

Weekly

Oct 10 - 15



"We have been nurtured to remain silent. Unfortunately, the silence is killing us. Today, we stand on the highest mountain in Africa to demand for what is rightfully ours, our land rights"

Welcome to this Women2kilimanjaro special edition of the Weekly.

The #Women2kilimanjaro flag off!



Left-Above: The Director of Programs at ActionAid, Harriet Gimbo (holding flag) flagged off the rural women farmers from Uganda and Rwanda last Monday. They travelled to Mt Kilimanjaro through Kenya where they were joined by the Kenyan Women farmers. Right-Above: are some of the Women on the bus to Kilimanjaro.

Below are a group of women cyclists. They cycled from Kampala to Arusha in solidarity with the rural women farmers.

Ugandan rural women, together with their counterparts from various countries on the African continent, last Friday convened at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania in an effort to advocate for unrestricted women's rights to land and other natural resources across the continent.

Participants from Uganda say they took part in the cause to denounce the continued discrimination of women in regard to land access, control and ownership. The situation cuts across several African Countries.

ActionAid Uganda's Director of Programs, Harriet Gimbo believes that the 'Kilimanjaro initiative' offers a unique window of opportunity to unify and amplify the struggles of rural women across Africa and their quest for land rights. Speaking at the flag off of the Ugandan caravan of women to Kilimanjaro, she called on all Ugandans to stand in solidarity with the women and listen to their land plight.

"The women climbed Mountain Kilimanjaro to show how difficult it has become for them to access, control and own land and yet they meet over 70% of the world's food needs", she said.

A recent study by the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation indicated that less than a quarter of agricultural land in developing countries is controlled by women, while low female access and control of land significantly obstructs access to financial assets.

Last week's event has been registered as the largest rural women's land rights assembly ever seen at the foot of Mountain Kilimanjaro. Women shared experiences on identifying and addressing key barriers to women's land rights such as early marriage, poor access to information, and unfair inheritance, among others. Apio Polly, one of the rural women from Katakwi said that the Kilimanjaro initiative had offered her an opportunity to share experience with women from elsewhere on the continent.

"While here, we are learning from each other how to win the campaign for the recognition of Women land rights. Am sure we are going to come back to Uganda to win this campaign" she spoke on phone from Tanzania.

Peter Clever Kalule, the National Livelihoods Coordinator at ActionAid in agreement with Polly added that;

"The initiative has linked the Ugandan Women to other women across the continent. They have shared experience and strategies on how to improve their advocacy drive to realise their land rights", he wrote during a whatsapp interview.

With 2016 declared by the African Union as the Africa year of human rights with a particular focus on the rights of women, women movements believe that it is time for action. At the meeting, women presented a charter demanding for fair and equal land rights on the African continent to the African Union and the United Nations for action.

The Women are expected back in the country on Thursday morning. Look out for more highlights on their trip to Kilimanjaro in next week's Weekly edition.

Flowers to the Nebbi Team-They stood in Solidarity!



In Nebbi, the Gender Based Violence shelter team spent their Saturday morning climbing the Nebbi Hill.

Natukunda Matilda, the Legal and Program officer of Nebbi GBV Shelter together with her children and ActionAid volunteers from Denmark and Sweden embarked on a very tough journey to climb the highest hill in the land.

"We embarked on the trip to stand in solidarity with the Women who climbed Mt Kilimanjaro but more importantly to depict how difficult it is for women to realize their land rights in this region", she said.

The journey was indeed not easy. They crawled, fell, carried each other but at the end of the day, they reached the top of the hill.

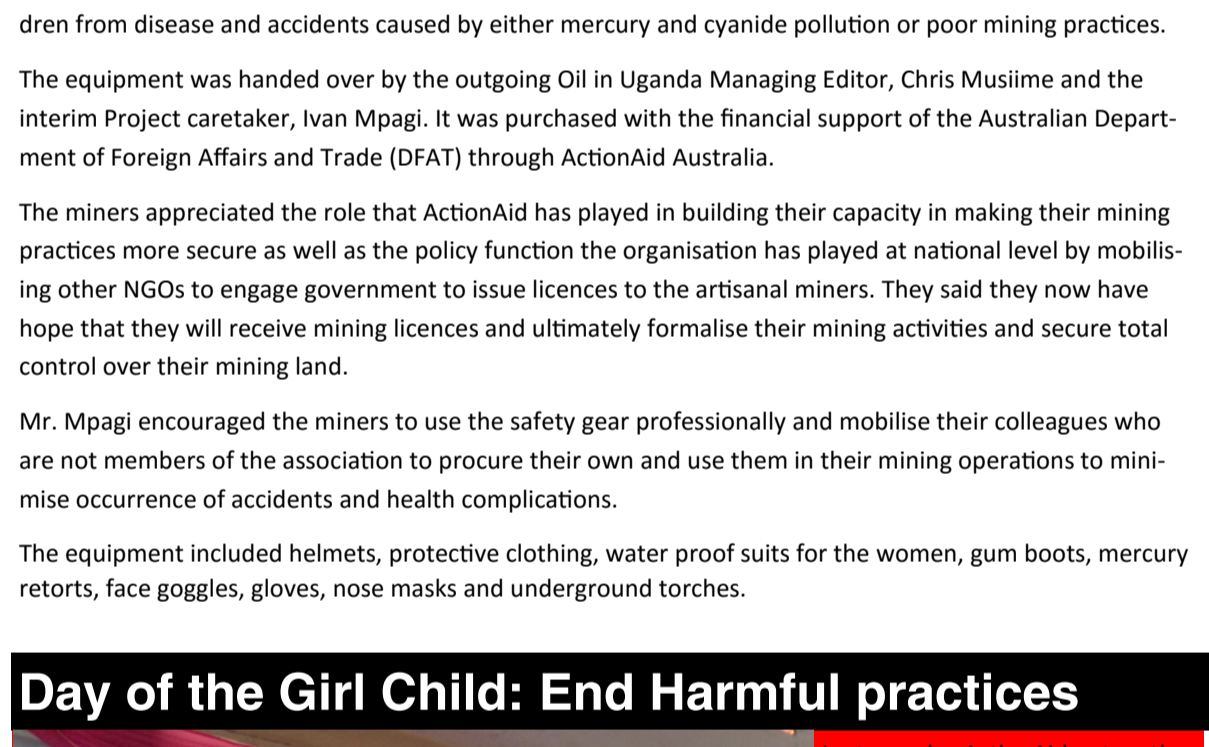
While the Nebbi GBV shelter receives about 15 cases every month, 40% of these are land related and are reported by women. Many of the cases are of women who have been denied

inheritance rights due to the patriarchal nature of society. The shelter team is however optimistic that if the women unite and demand for their land rights together, the power holders will listen.

"As a team, we reached the top of the mountain. We supported each other. At some point, we carried each other. That is what women need. Unity and solidarity"

Congratulations to the Nebbi team for the solidarity Action. The Country Director's award awaits you.

AAU donates Protective gear to make mining safe



Out-going Oil in Uganda Managing Editor, Chris Musiime(centre) hands over personal protective equipment to one of the female miners in Mubende last week. Looking on is Ivan Mpagi, the care taker of the project.

Last week, ActionAid's Oil in Uganda Project handed over Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to members of the Ssingoo Artisanal and Small Scale Miners Association in Mubende District.

The handover was preceded by training for the miners in Health and Safety, that focused on how women could avoid injuries and accidents caused by their mining operations and protect themselves and their children from disease and accidents caused by either mercury and cyanide pollution or poor mining practices.

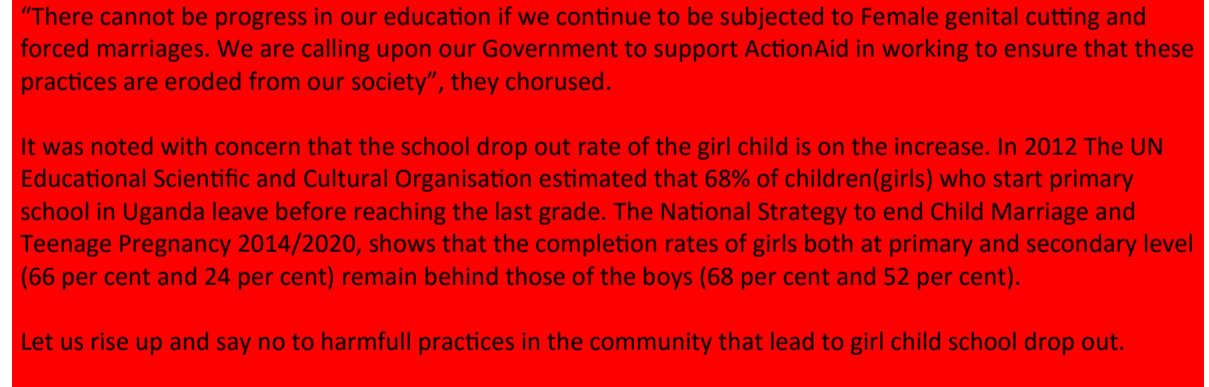
The equipment was handed over by the outgoing Oil in Uganda Managing Editor, Chris Musiime and the interim Project caretaker, Ivan Mpagi. It was purchased with the financial support of the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through ActionAid Australia.

The miners appreciated the role that ActionAid has played in building their capacity in making their mining practices more secure as well as the policy function the organisation has played at national level by mobilising other NGOs to engage government to issue licences to the artisanal miners. They said they now have hope that they will receive mining licences and ultimately formalise their mining activities and secure total control over their mining land.

Mr. Mpagi encouraged the miners to use the safety gear professionally and mobilise their colleagues who are not members of the association to procure their own and use them in their mining operations to minimise occurrence of accidents and health complications.

The equipment included helmets, protective clothing, water proof suits for the women, gum boots, mercury retorts, face goggles, gloves, nose masks and underground torches.

Day of the Girl Child: End Harmful practices



Girls from Pokot Secondary school (Amudat) travelled to Kampala to attend the Girl Child conference. They called on Govt to urgently work to bring to an end the several harmful practices that are affecting their progress.

Last week, ActionAid together with partners took part in the Girl Child Students Conference held at Uganda Information and Communication Technology Institute in Nakawa.

The conference, held in commemoration of the International Day of the Girl child aimed at creating awareness on key issues affecting the girl child. These include violence against the girl child, reproductive health, sanitation and girl education among others.

Over 250 students from different schools attended the conference. Other Organisations represented include WaterAid, Baylor Uganda, ActionAid Uganda, African Women and Girls Organisation, Afri-Child Centre, Save the Children, FAWE Uganda among others.

Kay Lehner from USAID, the chief guest at the conference called upon partners present to invest in collecting and analysing girl child relevant data which can be used to make amendments to the issues that affect them.

The year's theme is; "Girls' Progress = Goals' Progress: What Counts for Girls." The theme is in line with the challenges that many girls face and the need to empower them to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030, especially goal number five on gender equality.

Girls from Pokot Secondary school in Amudat spoke about the harmful practices in their district such as female genital cutting, early and forced marriages and how this are a road block to their progress. They commended ActionAid for the work its doing in the district to address the challenges.

"There cannot be progress in our education if we continue to be subjected to Female genital cutting and forced marriages. We are calling upon our Government to support ActionAid in working to ensure that these practices are eradicated from our society", they chorused.

It was noted with concern that the school drop out rate of the girl child is on the increase. In 2012 The UN Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation estimated that 68% of children(girls) who start primary school in Uganda leave before reaching the last grade. The National Strategy to end Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy 2014/2020, shows that the completion rates of girls both at primary and secondary level (66 per cent and 24 per cent) remain behind those of the boys (68 per cent and 52 per cent).

Let us rise up and say no to harmful practices in the community that lead to girl child school drop out.

The women who cycled to Kilimanjaro!



Women who rode bicycles from Kampala to Mt Kilimanjaro pulled mammoth crowds along the way as people saluted them over their sacrifices in the bid for women land rights under the women to Kilimanjaro caravan. Daata Esther,31 and Nagadya Marlam,30 set off from Kampala on the 3rd of October. They cycled through Uganda; Mukono, Jinja, Iganga and Busia, In Kenya through Siaya,Nakuru and Nairobi before safely arriving in Arusha, their final destination. The two joined the delegation of rural women from the African Continent to demand for the enactment of women land rights laws in Africa.

Above-Left: Esther(L) and Mariam are welcomed to Arusha by Apio Polly, one of the Ugandan Rural women who climbed Mt Kilimanjaro. Above Right is Mariam and Esther being recognized t the Assembly.

Below-Left: Mariam and Esther riding through the Nakuru streets. Right is the set off in Kampala.

denied access to what rightfully belongs to them because they are female. She called on African Governments not to just stop at passing laws that protect and uphold women land rights but work towards implementing them.

Mariam, in the same spirit added that;

"Just as it is hard to climb Kilimanjaro, power holders should know that women are ready to do anything in their power, no matter how hard it is to realise their land rights", she concluded.

Esther and Mariam are expected back in Uganda tomorrow.

Kilimanjaro photo gallery



In Nakuru Kenya!

At the Assembly!