



Weekly

Dec 12 — 18

The organizations under the Tax Justice Alliance are calling for a referendum on the proposed exemption of taxes on legislators' allowances. According to ActionAid and partner CSOs, circumstances surrounding the bill have been secretive ever since the president returned it to parliament for the second time. Welcome to the Weekly!

We want a referendum on MPs Tax Exemptions



The campaign against the MPs Tax Exemptions only gets hotter and stronger. The activists are demanding that a referendum be held for Ugandans to decide on whether the legislators should pay taxes or not. The pictorial shows the several campaign actions.

ActionAid and partner CSOs under the Tax Justice Alliance will seek legal action if Parliament of Uganda passes a law exempting MPs from paying income tax.

In May this year, president Museveni returned the bill stating that the proposal was detrimental to domestic revenue mobilization and is tantamount to double standards. He returned it for the second time last month to enable parliament review clauses on the oil production agreements. The CSOs are now calling for a referendum on the proposed exemption of taxes on legislators' allowances. Unfortunately, circumstances surrounding the bill have been secretive ever since the president returned it to parliament for the second time.

ActionAid and partners contend that the country is likely to lose 53 billion Shillings if the controversies surrounding the law are not resolved because revenue proposals under the bill cannot be operationalized.

"We are equally concerned about provisions of article 91(5) of the Constitution which allows parliament to pass a law without the assent of the President if it is returned twice. Parliament needs at least two thirds of MPs to effect this", stated Fredrick Kawooya, the Policy and Campaigns Manager at ActionAid.

Nelly Busingye Mugisha, the program officer of SEATINI Uganda added that tax evasion by legislators sets a bad precedent for the country. She says it is important that Ugandans make a collective decision on the matter.

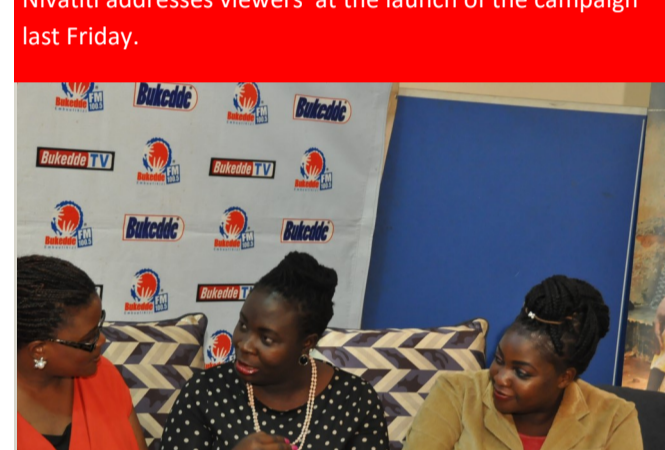
"We are not ready to let Ugandans suffer while MPs who should work for citizens are enriching themselves. All civil society organizations are united to challenge the decision on behalf of citizens" she concluded.

Samanya R. Kyategeka, the AAU Communications Officer while giving a media interview noted that MPs should reconsider their decision on account that they volunteered to become leaders and should therefore not turn their political calling into a money making venture.

"But more importantly, the law should be reviewed to provide tax exemption on allowances of all Ugandans if legislators feel that taxation is a burden", she stated rhetorically.

A referendum is held when 24 percent of district councils in the country express support for the process. Lawyer Nicholas Opiyo, the Deputy Chairperson of the AAU Governing Board however said that a referendum may not work in this case because the process also requires the approval of parliament. He advises that court action would provide a better challenge

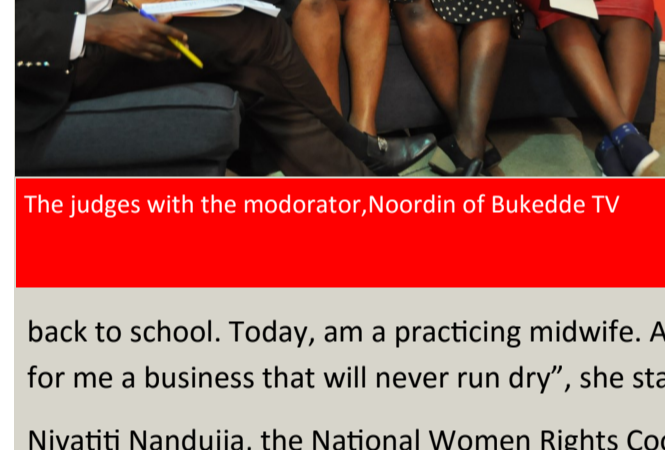
Model man Campaign Launched!



Nivatiti addresses viewers at the launch of the campaign last Friday.



AAU's Florence and Nivatiti together with Bukedde's Sumaya Muwonge(Right) are some of the judges



The judges with the moderator, Noordin of Bukedde TV

Last week, ActionAid in partnership with Bukedde Television launched the **Economic Empowerment Model man campaign**. The campaign that will be running for the next two months aims at recognising men that have supported their spouses to attain economic independence but also challenge other men to stop GBV and invest in their spouses.

According to Florence Akol, the Bwaise Gender Based Violence Shelter Program and legal Officer, three out of every five cases of GBV recorded at the shelter are caused by the poor economic status in families.

"We believe that if the economic muscle of the women is strengthened, they will be able to say no to GBV in all its forms", she said.

While ActionAid through the GBV shelter program has a component on economic empowerment, it requires joint effort by all stakeholders to be more meaningful to the women beginning at the household level.

One of the GBV survivors who attended the campaign launch confessed that she used to provoke her husband several times so that he can beat her. She said that their problem was simply poverty and when she started working and earning, the family stabilized.

Another participant, Nakiwala Proscovia travelled all the way from Masaka to come and speak about the economic boost that her husband had provided.

"He sacrificed all he had and took me back to school. Today, am a practicing midwife. Am so grateful to my husband. He set up for me a business that will never run dry", she stated.

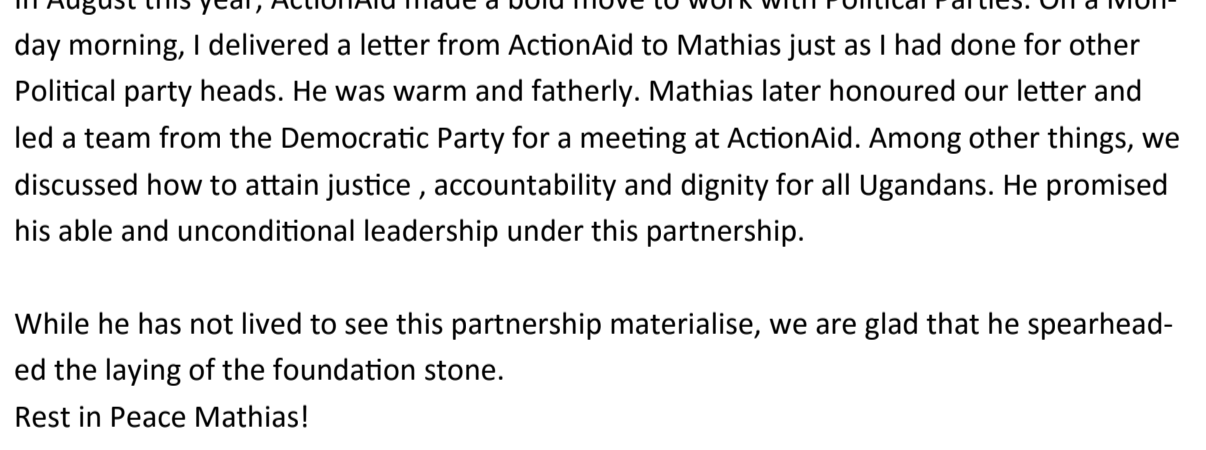
Nivatiti Nandujja, the National Women Rights Coordinator while speaking to the guests and the several Bukedde TV viewers challenged the men to stand up for their spouses.

ActionAid and Bukedde TV are going to follow the several stories of male support shared and document them into mini videos. These will be reviewed by judges using the set criteria. The five winning stories will be broadcast and viewers will vote the most inspiring model man.

You too can be part of this campaign. Nominate the men in your life that have supported their spouses attain economic independence and we shall come and tell their story. The winning couple will take home a cash prize to further invest in their business.

Together, we can achieve economic dignity for all women and girls. Tune in to Bukedde TV this Saturday and capture the campaign launch.

ActionAid mourns Hon Mathias Nsubuga



Above: (Left) The late Mathias together with the Vice Chairperson DP Women's chapter during the meeting at AAU Offices. Right is Mathias with AAU's Fredrick Kawooya. Below is the DP team together with the AAU Policy and Campaigns Manager(second left) after the meeting

Democratic Party (DP) Secretary General Mathias Nsubuga has died last evening moments after suffering a stroke.

In a press release issued on Saturday, DP president Norbert Mao said Nsubuga had suffered the stroke on Friday at Mukono Bookshop in Kampala.

Mr Mao confirmed Nsubuga's death on social media: "With deep sorrow I announce the death of Hon. Mathias Nsubuga, Secretary General of the Democratic Party. We have lost a most clean hearted man. RIP."

Nsubuga was also a former member of parliament for Bukoto South.

In August this year, ActionAid made a bold move to work with Political Parties. On a Monday morning, I delivered a letter from ActionAid to Mathias just as I had done for other Political party heads. He was warm and fatherly. Mathias later honoured our letter and led a team from the Democratic Party for a meeting at ActionAid. Among other things, we discussed how to attain justice, accountability and dignity for all Ugandans. He promised his able and unconditional leadership under this partnership.

While he has not lived to see this partnership materialise, we are glad that he spearheaded the laying of the foundation stone.

Rest in Peace Mathias!

AAU Kalangala Phase out plan discussed



Some of the stakeholders in a focus group discussion during the phase out planning meeting.

AAU Kalangala Local Rights Program held a Participatory Review and Reflection Process and a Phase out planning meeting last week.

The meeting was organised to provide a platform for the District and other stakeholders to reflect on key achievements, challenges and lessons learnt in the past

16 years of ActionAid programming in the district. Harriet Gimbo, the Programs Director at ActionAid challenged stakeholders to have a deeper reflection on the impact of ActionAid's interventions in the district for the last 16 years.

The stakeholders counted the gains the district under the AAU programming. They cited programs such as the Tax Justice campaign that has seen an increase in the revenue collected in the district. The Quality public Education program was also commended for improving school enrolment, retention and completion in the district.

However, the stakeholders outlined the several challenges that the district is still grappling with. Some of the challenges include lack of a health program targeting the young people living with HIV.

"Most of the programs are targeting adults and those who are HIV negative. The young positive population has not been attended to and this is a great risk if we are committing to work towards zero HIV infections" stated the District Health Officer.

Other challenges include the increase in child abuse. According to Edmond Olowo, the AAU Program Officer in Kalangala, at least three girls are defiled on a daily basis.

"Unfortunately, the Police Officers are not able to gather convincing evidence for the victims to get justice due to the island nature of the community", he said.

The stakeholders appealed to the Government to invest in Marine insurance since it's the main means of transport in the district.

Kalangala District Local Government leadership commended ActionAid for the enormous contribution in improving the lives of the people in the island communities in the last 16 years and still pledged to work with AAU as one of the dependable development partners in the district.

Week Ahead

⇒ Today, all unit heads are at Royal Suites for the 2017 annual planning meeting.

⇒ ActionAid will hold its end of year party at the AAU offices this Wednesday. Come join us as we dance, wine and dine.

⇒ On Thursday, the AAU offices will be closed for the Christmas Holiday. Business will resume on Monday 9th January 2017.