

## The ActionAid Staff Retreat at Colline Hotel In Mukono



Last week was a time to unwind, rekindle, develop relationships, share challenges and strategies, and even eat for the ActionAiders in Uganda. The weeklong retreat happens once every two years and this time, it was bigger and better than ever. The ActionAiders were taken through team-work sessions, team building, conflict resolution, personal finance management and a lot more.

The team was honoured by the presence of the ActionAid board vice chairperson, Professor Consolata Kabonesa. She thanked the employees for making the board very proud and promised that the board will get more involved in the organisation programming. We shall be sharing more widely the retreat report and details of the various sessions for your reference. Well come back!

## No More Go Between, ActionAid to Work Directly with UNFPA in Lira and Gulu Safety Centers



Maximum attention!! The Women Rights and grant management team taking their time on the plans and budgets at Colline Hotel last Friday

Beginning the New Year in style, the Women Safety Centers of Lira and Gulu will now receive funding from UNFPA directly. Previously, the funding of the centers has been through a consortium of five organizations led by UWONET. However, UNFPA has disbanded and is going to work with individual organizations including ActionAid for the next one year with a possibility of extension.

The Women Rights team took off the entire Friday last week to develop plans, budgets and the general roadmap. These were submitted last week and will be reviewed by ActionAid and UNFPA Tuesday. This will be followed by signing of the Memorandum of Understanding.

We look forward to a more refined relationship with UNFPA and of course, more justice and redemption from Gender based Violence for the women in Northern Uganda.

## Programs Unit Strategizes in the Program Thinking Meeting



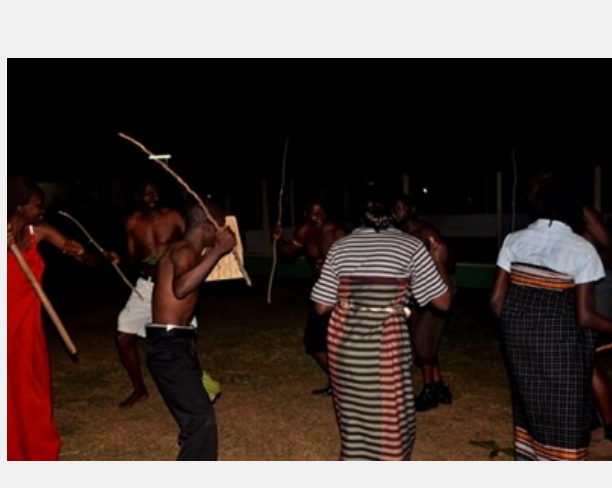
Nickson Ogwal, makes a presentation on program led funding to LRP coordinators and program unit leadership.

It was not business as usual at the programs unit-thinking meeting. The meeting attended by LRP coordinators and Programs unit heads challenged the team to think out of the box, and come up with solutions on how to roll out programs better and cause lasting impact in the communities we work. The highlight of the meeting, apart from unit updates and strategies for the next quarter was the presentation on the different ActionAid projects, which are considered high risk. The unit was challenged to do their best to ensure that money that has been solicited is not taken back for reasons of underutilization as this is not very good for the future of the organisation and its donor relations.

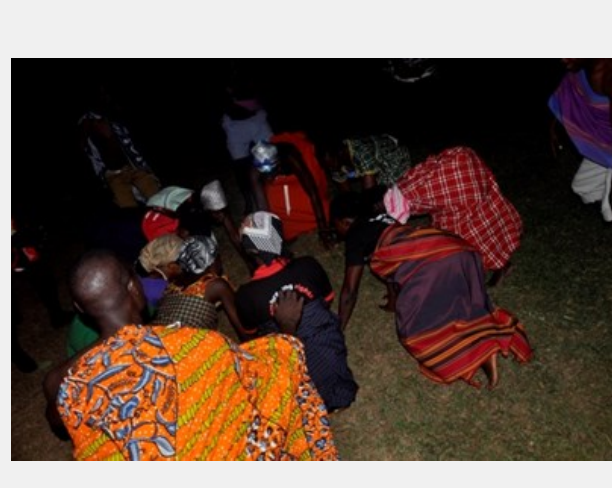
"Imagine ActionAid writing a cheque to European Union, refunding unspent money, and the next day, we write a proposal seeking for funding to the same donor. The cheque will have said a lot about us negatively. We must fight such scenarios," said Nickson Ogwal.

## The United Cultures of ActionAid!!

Unique in all ways, ActionAid Uganda proved that it is an organisation worth its name, values and mission, standing above ethnic differences to work for the poor and excluded communities! Last Friday, I realized that unlike some organizations where there is monopoly of one or two tribes, ActionAid is a united culture of sorts. This was exhibited in the cultural gala that marked the official end of the retreat. The event was so colourful, with comments like, "This is now the Actual Retreat" From the Adhola to the samyas to the Basoga. The Baganda ladies were graceful in their Gomesi, the Banyakitata calm and humble in their regalia, the Bakiga hard and aggressive in their dance, the Itesot celebratory... you name it. And at the end of the evening, it was hard to tell which culture "stole" the show. The music, dance, drama, dressing, folks tales, drums were undoubtedly remarkable. At least I will remember the Acholi and Lugbara's for their artistic dressing! Enjoy the highlights



The Ateso doing their dance



The Langi Warriors.



The Lugbaras love vegetation



Buganda Queens?



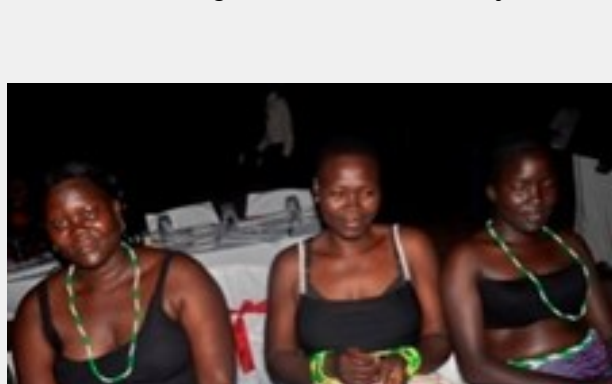
Scanavia Swaga!!



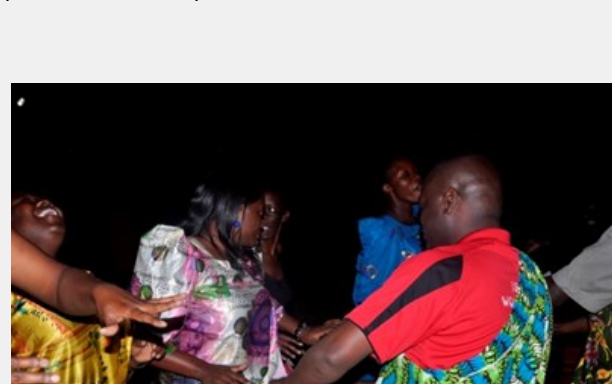
Basaja ba Kabaka (Kabaka's Men)



Even Indians/Rwandese?



Acholi Babes



The Kisoga way

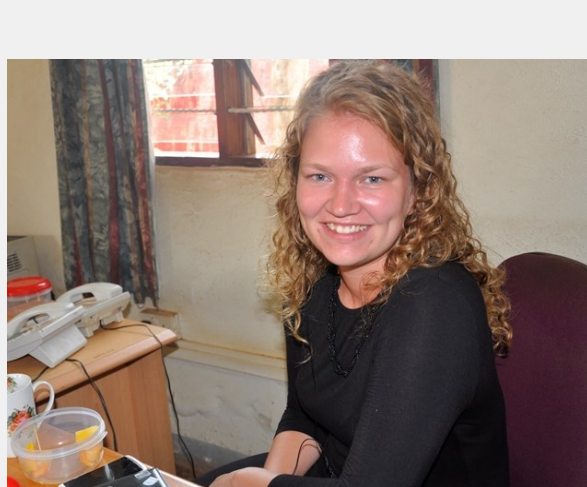


Banyoro/Batoro Anthems



The graceful Banyoro/Batoro!

## People4Change Volunteer supporting Grants Unit



ActionAid Uganda Kampala office is hosting Christie Duckert Schmidt, a People for Change - Volunteer from Denmark. Christie is working with the Grants Unit for a period of 3months. Christie is specialized in Sales & Marketing Management. She has knowledge in marketing disciplines and tools, concept development, brand identity and adapting the brands philosophy to a specific segment and culture. When asked why she choose to come to Uganda Christie replied, 'I am volunteering because I want to get a bigger perspective of life'. In the Grants Unit, Christie will participate in the development of a fundraising strategy, development of short documentaries showing achievements and impact of our project work and support development of a newsletter with a bias on project work.

The idea behind the People for Change - volunteer programme is the need for citizen engagement and for civil society to engage in global problems to challenge poverty and inequality. The People for Change- Volunteers are engaged people and agents of change who see themselves as part of both the global problems and solutions. It is no longer a question about "us and them" but rather of all of us together. For the People for Change - volunteers, this active citizenship starts by staying and working with communities. Bringing ordinary people from different cultures and a committed global civil society together will provide far better opportunities for the people concerned to raise their voice and provide potential solutions on ways to eradicate poverty and make the world a better place to live – locally, nationally, regionally and globally.

In case you need a volunteer in your unit, contact Ivan Mpagi, the P4C Officer.