



Hope for the protection of Women Land Rights

(Picture above: Harriet Gimbo, with the conference delegates at the review in Entebbe last week.)

ActionAid took part in a validation workshop for the draft gender strategy for the implementation of the LPI Strategic plan in Entebbe last week. The meeting was organized by the Land Policy Initiative (LPI) secretariat whose mandate is to foresee the implementation of the African Union commitments on Land rights in Africa.

A group of experts comprising of government officials from Ministry of Lands and Gender, and CSO platforms were represented at the meeting. The objective was to validate the content of the strategy, identify, and prioritize areas of implementation and clarifying roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders in the roll out of the strategy.

In the Government of Uganda's submission, it was interesting to learn that there is an implementation plan for the Land Policy passed in 2013 with proposals for enhancing women land rights. Among the commitments was government's interest in protecting the rights to inheritance and ownership of land by women and children as a special interest group.

"This submission excited me and am anxious to see the implementation and resources allocated to these commitments," stated Director of Programs Harriet Gimbo

Key among the issues in the strategy was the need for clear indicators for equitable gender outcomes on land rights and advocacy for gender responsive budgeting at different levels. The team looks forward to a renewed document engendered to address the inequalities, injustice, vulnerabilities, and marginalization that come with women land rights abuse.

It should not be business as usual: AAU Country Director



Saida Bogere, the chairperson of the meeting, Betty Namatovu, and the Country Director reflect in the staff

The ActionAid staff in Kampala had their first staff meeting of 2015 last Friday the boardroom. One by one, the different units accounted to each other for the last period and made commitments on deliverables of the month and plans for the next quarter.

The Country Director, Arthur Larok asked staff to reflect on 2014 and identify the key highlights and low moments of the year. Zaituna Fumbe, the Secretary in the office of the Country Director could not hold back the tedious process that the organisation went through in the bid to try and renew the ActionAid NGO Certificate.

"It was such a difficult process. We thank God that our certificate was renewed," she said.

The Country Director added that this year, it shouldn't be business as usual. Staff should get out of their comfort zones and worker harder for the betterment of the people living in poverty. He implored all line managers to ensure that annual appraisals for all staff are concluded by 26th February.

"We also need to take the issue of unaccounted for funds by staff very seriously. You must make it a personal discipline to account within 48 hours as stipulated by the financial policy. And note that it's not about the money, but the activity that its meant to do,"he said.

Staffs were also called upon to fully participate in the CSPIV review as it would result into positive development for the Organisation.

No, I won't! ActionAid Driver Assures Traffic Police



Good, next to the car he drives.

Often we dread encounters with traffic police officers and so whenever they wave us down on the road, the next thing we think about is 'how much money will the officer ask for? If you are on a time-bound journey, the temptation is to quickly give the officer some 'kitu kidogo' to let you off the hook.

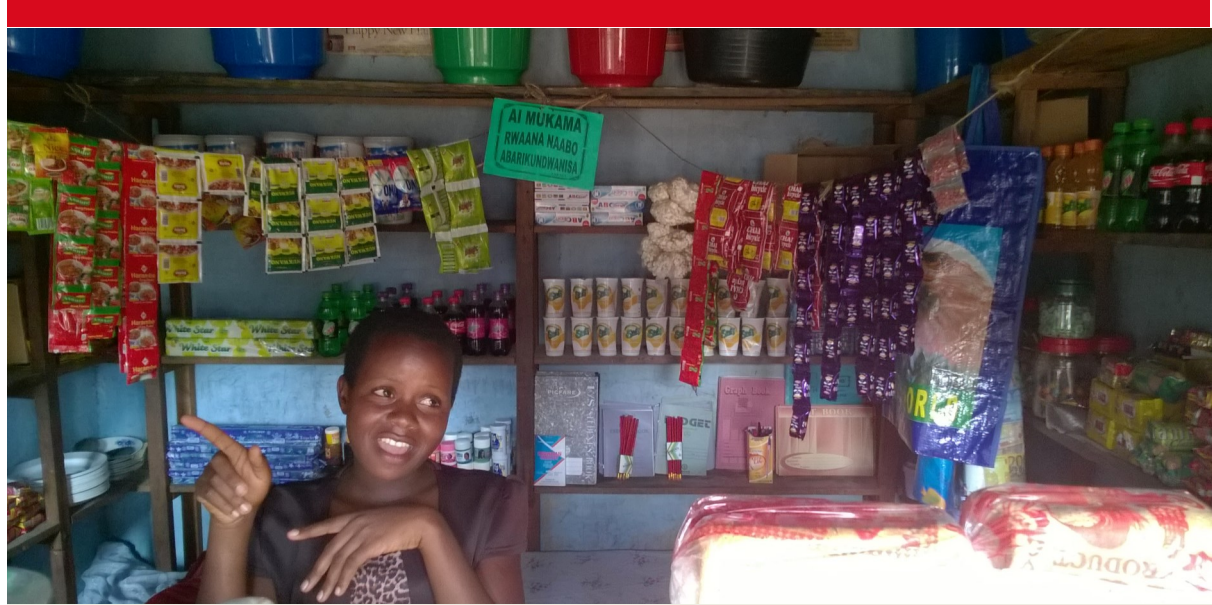
These and perhaps other considerations, one would think rung in the mind of Good Barnabas, one of ActionAid's drivers as the Gulu stopped him on the Gulu Highway in Nakasongola. Gulu Highway is known for the extremely corrupt traffic police officers that ply their trade on that route resulting in the Inspector General of Police suspending all traffic officers on that route.

Barnabas was on a mission taking the Country Director to Northern Uganda for a series of meetings in Apac, Lira and Gulu. Having the Country Director in the vehicle, one would imagine would make the driver even more nervous!

But no! Not for ActionAid drivers as our very own Good Barnabas demonstrated. As soon as he stopped by the traffic officers, one of them brought over the Speed Gun indicating that we were over speeding at 83 km per hour in a zone where the maximum speed limit was 70 km/h! Expecting our driver to stoop low and start pleading for mercy and make himself vulnerable for an extortion, the police officer demanded for driver's permit which he promptly gave and next was, 'you are over-speeding and will have to pay a fine'. Good flatly rejected the Police Officer's claim, insisting he was driving within range and that the 83 km/h that the officer was showing was forged or perhaps for another car. 'I am aware of traffic rules and respect them...I was driving at 67 km/h and therefore that record you have cannot possibly be mine or perhaps your machine is faulty...' he added. 'I will not accept any penalty and will not sign for any fine for you are not being honest'. After about 10 minutes, they backed off

Good insisted he was honest and all the police officer wanted was a bribe to let him go and that he would not give for he knows his rights and because of his commitment to the anti-corruption fight, he would not offer a bribe either!

I trust my Decisions; Update from Zainab Mbabazi



Zainab, in her shop in Mbarara

After a protracted court case, a ruling was delivered against her quest for justice in December 2014. The last seen of her in public was a disappointed 24-year old rolling over the streets of Kampala following the court verdict that set her tormentors free. After that infamous ruling, Ms. Zainab spent a couple of nights at the ActionAid run Women Protection Centre in Kampala. She later returned to Bushenyi where ActionAid started an economic empowerment business for her.

Known for her unpredictable decision making, it came as no surprise when news reached us that she has closed her shop in Bushenyi and shifted to Mbarara. The mystery ended when our CD visited and found a very energetic Zainab early morning running her new shop on the Kampala - Mbarara Highway at Biharwe. With her shop fully stocked, Ms. Zainab confirmed to the CD that he decision to shift from Bushenyi was purely a business one! The rented business in Bushenyi was proving too expensive and the business was struggling to break-even. In her new location, she was doing well and felt happier. 'I am confident of the decision I made and know that from my business, I will take care of myself'. A quick consultation with the women roadside market vendors confirmed that she was doing well and was, for the short time she has been there, well behaved and astute!

As ActionAid, we celebrate the modest contribution we have made to Ms. Zainab through our work. To see a woman who now believes in herself, her decisions and choices is testimony that our programming is truly empowering and life changing. This gives us reason to continue with our journey!

Redefining Agriculture in Uganda



Polly Apio from Katakwi demands for 10% budget allocation to agriculture at the stakeholder meeting last week.

When the African Heads of Government met in Equatorial Guinea in June 2004, they committed to increasing budgetary allocation to Agriculture by 10%. According to the famous Malabo Declaration, this would lead to 6% annual growth rate of the African economies and hence reducing the burden of poverty in Africa. About 11 years later, the Ugandan Government, has not lived up to this promise. The Government counts support sectors like roads, Trade and Industry to the allocation and therefore claim it gives more than more than 10% even though the actual ratio is much lower.

A national stakeholders meeting organized by ActionAid and the Eastern and Southern Africa Small Scale Farmers Forum attracted over 33 legislators, 70 smaller holder farmers and representatives from The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries. Just like in the past, they believed that the Agriculture sector in Uganda is actually getting more than 10%. On a positive note, all parties agreed to and drew an engagement plan, which will start by redefining what constitutes Agricultural sector from the support sectors.

At the end of the day, Hon Alowo Betty, the Woman Member of Parliament for Gulu Municipality, pledged to engage fellow legislators, to ensure that the mother sector of the country is given the Funding it deserves.

AAU a Potential Strategic Partner: Ford Foundation

Ford Foundation has revealed that it regards AAU a strategic partner whom it is considering entering a bigger partnership with for a longer time.

The Foundation's Program Officer, Margaret Rugadya, revealed this when she met AAU officials in Kampala to discuss an extension of the support to the Oil Governance Project that the Foundation has funded for the last three years. At the same meeting, which was attended by Arthur Larok, Harriet Gimbo and Chris Musiime, Margaret told the AAU Team that Ford Foundation had decided to continue supporting the Oil Project in the short term, but will also be looking to broaden the support to AAU for other work, not just oil. This discussion, Margaret said, would take place later in the year.

The Foundation is looking to enhance the impact of its grants by working with fewer partners that it will give larger grants for longer periods of time. The exciting news that AAU could be among this list of the few strategic partners is a confirmation of the confidence the Foundation has in the organisation, its values and work.

"The fact that we are giving you \$75,000 (to continue the oil work) means that we see you have potential," Margaret told the AAU Team. Arthur Larok expressed gratitude for the vote of confidence and noted that the Foundation's new focus on solving the inequality puzzle was very much in line with AAU's CSP and Vision, adding that there were several areas of convergence that the two organisations could explore as discussions on the partnership commence.

WEEK AHEAD

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- ActionAid will hand over the Galagala class room block to the Pader District Local Government this week. This was a result of the fundraising drive of ActionAid at 30.
- ActionAid will launch the No report sponsorship project this week in Nebbi.