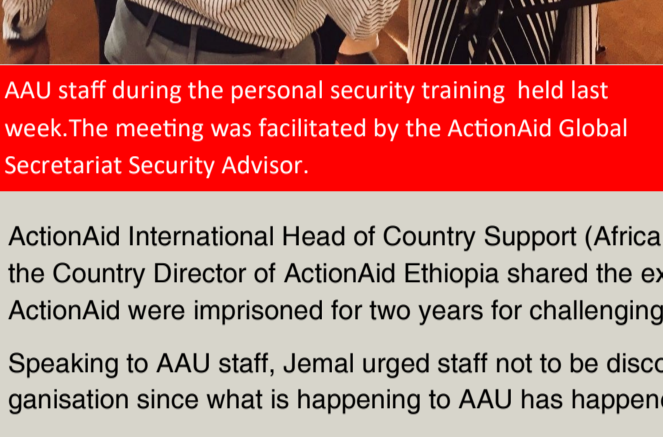
"With support from the Board, we have engaged with all offices and authorities one can imagine are important, to resolve our present situation, formally and informally, and I can confirm that all these efforts are beginning to bear fruit. We shall continue and will succeed!", he wrote.

ActionAid is also exploiting the numerous opportunities that the current situation has presented to mobilize its constituents, explain its theory of change and core objectives and if possible, recruit new partners who are not afraid to connect with struggles against social injustices in the country. The Organisation is also working day and night to mobilize resources to run through the crisis.

We are glad to report that the AAU Governing Board has consequently held three extraordinary meetings from which members of AAU management have benefitted from the advice and guidance of the members of the Board. The Weekly has also learnt that a sub-committee of three Board Members was set up to provide more regular support to management. They have also been very instrumental in some of the informal engagements that are bettering the situation.

"On behalf of Management and Board, I would like to thank you all that have remained steadfast, committed to the mission and values we stand for and worked in your diverse ways to ensure that the ActionAid 'shield' remains afloat and steady despite the murky waters. Many have prayed, shared information on incidences, responsibly defended our brand and values in spaces of their jurisdiction and many more actions that have impacted positively on our objective as stated above. Continue doing what is right and just!" stated Arthur.

AAU Encouraged by Global support and Solidarity!



AAU staff during the personal security training held last week. The meeting was facilitated by the ActionAid Global Secretariat Security Advisor.

The ActionAid Global Secretariat has continued to demonstrate its unwavering support and solidarity to ActionAid Uganda. This according to several staff and AAU management has kept them not only hopeful but committed to working towards the overall Organisational mission and objectives.

In addition to the visits made by the ActionAid International Secretary General, Adriano Campolina last month, AAU also hosted Chris Kinyanjui, the Acting Secretary General as well as Director for Federation Development.

Chris used his one week support visit to participate in one of the Board Meetings and some external engagements with donors.

Last Week, AAU hosted Jemal Ahmed the ActionAid International Head of Country Support (Africa 1) where Uganda falls. Jemal, previously the Country Director of ActionAid Ethiopia shared the experience from Ethiopia where two staff of ActionAid were imprisoned for two years for challenging social injustices.

Speaking to AAU staff, Jemal urged staff not to be discouraged by the developments within the organisation since what is happening to AAU has happened elsewhere and in worse forms.

AAU is also currently hosting the International Security advisor. She is in the Country to tip staff on personal security management for personal and organisational safety.

As earlier reported in the previous Weekly publications, the Global ActionAid secretariat is in crisis mood. The Uganda Crisis Management Team was established and it continues to meet daily to strategies and work towards bringing the situation back to normal but also ensure that work continues at ActionAid Uganda despite the crisis.

Projects amidst Freeze– Staff speak out!

We are engaging new funding partners-David Ssewanyana



David emphasized that project staff are not idle as the organisation is seeking out new donors to fund critical project activities

David Ssewanyana is the Acting Grants Coordinator at ActionAid Uganda. He spoke to the Weekly about the fate of the 12 ongoing projects amidst the Accounts freeze.

"The freezing of our bank accounts has significantly affected implementation of 12 ongoing donor supported projects across the board. The most affected are survivors of gender based violence (GBV) under the GBV Shelter Project and 107 orphans in Bwaise whose school fees for the third and promotional term is being held on the blocked accounts.

We have communicated the current situation to each of our Funding Partners and negotiating for revised schedules and reporting timelines. We have also met in-country funding partners to provide status updates and explain the current work dynamics.

The organisation has embarked on a strategy of engaging new funding partners to directly fund critical activities under the different projects and hence reduce on the negative impact that the freeze would have had on the projects.

The project staff are not idle. They are using this time to compile and share updates with different stakeholders and funding partners on project progress for the last quarter, finalise plans and budgets for 2018, as well as adapting budgets and work plans for accelerated implementation as soon as they unfreeze the accounts.

GBV Shelter Services Scaled down– Joyce Nabwire Baker



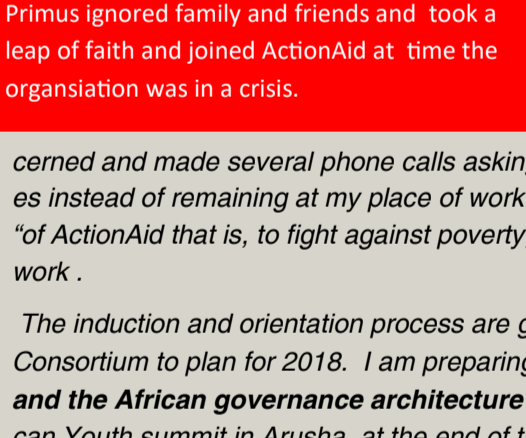
Joyce, the GBV Shelter Project Coordinator says the govt institutions are also affected by the current accounts freeze

According to Joyce Nabwire Baker, the Project Coordinator of the DFID funded Gender Based Violence Shelter Project, the crackdown has greatly compromised the quality and delivery of comprehensive GBV shelter services to survivors at the 10 shelters of Gulu, Amuru, Lira, Nebbi, Mubende, Bwaise, Pallisa, Kumi, Kween and Katakwi. While the shelters remain open, the services provided in the current situation are not as comprehensive as they are meant to be.

"Currently, we are only admitting women and girls with extremely delicate cases into our shelters to cut on the accommodation, meals and general maintenance of survivors while at the shelters.

Out door activities have been put on halt due to uncertainties that could arise from interruptions by Security agencies as experienced before in Bwaise Shelter. However, we are still exploring indoor activities like mediations and psychosocial support as we monitor the situation at hand. The most ironic issue is that the Police and other Government institutions have continued to refer clients to the shelters and plead that they are admitted. As the 16 days of Activism against Gender Based Violence draw in, we have received several letters from Local Governments requesting for support during the campaign. The government should hence rethink its stand on our accounts since its institutions are equally affected by the current accounts freeze."

Youth losing employment opportunities due to accounts Freeze -



Nora Nakyegera is disappointed that Govt would block funds meant to address youth unemployment

Nora Nakyegera

The freeze of the accounts has negatively affected the EU funded Youth Empowerment for Sustainable self-employment for National Development project (YESSEN).

Nora Nakyegera, the Acting-Project Coordinator told the weekly that it was unfortunate that the government would freeze the accounts and stifle projects such as these aimed at addressing the alarming levels of youth unemployment in the country.

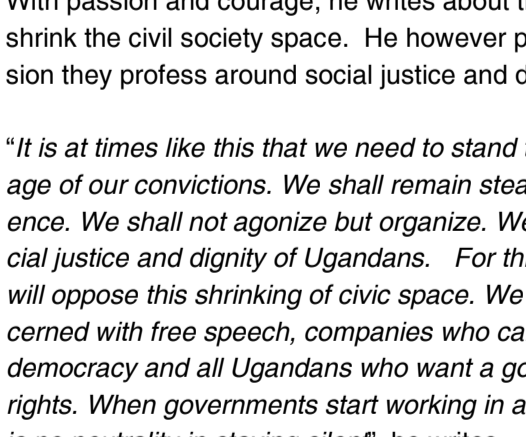
"The Project aims at building a vibrant youth led business movement to create employment opportunities, improve incomes and contribute to the country's National development. Why would you hold funds for such a project", she asked rhetorically.

According to Simon Peter Wolumeli, the Manger, Program Development at AAU, the accounts freeze came at a time when the project team had just completed the Climate Resilient Agriculture (CSRA) training of 58 youth groups across the four districts of project implementation (Amuru, Nwoya, Pader and Kotodo)

They groups had selected their CSRA technology demonstration sites and were ready to procure items for the said demonstration when the funds were frozen. Simon adds that hundreds of youth were also meant to be attached to artisans for apprenticeship placement to develop business skills before being supported with seed fund for selected business enterprises at the time of the AAU siege.

As we await Government's decision on the accounts, the project officers are encouraging the youth to test the CRSA techniques that they have acquired with whatever resources they can marshal for learning.

Family and friends wondered why I was joining a challenged organisation- Primus Atukwatse.



Primus ignored family and friends and took a leap of faith and joined ActionAid at a time the organisation was in a crisis.

While the media was filled with news about the siege of ActionAid offices and the blocking of the organizational accounts, Primus Atukwatse was busy signing his contract with ActionAid as the Coordinator of the African Governance Architecture Project. The Weekly interrogated his rare courage that made him start work at an organization when his salary wasn't guaranteed.

"Motivated by my personal faith that God cannot lead to a closed door, and personal philosophy that stars don't shine during the day, but only at night, I joined Action in "Crisis" of siege and frozen accounts as coordinator of African governance Architecture. The Project's core objective is to increase and strengthen the role that CSOs play in processes to ensure that all African Union (AU) member states are democratic and accountable to their citizens.

Many friends and family members were deeply concerned and made several phone calls asking why I was joining an organization with huge challenges instead of remaining at my place of work. My strong belief and association with "Raison d'entre "of ActionAid that is, to fight against poverty, and injustices, I took a leap of Faith and reported to work.

The induction and orientation process are going very well, and am working with members of the Consortium to plan for 2018. I am preparing a paper on; **The democratic crisis in East Africa, and the African governance architecture; the role of the Youth.** that I will present to East African Youth summit in Arusha, at the end of this month. I must Say I don't regret the decision I made."

The Dutch Gov't has offered support and solidarity– Jennipher Achaloi



Jennipher during the interview with the Weekly team.

After raiding the ActionAid offices on 20th September, Police proceeded to raid the offices of Action Alliance, an ActionAid implementing partner based in Lira. Two staff were arrested and several office documents and equipment were taken by the police for what they called further investigation. Jennipher Achaloi is the Fair, Green and Global Project Coordinator under which Action Alliance operates. The project is funded by the Dutch Government.

"The raid, arrest and detention of two staff of Action Alliance, one of the Fair, Green and Global (FGG) project implementing partner by police last September has hindered the project's work with local communities. The organisation builds the capacity of local communities in non-violent mechanisms to resist land grabs. Being a young organisation, the staff and board have had to rethink strategies for further implementation. This setback comes at a time when mass land grabs are spreading in the country. The Dutch government has been briefed about the developments and have offered support and solidarity to ActionAid and Action Alliance.

On the whole, the ongoing investigations and freezing of AAU accounts has affected the community consultations on the proposed amendment of Article 26 of the 1995 Constitution to allow government compulsorily take over land it has identified for development before compensation of the owner. The Bill in its current form violates cardinal human rights principles such as Free, Prior and Informed Consent of land owners and violate the spirit of the 1995 Constitution. With frozen accounts, the consultations and participation of local communities have been halted and yet community participation is key in the discussions before parliament discusses and or passes the Bill.

The Fair, Green and Global (FGG) Project focuses on enhancing state and corporate accountability in Uganda through improved corporate conduct. The project, funded by the Dutch government is in its second year of operation.

Expanding the Alliance against shrinking space-Blog!

Kumi Naidoo is the Director of Africans Rising and Former Executive Director of Greenpeace, but also a globally recognised blogger.

With passion and courage, he writes about the current attempts by the Ugandan Government to shrink the civil society space. He however promises the world that they shall not relent on the mission they are profess around social justice and dignity of Ugandans.

"It is at times like this that we need to stand together more strongly than ever - and have the courage of our convictions. We shall remain steadfast with an unmatched spirit and unparalleled resilience. We shall not agonize but organize. We shall not relent on the mission we profess around social justice and dignity of Ugandans. For this reason, we need to expand the alliance of actors who will oppose this shrinking of civic space. We need everyone to speak up: the media who are concerned with free speech, companies who care about rule of law, parliamentarians who care about democracy and all Ugandans who want a government that is committed to delivering on their basic rights. When governments start working in arbitrary, unjustified and legally indefensible ways there is no neutrality in staying silent", he writes.

[Click here for the full blog.](#)

AAU's Arthur Larok tips CSOs on how to handle Police Siege

Civil society organizations are not taking attacks on their work lightly. Several organizations have already the wrath of government security agencies that have raided their offices and confiscated documents, equipment, money and bank accounts frozen.

Last week, Arthur spoke to the world about the siege of the ActionAid offices. He gave tips to other CSOs in the country and all over on how to deal with similar situation if it occurred in their organisations.

[Capture the full interview here](#)

Week Ahead

- ActionAid leadership team will be reviewing the critical pathways/ operationalisation plans for the yet to be launched 5th Strategy Paper today (Monday) and Tuesday this week.