



Margaret Amoding is now a successful small scale holder farmer in Kumi. She has been able to increase her agricultural returns after a boost from ActionAid's Food Rights for Agriculture project that was funded by Australian Aid. We'll come to this edition of the Weekly!

Is it corruption, sexual harassment or both?



Above-Left: this corruption/sex scandal seems to be marred with a lot of controversy and contradictions. We wait to see how it unfolds in the days that follow

Hamid is the boss at Aya Group, the proprietors of the Hilton Hotel in Kampala. One of his former employees alleges that he sexually harassed and molested her before she was summarily sacked last year, prompting her to take up the matter with the police.

Days after the story of this accusation went public, police on Saturday arrested and detained three people: State Minister for Labour, Employment and Industrial Relations also Member of Parliament for Rukiga, Herbert Kabafunzaki, Mr. Brian Mugabo, a Clearing agent and a 3rd person believed to be the bodyguard to the Minister for allegedly receiving a Shs30 million bribe from the businessman. In photos widely circulated on social media, Mr Kabafunzaki is seen sitting on a chair at the Kampala Serena Hotel with arms folded as individuals believed to be police officers go about collecting evidence of the alleged bribe. On the table in front of him are Shs50,000 notes believed to be part of the alleged bribe money.

In trying to defend himself from the accusations of pocketing a bribe, Mr Kabafunzaki said that it was all a hoax. But Mr Hamid told journalists at Kampala Serena Hotel that when the minister asked for the money, he contacted the president through his personal assistant and the president said, "give him the money and we have him arrested."

"We agreed to meet at 2:00pm at Kampala Serena Hotel and he came. He had asked for Shs25 million to clear our [Aya Group] image on the sexual harassment allegations and another Shs5million to call a press conference.... We gave him Shs5million as deposit but he insisted that we should give him at least Shs10 million. Before we agreed on the additional amount, the police officers came in and arrested him."

In a face book post, the Senior Presidential Press Secretary, Don Wanyama could not confirm or deny president Museveni's involvement in the arrest of the minister:

"When the President said this is *Kisanja Hakuna Mchezo*, this is what he meant. The message is clear, the fight against corruption has been taken to a new level and there are no sacred cows. Once you're involved, you'll be arrested irrespective of your position. Corrupt government officials have been put on notice", he wrote enlisting several comments.

Sexual assault case

Just this week, Mr Kabafunzaki was reported to have sought to help the woman who alleges that she was sexually assaulted by Hamid. In a story aired on NTV Uganda, the woman narrated that two weeks after she started working at the Hilton Hotel in November 2016, Hamid would call her into his office and pretend to be asking for an update on an issue but would then close the door and start molesting her. Mr Hamid allegedly turned violent after she resisted repeated sexual attacks on her.

"He stormed into the office and boxed me while yelling all sorts of insults. He left me bleeding with a bruised mouth," the woman says in the TV report.

When she reported the matter to police, no action was taken. The woman then approached Mr Kabafunzaki who, among other things went to the Hilton Hotel to inspect working conditions. However, Hamid denied the sexual harassment allegations.

"She is simply blackmailing us which is not right especially since we have employed more than 2,000 Ugandans in the last nine years," Hamid said.

ActionAid has and continues to receive several media calls for interviews on the case. In one such interview, the AG-Country Director, Nickson Ogwal demands that both cases (corruption and Sexual Harassment) be investigated and brought to logical conclusion. He also points out that the issue of workers' rights need to be looked into by our Government. [See the interview here.](#)

That said, several questions still linger in my mind....Are we finally winning the war against corruption? Is this corruption scandal being used to cover up for the sexual harassment and abuse of the woman? Will this case help us win the war on both corruption and violence against women? Shall we finally have the Workers' rights issue resolved with the right legislation? Or this will make news and increase sales for the media house and die a natural death after just a week or two? May the debate begin!

HRBA to ignite AAU programming!



Learning in progress!

Last week, a section of AAU staff who joined the organisation in the last two years converged in Gulu for a training in Human Rights Based Approaches (HRBA).

The five days' training emphasized to participants the need to integrate human rights principles and standards into all stages in the programming processes such as assessment and analysis, objective setting, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Miriam Cherukut, the AAU Katakwi Cluster Coordinator and one of the trainers taught the participants that HRBA is the most important element of good programming and should be used in our work for the success of our programming and interventions.

"This approach enables us to create a strong linkage to human rights instruments, principles and standards", she added.

Participants were also reminded that as they go about with their programs, they need to recognise the communities not by just their needs but as rights holders and work to establish the duties and obligations of those responsible for ensuring that needs are met.

"HRBA programming hence directs for a dual focus on right holders and duty bearers", emphasized Simon Sentamu, the HRBA Capacity Building Officer at ActionAid International.

After the theoretical training, participants were taken to Nwoya District for a practical application of the issues learned. As the practical analysis of the issues raised by the community unfolded, participants found themselves challenged but also inspired.

"The practical visit to the community further boosted our learning. It provided the actual contextual issues for our analysis and application of the HRBA skills", stated Caroline Abilat, one of the participants.

Richard Long, AAU's Manager of Partnerships and Capacity building urged the trainees to domesticate the training as this would improve the impact of our interventions in the community.

"While ActionAid is committed to building the capacity of her staff, we need to realize the impact of these trainings in our work in order to justify similar future engagements", he stated.

Reflections from Washington



This blog is going to hit you hard, or should I say hit us hard. For all of you borrowing money to buy sodas, beer, waragi and the like for Easter when you have free water, for those busy scanning in today's New vision for jobs when you have a job with ActionAid, for those with the wonderful spouse at home and yet you continue fall in the **married but searching** category.....[click here for today's blog.](#) It has your message.

Nickson now AG-Country Director



Harriet Robinah Gimbo, the Director of Programs at ActionAid successfully completed her tenure as the AG-Country Director, a position she has held for the last two months. She will be remembered for spear heading the completion of the 5th Country Strategic Paper along side other challenging organisational developments including the roll out of the Provident fund. Nickson takes on from her for the next two months.

Nickson's major task will be ensuring that the 1st Governing Board meeting of the year successfully takes place later this month. He will also ensure that the organisation conducts a successful Annual

General Assembly, recruitment of new Governing Board and members of the General assembly among others. Enjoy your new office Nickson!

WEEK AHEAD:

- AAU is in final stages of hosting the EU Ambassador in Uganda to launch the youth project in Kotido. We shall keep you informed.
- A media team has been sent to Lira to document a case of land grabs involving a top Government agency. Look out for this exclusive in the media.