

Weekly

Aug 29 - 4 Sept



Dear Reader, as Ugandans celebrate their African Cup of Nations qualification in 39 years, we stand in solidarity with them. Flowers to the Uganda Cranes! In other news, AAU has made a move to work with political parties. Details in this publication. Enjoy your reading!

Bold Move: AAU to work with FDC, NRM, DP and others!



Left-Above: NRM Secretary General Ms Lumumba explains the NRM ideology to AAU country Director Arthur Larok. **Right-Above** are AAU staff and NRM party leaders after the meeting last week..
Middle-Left: The Democratic Party leadership with the AAU policy and Campaigns Manager after a successful meeting. **Middle-Right** is the AAU Policy Manager Fred sealing off the partnership with DP's Mathias Nsubuga.

Left-Below: The AAU Programs Director Harriet and the Policy Manager Fred listen to critical issues raised by the FDC party chairman Wasswa Biligwa. **Right-Below** is the Party Secretary General, Nandala Mafabi handing over the FDC Strategic Plan to Harriet and the AAU team.

In a bid to create a collaborative agenda for Ugandans and the Country at large, ActionAid Uganda has taken a bold step to consult and hopefully build a collective agenda with political parties as these are a central entity in Uganda's governance and development agenda.

According to AAU's Country Director Arthur Larok, AAU hopes that through a constructive dialogue, AAU will add value to the work of political parties and their vision for Uganda.

"Political Parties are in systemic crises everywhere, in the US, in the UK and certainly in Uganda. Part of this crisis is about the ineffectual engagement of citizens with political parties in the erroneous belief that politics is a turf only for politicians and also the political fear factor of being branded partisan. If we have to make parties better reflect citizen interests, we must engage with them, including directly. This is the reason we have taken the bold steps, well knowing the risks these come with but also opportunities".

Last week, ActionAid met with the top management of the three biggest political parties in the country - The Democratic Party (DP), The Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) and the National Resistance Movement (NRM). While at the meetings, AAU introduced itself to the respective party leadership, explaining its philosophy, vision, mission and areas of work. For an earlier blog the CD wrote on Political Parties, [click here](#)

At the FDC headquarters, ActionAid learnt that the party has a five year program aimed at building structures at the grassroots but most importantly to economically empower Ugandans.

"We believe that if Ugandans are economically empowered, then they will seek for leadership positions not to enrich themselves but to serve Ugandans. They will also be a strong economic base for the party", stated Gen Mugisha Muntu, the Party President in a meeting that was attended by Amb. Waswa Birigwa, the Party Chairperson, Hon Nandala Mafabi, the Party Secretary General among others.

While at the NRM Secretariat, the Secretary General, Justine Kasule Lumumba on behalf of the Party President welcomed the partnership with ActionAid.

"This is the beginning of the beginning", she noted while thanking ActionAid for seeking to work with the party.

The NRM Party Treasurer urged ActionAid and other CSOs to avoid contaminating good causes like campaigns against corruption with faces that seem to be in the opposition.

"It's those faces that make us suspicious and not to trust you", cautioned Hon Rosemary Namayanja. The NRM meeting was attended by the party Secretary General, the Party Treasurer, and the Director of the legal department among others.

The members of the Democratic Party on the other hand, while at AAU offices for the meeting were thrilled with the AAU vision of a world without poverty and injustice.

"At the Democratic party, we stand for justice, just like ActionAid. We welcome this partnership. Together, we can realise a Uganda without injustice" exclaimed the party Secretary General, Mathias Nsubuga.

All the three meetings explored entry points for a more systematic collaboration in areas of mutual interest.

Fredrick Kawooya, the Policy and Campaigns Manager at AAU stated that in all meetings, members agreed to work towards bridging the gap between Civil Society and Political parties to realize good Governance, Accountability and Democracy in Uganda.

"We have also agreed to have follow up meetings with each of the parties to draw our partnership strategy and eventually build a collective and mutually beneficial agenda" he stated.

AAU will be meeting with the Uganda People's Congress later next week. The Weekly will capture the moments on your behalf. [To review the presentation that we are making to Political Parties at this initial stage, click here.](#)

DFID Auditors Impressed with AAU Work!



Left-above: Ms Onyekachi carries a baby of one of the GBV survivors at the shelter as the AAU Women Rights Coordinator looks on. **Right** is Onyekachi and Bethan listening to the WPC Coordinator; Joyce as she explains the projects. **Left-Below:** The auditors listen to Florence, the shelter legal and program officer. Looking on is Irene Ahimbisibwe. **Right** is the auditor making a suggestion to Joyce on equipping women with self defence skills.

"Thank you very much for the great work you are doing. Your work has touched my heart. Please continue working to put more smiles on the faces of women and children", were the emotional remarks made by Ms Onyekachi Okorie, during an audit visit to ActionAid Bwaise Women Protection Centre (WPC).

The Department for International Development (DFID) is undertaking an internal audit process. ActionAid has been getting funding from the institution. The funds have been directed to the running of the eight Gender Based Violence shelters of Bwaise, Pallisa, Kumi, Katakwi, Nebbi, Kween, Amuru and Mubende. Its against this background that AAU hosted a team of auditors from DFID led by Ms Onyekachi to complete the audit process. The others were the DFID Social Development Advisor Ms Among and Ms Jones, also an auditor.

The auditors were received by the Bwaise shelter Program staff, Partner Organisations and GBV survivors. Irene Ahimbisibwe, the shelter Counsellor took the auditors through the different steps taken by the shelter in ensuring that clients get the best services but most importantly total freedom and healing from GBV.

The auditors were also taken through a guided tour around the shelter. Joyce Nabwire Baker, the Project Coordinator informed the auditors that clients' security and privacy are taken very seriously.

"Our security guard is under strict instructions to screen all visitors to the shelter and report any suspicious guests to the shelter staff before admitting them. We want the women and children to feel safe as this expedites their healing", she said. Joyce added that as a result of the work at the shelter, there is increased awareness on the need to fight GBV.

"The project has strengthened the referral pathway to GBV prevention and response but most importantly contributed to the recent cabinet assent to the Gender Based Violence Policy (2016)", she concluded.

The auditors further held a closed door interaction with the GBV survivors to corroborate the information provided by the AAU team.

At the end of the meeting, Ms Onyekachi suggested that the shelter should work towards providing specialised training for women and girls in self-defence (martial Arts) in order to fight off the GBV perpetrators. "That notwithstanding, am impressed with the work", she said before bidding farewell.

In a move to appreciate and motivate staff, Arthur Larok, the AAU Country Director rewarded the staff that prepared in detail to ensure the success of the audit visit.

'I have received feedback about how DFID was impressed with our work during their Audit and this means a lot to us and the work we do to make the world a better place for the thousand of women and million of people living in poverty and facing injustice. We always have to acknowledge and appreciate the hard work staff put into critical activities and enjoying a cake on a Friday afternoon was not a bad idea. I look forward to even better outcomes and celebrations from our hard working team,' stated Arthur.

EC-VAC Project Exit Meeting Held



The EU project focal person, Meya Sayson speaks to stakeholders at the exit meeting. Looking on is the RDC of Kapchorwa; Jane Francis Huukha.

Last week, AAU held an exit meeting of the European Union Funded project on Eliminating violence against children. The project that has been implemented for the last three years in Amudat, Kween, Bukwo and Kapchorwa will officially close at the end of next month.

The exit meeting was attended by all implementing partners from the four districts, stakeholders, children and the EU project focal person; Meya Rosette Syson.

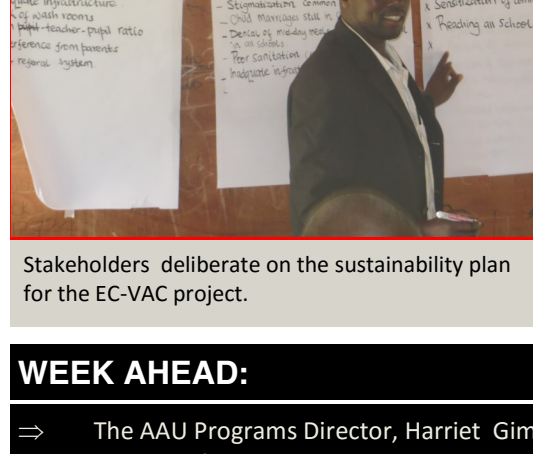
Meya urged the community to come up with sustainability plans so that violence against children in the region does not rise again with the exit of the project.

All stakeholders agreed that while the massive sensitization, popularisation and implementation of the Female Genital Cutting Act had greatly reduced the number of girls being mutilated, the girls and women continue to be cut clandestinely.

"Women are being mutilated during child birth by the traditional birth attendants without their consent. The girls are being mutilated from houses", remarked some of the stakeholders.

They resolved to have a meeting with the security agents before the end of this month to explore strategies of dealing with the current situation.

On a sad note, the community was not happy with the end of the project. They appealed to the EU and ActionAid to continue fundraising and invest in the children of the region.



Stakeholders deliberate on the sustainability plan for the EC-VAC project.

WEEK AHEAD:

- ⇒ The AAU Programs Director, Harriet Gimbo and the AAU Fundraising Director, Nickson Ogwal are in Denmark for a Partnership Workshop.
- ⇒ ActionAid will conduct a mini-Kilimanjaro event this Friday in Kapchorwa. Women all-over Africa are being invited to camp at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro and to climb her mountain. AAU is holding the event in Kapchorwa as a build up to the Kilimanjaro event but most importantly to stand in solidarity with the Bennet Community that has been struggling for land control and ownership for the last 20 years.
- ⇒ ActionAid will have a Partnership Meeting with representatives from the Ford Foundation Regional Office on a possible extension of the current collaboration for another 2 years. ActionAid will be represented by the CD, Women's Rights Coordinator and Manager Oil and Extractives Governance