



## Weekly

March 7 — 13

Alur Phoebe lost her husband six years ago. She was denied access and ownership of her late husband's land by her in-laws. With support from the Berkley Women Land Rights project through ActionAid, Phoebe gained back access and control of the piece of land. She now grows groundnuts and cassava. Her economic status has improved. Welcome to this edition of the Weekly.

## The AAU Women's Day Twitter Explosion!



Above is the twitter explosion billboard. Below (L-R) Leya Chede transformed from an illiterate GBV victim to a literate woman influence in Pallisa, Zainab Mbabazi is now a successful business owner and has saved over UGX2000000. Irene Cheptoeck has mobilized women in Sebei region to say no to FGM and improve their lives through vegetable growing and processing.

ActionAid Uganda joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Womens day last Tuesday. AAU used the day to galvanise global attention on gender equality and Women's economic empowerment through an exciting and impactful social media rally. The rally attracted some of the Country's twitter influencers such as Rosebell Kagumire, Danny T, ActionAid's Nickson Ogwal among others.

Other guests at the rally included AAU Women Rights staff, representatives from partner organisations, GBV survivors, journalists and bloggers among others.

Despite what took place in her life two years ago, Zainab Mbabazi, the GBV survivor who was allegedly gang raped by Pakistan Nationals was at the social media explosion, sharing a story of total transformation.

"I went through a very difficult time in my life. I encountered all those unfortunate events because I was struggling to make ends meet, to be able to support myself and my grandmother. Am so great full to ActionAid that supported my full recovery. With their support, I was able to start up a business. One year down the road, I have been able to save over UGX2000000. If all women were economically empowered, they would never suffer from GBV", she narrated to the tweeps.

Leya Chede, 55 was another remarkable GBV survivor who told the tale of total empowerment.

"My husband used to physically and emotionally abuse me. I felt ugly, useless, used and abused. That went on for years. When ActionAid came to our community, I enrolled into the adult literacy program. My husband resisted it, but I would do it behind his back. When I learnt to write, I wrote my name and placed it on the table. My husband was humbled and steadily changed his attitude towards me. With this empowerment, I worked hard to change the economic status of my home. Today, I live in marital bliss and my children are going to school."

Arthur Larok, the AAU country Director added that while over 80% of Uganda's food needs are met by the small scale women farmers, only 1% of women own land. He challenged the patriarchal ideologies that stand in the way of Womens Economic empowerment committing them to lives of vulnerability and abuse.

"If your masculinity is threatened by an empowered woman, then it was not build on a just foundation" he said, adding that its very costly to keep women in subordination .

"We must challenge patriarchy to transform the women and the world" he concluded.

Both quotes were among the five most retweeted posts of the day. Click [Here](#) for details on Arthur's reflections on Patriarchy.

At the end of the Twitter rally, statistics indicated that the Women's day social media explosion trended in 26 countries around the world with a total of 2074 tweets. Our total reach was 18,211,503. These are the actual number of views made on the posts. Unfortunately, the campaign was dominated by 60% of men and only 30% of the women. While this raises issues of the women's role in their own struggle for equity and equality, the 60% is explained by the fact that men in the country have more access to the media and social media such as Facebook and twitter as compared to the women, a statistic that should also be reversed.

During the day, Henry Nickson Ogwal, the Sponsorship and Fundraising Director, Joyce Nabwire Baker, the Women Protection Centre Coordinator and Irene Cheptoyek, a rural Woman farmer were all featured on the NTV special Womens day talk shows. They all stressed the urgent commitment by the Government on Womens Economic Empowerment to eradicate GBV in the country and achieve sustainable and balanced development.

## AAU hosts guests from Denmark



ActionAid Uganda through the People for Change Program has been collaborating with the Nursing Training Colleges and Universities in Denmark to place Intern Nurses from Denmark to Lira and Gulu Regional Referral Hospitals. Since 2009, ActionAid Uganda has placed a total of 41 interns in the two hospitals. Last week, AAU Gulu Cluster hosted 12 International Coordinators from the various Danish Nursing colleges and universities. The Coordinators made the visit to analyze the status of the health facilities where the nurses are placed but to also discuss the health service delivery system in Uganda.

In Gulu, the team visited Gulu National Referral Hospital where they were guided in a hospital tour by the Senior Nursing Officer, Sr. Beatrice Odyek. They visited the Children's ward, the surgical section, causality section and maternity ward among others. Sr Beatrice

(L- above) The coordinators meeting with the Lira district leadership and (Right) meeting with Sr Beatrice of Gulu Regional referral hospital. Below is the team in a group photo with the Lira District leadership.

informed the visitors that the most common ailments at the hospital include Malaria, Tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS infections.

While in Lira, the team made a courtesy visit to the District Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), the Deputy CAO and LCV Chairperson. Mr. Elias Biamungu, the CAO informed the visitors that the HIV/AIDS prevalence stands at 13.9% in the district.

"ActionAid Uganda is our biggest partner in the district and we are very grateful for this visit. We also appreciate the intern nurses as these have supported our medical staff to handle the overwhelming numbers of patients at our hospital", he added.

At the end of their three days visit, the team appreciated the very challenging working environment for the health Workers in the country and how it greatly differs from the situation in Denmark.

"We now have a better understanding of the context in the Ugandan hospitals. We shall improve our training so that our students are better prepared to work in the challenging situations that we have seen", they noted.

## AAU Moves to make Mining Safe



Last week, ActionAid's Oil in Uganda unit conducted a training for women miners in Mubende District on health, safety and environment (HSE) management to reduce the incidence of accidents and illness during their mining operations. The meeting took place at Bukuya town and attracted over sixty miners, district officials, central government officials as well as environmental management experts.

Key issues discussed included management of mercury because the main cause of health complications in the mines is mercury poisoning. Women were taught how to recycle water to prevent contamination of the nearby water bodies with mercury as well as the use of mercury retorts.

The two days training also involved practical lessons on mine pit construction to improve the safety of mines and reduce accidents resulting from mine collapse. As a follow up, AAU-with funding support from DFAT and AA Australia will distribute mining equipment and protective gear to improve the safety of women involved in mining.



## Have you visited the Ipaid a bribe website lately?

While the Ministry of Health commissioned free Immunisation for all recently, there are health workers who wanted to reap from it. This Empowered Ugandan refused to pay a bribe to access immunisation services. Read her story [Here](#) and lots more on [www.ipaidabribe.or.ug](http://www.ipaidabribe.or.ug).

## Story of the Week!



Today, I decided not to share a story of change, but a story that needs change.

During my recent visit to the community, I attended a community youth Assembly. At an assembly of over 800 youths, none can definitively explain how much money the district Local government has allocated to the road project, how long it will take, its size and which route the road will follow.

This really needs change. Read the entire story [Here](#)

## WEEK AHEAD:

- The Country Director will be meeting with all AAU managers to discuss accomplishments in the ending quarter but also their plans for the next quarter.
- UNFPA is this week conducting a program and Financial Audit of AAU. UNFPA has been supporting the Women Protection centres of Gulu and Lira. We shall keep you informed about the outcomes.
- AAU is currently undergoing an external Institutional audit by KPMG. The Finance Director expects the process to be complete by 31st March.
- AAU will hold a meeting with some of its partners to review the partnership policy for improved engagements and strengthened partnerships.
- The Supreme Court will deliver a ruling on whether the civil society should be allowed to participate in the Presidential Election Petition today. AAU is closely associated with this. Look out for the ruling.