



## Weekly September 22-28

### Hon Rukia gets emotional as the Gulu GBV Shelter is Launched!

Last week, the Minister of State for Gender and Cultural Affairs, Hon Isanga Lukia Nakadama was in Gulu to launch the Gender based violence shelter. The shelter was constructed by ActionAid with support from DFID through UNFPA. Hon Rukia almost broke down during her guided tour of the shelter. In the children's wing, she met Mercy, a GBV survivor who was defiled at only three years by a 29 year old man.



Ms. Esperance signs the visitors book at the shelter launch in Gulu.

"This is unacceptable", she remarked while cuddling the little girl. She commended ActionAid for the job well-done and pledged her continued support. Present at the launch was the Head of office at DFID in Uganda; Daniel Graymore. He commended ActionAid's work and reiterated the importance of dealing with power relations at household level. On her part, the UNFPA Country Representative, Esperance Fundira called on all actors to play a critical role along the referral pathway to ensure that the journey to justice is complete for all women and girls. The ActionAid Board Chairperson, Mr James Otto. While delivering his key note address, informed the gathering at Kanda grounds that ActionAid was committed to eliminating all kinds of violence against human life, including GBV.

"The cost of managing GBV cases is very high, and so we must join hands and denounce GBV", he cried out.

The ActionAid Country Director, Arthur Larok used the opportunity to announce a planned Gender Based Violence conference organized by ActionAid in partnership with all other agencies. He urged the gathering to honor the invitations and be part of the stock taking of the strides in the fight against GBV and set the agenda for the future. Other guests present were cultural leaders, the district political and technical leadership, CSO representatives among others.

### Let's Invest in Rural Women farmers!

On Thursday last week, ActionAid, together with institute of Social Transformation organized a National Consultative meeting on the establishment of the rural women farmers' movement in Uganda. The meeting that was held over dinner aimed at creating a dialogue towards investing in rural women farmers for a dignified rural life.

Dr Thelma Awori from the Institute of Social Transformation and one of the continental champions of rural women farmers urged all participants to break the traditional norms and advance women's development. She challenged the rural women farmers to stand up and advance the movement as its only them that understand the pain that they go through.

Henry Nickson Ogwal from ActionAid added that over 90% of the food consumed around the world is produced by rural women farmers.

"Let us invest more in Women Smallholder farmers who feed the over a billion people in the world", he added.

The meeting attracted twenty rural women farmers across twenty districts. The meeting was also graced by eight legislators under the leadership of Hon Auda, the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture among other CSO leaders.



Nickson and Thelma chat during the dinner

### Teso thirsty for Electoral Reforms

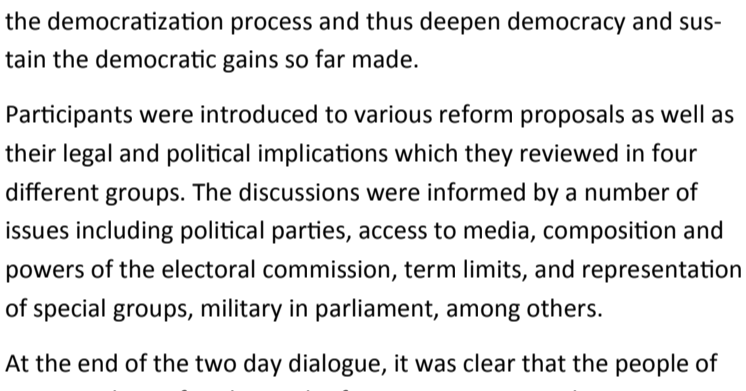
As a member of the Uganda Governance Monitoring platform but also one of the CSOs interested in causing positive Governance change in the Country, ActionAid organized a consultative meeting in Teso with the aim of shaping proposals for long term constitutional stability in Uganda.

The forum, which attracted over 200 participants, was graced by the Hon. Christine Aporu, the State Minister for Teso Affairs. Also present were the political, cultural and technocrats from Teso.

The consultative meeting was held ahead of the National Consultative Dialogue organized for purposes of forging a national consensus on a new system for organizing and managing elections. Participants agreed to the fact that there is a need to reform the country's electoral management systems so as to push the country forward in the democratization process and thus deepen democracy and sustain the democratic gains so far made.

Participants were introduced to various reform proposals as well as their legal and political implications which they reviewed in four different groups. The discussions were informed by a number of issues including political parties, access to media, competition and powers of the electoral commission, term limits, and representation of special groups, military in parliament, among others.

At the end of the two day dialogue, it was clear that the people of Teso are thirsty for electoral reforms. An outcomes document reflecting consensus from the region will inform the National Consultations on Free and Fair Elections. We look forward to the Sabin region deliberations on the same that will be held this week on Wednesday and Thursday in Kapchorwa.



A participant expresses his quest for a free and fair electoral process in a fully packed hall

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### Witchcraft Allegations worry Women in West Nile

In Nebbi last week, the Women Wont Wait coalition successfully held its review meeting. Stakeholders came together to share best practices on how they can improve the GBV referral pathway in Nebbi and Zombo districts.

Women activists expressed their concern on the rising cases of witchcraft allegations against widows. The cultural leaders, who are meant to protect the women, instead ask for huge sums of money from them in exchange for justice. Because majority of the women cannot pay the money, they are evicted from their land and even some killed in mob justice.

The police, who were put on spot to state their stand in the protection of these women stated that they were doing their very best. However, they stated that a clear procedure that the community uses to declare someone a witch should be set up, since the police has no stand on witchcraft.

The district leadership on Nebbi and Zombo took up the matter as an emergency and promised to table it before the council so that a resolution is reached as soon as possible to save the women from abuse by select community, members.

Hope Wambi, the LRP Coordinator of Nebbi stated that ActionAid is committed to working with all district structures to eliminate GBV in Nebbi and Zombo districts. She promised to follow up the witchcraft allegations very closely to ensure that the problem does not escalate to what was happening in Ghana a few months back.

### DFID Reviews its Partners



Cornelius acknowledged the strides made by ActionAid

On Thursday last week, Cornelius, a consultant hired by DFID was at ActionAid to evaluate the UN Joint Program systems.

Currently, ActionAid, under the Women Rights unit is a key partner of DFID. Through UNFPA, DFID channels financial support to Gulu and Lira GBV shelters. At the same time, DFID directly channels money to ActionAid to support the rest of the eight women protection centers across the country. The review was therefore meant to identify good practices and lessons learned from the two systems to improve value for money and program management for the UN joint programming. While meeting with the senior management and Women Rights teams of ActionAid, Cornelius recognized the great strides that ActionAid had attained.

'These are great lessons that should be replicated in other partner organisations.' He said.

### AA Uganda Board starts next round of Governance Meetings

As an Affiliate of the Global Federation, effective national governance is a cornerstone of AA Uganda's existence. The Governance, Board and Organisational Development Committee (GBODC) is one of three Board Committees of the National Governing Board. Its mandate is to provide guidance to the Board on governance, human resource and organizational development matters. It is chaired by Ms. Judy Kamanyi.

As a committee that plans for the Board, the 7<sup>th</sup> Ordinary Meeting of GBODC kick-started the next round of particularly important meetings which are relevant in light of its review and approval of our 2015 Plans and Budgets, amongst other statutory obligations.

Key issues discussed at the Friday 26<sup>th</sup> GBODC Meeting also attended by the Board Chair James Otto, Nicolas Opiyo and Judith Davey (via skype from the UK), included: AA Uganda's risk matrix, the draft IT Policy and International HR Audit, all of which were greatly enriched and commended to the full board for approval and further action.

The full board meeting is scheduled for Saturday November 1<sup>st</sup> 2014.

### Lango Residents Speak out On Land



Participants closely examined documents and resolved to restore land tribunals to be supervised by the Magistrates

Stakeholders from the eight districts of Lango sub region convened last week, to discuss the most contentious issue that will ever be, Land. The meeting organized by ActionAid brought together all CSOs and actors that are handling land issues. These included the police, the Prisons, Magistrates and advocates, cultural leaders, politicians among others.

The heated deliberations sought to harmonize the justice system between the formal and informal institutions that handle land issues. At the end of the stormy meeting, stakeholders' unanimously agreed that the land tribunal in the Lango region should be restored and this should be closely supervised by the magistrates' office. RDCs were also tasked to seek audience from the president on the legitimacy of local council ones, who continue to preside over land disputes unlawfully.

Participants appreciated ActionAid and called on other CSOs, but also ActionAid to continue sensitizing the communities about their land rights and the justice systems that they should follow.

### The Transition Process at Ford Foundation: Lessons for ActionAid

For the last one year, Ford Foundation has been undergoing a transition in both its leadership and focal areas of work. This transition was preceded by an assessment the organisation carried out that revealed that they were working on too many things-albeit all critical, and hence needed to narrow down to specific areas.

It is for this that the organisation is planning to reduce the number of focus areas it was working. The announcement made during a two day training session at Protea last week, in which AAU was well represented, confirmed that Ford Foundation will now focus on three areas/portfolios; Markets (formerly called Assets) under which Natural Resource Governance will fall, Democracy (formerly Democracy Rights and Justice) where any work on governance will fall and Education and Expression (formerly Education, Culture and Free Expression) under which all work on youth will fall.

This leaves AAU with opportunity to harness funding for Youth activities, natural resources work, governance work, women and vulnerable groups work as well as fair labour markets advocacy work.

**Therefore** Starting 2015, the Foundation will only fund projects that have the potential to change the rules of the game (policy influencing), are targeting a change in system dynamics, and are targeting to change beliefs of society

In other words, the organisation has decided to be bolder and not shy away from issues that may lead to political controversy. Yet at the same time, they intend to work more with governments worldwide to influence policy at national level.

### WEEK AHEAD

- The IASL Manager will be in the East for the next two weeks to present the EC-VAC project baseline but also collect data for the PPA project in Kween, Kumi, Kapchorwa, Katakwi and Busiki.
- European Commission funded Violence Against Women project will carry out business training of out of school youths in the districts of Kapchorwa, Bilkwo, Amudat and Kween
- The Sebei region will conduct its Forum on Free and Fair Elections this Wednesday and Thursday.
- The Management Audit Committee meeting will be held this Wednesday.