

Weekly

Oct 31 — Nov 6



Last week, ActionAid saw the successful sign up of the Global Civic Charter by the Uganda Police. The Police pledged its full support to the Charter emphasizing that the Police exists to protect the people, their property and their rights. However, terms and conditions apply: sign the charter today by [clicking here](#). It will only take a few minutes. Welcome to the Weekly.

Ug-Police Signs Global Civic Charter!!



Left-Above: The Director of Human Resource and Police Spokes person Andrew Felix Kaweesi is taken through the Civic Charter by the Deputy Board Chair at AAU, Nicholus Opiyo. **Right** is the team in a group photo after signing the charter.

Below –Left: Kaweesi meets members of the jobless brotherhood at the breakfast meeting. **Right** is AAU's Program Director-Harriet in a close interaction with Namutebi Hadija, the Police Commissioner in charge of Community Policing.

Last Thursday, the Director of Human Resources and Spokes Person of the Uganda Police Force, Andrew Felix Kaweesi appended his Signature to the Global Civic Charter with a commitment to ensure that the Police Force provide a conducive atmosphere for Ugandans to genuinely participate in shaping their society. Kaweesi made the commitment during a breakfast meeting organised by ActionAid aimed at finding lasting solutions to challenges that Ugandans face in advancing their rights to participate. The highly engaging meeting was also attended by the Commissioner of Community Policing Ms Hadija Namutebi, Members of the Jobless brotherhood and several civil society leaders.

In his opening remarks, Arthur Larok, the Country Director at ActionAid stated that in Uganda just like many African Countries, the civil society and other rights activists have increasingly limited space to express themselves due to the repressive measures against them by the state.

"This Global Framework for people participation is giving us an opportunity to work towards realizing fundamental human rights and rights of participation by the different actors", he inspired.

Several youths stood up to challenge the Police for proving to be uncooperative and using excessive force to deny Ugandans freedom of association, assembly and expression all of which are emphasized in the Civic charter.

"Even when the Police gives us a go ahead to hold peaceful demonstrations, the same Force comes and disperses it using excess force. So we are at cross roads", stated one of the youth Activists citing the Women's planned demonstration against the lifting of term limits for judicial officers which the Police had given a green light but later blocked and arrested the women.

While the Police accused the youth of being used and paid to be activists and hence their cause not entirely genuine, the youth in response stated that there seems no other option but to take on activism as a full time job.

"When injustice becomes the practice, then resistance becomes a duty and hence activism a full time job", he said.

Afande Kaweesi on the other hand recognised that some Police Officers have acted unprofessionally.

"On several occasions, our officers in uniform have acted stupidly. My appeal to you is that if they act stupid, please don't act like them. Always seek the intervention of officers at a higher level", he guided.

He however emphasized that as a state organ, they are mandated to protect the sitting Government and acting otherwise would mean neglecting their job.

"We however recognise that some of the challenges that Uganda is facing now like poverty, inequality and climate change can only be overcome if people collectively participate in finding lasting solutions. As the Police, we pledge to support the charter with full commitment" he concluded.

In his Closing remarks, Dr Nicholus Opiyo, the Vice Chairperson of the AAU Governing Board thanked the Police leaders for honouring the invitation and committing to work with the civil society to advance the civic charter.

The Civic Charter was developed in collaboration with civil society actors from different continents and countries through extensive consultation and advisory processes. The process was supervised by a Steering Group of renowned civil society organizations, with participation from CIVICUS, ICNL, ActionAid, Amnesty International, Oxfam, Rendir Cuentas, VANI, Africa Platform, the Oak Foundation, the Wallace Global Fund, and the Open Society Foundations. The Civic Charter is supported by its signatories and is open for signing by all those who feel connected to the rights and principles declared therein.

The Emotional Farewell.....



Emotional hugs, dance, laughter, catwalks, ululations and beautiful memories filled the air as ActionAid staff and Members of the AAU Governing Board gathered to witness a sterling chapter of the longest serving ActionAid staff come to a close.

Mary served ActionAid for the last 29 years. Her passion to work with children brought her this far. Right is Mary receiving her award.

Zaitun doing her last dance in AAU. Her children pledged to ensure that she remains classy! Right is Zaitun receiving a gift from the Deputy Board Chair.

The gentlemen on the left seemed to have waited for Saida's hug for several years. They couldn't hold back their excitement. Right is Saida receiving her gift.

Wining and dining in progress!

The 29 yrs of Mary, 25 of Saida and 24 of Zaitun were marked on the cake. All the outgoing staff and management joined in cutting the cake.

Zaituna's children thanked ActionAid for ensuring that their mother retires. They promised to support her to ensure that she remains the classy lady she is.

From that moment on, Zaituna Fumbe, the former Executive Assistant in the Office of the Country Director, Mary Akir, the former Sponsorship Officer and Saida Nansubuga Bogere, the former Sponsorship Coordinator became retirees, albeit all with long and illustrious careers.

Accompanied by their close families and friends, the three ladies stepped into the farewell hall with an instigating gait of utter confidence, pride and triumph overflowing at each dance move they made to the music in the room.

The dance they made across the room took about 20 minutes as at every step, the ladies were cheered, admired and hugged by several members of staff, some of whom had waited for several years to hug the ladies. It was an emotional goodbye to write the least.

Zaitun, in her last words after a 24 year journey with ActionAid stated that it was not easy serving in her office as the former Country Directors she worked with all had their "way of work". She emphasized patience and hard work to all current staff.

"I have learnt a lot from each of you. Without your guidance, support, encouragement and care, my achievements wouldn't have been met. I move out with my head up for all I've been able to contribute towards the process of alleviating poverty", she said.

Zaituna's children thanked ActionAid for ensuring that their mother retires. They promised to support her to ensure that she remains the classy lady she is.

On the other hand, Mary, who has served the Organisation for 29 years thanked AAU management for an opportunity to serve in order to look after her extended family. She explained that she served for all those years because she was not only working for her family but also doing that which her heart loves best; working with children. The emotional Mary had a script to read about every member of staff. Only time cut her short. As he danced to her seat, the gathering could not help but give a standing ovation to a lady that was described by the Policy and Campaigns Manager as "his inspiration."

And for Saida, her 25 year journey with ActionAid is one earmarked with hard work, integrity, energy and a sense of fashion. You will be excused to think that the over 50 year old is sweet 25.

"My experience in ActionAid for the last 25 years was extraordinary in many ways. I started in Mityana in the senior management team. This was during the prime years of reconstructing ActionAid International systems and procedures; I had an upper hand especially contributing to the building of the human resources both in country and internationally. In the early 2000s, I moved to the head office at a time when fundraising invigoration was key on the overall ActionAid agenda. With my computer background then, I contributed immensely in the NK database management system production and rollout. I'm going away while the candle is still burning but there is a lot that needs to be done in fundraising the light to be brighter than it is right now." She concluded.

The Country Director, Arthur Larok commended the three ladies for their dedication and long service to humanity over the years.

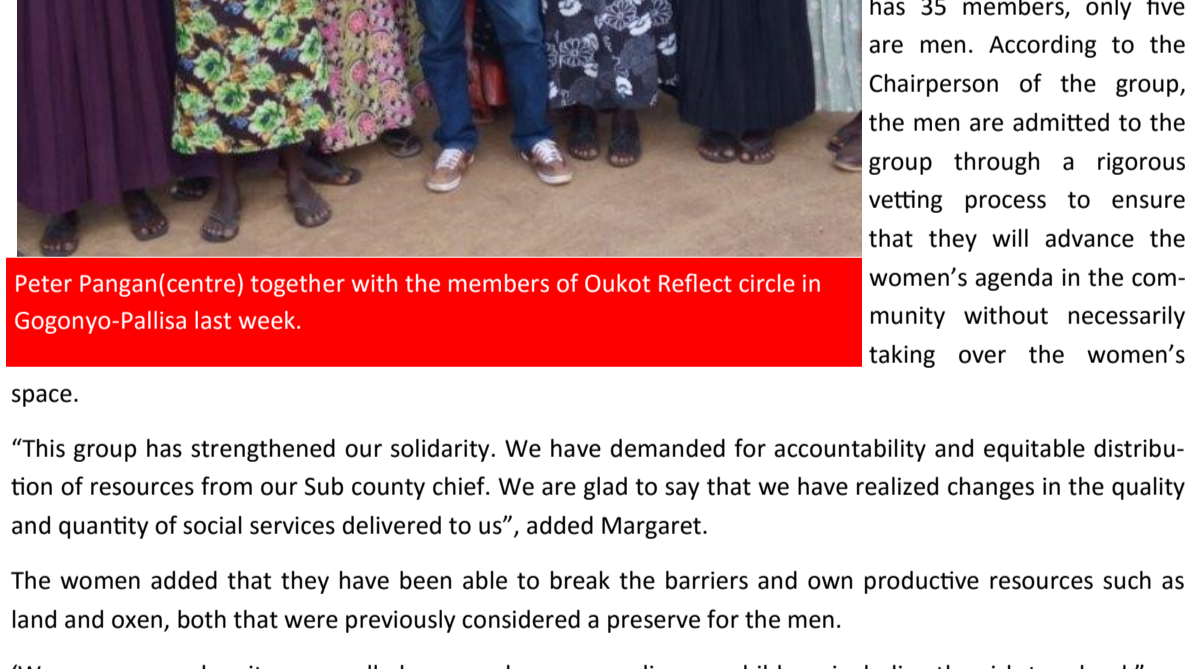
"With the high staff turnovers in the civil Society, we must say that this is an extra ordinary achievement for us as ActionAid. Thank you for your work, discipline and professionalism", he said adding that they should keep the ActionAid flag high even in their retirement.

Mr. Nicholus Opiyo, the Deputy Chairperson of the AAU Governing Board echoed Arthur's words as he handed over presents to the outgoing staff. Also present was Ms Judy Kamanyi, also a member of the Board.

Other members of staff whom AAU bid farewell to on the same day were Chris Musime; the former Managing Editor of the Oil in Uganda Newsletter, Hellen Nampijja; the former Human Resource Officer, Timothy Kabaale; the former Governance Program Officer, Ogech Moses; the former Project Officer-SFR-Katakwi, Kevin Nabattu; former project Officer SFR-Kumi and Hope Wambi; the former Project Coordinator of the ECVAC.

At the end of the day, cake was cut, gifts exchanged and a last dance ensued. For Saida, Mary and Zaituni, you have set the bar so high. Congratulations. For the rest of the outgoing staff, we wish you success in your next assignments.

Women Solidarity excites Malawi Staff



Peter Pangan (centre) together with the members of Oukot Reflect circle in Gogonyo-Pallisa last week.

ActionAid Pallisa cluster last week hosted the ActionAid Malawi Programs Director, Peter Pangani. Peter was in Uganda for orientation into his new position as ActionAid Malawi Program Director. He was accompanied to Pallisa by the ActionAid Uganda Programs Director, Harriet Gimbo.

While in Pallisa, Peter met and interacted with Oukot Reflect Action Group in Gogonyo. While the group has 35 members, only five are men. According to the Chairperson of the group, the men are admitted to the group through a rigorous vetting process to ensure that they will advance the women's agenda in the community without necessarily taking over the women's space.

"This group has strengthened our solidarity. We have demanded for accountability and equitable distribution of resources from our Sub county chief. We are glad to say that we have realized changes in the quality and quantity of social services delivered to us", added Margaret.

The women added that they have been able to break the barriers and own productive resources such as land and oxen, both that were previously considered a preserve for the men.

"We can now read, write, own cell phones and we are sending our children, including the girls to school."

Peter was particularly amazed by the experience of a woman who sued UMEME, the Electricity distribution company in the country for trespass and successfully won the case.

"The experiences are amazing. What am taking back to Malawi is the empowerment and solidarity that I have seen in Pallisa. I realize that when people organize themselves in groups, they can always win their campaigns against injustices in society", said Peter.

He added that the Oukot Reflect group members were not simply reading from a script but sharing real life experiences as a group and individuals, a true definition of empowerment.

Before travelling back to Malawi over the weekend, Peter also interacted with several Heads of Units at AAU

ActionAid in the media



Last week, AAU's Country Director, Arthur Larok was hosted on NBS to participate in a live debate on the performance of the Electoral Commission under the leadership of Dr Badru Kiggundu. Arthur was hosted together with Mr Taremba, the Electoral Commission's Spokes person. In his debate, Arthur stated that key structural changes need to be effected in the commission and several electoral reforms instituted if the EC is to perform better than it has done in the past elections.

Asked for his verdict by the show host Simon Kagwa Njala, Arthur stated that according to his assessment, the Commission had performed slightly below average. You can watch this debate on NBS/YOUTUBE/ morning breeze.

Week Ahead

This week, ActionAid is hosting the ActionAid Ireland Country Director. More details on her visit in our next edition of the weekly.