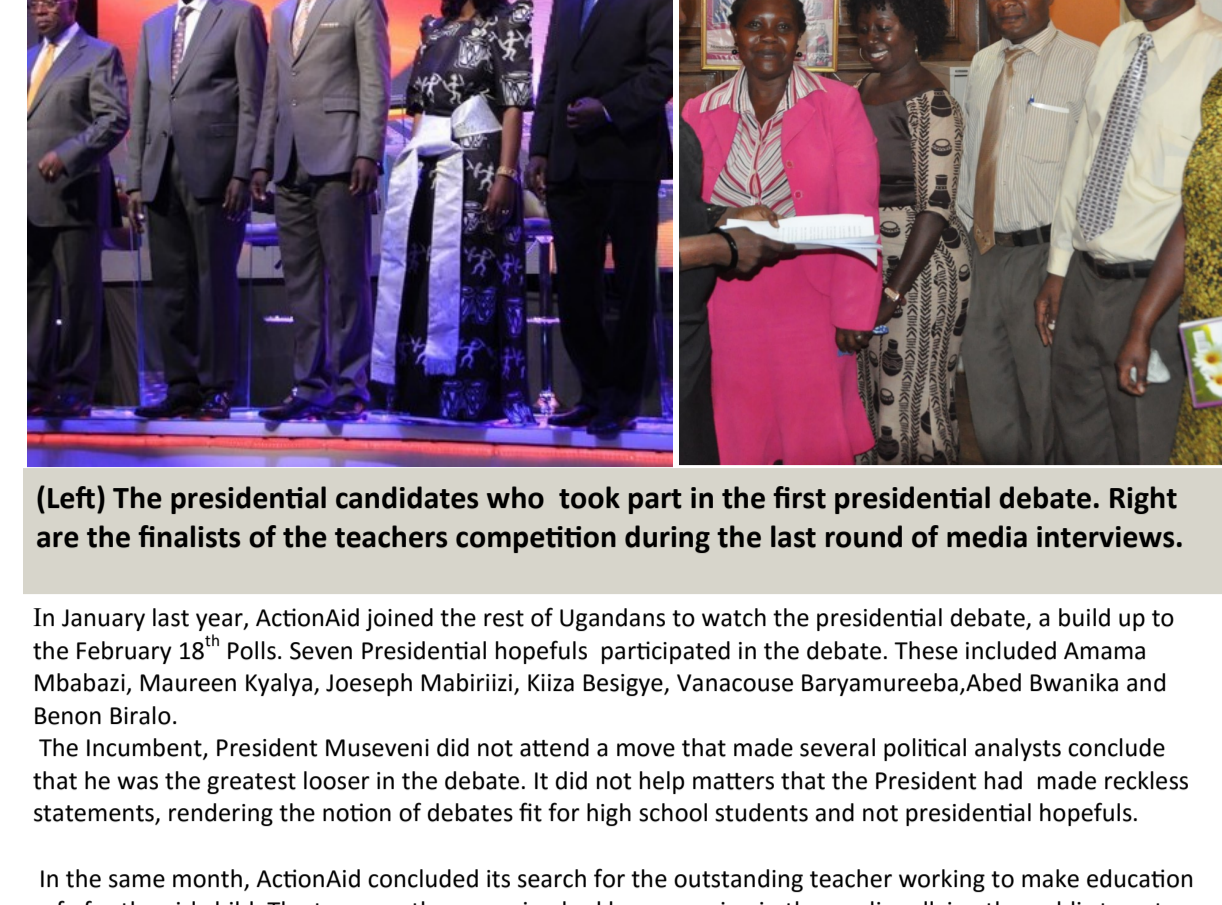


actionaid Uganda



Jan: The maiden presidential debate and the best teachers in the land!

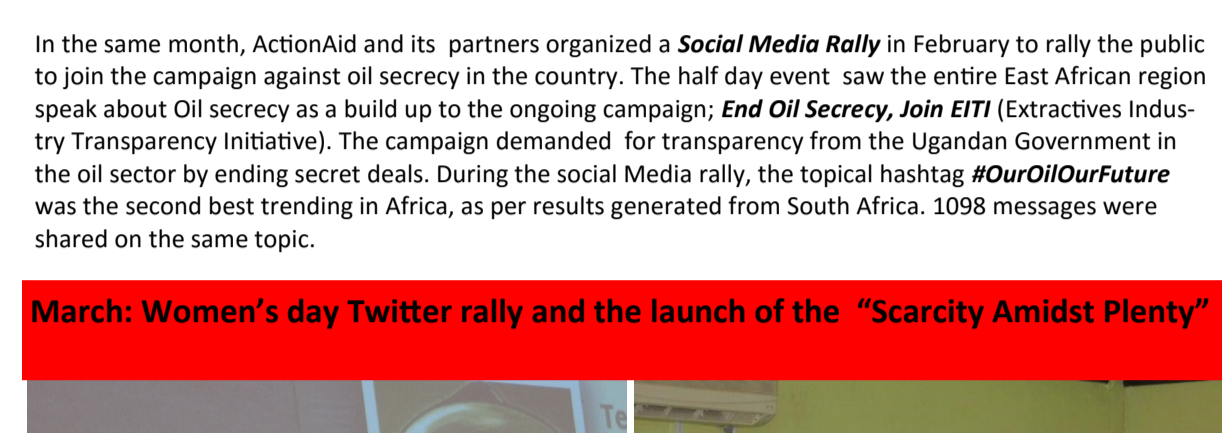


(Left) The presidential candidates who took part in the first presidential debate. Right are the finalists of the teachers competition during the last round of media interviews.

In January last year, ActionAid joined the rest of Ugandans to watch the presidential debate, a build up to the February 18th Polls. Seven Presidential hopefuls participated in the debate. These included Amama Mbabazi, Maureen Kyalya, Joseph Mubirizi, Kiiza Besigye, Vanoucouse Baryamureeba, Abed Bwanika and Benon Biralo. The incumbent, President Museveni did not attend a move that made several political analysts conclude that he was the greatest loser in the debate. It did not help matters that the President had made reckless statements, rendering the notion of debates fit for high school students and not presidential hopefuls.

In the same month, ActionAid concluded its search for the outstanding teacher working to make education safe for the girl child. The two months campaign had been running in the media rallying the public to vote for their best teacher. Mr John Kabanda of Nakasero Primary school took home the cash prize of UGX1000000/=, Nandutu Betty of Buganda Road Primary school came second and Mugerwa Charles Lwanga of Mutundwe Parents School came third.

Feb: the 2016 Presidential elections and the oil twitter rally!

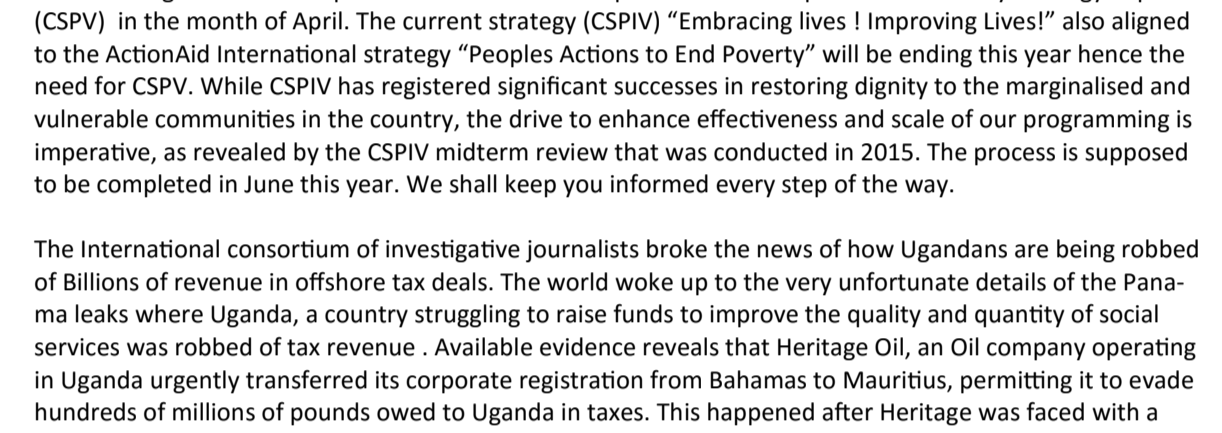


AAU's Arthur Larok and the Executive Director of Global Rights Alert joined the Oil Twitter rally to demand for an end to oil secrecy.

In the month of February, Ugandans went to the polls to vote for their president for the next five years and over 400 legislators. However, the election that granted President Museveni an extension to his 30 year rule was criticized for lacking transparency. Museveni's main opponent, Dr Kiiza Besigye denounced the election as a sham and called for an independent audit of the results that gave one of Africa's longest serving leaders a 60.8 percentage win. The EU observer mission said that the election had been conducted in an intimidating atmosphere while Commonwealth observers said the poll "fell short of meeting some key democratic benchmarks".

In the same month, ActionAid and its partners organized a **Social Media Rally** in February to rally the public to join the campaign against oil secrecy in the country. The half day event saw the entire East African region speak about Oil secrecy as a build up to the ongoing campaign: **End Oil Secrecy, Join EITI** (Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative). The campaign demanded for transparency from the Ugandan Government in the oil sector by ending secret deals. During the social Media rally, the topical hashtag **#OurOilOurFuture** was the second best trending in Africa, as per results generated from South Africa. 1098 messages were shared on the same topic.

March: Women's day Twitter rally and the launch of the "Scarcity Amidst Plenty"



Left is the Women's day social media rally and right is Hon Kamuntu at the launch of the findings of the study.

ActionAid joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Women's day in March. AAU used the occasion to galvanise global attention on gender equality and Women's economic empowerment through an exciting and impactful social media rally. AAU's Country Director, while at the rally challenged that if masculinity is threatened by an empowered woman, then it was not build on a just foundation. At the end of the Twitter rally, statistics indicated that the Women's day social media explosion trended in 26 countries around the world with a total of 2074 tweets. The total reach was 18,211,503. However, the campaign was dominated by 60% of men and only 30% of the women. While this raises issues of the women's role in their own struggle for equity and equality, the 60% is explained by the fact that men in the country have more access to the media and social media such as Facebook and twitter as compared to the women, a statistic that should also be reversed.

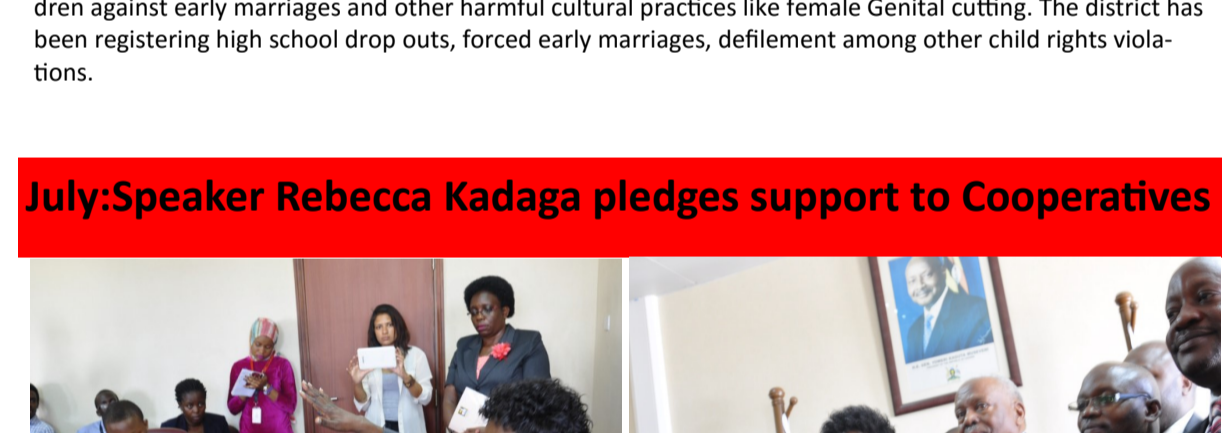
In the same month, ActionAid launched a study report dubbed, **Scarcity Amidst Plenty: Status of Water for Production infrastructure in Teso Sub Region**. The report was a result of the study undertaken to profile water for production/flood management infrastructure in the Teso sub region using an integrated Geographical Information Systems (GIS) technology in the Districts of Kumi, Ngora, Soroti, Katakwi and Amuria. The dissemination of the study findings was graced by Hon Ephraim Kamuntu, the Minister for water and Environment. Also present was the Minister for Teso Affairs, Christine Amongin Apooru, civil society leaders, officials from the Ministries of Agriculture and Water and environment among others.

April: AAU starts new strategic paper development and the Panama leaks!

ActionAid Uganda leadership team embarked on the process to develop the Fifth Country Strategy Paper (CSPV) in the month of April. The current strategy (CSPV) "Embracing lives! Improving Lives!" also aligned to the ActionAid International strategy "Peoples Actions to End Poverty" will be ending this year hence the need for CSPV. While CSPV has registered significant successes in restoring dignity to the marginalised and vulnerable communities in the country, the drive to enhance effectiveness and scale of our programming is imperative, as revealed by the CSPV midterm review that was conducted in 2015. The process is supposed to be completed in June this year. We shall keep you informed every step of the way.

The International consortium of investigative journalists broke the news of how Ugandans are being robbed of Billions of revenue in offshore tax deals. The world woke up to the very unfortunate details of the Panama leaks where Uganda, a country struggling to raise funds to improve the quality and quantity of social services was robbed of tax revenue. Available evidence reveals that Heritage Oil, an Oil company operating in Uganda urgently transferred its corporate registration from Bahamas to Mauritius, permitting it to evade hundreds of millions of pounds owed to Uganda in taxes. This happened after Heritage was faced with a large tax bill in Uganda over the sale of an oil field. ActionAid together with the tax justice network partners convened and spoke about these very unfortunate revelations. While speaking to the press, the CSO leaders noted that while it's a well-known story that Heritage oil attempted to avoid paying capital gain tax in Uganda, The Panama papers leak reveals a new angle that multinational corporations can switch ownership of their holding to a tax haven or double tax treaty jurisdiction to avoid paying taxes in a host country.

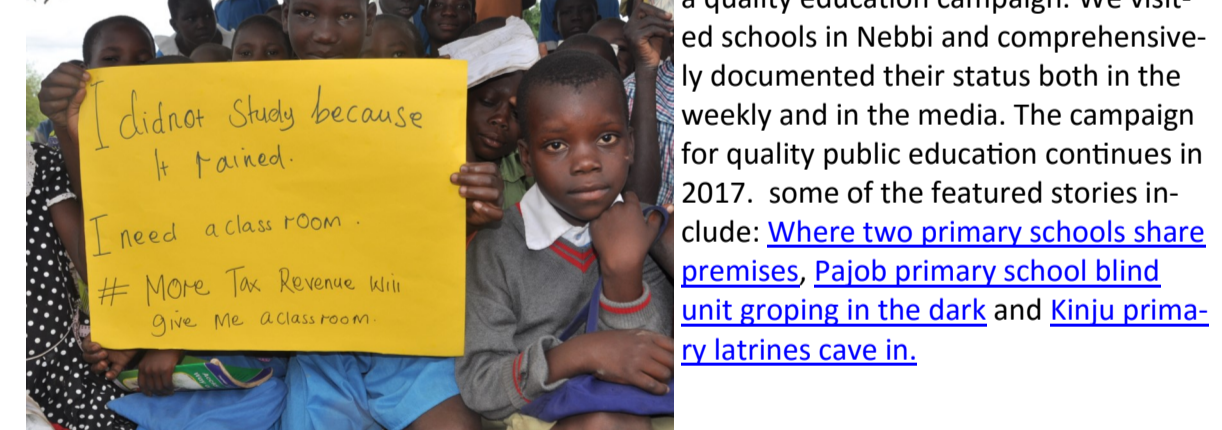
May: The campaign against MP tax exemptions



ActionAid and CSOs under the Tax Justice Network in May collected over 3 million signatures in a bid to frustrate the Legislators' move to dodge Income Tax payment. On 20th April 2016, a 5 million citizens' campaign was launched to petition the president to reject the new insertion by MPs under Sec.21 of the Income Tax Bill that creates Tax exemptions on the Legislators emoluments and allowances which are in Millions of shillings, and yet the same tax regime imposes taxation on emoluments and benefits of all other public servants and low income earners.

The signatures were later delivered to the Prime Minister, Hon Ruhakana Rugunda who promised to listen to the voice of the people. The President later returned the Bill to parliament, describing it as politically and morally incorrect. Unfortunately, the Legislators passed the Bill for the second time and forwarded it to the president for signing. The president returned the bill to parliament for the second time but was silent about the clauses that exempt legislators from paying tax on their allowances. The Bill was later signed despite civil society outcry. This year, the CSOs will be going to courts of law to challenge this law and success is guaranteed. The struggle to attain Tax justice in Uganda continues.

June: Comemoration of the Day of the African child and Quality Service Delivery Dialogue



(Left) Hon Christine Amongin, Hon Tarsis Kabwegere, Dr Consolata Kabonesa, Christine Aboke all graced the dialogue. Right is the EU head of mission handing over books to one of the pupils in Kapchorwa

Leaders from Northern Uganda in June last year warned that Uganda's future is blurred if the Government does not invest in improving the quality of service delivery in the region especially the health and education sectors. The warning was made at Sheraton Hotel during a National Dialogue on the state of service delivery in Northern Uganda under the theme; **Walk the talk, make quality service delivery a reality in Northern Uganda**.

The meeting was attended by Members of Parliament, Resident District Commissioners, District LC5 Chairpersons and technocrats from Northern Uganda. Also in the house were Hon Rebecca Othengo, the Minister of State for Northern Uganda and Hon Christine Amongin, the Minister of State for Teso. Hon Tarsis Kabwegere, the Minister in charge of General Duties in the Prime Minister's Office presided over the dialogue. Two representatives from Northern Uganda delivered a communique to the three Ministers. The document highlighted specific challenges on social service delivery in Northern Uganda and the key recommendations to better the situation.

ActionAid joined the rest of the World to Commemorate the Day of the African Child in June. In an event presided over by the European Union Head of Mission in Kapchorwa, the children played, sung, acted and cried in equal measure against the violations of their rights by those meant to protect them. Through the skits, the children decried the bureaucracy and corruption in the justice system that has denied them justice for the several child rights violations they have faced. The EU Head of Mission appealed to the Sebei community to abandon the harmful cultural practices and come up with alternative ways of passage to adulthood other than Female Genital cutting. During the same event, he launched the **Amudat District Local Government's Protection of Children ordinance, 2015**. The ordinance among others aims at protecting children against early marriages and other harmful cultural practices like female Genital cutting. The district has been registering high school drop outs, forced early marriages, defilement among other child rights violations.

July: Speaker Rebecca Kadaga pledges support to Cooperatives



ActionAid and several Cooperatives petitioned the Speaker of Parliament on the status of Cooperatives in Uganda in July last year. "We funded cooperatives of Uganda pray that the 10th Parliament causes the establishment of a fully fledged well funded independent Ministry of Cooperatives with Cooperative professionals and functional structures right from the sub country to the national level", read part of the petition.

Fredrick Kawooya, the Policy and Campaigns Manager at ActionAid said that while the Government has tried to revive the Cooperative Movement through the appointment of a Minister of State for Cooperatives, a lot needs to be done to revamp the sector. The Speaker of Parliament, Hon Rebecca Kadaga while receiving the petition promised that the 10th Parliament will work towards the creation of a **Cooperative Development Fund** that will avail funds to cooperatives through the Uganda Central Cooperative Financial Service. She also promised to ensure that a Parliamentary Committee on Cooperatives is instituted so that all concerns regarding cooperatives are channelled there. Uganda has seen an increase in the formation and registration of Cooperatives despite the various challenges. A total of 16000 cooperatives have been registered to date.

August: The Quality public Education campaign



In the month of August, the Weekly run a quality education campaign. We visited schools in Nebbi and comprehensively documented their status both in the weekly and in the media. The campaign for quality public education continues in 2017. some of the featured stories include: [Where two primary schools share premises](#), [Pajob primary school blind unit groping in the dark](#) and [Kinjy primary latrines cave in](#).

September: ActionAid in a bold move to work with Political parties



Meetings with NRM (left), Democratic party (centre) and FDC (right)

In a bid to create a collaborative agenda for Ugandans and the Country at large, ActionAid Uganda took a bold step to consult and hopefully build a collective agenda with political parties as these are a central entity in Uganda's governance and development agenda.

Last September, ActionAid met with the top management of the three biggest political parties in the country: The Democratic Party (DP), The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and the National Resistance Movement (NRM). While at the meetings, AAU introduced itself to the respective party leadership, explaining its philosophy, vision, mission and areas of work. At the FDC headquarters, ActionAid learnt that the party has a five year program aimed at building structures at the grassroots but most importantly to economically empower Ugandans. While at the NRM Secretariat, the Secretary General, Justine Kasule Lumumba on behalf of the Party President welcomed the partnership with ActionAid.

"This is the beginning of the beginning", she noted while thanking ActionAid for seeking to work with the party. The NRM Treasurer urged ActionAid and other CSOs to avoid contaminating good causes like campaigns against corruption with faces that seem to be in the opposition. The members of the Democratic Party on the other hand, while at AAU offices for the meeting were thrilled with the AAU vision of a world without poverty and injustice.

"At the Democratic party, we stand for justice, just like ActionAid. We welcome this partnership. Together, we can realise a Uganda without injustice" exclaimed the party Secretary General, the late Mathias Nsubuga.

All the three meetings explored entry points for a more systematic collaboration in areas of mutual interest. These partnerships will be rolled out this year.

In the same month, ActionAid mourned the loss of James AA.Otto, its former Board Chairperson. He was described as hardworking, principled and loving. He worked so hard for ActionAid, the wider civil society and development generally in Uganda. He was a father, a statesman, and a man of integrity! He was a founding Trustee of ActionAid Uganda and a permanent member of the ActionAid Uganda General Assembly. Rest in peace James

October: Women to Kilimanjaro campaign

In October last year, Rural women farmers from Uganda joined their colleagues from several African states at the foot of Mt Kilimanjaro to demand for the recognition and respect of women land rights. The courageous women who camped at the foot of Mt Kilimanjaro to speak to the world about women land rights in Uganda and Africa braved the eight days journey, to and from Kilimanjaro. Tired and exhausted, the women were very happy to have taken this trek and were proud of their achievement.

The greatest tale of the day was of the two courageous women who made it to the Peak of Kilimanjaro Mountain along with others from eight countries. Irene Cheptoeke a farmer from Kapchemwor village, in Kapchorwa district and Polly Apio, a 59year old farmer from Adachari village in Katakwi could not hold back their excitement. Their tale of the hurdle they went through to reach the peak was tearing, but the beginning of a journey of believing in themselves, and protecting what belongs to them land.

"It was very tough. I cant believe I reached the peak of Mt Kilimanjaro. This has increased my energy and courage. If I can climb Kilimanjaro, then I can successfully mobilize my fellow women to say no to the several patriarchal beliefs that deny us land control and ownership" stated Apio Polly upon her return.

November: The Uganda Police signs Civic Charter

In November, the Director of Human Resources and Spokesperson of the Uganda Police Force, Andrew Felix Kaweesi appended his Signature to the Global Civic Charter with a commitment to ensure that the Police Force provide a conducive atmosphere for Ugandans to genuinely participant in shaping their society. Kaweesi made the commitment during a breakfast meeting organised by ActionAid aimed at finding lasting solutions to challenges that Ugandans face in advancing their right to civic participation. The highly engaging meeting was also attended by the Commissioner of Community Policing Ms Hadjiia Namutebi, Members of the Jobless brotherhood and several civil society leaders.

December: The model man campaign

In December, ActionAid in partnership with Bukedde Television launched the Economic Empowerment Model man campaign. The campaign that will be running for the next two months aims at recognising men that have supported their spouses to attain economic independence but also challenge other men to stop GBV and invest in their spouses.

You too can be part of this campaign. Nominate the men in your life that have supported their spouses attain economic independence and we shall come and tell their story. The winning couple will take home a cash prize to further invest in their business. Together, we can achieve economic dignity for all women and girls.