

## 2015 at a glance!



### January: An opportunity to improve lives!

As ActionAid flagged off 2015, it was clear that it was not going to be business as usual. The country Director called upon all staff to get out of their comfort zones, become more innovative and creative and work towards making a difference in the lives of the poor and marginalised people.

In the bid to improve efficiency and effectiveness, ActionAid flagged off a review of the organisational efficiency and another to track progress of the CSPV implementation. By December last year, all processes were complete. Look forward to a fresh and rebranded ActionAid this year.



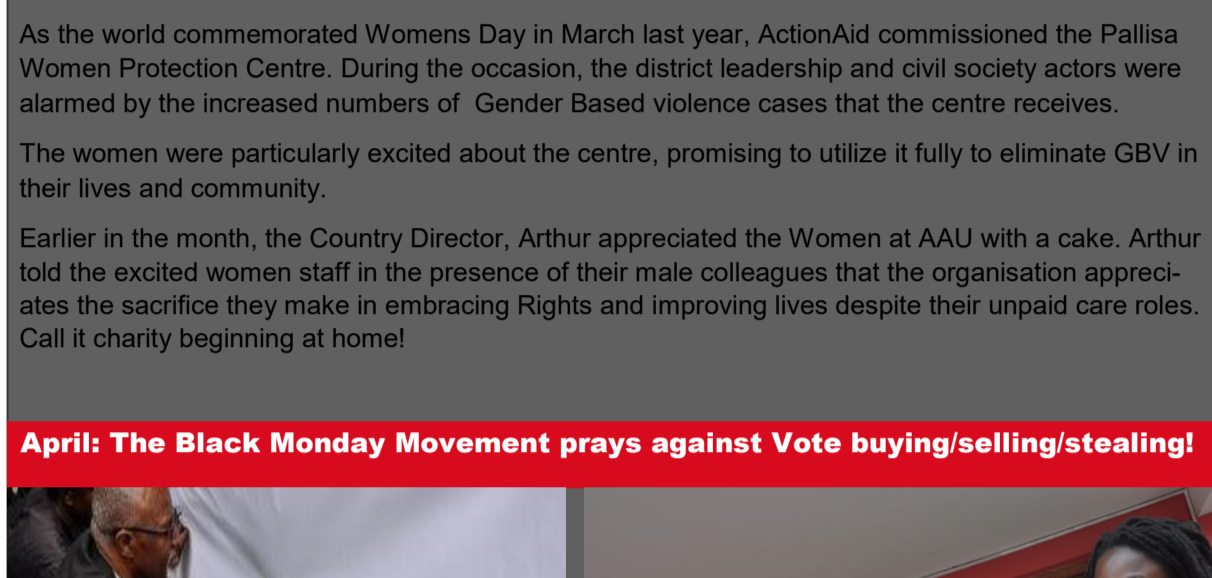
### February: Galagala Dream school becomes a reality

Pupils of Galagala pose in front of the newly constructed classroom block early last year

In February last year, ActionAid concluded the construction on Galagala Primary school and handed it over to the community. The construction was made possible by a local fundraising drive that was flagged off in 2012 as ActionAid Uganda commemorated its 30 year anniversary in Uganda.

The building was handed over to Pader District Local Government who pledged to work towards ensuring that the school becomes Government aided. The ActionAid Governing Board Chairperson then, James Otto challenged the gathering to adopt the ActionAid local fundraising strategy to improve the status of social services in their localities.

In the same month, ActionAid commissioned a community value addition seed store in Pader and a Girls dormitory in Kotido.



### March: Womens Day in ActionAid

The DFID Head of office in Uganda shares a moment with a GBV survivor at Bwaise WPC last year

As the world commemorated Womens Day in March last year, ActionAid commissioned the Pallisa Women Protection Centre. During the occasion, the district leadership and civil society actors were alarmed by the increased numbers of Gender Based violence cases that the centre receives.

The women were particularly excited about the centre, promising to utilize it fully to eliminate GBV in their lives and community.

Earlier in the month, the Country Director, Arthur appreciated the Women at AAU with a cake. Arthur told the excited women staff in the presence of their male colleagues that the organisation appreciates the sacrifice they make in embracing Rights and improving lives despite their unpaid care roles. Call it charity beginning at home!



### April: The Black Monday Movement prays against Vote buying/selling/stealing!

In the month of April, members of the Black Monday movement convened at HURINET offices in Ntinda to pray against vote buying, vote selling and vote stealing. Imam Kasozi categorically stated that vote stealing can lead to instability and loss of lives and hence the need to desist from it.

"The current regime went to the bush to fight a government that has stolen votes. There was blood shed. A lot of property was destroyed. We should not have a repeat of that nasty history", he cried out.

Bishop Zac Niringiye added that: "It is an evil. Don't sell the future of your children in exchange for a sugar. Don't trade Uganda in exchange for a match box. Tell everybody that it is an evil".

Richard Sewakiryanga, the Executive Director at the Uganda National NGO forum also made an appeal to desist from the practice. "We are calling upon all Ugandans to commit to protecting the sovereignty and future of this country. Don't vote in exchange for Sugar, salt, soap and matchboxes. Our country is worth more than that. Vote for the minds that will bring about the future that you desire Uganda and your children to have".



### May: The anti-corruption music extravaganza

ActionAid with funding from The Democratic Governance Facility(DGF) conducted an anti-corruption music extravaganza. The event that took place at the Ndere Centre attracted hundreds of local artists of all ages from across the country.

These recited poems, danced and sung against corruption. The country Director, Arthur congratulated all artists present for devoting time and monetary resources to compose creative works against the corruption vice.

All winning artists joined the western leg of the anti-corruption caravan in December to spread the gospel against vote buying and vote selling in the upcoming general elections.



### June: AAU Governing Board ushers in new leadership

In the month of June, the ActionAid governing Board ushered in new leadership during the annual General Assembly. The event that was held at Serene suits in Mutundwe saw the exit of Mr James Otto as AAU board chairperson. He was replaced by Dr Consolata Kabonesa, a Makerere University don.

James Otto, in his exit remarks thanked the ActionAid family for enabling him serve in this great institution. "As I exit, I want to see ActionAid us there, shining above its peers. I have no doubt that with your support, Dr Consolata will sail us in that direction," stated the emotional James, with tears welling in his eyes.

Dr Consolata on the other hand thanked ActionAid for the grooming and opportunity to serve as the new Chairperson. "I cannot deliver all the aspirations that I have for ActionAid alone. Am counting on your hard work, support, criticism and energy to be able to sail ActionAid to greater heights" she re-marked.

The same meeting saw veteran Journalist, Charles Mwanguhya Mpagi elected as a new board member of AAU and Helena Okiring, a civil society activist voted as the convener of this years General Assembly.



### July: The Pupils that impressed!

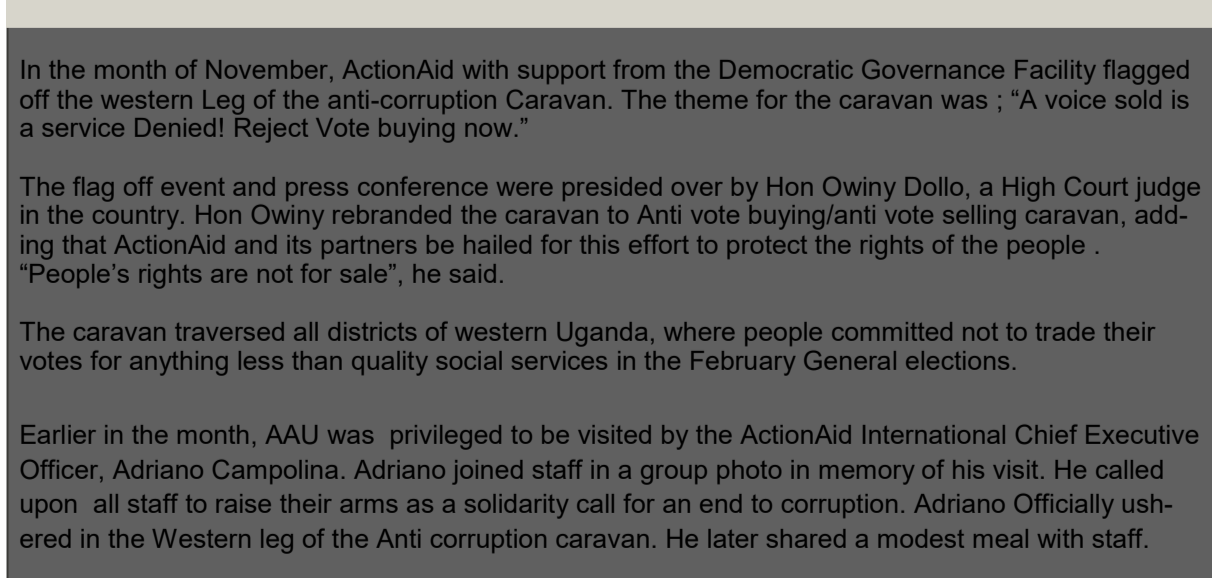
When 13 year old Natongo Bernadette took to the podium to address delegates about reducing violence in and around school, she left awe, wonder and amazement in their minds. Natongo was part of the children that attended the Elevate Children's Learning event on Reducing Violence in and around event that took place last week at Hotel Africana.

The event brought together all National and international organizations that have programs aimed at eliminating violence in the lives of children. Participants were drawn from America, Asia, Africa and Britain.

Natongo explained how the violence free boxes are steadily eliminating violence in their schools. "With support from ActionAid, the boxes were introduced in our school. They told us to write any abuse or violence on a piece of paper and drop it in the box. When the box is full, a community member, usually a parent is called to witness the opening in the presence of the teachers and the pupils. All issues are recorded and acted upon accordingly. Our teachers are no longer violent. They know that we can report them", she said.

However, 13 year old Patrick Owany from Nebbi puzzled participants when he revealed that his school lacks female teachers, which is affecting the enrolment and retention of girls. He revealed that one male teacher had been appointed as the acting female teacher.

The participants were amazed at how ActionAid has inspired pupils to spear head the war against violence in schools. They however tasked the Ministry to ensure recruitment of more female teachers in schools as these play a vital role in making education safe for all.



### August: AAU Hosts and Impresses Ford Foundation

ActionAid hosted a Ford Foundation delegation in the month of August. The Vice President of Ford Foundation applauded ActionAid Uganda for the bold step taken in confronting poor governance in an effort to promote a fair and just world.

With a 10 man delegation from Nairobi, Ms. Hillary Pennington, while reacting to a presentation by the Country Director Arthur Larok, asked how ActionAid is able to work with Government despite the very sensitive Governance areas it tackles.

"That takes art, skill and a wide range of expertise which is exhibited through your staff. This is impressive!" she expressed.

Mr Larok in his response confirmed that AAU engages Government, but does oppose it. He confirmed that success is also achieved because AAU employees are passionate about what they do, experienced and exhibit high levels of humility at all times. "We work hard but we remain humble. We have supported organizations that have turned out bigger than ActionAid, and this is what makes us proud, that we have contributed to a better world for many," he said.



### September: AAU sends delegates to Parliament

AAU sent a total of 10 delegates to parliament to attend the debating of the NGO Bill. Tabled by the then Minister of Internal Affairs, General Hon Aronda Nyakairima (RIP) ActionAid and the rest of the civil society were opposed to certain clauses and had been engaged in several dialogues with legislators on this.

After a long day of waiting, AAU and the rest of the civil society representatives in the gallery were glad to have the Ministry of internal affairs conceding to the deletion of clauses that required NGOs to register with an NGO body within the Ministry of Internal Affairs which then would be able to revoke a permit at any time if it is in the "public interest."

Other clauses under contest included those requiring organizations "not engage in any activity which is contrary to the dignity of the people of Uganda." The bill also dictated, that leaders of organizations that operate without a permit are subject to fines, or up to eight years in prison.

However, the Bill was not further debated on the days that followed due to the passing on of the Former Minister of Internal Affairs. However, Parliament convened before the year ended and fully debated on all pending clauses in the Bill. The civil society was happy with the deletions and inclusions of the document that is currently awaiting the signature of the president to be past into law.

A big thank you to civil society members who from time to time engaged with legislators to ensure that the NGO Bill turns out as desired.



### October: AAU joins civil society to denounce Police Brutality

ActionAid joined the rest of the civil society to condemn the increasing incidents of police brutality in the month of October. The latest case of this torture was that of the FDC Woman activist, who was dragged on the road and stripped naked by the police. The reaction by the police to the incident was outrageousness, claiming that the woman undressed herself as a political tactic to evade arrest and tarnish the image of the police.

Harriet Gimbo, a Women Rights Activist and Programs Director at ActionAid had this to say, "The handling of the FDC supporter Peace and security. It was so heart piercing to see the endless torture Uganda went through in the hands of the police expected to keep law and order. The scene turned to "keeping" injustice, injury, torture, and abuse of women's dignity by even women in the police force"

The struggle to have the police respect the rights of Ugandans continues during this election period. Several incidents of Human Rights abuse have been reported especially by opposition politicians. These are expected to shoot up as we move towards the election date.



### November : Adriano visits and Caravan goes to Western Uganda

(Left and Up Right) The flag off of the caravan. Lower Right is Adriano with AAU staff during his visit

In the month of November, ActionAid with support from the Democratic Governance Facility flagged off the western Leg of the anti-corruption Caravan. The theme for the Caravan was ; "A voice sold is a service Denied! Reject Vote buying now."

The flag off event and press conference were presided over by Hon Owinly Dollo, a High Court Judge in the country. Hon Owinly rebranded the caravan to Anti vote buying/anti vote selling caravan, adding that ActionAid and its partners be hailed for this effort to protect the rights of the people. "People's rights are not for sale", he said.

The caravan traversed all districts of western Uganda, where people committed not to trade their votes for anything less than quality social services in the February General elections.

Earlier in the month, AAU was privileged to be visited by the ActionAid International Chief Executive Officer, Adriano Campolina. Adriano joined staff in a group photo in memory of his visit. He called upon all staff to raise their arms as a solidarity call for an end to corruption. Adriano Officially ushered in the Western leg of the Anti corruption caravan. He later shared a modest meal with staff.



### December: AAU Launches the Ipaid a Bribe website

(Left) Justice Kavuma subscribes to the Ipaid a bribe website after launching it (Right)

Drawing lessons from India, Kenya and Nigeria, ActionAid with funding from DGF closed the year with the launch of a digital information sharing platform; I Paid a Bribe URL <http://ipaidabribe.or.ug/>. Individuals or Organisations are expected to share experiences of giving bribes, being asked for bribes or rejecting to pay bribes on the site. This site was launched by the Deputy Chief Justice of Uganda Hon Justice Steven Kavuma. He also became the first subscriber to the digital platform during the 5<sup>th</sup> National Anti-corruption Convention that was held at Hotel Africana then.

Log on to the website this year and together, lets report all corruption tendencies for prosecution. Its easy to use.

As I wish you a happy 2016, I request all of you to mobilize your households to go and cast their votes in the coming General Elections. Your vote could deliver to us a corruption free Uganda.