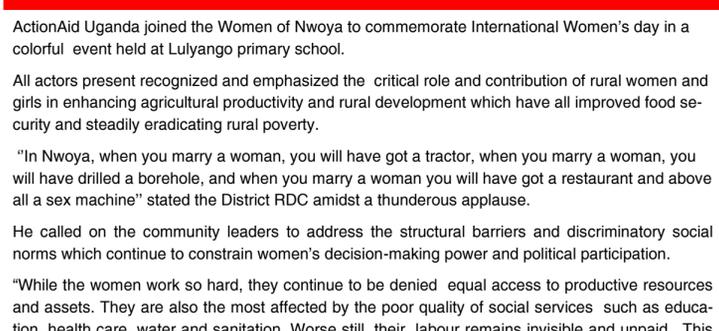




Weekly
March 5 - 11

The ActionAid Pallisa cluster decided that besides the weekly updates brought to you by this publication, impact must be measured. They have now produced the **Impact Mirror** which will speak impact and nothing else. Congratulations team. In photo are some of the ActionAid staff working in the Pallisa cluster offices that cover Pallisa, Kumi and Namutumba/Busiki. [Click here for the publication!](#)

When you marry a woman, you have got a borehole, tractor...-RDC!



Left: Students pose for a photo moment with sanitary towels donated by ActionAid. Centre are girl pupils speaking for their rights and Right is the RDC making his remarks

ActionAid Uganda joined the Women of Nwoya to commemorate International Women's day in a colorful event held at Lulyango primary school.

All actors present recognized and emphasized the critical role and contribution of rural women and girls in enhancing agricultural productivity and rural development which have all improved food security and steadily eradicating rural poverty.

"In Nwoya, when you marry a woman, you will have got a tractor, when you marry a woman, you will have got a borehole, and when you marry a woman you will have got a restaurant and above all a sex machine" stated the District RDC amidst a thunderous applause.

He called on the community leaders to address the structural barriers and discriminatory social norms which continue to constrain women's decision-making power and political participation.

"While the women work so hard, they continue to be denied equal access to productive resources and assets. They are also the most affected by the poor quality of social services such as education, health care, water and sanitation. Worse still, their labour remains invisible and unpaid. This status must be challenged for the better", he argued.

ActionAid Uganda and other partners present urged the duty bearers present to work at ensuring that all obstacles on the road to Women's economic and social empowerment be addressed for the dignity of all women in the community.

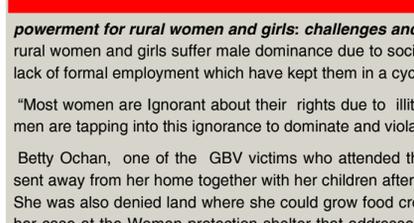
On a sad note, the District Chairperson acknowledged the lives of two women who were gruesomely killed as a result of gender based violence within the sub county and openly denounced such act as barbaric and inhuman.

He added that violence against women remains one of the most pervasive forms of human rights violations to the extent that many women, who are abused always feel that it was their fault and opt to cry in silence.

Last Thursday, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni urged men to stop physically abusing their wives, in official remarks while marking International Women's Day.

"If you want to fight, why don't you look for a fellow man and fight?" Museveni said, calling domestic abusers cowards. With these remarks, ActionAid hopes that domestic violence which victims rarely report for fear of being stigmatised or thrown out of their homes will become history in Uganda.

Pallisa leadership pledge to carry on GBV Shelter work



A section of stakeholders at the dialogue last week

ActionAid Uganda cluster Pallisa held a stakeholder's dialogue last week as a precursor for women's day celebrations. The meeting attracted several district leaders such as the LCV chairperson, RDC, District community based services department, religious and cultural leaders, the police and other stakeholders involved in the response and prevention of Gender Based Violence.

During the dialogue, it was very clear that the GBV trend has changed face from the traditional physical violence to psychological and economic violations that women and girls continue to suffer.

The District Community development officer, Mr. Wamire Dawson emphasized that this year's International Women's Day theme, **Economic Empowerment for rural women and girls: challenges and Opportunities** was timely as most of the rural women and girls suffer male dominance due to social economic factors like low education and lack of formal employment which have kept them in a cycle of poverty and gender based violence.

"Most women are ignorant about their rights due to illiteracy and lack of exposure. Unfortunately, men are tapping into this ignorance to dominate and violate the rights of women" said Wabwire.

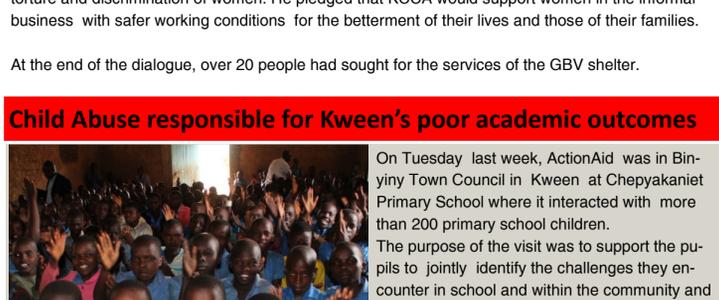
Betty Ochan, one of the GBV victims who attended the dialogue shared a tale of how she was sent away from her home together with her children after her husband had married another woman. She was also denied land where she could grow food crops for her children. Although she reported her case at the Women protection shelter that addressed the issue through a mediation, her husband continues to send her death threats. In response, the RDC as a matter of urgency instructed police to intervene and take charge of Ochan's case to ensure that her life is protected.

During the dialogue, it was noted that 80% of GBV cases registered in the district are related to land inheritance by women, access to property for widows and orphans, land grabbing and the role of clan leaders as accomplices in violating women land rights. Participants proposed a number of actions to curb violence against women and girls among which included; massive and continuous sensitization of community on land rights, engagements with cultural and religious leaders on harmful traditional practices and emphasis on community policing.

In his closing remarks, the LCV chairperson Mr. Okurut John Micheal appreciated the work of ActionAid in complimenting Government programs that protect and promote Women and girls' rights.

He pledged that at the end of the current ActionAid Gender Based Violence shelter project, the district would take over the shelter to ensure that the women in the region continue receiving GBV

Women's day in Bwaise



AAU's Florence Akol (on red T-shirt) joins the community in the clean up of Bokasa Kimalimali slum ahead of the Women's dialogue on Women's day

Last week, ActionAid Bwaise GBV shelter in partnership with Tusitukirewamu joined the rest of the world to commemorate the international women's day by conducting a community dialogue at Bwaise Bokasa kimalimali zone and airing live links on Beat Fm.

The day started with the general cleaning of Bokasa (an abandoned slum) by the women.

After the cleaning exercise, the women and girls took to the microphone and airwaves of Beat FM to speak about the challenges that women and girls living in the slum areas grapple with.

The women counted off domestic violence, rape, poverty, murder and child neglect as some of the challenges that affect their way of life.

Ms Florence Akol, the Program officer at the Bwaise shelter urged the women and girls to step out of their comfort zones and tackle life's challenges as warriors. She encouraged the women to use the available resources to find something to do for survival rather than wait for hand-outs. She further encouraged survivors of GBV to seek support from the referral structures instead of suffering in silence.

Mr. Robert Kajjuka, the KCCA Community Development Officer stated that KCCA denounces the torture and discrimination of women. He pledged that KCCA would support women in the informal business with safer working conditions for the betterment of their lives and those of their families.

At the end of the dialogue, over 20 people had sought for the services of the GBV shelter.

Child Abuse responsible for Kween's poor academic outcomes



Some of the pupils who spoke out

On Tuesday last week, ActionAid was in Binyiny Town School in Kween at Chepyakaniet Primary School where it interacted with more than 200 primary school children. The purpose of the visit was to support the pupils to jointly identify the challenges they encounter in school and within the community and come up with workable solutions.

The body map tool and art were some of the participatory tools that the pupils used to identify the challenges faced in relation to violence and child abuse. Child after child narrated how children in the community were tasked with heavy work loads before being allowed to go to school and later after going back home from school. The pupils stated that this was the reason why most of them are always late for school while some don't even go to school after failing to finish the tasks allocated to them by their parents or guardians. This eventually has very negative effects on their performance in school.



Body map illustration

This, the pupils clearly demonstrated by the art drawings they made. Most of the drawings illustrated how children carry heavy loads while the parents or guardians carry light or no load at all. Particularly, the girls stated that they will soon abandon school because of this threat on route to and from school. They added that the paths to the schools are very bushy and rape risk zones. Other issues identified were child sacrifices and abductions, mutilations, murder among others. A section of the pupils also spoke about the physical and psychological abuse by their (drunk) parents and lack of scholastic materials.

According to the Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB) the eastern region registered a high failure rate by the candidates who sat for the 2017 primary examination exams. The board noted that Kween District registered the highest failure rates followed by Bukwo also in Sebei region.

All challenges pointed out will be constituted into a charter of children's voices which will be used to advocate for better learning.

Women speak to Transitional Justice



Some of the women who attended the dialogue in Amuru

During a community dialogue organized by ActionAid Uganda Amuru office, Women and girls spoke emotionally about the challenges they face in transitional justice within the post conflict communities.

The dialogue was organized in Atiak, one of the most traumatized communities as a result of the LRA war. In this sub county, over 200 locals were massacred in 1999 in an attack commanded by LRA's top commander Vicent Oti.

The women pointed out that Justice can only make sense when forgiveness, reconciliation, compensation to those that lost their property and loved ones among others are realized.

The women decried the now normalized practice of early marriages, defilement, domestic violence and increased HIV Infections which are attributed to the conflict and its after effects.

To address such challenges, the women proposed the revival of wangoo (camp fire), a cultural practice/platform which parents can utilize to impart knowledge and good morals on descent and dignified ways of life.

Ms Betty Ato, one of the community leaders and mentor encouraged the women to unite and utilize the several economic empowerment projects by the different actors.

"Economic empowerment is one of the greatest weapon to all forms of abuse and social injustice", she tipped.

Josephine Laker, the ActionAid Program Officer of the Gender Based Violence Shelter project told the weekly that the dialogues will continue because talking about the pain stimulates a healing process.

"When women speak out, they feel some relief. But we are looking beyond dialogue, so we are going to kick start their economic empowerment journey which will contribute to their complete healing", she said.

ActionAid conducted the same dialogue in Gulu and Omoro districts. Jennifer Ayot, the officer in charge of the Gulu GBV shelter stated that a number of women testified that their husbands were very loving and more responsible before the war. After the war, they are totally different, all the family responsibilities have been left to the women who have to toil on a daily basis to take care of the home while men look on.

Parents scared of Children's tough Asks in petition

Pupils present the petition during the Women's day celebrations last week.

Unlike all other ActionAid offices whose International Women's day activities focused on Women, the Nebbi team decided to put children at the center of its activities. The office conducted a children's dialogue on violence against girls with an aim of highlighting the plight of the girl child in the community but also design a petition that would be presented to the district leaders during the Women's day event.

The dialogue attracted seven schools and key education and social services officials from the districts of Nebbi, Pakwach and Zombo.

The pupils took off time to demystify and contextualize violence against girls in the 3 districts.

The various night markets in the 3 districts whose lack of regulation exposes the girl child to sexual violence were cited as some of the biggest drivers of violence against girls.

"These markets are named after the level of sexual activity therein; as one was called, **Dead man's grave** and another **sit on my laps** in Alur!", stated some of the participants.

The children also reported that the girls are often turned into cooks at school after the cooks abdicate their duties denying them the right to education. Others reported that their teachers and community members prefer to describe girls according to their physical beauty while describing the boys by their strength, academic and athletic prowess. This alone makes the girls vulnerable to sexual violence. The girls added that the age of marriage in the region is 14 and none of them would feel safe reporting sexual violence because of stigma in the community.

The petition that was developed from this dialogue was presented to the leadership of the three districts by the pupils at the Women's day commemoration event.

Among others, the pupils prayed for the arrest and punishing of all parties including parents, relatives and community members that encourage child marriages and early pregnancies.

"We also pray that video and disco halls be regulated. We pray that the district leaders will develop and implement a child protection policy for all schools", the pupils read adding that Government should ban emerging night markets and enforce existing ordinances.

The parents felt threatened by the strong but sincere language of the prayers while the community and political leadership were amazed with the accuracy of the issues raised such as the unregulated video and disco halls, night markets and the harmful negative cultural practices.

The Member of Parliament for Pakwach district Hon. Ongertho Emmy corroborated the petition with his own observations and asked the local government to absorb and own the petition to allow for change in the communities. The Nebbi district Speaker requested for the council to review the petition and begin the necessary discussions to cause the required change!

Week Ahead

- The job of AAU's Country Director is still up for grabs, having failed to get a suitable candidate from the concluded interview process. The position was hence re-advertised. You will have to wait until the 1st week of April before the Governing Board announces the new Country Director.