



Dear Reader; last Friday, ActionAid management and staff came together to bid farewell to your weekly Producer, Ms Samanya R. Kyategeka. In this edition of the Weekly, we feature Samanya but also an interview with Arthur, the former AAU country Director who tells us why he waved processes and procedures during his tenure at AAU. Welcome to this edition of the weekly!

## Q and A with Arthur Larok



Staff from Katakwi and Kapchorwa offices bidding farewell to Arthur in December last year.

**In our interview with Arthur Larok, find out why he often ignored procedures and process as he went about his work during his five year term (Feb 2012-Dec 2017) as the Country Director of ActionAid Uganda**

**Five years as ActionAid Uganda's captain. Could you kindly count for us your gains?**

I had an amazing time at ActionAid Uganda and it remains an experience close to my heart. I believe staff who were in ActionAid before I joined would best answer this question but the five things I most proud of are:

a) Building and rebuilding a winning team that helped us collectively celebrate many milestones together during my time - no leader without a team can succeed for even our Lord Jesus had a team to help Him do all the amazing things today. Without my immediate CMT team, helping me fulfil collective leadership, I would count many gains in reducing staff attrition, fundraising inroads, clean external audits; new programmes and innovations in communication such as this very platform I am speaking at;

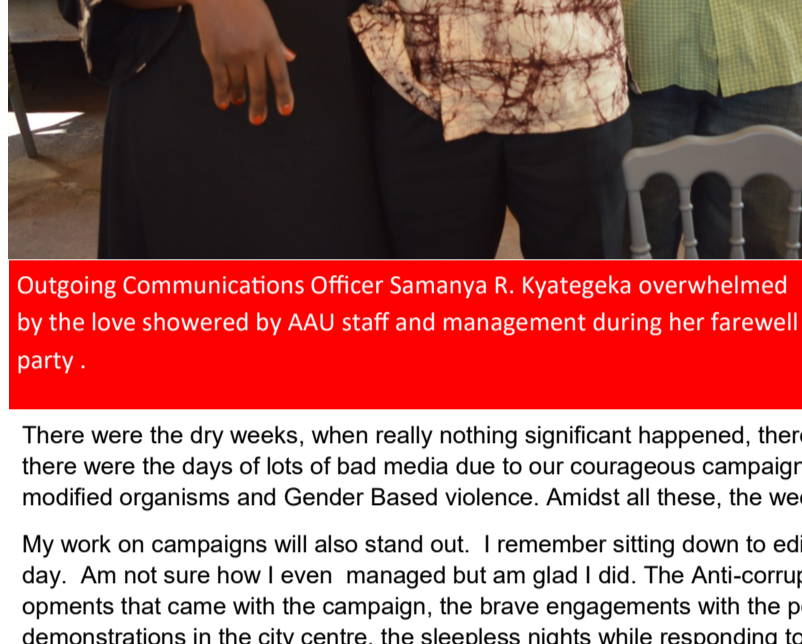
b) secondly, I am proud of what I consider an atmosphere where many staff felt worthy and worked with dedication - an atmosphere of love and support and one that enabled us achieve a significant turnaround in terms of voluntary attrition which was over 12% when I joined; more staff staying more than four years was testimony to a commitment to the organisation and enthusiasm with which we turned around and revived our Staff SAC-CO after a terrible experience with a welfare scheme before was lovely to witness;

c) I am proud of increasing the external focus and profile of ActionAid and we won many public accolades for the courageous work we did and certainly our brand externally was bigger and better. We also provided greater leadership in the sector, be it shaping the nascent black Monday movement 5 years ago, the leadership role we played in other networks such as the National NGO Forum, Food Rights Alliance or the anti-corruption coalition, ActionAid became a credible convener in the sector;

**What was the most trying moment of your leadership, that moment when you almost gave up?**

[Find out answers to this and many more questions by clicking here for the full interview.](#)

## Farewell To The Lady Behind AAU'S Brand



Outgoing Communications Officer Samanya R. Kyategeka overwhelmed by the love showered by AAU staff and management during her farewell party.

Today, you receive the last edition of the Weekly from me. This particular product, one of the many produced by the communications unit, makes me feel very lucky for I have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.

I walked into ActionAid in August 2012, a few months after Arthur, the Country Director then who had just taken over office. Those who know Arthur very well will tell you about his passion for communication. He always had these many ideas on what more we can do to document the work of ActionAid for better branding and shared learning. It did not help matters that I was six months pregnant at the time (I will write about this next time, the fact that ActionAid employed me when I was heavily pregnant-amazing!).

In one of those meetings, he challenged me to produce a weekly newsletter, tracking all activities that made news in and around ActionAid. That was tough, I thought; and yet, that is what he wanted exactly.

Six years later, am happy that you have received the weekly edition every Monday. It has not been easy bearing in mind that communication at ActionAid is a one man office.

There were the dry weeks, when really nothing significant happened, there were the days of frozen accounts, there were the days of bad media due to our courageous campaigns on Black Monday, Genetically modified organisms and Gender Based violence. Amidst all these, the weekly came out.

My work on campaigns will also stand out. I remember sitting down to edit the first three editions of Black Monday. Am not sure how I even managed but am glad I did. The Anti-corruption caravans and the slogan demonstrations that came with the campaign, the brave engagements with the police to seek for clearance to hold demonstrations in the city centre, the sleepless nights while responding to the bad media that came with the famous Zainab Mbabazi case, a GBV survivor who had been allegedly gang raped and was living at our GBV Shelter will forever be memorable. This is what they call experience.

Great is the art of beginning, but greater is the art of ending. As I end my journey at ActionAid, am proud of the strengthened ActionAid brand as a result of improved documentation and strong media relations.

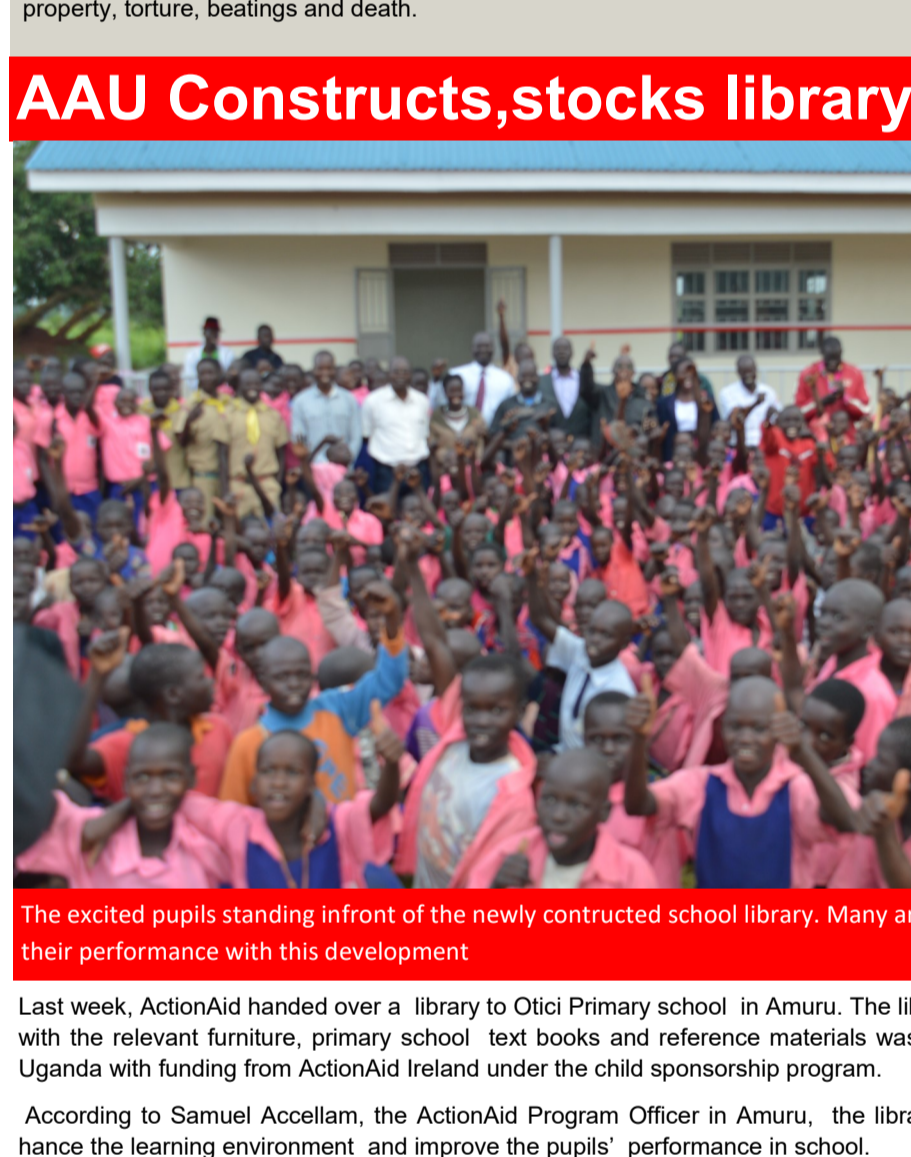
All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another. I longed for this change and I praise God for it. However, having logged into ActionAid at only 25yrs, I celebrate the physical growth, career experience, professional grooming and academic growth. Just to add that I read my Masters degree while at ActionAid. I will always celebrate ActionAid for these milestones and each of you. Goodbyes make you think, they make you realize what you've had, what you've lost, and what you've taken for granted.

As I exit, am happy that I played my role as the communications officer at ActionAid. I did this with all my heart, soul and expertise. It's no wonder that God has rewarded this service with my dream job.

Last Friday, I was praised, hugged, awarded, carried and even rewarded by ActionAid management and staff. It was an experience I will live with for the rest of my life. Thank you ActionAid for training me but also for recognizing my modest contribution to this organisation for the last six years.

I wish you more strength, passion and courage as we continue to struggle for social justice in our Country and the world at large.

## AAU Donates Relief Items To Apaa



Some of the Apaa displaced persons receiving turplins from ActionAid team

Last week, ActionAid together with Caritas delivered a consignment of 230 Turplins to support the Apaa community in Amuru district. This followed a Rapid Assessment conducted by ActionAid which recommended a dire need for emergency humanitarian aid based on the forced evictions and torching of the residents.

While delivering the items, ActionAid learned that 246 huts had been torched in the last two months, leaving hundreds of families with no shelter at all. The intensive attack in Gagi, Acholi ber, and Punudyang villages in the 2nd week of May increased the number of torched huts to 400.

The community alleged that over 200 bags of sorghum, 80 bags of millet, 50 bags of rice, 10 bicycles and over 600 chickens were looted during the attacks.

"We have endured over 5 years of brutal conflict and we have not lost the resilience or hope because this contested land is ours and we must protect it at all costs", stated Charles Awaro, the LCI Chairperson of Punudyang.

Mr Awaro added that as a result, children have dropped out of school as many of their families have been displaced while others lack shelter.

"We appreciate ActionAid and Caritas for the kind gesture, and call upon all actors to ensure that this conflict comes to an end", he appealed.

AAU used the same occasion to call upon the concerned parties to urgently consider dialogue and commit to an end to violence that has brought with it massive human suffering.

" We demand for an immediate end to the social injustice that the people of Apaa have been subjected to. They too have a right to life , a right to land and a right to a life of dignity", Stated AAU's David Komakech.

The current forced evictions in Apaa are part of a complex, ongoing land disputes involving political parties and interests. At the heart of the dispute, approximately 26000 Acholi inhabitants claim that Apaa is their customary land, while Uganda Wild Life Authority (UWA) purports they are illegally residing in a gazetted Wild life area. Since 2010, UWA has backed a series of forceful evictions of the local population, which have been carried out at different times by UWA rangers, police and UPDF soldiers involving burning of huts, destruction of property, torture, beatings and death.

## AAU Constructs,stocks library



The excited pupils standing in front of the newly constructed school library. Many are aiming at improving their performance with this development

Last week, ActionAid handed over a library to Otici Primary school in Amuru. The library that was fully stocked with the relevant furniture, primary school text books and reference materials was constructed by ActionAid Uganda with funding from ActionAid Ireland under the child sponsorship program.

According to Samuel Accellam, the ActionAid Program Officer in Amuru, the library was constructed to enhance the learning environment and improve the pupils' performance in school.

At the handover ceremony, the pupils, teachers, members of the school management committees and the community at large were overly excited at the development that they believe will improve the academic performance of the school.

Mr. Omy Michael, the Vice chairperson of Lamogi Sub County tasked the pupils and teachers to make use of the new resource and work at making Otici among the best performing primary schools in the district.

Mr. Ocan Christopher, the District Inspector of schools thanked ActionAid for constructing the only library in Amuru.

"You did not stop at putting up a structure but also stocked all the relevant text books. This is commendable", he said.

Mr. Richard Olong, the Manager of Partnership and Capacity Building at ActionAid challenged the teachers and pupils to make use of the library and improve their score in National examinations. He urged the Local Government to work at addressing any other existing gaps for better results.

ActionAid Uganda constructed the school Library as a model strategy for the Government of Uganda to adapt and replicate to other primary schools in the entire country in order to improve on the learning environment and better academic performance.

## AAU in Land Awareness week-Mubende

ActionAid in partnership with the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development (MLHUD), Uganda Consortium on Corporate Accountability (UCCA), Buganda Land Board (BLB), the Network for Public Interest Lawyers (NETPIL), Mubende District Local Government and Participatory Ecological Land Use Management (PELUM) were in Mubende for a Land Awareness Campaign.

The team visited five sub counties of Madudu, Kiyuni, Kasanda, Kitenga, Mubende Municipality reaching approximately 5000 people through face to face interactions and over 10,000 people during the daily radio talk shows.

In the recent past, Mubende has been a center of land conflicts with multinational corporations claiming land for purposes of coffee growing, establishment of large farms, gold mining among others. There has been massive displacement and forced evictions to provide land to private actors to do business in the area.

During the week, the organizers held stakeholder meetings, community sensitization engagements, mobile legal aid clinics on land rights, radio talk shows among others.

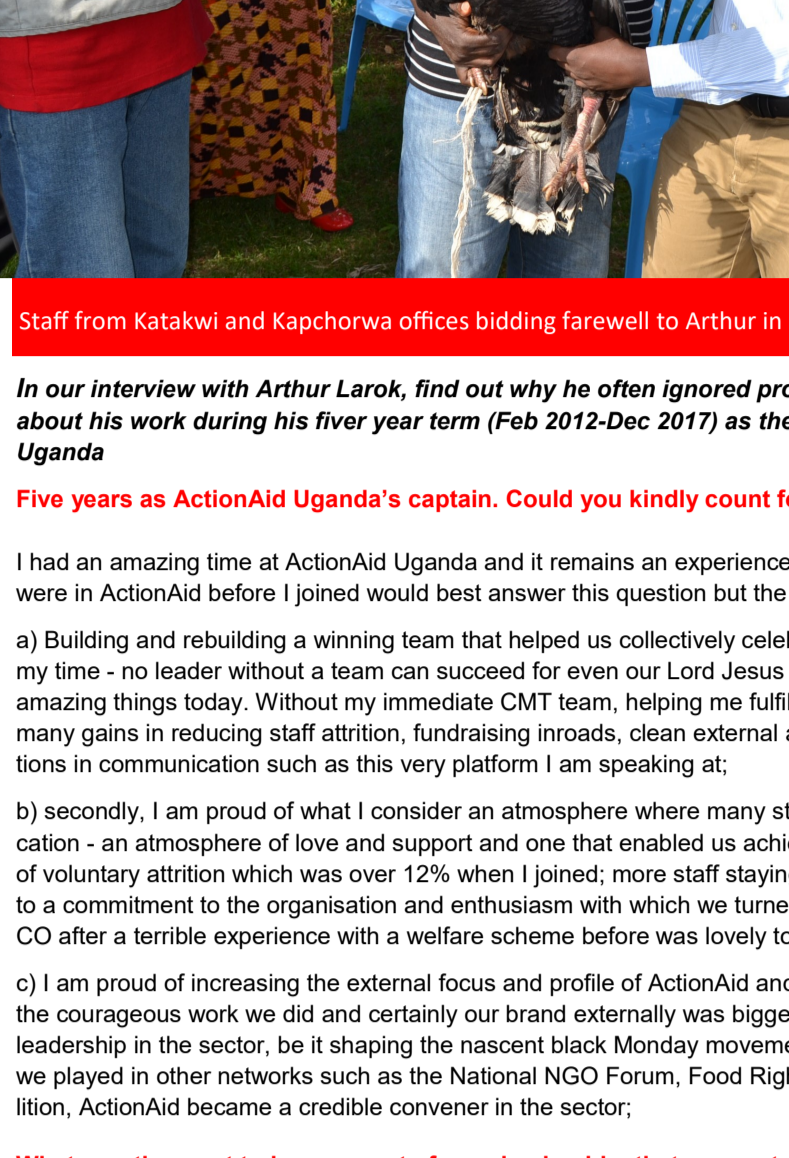
The week long engagements focused on creating awareness, underscoring gaps relating to land governance and demystifying the various misconceptions around land laws—so as to enable clear documentation of evidence based land issues to inform national level advocacy and strategies towards reform of land administration.

ActionAid and actors found that some of the issues that were driving land conflicts in the district include Absentee landlords, poor boundary demarcations, the poor technical capacity of some land administrators among others. The weeklong activities closed with a dialogue held at Kitenga sub county headquarters where the Minister of State for Lands Housing and Urban Development Pervis Namuganza , Area Members of Parliament, District officials and other stakeholders were in attendance.

A Communique highlighting some of the critical issues observed during the week was presented to the Minister. Among others, ActionAid and its partners recommended that the Ministry of Lands Housing and urban development, through the Commissioner Land Registration develops guidelines on payment of *Busuulu* in cases of absentee landlords or where landlords refuse to receive payments. They also called for the Streamlining of registration and acquisition of National Identity cards to aid in facilitation of Land transactions.

Other recommendations include the operationalization of the Land Fund, equipping and building the capacities of area Land Committees to appreciate their roles and responsibilities in all Land transactions. Hon Namuganza promised to follow up on all the issues raised and work towards an end to land conflicts not only in Mubende but the rest of the country.

## AAU Builds Capacity in Evidence Collection



ActionAid staff, together with the participants and trainers in a photo moment after the training last Saturday

Last week, ActionAid in partnership with International Conference of the Great Lakes Region-Regional Training Facility (ICGLR-RTF) implementing the Kampala declaration on the suppression of sexual Gender Based violence against women and girls conducted a five days training to enhance the capacity of multi-sectoral stakeholders towards improved management of SGBV cases at different levels.

The training was attended by 40 Police Officers, Medical personnel, Psychosocial Support Officers, Prosecutors, Probation and Social Welfare Officers.

According to Joyce Nabwire Baker, the ActionAid Coordinator of Women Protection centres, the training was conducted to enable successful prosecution of Sexual Gender Based Violence(SGBV) cases at different levels. The training also provided a platform for shared learning among actors towards improved coordination and support to

SGBV survivors.

It is estimated that in Uganda, only 2 in 10 women report violence or seek help. Even when cases are reported, conviction rates for perpetrators stand at only 6.6% of prosecuted cases. Low reporting of violence means that many survivors do not receive justice nor psychosocial support. AAU has been campaigning for special courts/sessions to handle GBV cases. However, working closely with the referral pathway actors in the prevention and response to gender based violence, ActionAid noted pertinent challenges that needed to be addressed.

These include the limited capacity of officers to handle SGBV cases resulting from limited skills in collection, preservation and management of forensic evidence during investigation and prosecution of SGBV cases. The training therefore equipped stakeholders with skills and knowledge on evidence preservation and management. The training also strengthened the coordination and working relation between the different actors in SGBV Case management and support towards increased prosecution of SGBV in Courts of law.

The ICGLR- RTF is mandated as an inter- government training facility of the ICGLR Partners States of the great lakes region to train stakeholders in documentation and investigation of sexual violence cases in conflict. The institute delivered quality training, using examples of some of the high profile cases in Kampala.

The training that took place at UNIK Hotel in Namugongo closed on Saturday with the ward of certificates to the participants.

AAU's Program Director, Harriet Gimbo called on the trained stakeholders to work at ensuring the successful prosecution of GBV cases so that the victims can realise justice.

## AAU Inducts New implementing Partners



Aid team also took time to listen and learn about the different partners.

Partnership is one of the approaches designated for the implementation of AAU 5<sup>th</sup> Strategy Paper, Strengthening Struggles for Social Justice. As you may recall, ActionAid has been conducting a Partner selection exercise since December 2017. The selection process has gone through three phases: Calls for expression of interest; evaluation process during which the proposals were reviewed and a shortlist of potential partners made and finally a physical validation process during which physical visits were made to shortlisted organizations.

Last week, ActionAid moved a step further by conducting regional partner's inception and learning fora for all the selected partners. The meetings took place in Gulu for the Northern and West Nile partners and Mbale for the partners in the East. During the meetings, partners were introduced to ActionAid as an organization to have a better understanding of the organization's culture, work ethics and strategic direction. The Action-

Aid team also took time to listen and learn about the different partners.

At the end of the meetings, both ActionAid and partners had harmonized their expectations and there was clarity on the essence of AAU partnership approach. ActionAid will hold a similar engagement with the Kampala based partners next week.

According to Fiona Awilli, the partnerships Officer, ActionAid will sign MOUs with the selected partners at the end of this month and start implementation of the 5<sup>th</sup> strategy immediately.

## Hello From Denmark

Last week, we reported that the ActionAid Global Secretariat Representative on the AAU Governing Board was in the Country for the General Assembly. Ole Anand, on returning to Denmark wrote back to us. He says that during his stay, he learnt that Africans are the most beautiful people in the world. He also learnt that ActionAid is powerful in Uganda.

[Read more about his reflections here.](#)