

UN Women Uganda Q4 Newsletter 2022

This edition of our quarterly publication, aimed at keeping our esteemed readers abreast with the endeavors of UN Women Uganda, encompasses the period of October through December 2022. Within these pages, we have meticulously curated a selection of activities undertaken by our organization, as well as providing a platform for the voices of those whom we have had the privilege of serving, to be heard. We trust that the contents of this newsletter will prove to be both enlightening and informative. Enjoy the read!



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Austria's Government Supports UN Women's Training for Judicial Officers in Uganda

by UN Women/ Eva Sibanda



Lady Justice Mutonyoni dives into “Gender Bias and the Law” on day 3 of the JTJ Training (UN Women/Eva Sibanda)

UN Women and the Judicial Training Institute (JTI) in conjunction with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) are implementing the ‘*Women and Girls Access Justice through Effective, Accountable and Gender-Responsive Institutions*’ Project. This work is premised on an outcome of the Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) Strategy for Uganda which seeks to enhance staff capacity in institutions involved in the administration of justice, with particular focus on gender equality and equitable access to justice, including for vulnerable groups, and enhancing the observance of human rights in the delivery of justice.

On 7 November 2022, a five-day training commenced for judicial trainers in Uganda to build their capacity to adjudicate SGBV cases with knowledge, skill, and expertise. The training invited magistrates at all levels; grade one, senior grade one, principal grade one and chief magistrates. 24 Magistrates from Moroto, Nakapiripirit, Soroti, Tororo, Gulu, Nwoya, Amuru, Kasese, Fort Portal, Kampala, Luwero, Kaberamaido, Bwera, Katwe, Butaleja, Malaba, Serere, and Kamwenge.

In line with training objectives Judicial officers’ capacity was built to support victims and survivors of violence. The training was moderated by UN Women implementing partner CEDOVIP led the first session on “Examining Power”.

Allowing for free interaction as participants filled a ‘pre-test’ and shared their reflections on power from their experience as District Magistrates. CEDOVIP spoke to unfair power dynamics and the burden of care placed on women. Grace Lwanga (CEDOVIP) led the session on the relation between power and gender-based violence. UN Women Country Representative Dr. Paulina Chiwangu shared remarks, while Dr. Roswitha Kremser (Head of Office, Embassy of Austria, and ADC Uganda and programme funder) opened the workshop.



Hon. Justice Damalie Lwanga presentation on victim rights in the criminal Justice system, officers spoke to the unique nature of SGBV crimes (UN Women/Eva Sibanda)

The training heard from esteemed Judges including Her Worship Gladys Nakibule who highlighted the importance of international legal instruments on GBV such as the CEDAW. Honourable Lady Justice Jane Elizabeth Alividza of the Judicial Training Institute (JTI) spoke to gender stereotypes in a presentation on “Concepts, Causes and Manifestations of GBV.” Lady Justice Muthonyi divulged on gender bias and the contentious question of whether there is a need for corroboration in defilement cases, and how bias can manifest in real life cases.

Honourable Justice Damalie Lwanga on victim rights in the criminal justice system. Furthermore, the officers discussed the unique nature of GBV and its effects on access to justice. Justice Eva Luswata explored a practical session with the judicial officers on the need for judicial activism in deciding GBV cases during which officers read through landmark cases deliberating the issues and judgments. Further Justice Luswata spoke to removing systematic barriers and promoting positive change. To compliment, Cissy Namuzimbi Bwogi of International Justice Mission (IJM) shared a presentation on understanding the effects of traumatic events and taking a trauma-informed approach at all stages.

Judicial Officer Takeaways

1. Pay attention to the victim and ask myself “What Would Justice Kisaakye do in the circumstances?”
2. Create a conducive environment in the court.
3. Adopt a victim centered approach
4. Judicial activism has its place in adjudication especially in regard to gender-based violence cases
5. In some cases, judicial activism should be the dominant approach
6. Gender sensitivity with regards to line of questioning for GBV survivors
7. Issue of mediation in GBV cases and when to engage in mediation and what to consider when deciding whether mediation will be helpful
8. Trauma informed court processes – by the time victims get to court (from reporting), they have gone through a lot of reporting
9. Self-care as one of the takeaways
10. In addition to dispensing justice in GBV cases, need to coordinate with stakeholders to handle justice in a collaborative way
11. Sensitize offenders while in court to understand
12. Engage in BCC for the safety and protection of victims, with civil society such as IJM
13. When handling SGBV cases exercise judicial activism and look at regional and international law
14. Need a streamlined judiciary alternative dispute resolution (ADR)
15. Train all judicial officer on ADR – Mediation as it could lighten the load
16. Compendium on gender sensitive judgments
17. Train lawyers on DR and GBV to aid judicial decisions
18. Train bench and bar together
19. Give realistic protective orders – keep women at home and order men out for example.
20. Instead of asking what the law says ask what would a right-thinking judge say
21. Be more empathetic
22. Read between the lines, sometimes facts are not what they seem
23. Concentrate on justice and don’t be gender biased
24. Psychosocial support CSOs to be engaged
25. Observe body language

Government of Uganda with support from UN Women Uganda commemorates 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign in Kampala

by UN Women/ Eva Sibanda and Edmond Mwebembezi

24 November 2022



Frank Mugabi (Communications Officer at the Ministry of Gender) moderated the day and made statements and impassioned pleas to end violence against women and girls at the 16 Days of Activism National Launch at Imperial Royale Hotel in Kampala (UN Women/Eva Sibanda)

The commemoration created awareness on the continued prevalence of violence and clarified the urgent need to end all forms of violence against women. The remarks shared highlighted the urgency behind this work, as donors rallied behind UN Women with evidence and the community backed up that evidence through testimony. Government representatives also shared their commitments to the cause.

As guests arrived, dance entertainment and videos played in the background illustrating the work conducted in Uganda to support survivors of violence and efforts to prevent all forms of discrimination against women. The UN Women Country Representative Paulina Chiwangu introduced the United Nations Resident Coordinator Susan Namondo to make remarks on behalf of one United Nations. The UNRC shared:

“Despite the commendable efforts of the Government - including legal reforms, increasing access to justice, and improving services - high rates of violence persist. This is costing society. In 2021 alone the Uganda Police Force received over 16,000 reports of sex-related offences – one report every 30 minutes.”

On the sideline of the launch, *Frauen Initiative Uganda* (a Civil Society Organization supported by UN Women) held an exhibition entitled “What I Was Wearing.” The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development concluded his remarks at the launch with reflections on the “What I Was Wearing” exhibition, noting: “*We should not agonize, but organise.*” [when it comes to ending violence against women and girls].



The EU Ambassador to Uganda Jan Sadek and UN Resident Coordinator Susan Namondo Ngongi at the National Launch in Kampala (Eva Sibanda/UN Women)

The Ambassador of Sweden to Uganda, spoke on behalf of the development partners and donor community in Uganda, sharing recent statistics on teenage pregnancy. To back her, the Chairperson of the National Women's Council Faridah Kibowa and the Honourable Minister of Gender Betty Amongi reinforced with figures from Uganda Bureau of Statistics and emphasised the timely importance of this campaign.

This launch was a call to action and triggered thinking among participants visiting the exhibition



Police Officer Francis Ogweng shares feedback to the "What I Was Wearing" Exhibition at the National Launch (Eva Sibanda/UN Women)

and bearing witness to the remarks, the shared feeling was around urgency and need to amplify this cause. Representation from the United Nations family, the diplomatic community and government highlighted the need for concerted efforts to take urgent action. The launch left participants asking "What Can I Do?" to make the world safer for women and girls. With conclusive remarks and commitments to continue work to end violence in Uganda, the campaign was officially launched with a symbolic cake cutting (Eva Sibanda/UN Women)



L-R Paulina Chiwangu (UN Women Country Representative), Director Juliana Akoryo (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development), Elsie Attafua (UNDP Country Representative), Hon Betty Amongi (Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development), Susan Namondo (UN Resident Coordinator), H.E Jan Sadek (Ambassador of the European Union to Uganda), Dr. Roswitha Kremser, (Head of Office, Austrian Embassy in Uganda) and Maria Håkansson (H.E the Ambassador of Sweden).



Bringing International Debates to Africa: The Success of the 5th Kampala Geopolitics Conference

by UN Women/Edmond Mwebembezi



UN Women Representative Paulina Chiwangu (PhD) makes remarks at the Kampala Geopolitics Conference. Looking on are Makerere University Vice Chancellor Prof Nawangwe, French Ambassador to Uganda, Xavier Sticker and other dignitaries.

In November 2022, Makerere University, in partnership with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS), UN Women, and the Embassy of France, successfully organized the 5th edition of the Kampala Geopolitics Conference (KGC). The conference was held at the Makerere University auditorium and brought together experts from Uganda, the African continent, and international researchers to engage in participatory and documented debates on global topics.

The theme of the conference was **“Bringing International Debates to Africa”** and aimed to discuss current geopolitical questions and trends. 14 roundtables were held, covering a wide range of subjects such as global challenges, security, regional trends, sustainable development, sport, culture, and society.

The conference was presided over by the French Ambassador to Uganda, Julie-Armand Aniambossou, who highlighted the importance of democracy and freedom of speech as one of the main issues discussed during the conference.

“We are not saying we are the only ones to talk about democracy and freedom of speech, but it’s very important that we debate on those kinds of issues,” said Julie-Armand Aniambossou the French Ambassador to Uganda.

The UN Women Representative to Uganda, Paulina Chiwangu (PhD) also commended Makerere University and KAS Uganda for organizing the event, which provided an opportunity for knowledge sharing across continents.

“Our organization, UN Women, believes it is crucial for us to be a part of this event, as it provides an opportunity for vital conversations about gender and women’s empowerment to occur. The challenges faced by women have been a frequent topic of discussion and by incorporating discussions about promoting gender equality and empowering women, this conference aligns with its intended purpose.”
Paulina Chiwangu (PhD)

The conference also featured cultural performances, an exhibition, and training for journalists on how to report different topics. One of the roundtables, the Geopolitics panel on global health partnerships, addressed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on relations between African states and external partners, and called for the need to re-prioritize strategic issues.

Overall, the conference was a huge success, providing an interactive platform for dialogue and free exchange on contemporary, regional, and international debates and moving global debates to an African stage.



Uganda Hosts Inaugural Renewable Energy Innovation Challenge, Catalyzing Innovations for High-Impact Solutions

by UN Women/Edmond Mwebembezi



Nuwagaba John Charles CENTER)- an innovator of a Solar Water Pump, emerged the overall winner in the ideathon, and was awarded at the closing ceremony of the REC22. (Photo: Edmond Mwebembezi/UN Women)

In a historic move, Uganda successfully organized its first Renewable Energy Innovation Challenge (REIC22) under the theme, 'Catalyzing innovations for high-impact renewable energy solutions'. The event, organized by Innovent Labs Africa (ILA) in collaboration with the Ministry of Energy & Mineral Development and with support from UN Women, took place in November 2022, at Speke Resort Munyonyo as one of the key events of the Renewable Energy Conference 2022 and Expo. It attracted over 100 participants from academia, the public, private sectors, and non-governmental organizations.

The REIC22 was premised on recognizing the importance of involving the public sector, innovators, researchers, the private sector, and other parties in designing a renewable energy innovation ecosystem that will spur Uganda's energy transition agenda.

The specific objectives of the Renewable Energy Innovation Challenge included

- building a culture of innovation,
- identifying and supporting innovative,

- practical and sustainable solutions in the renewable energy sector,
- enhancing mechanisms of inclusive dialogue and participation in the renewable energy sub-sector,
- building the capacity of researchers and innovators, and
- increasing participation of youth, women, and people with disabilities in developing solutions aimed at mitigating the effects of climate change.

The REIC22 aligns with and contributes to several national development goals, including Uganda's Vision 2040, the third National Development Plan 2020/21-2024/25, and the Nationally Determined Contribution to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Hon. Okaasai Sidronius Opolot, the Minister of State for Energy, in his address said, "the search for innovative ideas to enable clean cooking are underway and the Ministry is ready to support the youth with innovative ideas to enhance the transition to clean energy."



He also highlighted the importance of such innovations in achieving the country's ambitious renewable energy targets.

As part of the Renewable Energy Innovation Challenge (REIC22), a Master class session was held on Gender Inclusiveness in the Energy Transition. The session was led by UN Women's Paul Collins Okello, a renowned expert on gender and economic issues.

The session aimed to raise awareness and provide practical guidance on how to ensure that the energy transition is inclusive of both women and men. Paul Collins Okello highlighted the importance of gender-sensitive policies and regulations, and,

“the need to involve women and other marginalized groups in the decision-making process. We need to identify the role of renewable energy in creating economic opportunities for women and the need design renewable energy projects that consider the specific needs and challenges faced by women.”

Participants, drawn from various sectors such as the public, private and non-governmental organizations were exposed to the current state of gender inclusiveness in the energy transition, best practices and strategies for achieving gender equality in the energy sector, as well as the benefits of a gender-sensitive energy sector.

The session also provided a platform for dialogue and exchange of ideas among participants, with the goal of fostering greater understanding and cooperation among different stakeholders in the energy sector.

Out of the 24 applications received and assessed, Nuwagaba John Charles- an innovator of a Solar Water Pump, emerged the overall winner in the ideathon, and was awarded at the closing ceremony of the REC22. The challenge was funded by UN Women.

The organizers, Innovent Labs Africa (ILA), also announced that they will be providing post- challenge support, which includes tailored and relevant Business Development support and capacity building to all the applicants of the REIC22. ILA also highlighted the need for continuity of such initiatives and promised to rally more partners to support the REIC23.

This marks a significant step forward in Uganda's efforts to transition to a cleaner and more sustainable energy system. The nation is looking forward to more such efforts and innovation to achieve the national and international goals towards a cleaner environment.



UN Women Staff Retreat focuses on Strategies for Accelerating Delivery amidst a Changing Context

by UN Women/Edmond Mwebembezi



UN Women Staff at the Annual Staff Retreat (Photo: Edmond Mwebembezi/UN Women)

The United Nations agency dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women (UN Women), held a staff retreat in December 2022 to assess the impact made in the previous year and plan for the upcoming year. The retreat, which was held at Speke Resort Munyonyo, brought together staff members from across the organization to engage in team-building exercises and discussion on how to improve and deliver on the UN Women mandate amid the changing context and environment post COVID pandemic and other emerging issues.

The overall objective of the retreat was to lay strategies on how to remain relevant amidst the competing space of the UN Women Programme framework while remaining agile post COVID pandemic and other emerging issues.

This was an opportunity to reflect the implementation of the recommendations from the staff retreat the previous year in Jinja. The residential retreat aimed to pull together the program team members to develop strategies for accelerating the delivery of the Strategic Note, celebrating the successes on the implementation of the Budget Work Plan, drawing from lessons learned in the process and plan for the next year 2023.

"The retreat was an important opportunity for us to come together as a team, assess our progress, and plan for the future," said Paulina Chiwangu (PhD), the UN Women Country Representative to Uganda.

"It's important that we take the time to reflect on our successes and challenges in order to ensure that we are delivering on our mandate in the most efficient and effective way possible."

During the retreat, staff members participated in a variety of activities, including team-building exercises and discussions, to improve cohesion and teamwork. They also had the opportunity to share their thoughts on the progress made in 2022 and to come up with strategies for 2023. The retreat also focused on breaking a siloed approach to program implementation by seeking more collaboration across teams through team building activities.

"The retreat was an opportunity for us to challenge ourselves and understand the importance of teamwork for greater results in 2023," said Adekemi Ndieli, the UN Women Deputy Representative to Uganda. "We came away from the retreat re-energized and committed to ensuring that we are providing the best possible service for transformation in the lives of women and girls of Uganda."

Expected outputs from the retreat included a clear understanding by participants of the changing context/environment in which the programs are being implemented, clarity on UN Women Program Management processes, manageable actions to realize integrated resource mobilization efforts and stronger relationships and cohesiveness in teams.

UN Women's mission is to empower women and girls and to promote gender equality. The agency works to achieve this goal by providing support to governments and civil society organizations, as well as by advocating for policy change at the national and international level. The retreat was an important step in ensuring that UN Women continues to make progress towards its mission.

International Day of Peace 2022: Ugandans Say 'End Racism, Build Peace'

by UN Women/Isabella Bwire

The Women Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) grantee, Rwenzori Forum for Peace, and Justice (RFPJ) brought together religious leaders, cultural and political leaders, women and youth peace activists, and the media to commemorate the annual International Day of Peace in Fort Portal City, Kabarole District in the Rwenzori Region, Uganda. The Rwenzori region is known to be ethnically plural and ethnicity has often been used to perpetuate conflicts and violence. RFPJ, with technical support from the UN Women, has provided spaces for stakeholders to interface and build consensus around emerging peace building issues, further strengthening capacities of women as agents of peace and nonviolence to mediate, negotiate and refer emerging conflicts in Rwenzori regions. With support from the WPHF Programme, RFPJ has further embraced gender-inclusive peace building strategies, such as promoting participation and representation of women in peace building processes across the region.

"I have not the slightest doubt that "Peace is not something you wish for, it is something you make, something you are, something you do and something you give away"- said Mr Steven Kiyingi, the Prime Minister of Tooro during the celebrations.

Peace building is anchored on the threats to peace and by extension in the country. These include conflicts among ethnic groups leverage; fragilities along the porous Uganda border characterized by persistent criminal and rebel activities orchestrated by transnational actors and leading to the influx of refugees into Uganda; radicalization of the youth and incidents of violent extremism; failed transitional justice processes. "I Forgive others, not because they deserve forgiveness, but because I deserve my peace, that's why I stopped being violent in my own home and to date I preach peace" said Annet one of the Peace Activist trained by RFPJ.

In a bid to promote respect for Human rights and gender Equality, RFPJ works with and through organized trained communities and related structures to promote peace in the region. "I have become part of RFPJ's change story as I was trained as a peace activist and I contribute to promotion of peace in my village through mediations, referrals and seen many people reconciling in Bufunjo Sub-County, Kyenjonjo," said one of the trained Peace Activist.

The celebrations closed off with a plenary as participants who also double as stakeholders highlighted key challenging impediments of justice. They decried the lack of accountability for grave human rights violations against citizens and high level of impunity by perpetrators of violence/ conflicts. In the Rwenzori region, victims cited what many commonly referred to "Kasese Massacre" 2016 intervention of the Rwenzururu that led to death of over 100 people and no one has come out to account for the palace, women were left as widows with children to care of.

One participant further affirmed that the above are some of the things that some people may not want to hear but without it, the true meaning of justice cannot be realized. It was mentioned that the formal justice system takes so long, and the approach seems to discourage most victims in communities which hinders peaceful co-existence.

Participants made recommendations to address some of the challenges such as building consensus on national reconciliation processes in Uganda, there is need to formulate a committee to spearhead a national reconciliation and peace building activities within Uganda with focus in the Rwenzori region.



Women peace mediators who attended second day convention of sharing experiences (Photo: UN Women/ Isabella Bwire)



UN Women and Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy Join Forces to Strengthen Women's Political Participation

by UN Women/Edmond Mwebembezi

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in collaboration with Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy (NIMD) convened a three-day dialogue to address the low participation of women in women council elections.

As the leaders of the women's leagues from eight political parties convened for a dialogue, their goal was to promote inclusivity and empower female candidates in the upcoming council elections. Through equipping them with the necessary knowledge and resources, they aimed to strengthen the participation of women in these elections and pave the way for their success.

From the dialogue, the participants made commitments including engaging in massive sensitization of women within their political parties at the grassroots level on the mandate of the women councils and modalities of the women council elections. Participants also committed to follow up with their party leaders on the plan to start an interparty women's forum that will be charged with spearheading the women's agenda within political parties.

They also agreed to organize a dialogue with women members of parliament to agree on a common agenda for women despite their different status because issues affecting women concern them all.

The UN Women Representative in Uganda, Paulina Chiwangu highlighted the importance of increased involvement of women in politics at all levels and commended NIMD for the initiative to improve women's participation in the democratic process in Uganda.

"We all know that political parties, world over are a grooming ground for women to take up leadership, so having strong women in the political parties is key to the success of democracy in Uganda," she said.

Paulina further reminded the participants that women councils bring together all women of Uganda into a unified body for development purposes, "irrespective of their religion, tribe, origin, status or political affiliation."

Under the Strengthening Electoral Processes in Uganda (SEPU) Project, UN Women seeks to strengthen citizens' participation and engagement in the Women council Elections to fill up to 418,075 elective positions from village/ cell, parish/ ward, Subcounty/division, district/city, and national level.

The NIMD Country Director, Frank Rusa, said that good democracy begins with dialogue.

"We understand that politics has opponents that, have alternative agendas that promote the country and so are partners for national development and it should not be a zero-sum game," he said.

He further noted that having good quality leaders who can diagnose the problems of Uganda and find appropriate solutions is key to development.

"Women are critical for the story of this country and putting Uganda first is important," he noted.

A communique with clear milestones and actions for furthering an inclusive women participation in upcoming women council elections will be developed from the dialogue and will guide the women leaders going forward.



The dialogue attracted participation from women leaders of the eight political parties in Uganda, NIMD and UN Women (Photo: UN Women/Edmond Mwebembezi)

There is Power in Groups: Story of Miremebe

by Isabella Karvinen and Edmond Mwebembezi/ UN Women



Miremebe (name changed) is one of the peer educators trained by WONETHA. (Photo: Laura Silver)

Miremebe (name changed) is 32-year-old mother of three and she has been a sex worker for 13 years. She is one of the female sex workers who have benefitted from a project by the United Nations Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) and EU-funded Spotlight Initiative partnership implemented by Women's Organization Network for Human Rights Advocacy (WONETHA). WONETHA works with female sex workers like Miremebe to improve their access to justice and health services.

Miremebe started sex work when she was working in a bar. Her boss would sell her to customers and collect the payments. Miremebe was not paid properly and forced to work only for food and accommodation. She did not have knowledge of sexual health and sexually transmitted diseases. Condoms were unknown for her, and she got HIV from one of her customers.

Miremebe's story is very common and female sex workers face a lot of exploitation and violence in Uganda. WONETHA educates the women on sexual and reproductive health and rights, Ugandan laws and on human rights. An important part of the project are peer educators. When joining the project Miremebe was chosen as a peer educator by her fellow sex workers. The peer educators like Miremebe are in key roles as they reach out to other sex workers to form groups, educate them, and connect them with health workers and the police. The peer educators also follow up on cases and provide mental support.

Many people have negative preconceptions about sex workers. They are a marginalised group and do not have a voice in the society.

Even getting help from the police is sometimes challenging for the sex workers. They face a lot of violence and talking to the police is not easy. Through the project by WONETHA, sex workers are given a chance to speak for themselves. WONETHA has supported women to learn about their rights and how to protect themselves better. WONETHA brings the women together to form groups that are led by the peer educators. The groups protect one another and assist each other when one of them needs help.

As a peer educator Miremebe goes around and meets with her fellow sex workers. When they meet, they check in with everyone, exchange information on health services or access to justice when one's rights are violated. When they work in groups, they are stronger.

The WPHF is a flexible and rapid financing tool supporting quality interventions to enhance the capacity of local women to prevent conflict, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities. The Spotlight Initiative is a global partnership supported by the European Union, which deploys targeted, large-scale investments aimed at eliminating violence against women and girls. WPHF is partnering with the Spotlight Initiative to channel quality funding to grassroots women-led and women's rights civil society organizations with a focus on ending violence against women and promoting women's human rights and gender equality in peace, security and humanitarian contexts.

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Thanks to UN Women, OHCHR and WHRDN-U, I have a Firmer Understanding of Women Human Rights

By Ayikoru Patience Poni/ WHRD

The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Women Human Rights Defenders Network Uganda (WHRDN-U) developed Safety and Security Guidelines for Women Human Rights Defenders in Uganda.

The development of the guidelines was preceded by three regional trainings in Karamoja, Rwenzori and Arua for Women Human Rights Defenders to enhance their skills in human right defense, and they were later launched on the 29th of November in 2021. Resultantly, UN Women organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop to further equip a pool of Women Human Rights Defenders with knowledge on how to mitigate the impact of both online and offline attacks.

We arrived for the training at Jinja Nile Resort on Monday 29 September 2022 at Jinja and were welcomed by a pristine, tranquil, and alluring resort with smiling servers.

I could easily notice that my fellow participants looked a tad bit exhausted from the long travels, as some of the participants had traveled more than 500 kilometers to the venue all in an exciting bid to gain so much knowledge on Online and Offline safety guidelines for Women Human Rights defenders.

The influx of diversity energized us. There were women in attendance from all walks of life, including women from important populations, urban and rural areas, and all parts of Uganda. In this country, it was the ideal combination of universal instruction. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the delicious meals, we received throughout the programme that were presented to us with exquisite taste.

On the **first day**, benchmarking activities included an overview of women's human rights, a basic orientation, and introductions. Additionally, we learned about co-curricular activities including a fantastically cool pool and a challenging gym for those who were fervent about working out. I couldn't help but feel that the retreat was also a time for the women human rights defenders to take care of themselves.

Day 2 was utterly enthralling. After recapping our knowledge on women's rights, the astute, skilled facilitator Ms. Solome Nakawesi introduced to us the online and offline principles on how to safeguard, preserve, and defend ourselves as women human rights defenders. With unequalled lightning energy and enormous force, participants approached it. Every participant had a chance to speak and share their experiences during the dynamic, interactive sessions, and we literally implanted the guidelines.

The **third day** of the training included a lecture on how to distribute the exercise to our communities. We were inspired by the suggestions of our fellow participants, especially the original methods we demonstrated in practice how we would instruct other women human rights advocates on these principles using salon talks, market talks, and other settings outside simply the boardroom.

We made some amazing new friends and went home with a bag full of contacts. a group of warriors who have awakened to protect the nation's women.



Group work assignment on identifying human rights; Day one
(PHOTO: Patience Poni/Advancing Gender Responsive Governance and Effective Leadership)



Participants at the training. Day One (PHOTO: Gertrude Asibazuyo)

On the **fourth day**, September 23, we left. We were well-prepared and eager to share what we had learned with our diverse groups. We gained extensive knowledge about how to use and spread the WHRD safety rules through this course.

We appreciate the organizers, UN Women in collaboration with the Women Human Rights

Defenders Network-Uganda and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and the excellent hosts at Jinja Nile Resort. deserve the deepest thanks. The training was interesting and knowledge-packed, and we eagerly await more opportunities to learn. Cheers!



Participants pose for a group photo (PHOTO: Ruth Kitamirike/Makerere University)



UN Women supports the Uganda Police Force to Build Capacity of Police Investigators in Handling SGBV Cases in Uganda

by Edmond Mwebembezi (UN Women) and Phillips Manano (Uganda Police)

UN Women, in partnership with the Uganda Police's Criminal Investigation Department (CID), trained 354 investigators in handling and investigating Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) cases in twenty project districts.

The training, which took place in Abim, Amuria, Kabong, Kaberamaido, Kiryandongo, Kotido, Napak, Nakapiripirit, Pader, Yumbe, Moroto, Gulu, Bundibugyo, Kyegegwa, Arua, Tororo, Kasese, Amudat, Kitgum and Kampala, aimed to improve the skills and knowledge of investigators in handling SGBV cases.

The Director Research, Planning and Development AIGP Ocaya James says, "the trainings have greatly improved skills and knowledge of the investigators. As a result of the training, evidence collection, storage and preservation improved; the quality of investigation especially sexual and gender-based offences hence improving conviction in courts."

He further points out that the leadership training for female officers greatly prepared them for higher responsibilities as seen from the number promoted to higher ranks from, they held previously.

In addition to the training, UN Women also provided the CID with 20 motorcycles and 20 computer sets to improve response to SGBV crimes and records management in the project districts. The agency also supported the Directorate of Forensics Services in conducting training for 20 Scene of Crime Officers (SOCOs) and provided 18 SOCO kits, 18 SOCO cameras, 03 evidence collection vans for exhibit transportation and DNA consumables to improve forensic analysis.

The support to the Directorate of Forensics has strengthened the Department in the following manner:

Enhanced SOCOs' knowledge and understanding in management of forensic evidence ranging from evidence collection, packaging, labeling, preservation, storage and transportation. This has improved on the quality and integrity of forensic evidence submitted for analysis.

Improved capacity of scene of crime officers to collect, analyze and presented electronic evidence

with authenticity. This has been made possible by the procurement of 18 scene of crime cameras which have aided in documentation of crime scenes leveraging on the photographic, video graphic and acoustic elements of high resolution and good quality. Improved timely processing of evidence as a result of procurement of DNA consumables

The evidence collection vans have played a pivotal role in transportation of exhibits from different police stations to the forensic laboratory and also delivery of reports and already processed exhibits back to the police stations. This has led to timely delivery of exhibits and reports. Based on this, there has been a profound improvement in the quality of evidence submitted to the laboratory for analysis. The lag time between collection of evidence, analysis, report compilation and dissemination has greatly reduced due to the extensive adoption of these vans as key transportation means. The flexibility in movement in both easy and hard to reach areas has been augmented by the cold storage units found in the vans which has largely contributed maintaining quality of evidence and reducing the levels of DNA degradation.

According to Beatrice Mulindwa, a Program Specialist with UN Women, "UN Women takes pride in supporting the Police to improve the response time to SGBV cases reported, improved case record management and improved evidence collection, preservation and processing/analysis in the project districts."

"In our daily work, we deal with quite a number of cases involving violence against women and children and as such we need to be at our best to handle these. We are grateful to UN Women for the support and I believe the trained officers remain committed to ensuring justice is served to the victims," notes AIGP Ocaya James.



PICTORIAL: UN Women supports the Uganda Police Force to Build Capacity of Police Investigators in Handling SGBV Cases in Uganda



Debriefing of the Spotlight Initiative team by AIGP OCHOM. O.Edward the then Director Research, Planning & Development. (Photo: ASP Phillips Manano/Uganda Police)



Spotlight Initiative Africa Team visiting the Uganda Police Force Forensic Laboratory (Photo: Uganda Police)



Ms. Jennifer Francesca Acio, the acting UN Women Representative giving the opening remarks during the training in Kotido.



CP. Dr. Kamya John facilitating about understanding gender and how gender biases affect justice and the Legal framework on VAW/VAC focusing on major VAW/VAC cases (Photo: Uganda Police)



Some of the evidence collection vehicles (Photo: Uganda Police)



Uganda Parliament Illuminates Orange to Show Solidarity against Gender-Based Violence

by Sandra Heather/ UWOPA



UN Women, and the Uganda Parliament partnered to “orange” the parliamentary building to end violence (UN Women)

On November 25th, 2022, the Uganda Women’s Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) joined the rest of the world in commemorating the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women and Girls was marked, and this run up to December 10th, which was commemorated under the Human Rights Day. UWOPA, with financial support from the Netherlands Embassy, and UN Women, used this time to galvanize action to end violence against women and girls in the country.

One of the major activities that UWOPA conducted to commemorate the 16 days of activism against GBV was illuminating the Parliament of Uganda with orange decorations. This was a clear statement to the world that the Parliament of Uganda stands in solidarity with other activists to fight violence against women and girls. Major points within Parliament were decorated with orange colors and lights, creating visibility for the 16 days of Activism and enhanced awareness raising to the public about Gender-Based Violence on women and girls.

The event attracted high-level participation with Rt Hon Anita Annet Among, Speaker of Parliament of Uganda as the Guest of Honor and UN agencies (UNFPA, UNWomen), Embassies (Swedish and Netherlands), Representatives from line ministries, Members of Parliament, Parliamentary Staffs, like-minded Civil Society Organizations, Women Activists and several media houses took part in the event. This demonstrated and strengthened commitment among various stakeholders, especially Parliamentarians, to the fight against GBV.

During plenary, Rt. Hon. Anita Annet Among, Speaker of Parliament, tasked the ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development to address laws that address GBV during the 16 days of Activism because the population is not aware. She requested women to be submissive irrespective of their positions to avoid GBV in homes. The minister, in her statement, called upon all stakeholders to join hands and fight GBV in all its forms because it affects everyone including men.



“Much of our work is to unite together and end Gender-Based Violence without eliminating anyone who is experiencing it,” said H.E Karin Boven, the Ambassador of Netherlands.

“There is a need for Parliament to budget and finance activities aimed at fighting violence against women and girls,” said Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Country Representative.

“Members of Parliament should fight against all forms of violence against women and girls, emphasize girl child education and girls should marry after the age of consent” said Hon. Amongi Betty, Minister of Gender, Labor and Social Development.

Hon. Members also tasked the minister to come up with a budget for GBV elimination laws and ensure

they are implemented. The event was a success in raising awareness and building commitment to end GBV among all stakeholders.

“The event is about advocacy and awareness raising on the need to prevent violence on women and girls,” said Hon Sarah Opendi, Chairperson of UWOPA.

The 16 Days of Activism is an international campaign that originated from the first Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and recognizes that impunity, silence and stigma have facilitated violence against women to escalate to epidemic proportions. It’s estimated that one in three women worldwide experience GBV.





Embassy of the Netherlands Hosts Thought-Provoking Exhibition on Sexual Violence Survivors in Uganda

by Eva Sibanda/ UN Women



Her Excellency Karin Boven the Ambassador of the Netherlands hosted the Networking evening (Eva Sibanda/UN women)

On 22 November the Embassy of the Netherlands held a networking dinner at the Ambassador of the Netherlands' Residence in Kampala. The dinner was an opportunity to showcase a thought-provoking exhibition entitled "What I Was Wearing." This immersive, interactive thought-provoking exhibition will display clothing volunteered by survivors of sexual violence in Uganda. The clothing was displayed on 16 mannequins and held on the side-lines of multiple 16 Days of Activism activities including the National Launch.



Kate Airey of the Ambassador of the United Kingdom in Uganda and Maria Hakansson, the Ambassador of Sweden discuss the exhibiton (Eva Sibanda/UN Women)



The exhibition draws attention to the common global misconception that the way a woman dresses is a cause for sexual harassment. A joint initiative from UN Women Uganda and Frauen Initiative Uganda, the exhibition showcases the different attire that survivors of sexual assault were wearing when assaulted, to dispel the idea that what a woman wears is the cause for her assault.

Each dressed mannequin was accompanied with a direct quote from the survivors to bring out their stories and experiences. In Uganda, marital rape is yet

to be criminalised. One of the mannequins displayed the reality and consequence of this. *"He was my husband; I was 2 weeks postpartum."*

Often people will ask *"What Were You Wearing?"*, this line of questioning leads to victim blaming. The objective of this exhibition is to highlight that what a person is wearing when they get sexually assaulted has nothing to do with the fact they were assaulted. The exhibition showcases a mannequin wearing a fully covered traditional 'abaya'. The exhibition is 16 outfits, 16 stories for 16 Days of Activism.



The US Ambassador mingle with Director Akoryo, Macklean (AWAC) and Safina Virani at the Networking Evening (Eva Sibanda/UN Women)



Beauty and Empowerment: Y Plus Beauty Pageant Raises Awareness on HIV/AIDS and Stigma Reduction by Edmond Mwebembezi/ UN Women



The Leaving No One Behind Specialist, Elizabeth Mushabe makes a Keynote address on behalf of UN Women at the award event (Photo: Y Plus)

On the evening of November 23rd, 2022, the grand ballroom of the Kampala Serena Hotel was filled with anticipation as 18 young contestants took the stage for the annual **Y Plus Beauty Pageant**. The theme of the pageant was centered around HIV/AIDS awareness and the importance of reducing stigma and discrimination in our communities.

As the contestants walked out in their creative wear, they showcased their unique interpretations of how to protect oneself from HIV/AIDS infection. The crowd was entranced by the creativity and thoughtfulness of the designs, which ranged from traditional Ugandan attire to modern, avant-garde pieces.

The pageant was not just about beauty, but also about empowering young people to make a difference in their communities. The contestants, who were selected from all over the country, were given the opportunity to use the platform to raise awareness about HIV/AIDS and to encourage people to break the silence around the disease.

The keynote speaker for the event, Elizabeth Mushabe, UN Women Leave No One Behind Programme Specialist, took the stage to address the crowd. She praised the contestants for, “their meaningful participation and for using the pageant to raise awareness about such an important issue. At UN Women we are committed to the cause, and you can always count on our unwavering support.”

The pageant was a huge success and not only did the contestants look beautiful, but they also raised awareness about the importance of protecting oneself from HIV/AIDS and reducing stigma and discrimination in their communities.



Orange the Nile River Bridge



16 Days of Activism Video Series

On 25 November the 16 Days Video Series went live on social media and national television. This video series is an initiative that began in 2020 when the world moved virtual due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the video reach over the last few years has been wide so this activity continues into 2022. This year, in addition to the youth, feminists, women's movement, Ambassadors and United Nations representatives UN Women engage artist and celebrity Sheebah who shared: *"Violence can come from anywhere, so us in the music industry can use our platform and the numbers we have to speak about violence."*

The full video series can be viewed here, uploaded via the UN Women Regional Office: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLix6UiDjTOFryTxEBzU-KOxGd2vLAh8P8k>. The videos that are currently live are linked below:

Honourable Minister of Gender Betty Amongi 24/11
Link: https://youtu.be/8EAgU_0pdGs

Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Country Rep 25/11
Link: <https://youtu.be/SD9ip6--rgI>

Solome Nakaweesi, Feminist 26/11
Link: <https://youtu.be/Gx8RtPihSzs>

H.E. Ambassador of the NL Karin Boven 27/11
Link: <https://youtu.be/A4xDX-PgvtA>

Hon Sarah Opendi, Chairperson UWOPA 28/11
Link: <https://youtu.be/wRJQy9ioYXw>

Monica Emiru Enyou, NAWOU 29/11
Link: <https://youtu.be/3RxE51kdpPg>

In a partnership between UN Women Uganda, the Uganda National Roads Authority Uganda and the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development the Nile River Bridge between Kampala and Jinja was illuminated with the colour orange to launch 16 Days (Edmond Mwebembezi/UN Women)



Behind the Scenes of the Video Recording by MCI Media Hub



Sheebah Karungi recording the 16 Days Video Series (MCI Media Hub)



UN Women and Partners in Working Towards Creating a Better Understanding of Women Human Rights in Uganda

by Ruth Kitamirike/ Makerere University



Group work assignment on identifying human rights; Day one (PHOTO: Patience Poni/Advancing Gender Responsive Governance and Effective Leadership)

UN Women Uganda, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and Women Human Rights Defenders Network Uganda (WHRDN-U) recently developed Safety and Security Guidelines for Women Human Rights Defenders in Uganda. The development of the guidelines was preceded by three regional trainings in Karamoja, Rwenzori and Arua for Women Human Rights Defenders to enhance their skills in human right defense, and they were later launched on the 29th of November in 2021.

Later, UN Women organized a Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop from 19th to 23rd September 2022 at the Jinja Nile Resort to further equip a pool of Women Human Rights Defenders with knowledge on how to mitigate the impact of both online and offline attacks.

“The influx of diversity energized us. There were women in attendance from all walks of life, including women from important populations, urban and rural areas, and all parts of Uganda. In this country, it was the ideal combination of universal instruction,” said Ruth Kitamirike, a student at Makerere University.



Participants at the training. Day One (PHOTO: Gertrude Asibazuyo)



On the **first day**, benchmarking activities included an overview of women's human rights, a basic orientation, and introductions. introduced to us the online and offline principles on how to safeguard, preserve, and defend ourselves as women human rights defenders. Every participant had a chance to speak and share their experiences during the dynamic, interactive sessions.

The **third day** of the training included a lecture on how to distribute the exercise to communities. The participants had good suggestions on how to disseminate the guidelines, including using salon

talks, market talks, and other settings outside simply the boardroom.

"We were well-prepared and eager to share what we had learned with our diverse groups. We gained extensive knowledge about how to use and spread the WHRD safety rules through this course." said Patience Poni a Lawyer working with Advancing Gender Responsive Governance and Effective Leadership.



Participants pose for a group photo (PHOTO: Ruth Kitamirike/Makerere University)

Calendar of Key International Days

- February 6** International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation
- March 8** International Women's Day
- October 15** International Day of the Rural Women
- November 25** December 10 16 Days of Activism
- November 25** International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

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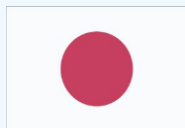
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