



Uganda's first ever presidential debate brought to the fore intelligent ideas for the country especially towards revamping the Agriculture, health and Education sectors. However, they were all lacking in terms of addressing the youth concerns, who are majority of the Country's population. But, there were also the comical responses from some of the candidates. Welcome to the Weekly!

## Who of them addresses the citizens manifesto?



Top (L-R) Proff Baryamureeba, Benon Biralo, Maureen Kyalya and Joesph Mabirizi. Down (L-R) Amama Mbabazi, Kiiza Besigye, Abed Bwanika and Yoweri Museveni. Apart from Museveni who stayed away claiming that debates are for high school students, the rest battled out, exposing their intelligence, dreams for Uganda but also some drama.

ActionAid joined the rest of the Ugandans last Friday to watch the presidential debate, a build up to the February 18<sup>th</sup> Polls. Seven Presidential hopefuls walked to the podium and were led into the toughest issues of the economy, social welfare and personal integrity head on. These included Amama Mbabazi, Maureen Kyalya, Joeseeph Mabiriizi, Kiiza Besigye, Vanacouse Baryamureeba, Abed Bwanika and Benon Biralo.

Unfortunately, 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 does not help matters that the President has consequently made reckless statements, rendering the notion of debates fit for high school students and not presidential hopefuls.

Important to note is the fact that several candidates spoke about improving Agriculture as this has been a civil society cry. Candidates also stated that their Governments would work to improve Education and Health services. They proposed workable and realistic solutions to these.

However, speaking to the Weekly, Ahmed Hadji of African Youth Development link was disappointed that the presidential hopefuls did not speak to the issues that affect young people but simply gave general solutions.

"We must not forget that majority of the country's population is made up of young people. We hence needed to hear solutions tailored to them to improve the current level of hopelessness and unemployment among them", he said in a phone interview.

Unfortunately, many Ugandans were denied an opportunity to engage in the debate. Friday evening was marred with power blackouts, not only in Kampala but the entire country. Gulu in Northern Uganda, Kasese in Mid Western Uganda and Mbale in Eastern Uganda are some of the areas that missed out on televised debate. Several divisions in Kampala also had interrupted power supply throughout the time of the debate. Many Ugandan interpreted this as a move by certain people to deny an opportunity to follow the debate.

A great thank you to the Civil society leaders who made it to Victoria Hall and the hundreds who watched the debate on their TVs. As we look forward to the next debate on 10<sup>th</sup> February, just seven days to the voting day, we encourage you all to mobilize your audiences to say no to vote buying and vote selling but most importantly to honour their vote. It's the only way we shall realize the citizens manifesto.

## The scars of GBV-Lira on spot



Jane had her scars of Gender based violence. (Right) she shows off one of the scars as a result of constant beatings and some times cuttings. It took the intervention of ActionAid for her to smile again (left). However, she is among the many women living with scars of GBV. Below are some of the scars of different women received at the ActionAid women protection centers. (File Photo)



Gender-based violence continues to undermine the health, dignity, security and autonomy of women and children in Uganda, yet it remains shrouded in a culture of silence. Victims of violence are suffering in silence. The situation in Lira is alarming.

Ameto Doreen, 26 is the latest victim of the inhumane Gender based violence. While I would have loved to present to you her photo, just so you know that women are suffering with Excruciating pain due to beatings, I have been by barred ethics. The photos are really bad.



Two weeks ago, Doreen's husband found one of his daughters with a boyfriend in his house. He reacted by locking them in the house and instructed Doreen to ensure that no one opens for them until he returns to discipline them. Doreen realized that her husband was sharpening a panga. She feared that the two, locked up in the house would be hacked to death. She did not want to be an accomplice.

She quickly opened the door and the young girl with her boyfriend fled.



When Doreen's husband came back, she pounced on her, accusing her of disrespect. I cant describe how exactly this man battered Doreen, but after he was satisfied, he locked her up in the house. By the time the Lira Women Protection centre got information, it was already two weeks and a better half of Doreen was rotting away alongside a broken arm. Even in her state, she pleaded with the authorities not to arrest her husband.

Akello Janet, 45's story is not very different from Doreen's. She also reached the Women Protection centre in the same state about four weeks ago. As if that was not enough, the centre is also currently handling a case of a 3 year old, who was defiled by her cousin.

This is a developing story. The AAU Communications team will be traveling to Lira to bring to you the male faces behind this abuse. When you look at Janet and Doreen's pictures, you want to find out what kind of instrument these men use to beat the women. And why don't the women want to speak out but prefer to rot in silence? Details of this developing story in our subsequent publications

## ActionAid in the News.

Last December. ActionAid conducted media field visit to some of our Women Protection Centre clients. Notable among them was Zainab Mbabazi, who was resettled in Mbarara.

Find out the latest about her [Here](#) and other clients in Kapchorwa [here](#).

## Join the 2million people;end oil secrecy-sign up

The campaign to end oil secrecy in Uganda is yielding fruits already having seen oil as one of the top-notch debated issues in the recently concluded Presidential debate.

We however need 20,000 signatures in the next few days to ensure that oil is a top most issue for Uganda's next president. Please spare two minutes of your precious time, and sign up the petition. When you sign up, your name will appear on the prestigious list of those with their country at heart. [Click here to sign up.](#)

## WEEK AHEAD:

- The entire program unit is in the field supporting the review of partner files. These have been distributed to the five clusters of Pallisa, Kapchorwa, Gulu, Nebbi and Katakwi.
- Harriet Robbina Gimbo, the Programs Director is in The Gambia supporting the Country Peer Review Process.