



## Weekly

August 31— 6 September

Ernestina proudly shows off her land that she reclaimed with support from ActionAid under the Beckley Women Land Rights Project. Ernestina had been accused of witchcraft by her in-laws and denied access, control and ownership of her land. She is now utilizing her land productively to better her livelihood.

## Alur Kingdom on spot over bunishment of Women



(Left) Religious and cultural leaders in a group discussion mapping out ways of addressing Women Rights Violations. Right is a religious leader making his submission to the coalition.

One of the key issues affecting women's access to justice in Alur community is the high fees levied on them by the cultural leaders as condition for handling their complaints. This concern was raised and deliberated on by the GBV Coalition meeting held in Nebbi and Zombo districts.

According to Hope Wambi, the LRP Coordinator for Nebbi, the women in West Nile prefer the traditional justice system because its closer to them as opposed to the Government courts of Law that are far away from them.

"However, the greatest set back is that there is no uniform fee set aside by the traditional structure. This means that the leaders determine the fee at own will, which affects Women's access to justice"

Hope, while speaking on phone informed the Weekly that there was a case of a widow who was accused of witchcraft. When she reported to the traditional justice system, she was asked to pay UGX750000/= before her case was handled. The lady could not afford the money and hence ended up being banished.

The coalition members placed the Kingdom officials on spot to explain why they have continued to banish women who have been branded witches from their land. In response, the kingdom official stated that they were banishing women for their own security.

The quarterly coalition meeting which brought together 50 participants from Police, Judiciary, CSOs Cultural and Religious leaders agreed that the traditional justice system sets a uniform fee, affordable to women seeking for justice.

The Royal Minister for Gender Labour and Social Development in Alur Kingdom- Moses Okwonga indicated that he had already communicated to King and they have plans to debate this issue in the next council and come up with realistic standard fees that are affordable by the local women.

The Coalition members tasked the chiefdom to come up with alternatives of securing the Women without violating their rights further. The coalition agreed to meet in a period of one month to track progress on the resolutions.

## Lira Residents speak out on poor social service delivery



Agnes Atim, narrates how she almost lost her life and that of her baby at Ogur Health center IV at the community Barraza

With funding from the Democratic Governance Facility through the Information, Voice and Accountability Project, ActionAid is working to ensure that community members fully participate in ensuring effective service delivery in their localities. In the week ended, ActionAid conducted two community Barrazas in the sub counties of Ogur and Barr in Lira district. The meetings brought together over 500 participants (300 men and 200 women) including Youth, politicians, technocrats and members of the civil society.

During the meetings, community members demanded for better social services but also made follow-ups on commitments made by power holders during the previous barrazas.

With tears welling in her eyes, Agnes Atim,44 narrated how she nearly lost her life while giving birth at Ogur Health Centre IV.

"I was asked to buy gloves in order for the midwife to attend to me. When I told her that I did not have money at the moment, she pushed me away and opted to work on some one who had money on them. I was just lucky that the doctor came in immediately and realized that I was in a critical state. He attended to me and saved my life and that of my baby".

Apart from the poor health services, members reported about the poor water sources and road networks in the community and technocrats who have continued to conceal information making it difficult for the community monitors to do their work. Community members also decried the corruption tendencies especially with Government projects of NUSAF2, NAADs, Youth Livelihood program among others. To benefit from these projects, you either have to be a relative or must be willing to give back to the officers in charge. ActionAid will be following up these issues with the relevant authorities to ensure that the community members get better and standard social services from the Government.



An old woman cries out against he fraud in the pension scheme that has seen her live a miserable life after her retirement.

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## Pupils petition at the Children's Forum



Nantongo hands over the petition

Last week, ActionAid Kalangala, Pallisa and Busiki LRPs convened in Pallisa for the first ever ActionAid Children Forum. The event that was hosted at Pallisa Secondary school started with a march around Pallisa town. Clad in red and white T-shirts, the pupils held placards denouncing child rights violations such as defilement, forced and early marriages, child labour among others.



Pupils marching in pallisa

The Children, later in the day presented a petition to the district representatives of Kalangala, Pallisa, Kibuku, Namutum-ba ,Budaka and Iganga. While presenting the petition, 13 year old Nantongo Benedetti from Kalangala informed the power holders present that pupils continue to learn under tree shades.

"That simply means that our learning is conditioned by the weather. When it rains, that simply means no school for some of us", she said.

Nantongo added that the sexual harassment and defilement of the girl pupils by some teachers was on an increase and this should be addressed immediately. On the issue of Universal Primary Education, the pupils did not mince their words. They stated that the program was becoming irrelevant as the quality of teachers was deteriorating by the day. They also pointed out the unrealistic teacher to pupil ratio that is making it difficult for teachers to pay attention to individual pupils. The pupils advised that the program be revisited immediately if the future of this country is to be redeemed.



Nantongo reads the petition

The leaders present promised to treat all issues raised in the petition with the urgency and seriousness they deserve.

The children also got an opportunity to interact with the district technocrats during the role model sessions. The games, movies and karaoke crowned off the day, ensuring that all days work does not deteriorate the young lads into dull pupils.

## ActionAid in the News

- In his analytical piece in the Observer, Edmond Awor asks a fundamental question, "Where is civil society space in Uganda?", drawing lessons from the recent robberies of civil society offices, including ActionAid. For further reading and reflections, [Click](#)
- Counting the gains, is what the Women Lango sub region are doing. Thanks to The Beckley Women Land Rights Project implemented by ActionAid, Women in the region have been able to attain land access and ownership. Many have had their lives transformed from Women of War (due to the LRA Rebellion in Northern Uganda) to Women Entrepreneurs. Watch this inspiring video [Here](#)
- The Guardian last week reported about the NGO Bill that was then being discussed by Ugandan law makers. However, they forgot to report that only 9 clauses were discussed as the legislators preferred voting for new districts to discussing and passing the Bill. This story [Here](#)

## WEEK AHEAD:

- This week marks the beginning of the ActionAid Planning and Budgeting cycle. The entire leadership team is at Royal Suits Bugolobi for a three day retreat on the same. We shall keep you updated on next steps arising from this meeting.