

**UGANDA**  
Country Office

# UN Women Uganda Q4 Newsletter 2023

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This quarterly newsletter profiles UN Women Uganda activities and highlights voices of beneficiaries. The Q4 Newsletter covers the period of October to December 2023.  
Enjoy the read!



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# 16 Days of Activism Launch Government, UN Women launch 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence campaign

24 November 2023

On November 24th, Kiryandongo district became the focal point for the national launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence, hosted at Siriba Primary School in Bweyale Town Council. This significant event unfolded under the theme "UNITE! Invest to Prevent and Respond to Violence against Women and Girls."

The vibrant occasion was illuminated by a diverse array of activities, featuring compelling performances by local artist Kofi Annan (named after former UN Secretary General- the late Kofi Annan).

His songs not only entertained but also carried poignant messages denouncing gender-based violence. Dignitaries, including the Swedish ambassador to Uganda, Amb. Maria Håkansson, UN Women Uganda Country Representative, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UNICEF Uganda Country Representative, Munir Safieldin, and the State Minister for Gender, Labour, and Social Development, Hon. Peace Mutuzo, among others were captivated by the musician's melodies, prompting them to dance in unison. This collective display symbolized their commitment to combatting gender-based violence.

The urgency of this commitment was underscored by the alarming statistics revealed during the event. Kiryandongo district, recently ranked highest in the national gender-based violence index, reporting a staggering 3,000 cases in the current year alone. This concerning figure served as a stark reminder of the pervasive nature of the issue and the crucial need for concerted efforts to eradicate gender-based violence in the district.



From (L-R) Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Uganda Country Representative, Munir Safieldin, UNICEF Uganda Country Representative, Swedish Ambassador to Uganda, Amb. Maria Håkansson and State Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development, Peace Mutuzo join hands in solidarity during the national launch of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Based Violence in Kiryandongo district (Samuel Wamuttu/UN Women)



**(L-R) Lora Lafuente, Program Coordinator Youths and Gender at UNFPA's Uganda, Local artist Kofi Annan captivates the audience, including UN Women's Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UNICEF Uganda's Country Representative, Munir Safiedin, and Edith Aliguma, the Chairperson of Kiryandongo district, as they joyfully join forces to convey a powerful message against gender-based violence through music and unity (Samuel Wamuttu/UN Women).**



**Local artist Kofi Annan (middle) captivates the audience, including UNICEF Uganda's Country Representative, Munir Safiedin, and Lora Lafuente, Program Coordinator Youths and Gender at UNFPA's Uganda, as they joyfully join forces to convey a powerful message against gender-based violence through music and unity (Samuel Wamuttu/UN Women).**

As the attendees danced and celebrated, their unity sent a powerful message—a message that echoed a shared determination to address and eliminate the menace of gender-based violence. The event not only marked the commencement of the 16 Days of Activism but also ignited a renewed sense of purpose in the ongoing battle against gender-based violence in Kiryandongo district and beyond. The festive atmosphere belied the seriousness of the cause, demonstrating that, when united, communities can strive to create an environment where every individual is free from the scourge of violence based on gender ■



# Makerere University acts against GBV

## raises awareness on Gender-Based Violence with artists



Makerere University staff members together with the students listen to the speeches during the 16 days' of activism event at the rugby ground

28 November 2023

On November 28th, the Makerere University rugby grounds buzzed with activity as a coalition of partners, including UN Women, UNFPA, the Swedish embassy, and the celebrated Ugandan music icon Navio, joined forces with his Swedish counterpart, Timbuktu. This collaboration, along with other stakeholders, marked a significant pledge to act against gender-based violence.

The gathering at Makerere University was more than just a discussion; it evolved into an immersive experience, enhanced by the presence of influential figures such as Navio and Timbuktu. The event served as a platform for these partners to reaffirm their dedication to combating gender-based violence, recognizing it as a critical issue requiring collective action.

Beyond words, the stakeholders actively engaged in the cause, pledging to strengthen their commitment to addressing gender-based violence. Navio and Timbuktu, through their musical talents, added a unique dimension to the event, blending education and entertainment. Their participation helped create a dynamic atmosphere, inspiring students to become advocates for change. The students, in turn, pledged their commitment to combating gender-based violence not only within the university but also, in their respective communities.

This collaborative effort at Makerere University showcased the power of influential voices and partnerships in tackling pressing societal issues. By combining awareness, commitment, and the arts, the event left a lasting impact, fostering a sense of responsibility and empowerment among the participants to actively contribute to the fight against gender-based violence ■



UNFPA Deputy Country Representative, Daniel Alemu, Makerere University Vice Chancellor, Prof. Barnabas Nawangwe, Swedish Ambassador in Uganda, Amb. Maria Håkansson, UN Women Uganda Country Representative, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, local artist Navio and Swedish rapper Timbuktu pose for a group photo during the Makerere University 16 days of activism event (Samuel Wamuttu/UN Women)



# The Council of Traditional Leaders in Africa (COTLA) Uganda Chapter Launches Strategic Documents to Guide their Operations

29 November 2023

In a significant move to combat Gender-Based Violence (GBV), the Council for Traditional Leaders in Africa (COTLA) Uganda Chapter marked the 16 Days of Activism against GBV by unveiling its strategic documents on November 29, 2023. Under the theme “Unite! Invest to Prevent Violence against Women and Girls!” these documents including a Strategic Plan, an Operational Manual, and a Charter, will steer the Council’s initiatives over the next three years.

The launch event, graced by dignitaries including traditional leaders, government officials, UN agencies, civil society leaders, and media representatives, was presided over by the Hon. Betty Amongi, the Minister of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, who also served as the Chief Guest.

The day's theme, 'Harnessing Cultural Resources and Partnerships to End Violence against Women and Girls,' resonated with COTLA Uganda's core mission, grounded in utilizing cultural resources to promote gender equality and eliminate harmful customs, particularly child marriage.

The COTLA Uganda was established in 2020 with support from the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU), UN Women, EU- UN Spotlight Initiative, and the Embassy of Sweden.



Hon. Betty Among, extreme right, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Representative in Uganda, EU Representative, Gonze Nicolas, Hon. Richard Josel Obbo as Secretary General who is also the Prime Minister of the Adhola cultural institution receiving the strategic documents from the minister.

“ In her opening remarks, **Dr. Paulina Chiwangu**, UN Women’s Uganda Country Representative, highlighted the alarming prevalence of gender-based violence in communities.

She emphasized that this constitutes a gross violation of the fundamental rights of women and girls, hindering not only individuals but also societal development.

”



Minister Betty Amongi (third from left) poses for a group photo together with dignitaries and some of the traditional leaders and representatives during the COTLA strategic plan launch at Africana hotel in Kampala.

Chiwangu noted that Uganda faces stark statistics, with over half of women experiencing physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. Additionally, a quarter of girls give birth by the age of 18, one of the highest rates in East Africa. Gender-based violence-related crimes are reported to the police in Uganda every 13 minutes, illustrating the urgent need for concerted efforts.

Hon. Betty Amongi emphasized the importance of working with cultural leaders, acknowledging that about eighty percentage of women in Uganda especially in rural areas, access justice through traditional provisions. She highlighted ongoing efforts to reform customary norms perpetuating violence against women and girls.

Rwot Onen David Acana II, the Paramount Chief of Ker Kwaro Acholi, who spoke on behalf of cultural and traditional leaders, echoed this sentiment, urging development partners to support cultural institutions to identify positive cultural resources and incorporate them into interventions to address violence against women and girls.

During the launch, the traditional leaders elected Kwar Adhola of Tieng Adhola, His Royal Highness Stephen Moses Owor, as the 1st Chairperson of COTLA Uganda Chapter, with Hon. Richard Josel Obbo as Secretary General and Prince Lawrence Opar Angala as Deputy Secretary General for the period 2023-2026.

The development of COTLA Uganda's strategic documents involved extensive consultations with cultural leaders from the 15 gazzeted cultural institutions in Uganda, community outreaches, and dialogues on ending Female Genital Mutilation and Violence Against Women and Girls.

Participants noted that despite Uganda's constitutional commitment to equal rights and numerous policies and laws addressing VAWG, the threat remains pervasive. COTLA Uganda guided by its strategic plan, aims to promote positive cultural norms, engage in advocacy, and collaborate across different levels to contribute to ending violence against women and girls.

As the Council for Traditional Leaders takes this bold step forward, it underscores the pivotal role traditional and cultural leaders can play in transforming societal norms and fostering a safer environment for women and girls across Uganda ■





# UN Women in stakeholder's breakfast meeting with Ambassadors, UN Heads, CSOs and Government on GBV investments to conclude 16 Days of Activism 2023

12 December 2023



Jean Kamirate (holding microphone), Programmes Director at Urgent Action Fund, moderates the High Level Breakfast meeting on Investing in Prevention of Violence Against Women and Girls as part of a joint initiative by UN Women, Raising Voices and CoFEM during the closure of marking 16 Days of Activism in Kampala.

UN women engaged it's stakeholders in a breakfast meeting that involved various ambassadors, heads of UN agencies, CSOs and some government officials to evaluate our strides against gender based violence. The discussions mainly focused on the investments in the prevention of violence against women and girls.

Dr. Paulina Chiwangu in her speech urged partners to take stock, understand what is working – or not working, assess our gaps and see how we can move forward.

She said GBV statistics represent lived experiences.

Chiwangu said there is need to tackle the underlying factors that breed violence in our societies so as to foster lasting change.

**“While the necessity of responding to incidents of violence is undeniable, the financial burdens associated with response can be overwhelming. Statistics tell us that only 0.2% of the overall development spending globally is allocated to gender-based violence prevention,” she noted.**

Chiwangu said prevention programming offers substantial long-term savings by reducing the strain on healthcare, justice systems, and national budgets



Dr. Paulina Chiwangu (left), Swedish Ambassador, Amb. Maria Håkansson, while speaking is UNFPA Uganda Country Representative, Gift Malunfa. UB Women/Samuel Wamuttu



# Playlist videos for the 16 Days of Activism

*A compilation of short videos were recorded from different partners and stakeholders during the 16 Days of Activism in Uganda. The videos re-enforced other activities in creating awareness around gender-based violence in the country with a call on uniting forces in eliminating the vice.*

Link to the playlist: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLix6UiDjTOFoWw62w547kPo0PocsmQqpO>





## **70-year-old Nakiru suffered physical violence during a land dispute in Moroto**



**Nakiru smiles during the interview exposing her missing teeth due to violence**

Despite facing a dark past marked by violence inflicted upon her, 70-year-old Lowanyang Nakiru radiates resilience and strength as she shares her story during an early morning interview. A resident of Lorikokwa village in Nandugut Sub County, Moroto District, Nakiru's journey has been one of both pain and unyielding determination.

**"I endured a brutal assault inflicted by my brother-in-law's son, driven by his desire to forcibly evict me from a piece of land I had tirelessly cultivated for numerous years. The vicious attack left me with injuries to my teeth and ribs, necessitating a two-month hospitalization," Nakiru recounts, shedding light on the harrowing experience that tested both her physical strength and unwavering determination.**

In numerous regions of Uganda, particularly in Karamoja, the prevalence of violence, including challenges related to land ownership rights, remains distressingly high among women.

Nakiru narrates that upon her return from hospital, her husband had already decided with some clan members to drop charges against the suspect since he was a family member. She however said that the suspect had continued threatening her through various emissaries. The turning point in Nakiru's life came when she decided to stand up for her rights, following a discussion with a friend about her predicament.

**"She brought me to the FIDA Uganda offices where I sought help. I was sensitized on my rights to own land something I didn't know before. This helped me be more determined and confident," she said.**

Deterred by the physical pain, Nakiru's spirit remained unbroken, and her story became a testament to the resilience of the human spirit despite her husband initial idea advising her to drop the issue.

In the interview, Nakiru recounts the events that led to her decision to reclaim her land. The struggle was not just about ownership; it represented a fight against injustice and a determination to secure a better future for herself and the generations to come. As she shares the details of the confrontation, her voice resonates with both pain and pride.

The Lorikokwa village, nestled in the heart of Moroto District, became a symbol of Nakiru's resistance. The community, once witness to her ordeal, now stands united in admiration for her strength and determination. Nakiru's story is not just a personal narrative but a rallying cry for justice and equality in a community that has grappled with issues of land rights and violence.

Despite the scars, Nakiru's eyes light up with a spark of hope. She speaks not only of her past struggles but also of the positive changes she envisions for her community. Nakiru has become a source of inspiration, a living example that resilience can triumph over adversity. In the backdrop of the rugged Moroto landscape, Nakiru's story unfolds like a beacon of hope. It serves as a reminder that even in the face of darkness, the human spirit can emerge victorious.

As the interview concludes, Nakiru stands tall, her silhouette against the rising sun, symbolizing the dawn of a new chapter—one where courage, justice, and resilience prevail ■

# Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Video Documentary

highlights programme benefits for survivors of gender-based violence in Uganda.



## ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR GBV SURVIVORS IN UGANDA

“ *Three-quarters of criminal cases in Uganda are of violence against women and girls. We need training so that by the time these people come into the system, the police are trained, prosecutors, defense lawyers, judicial officers and prisons officers - Justice Jane Frances Abodo, Director of Public Prosecutions.* ”

“ *Julius didnt just simply beat me up; he fought like he was fighting a fellow man, with kicks, and punches. Eventually, i couldnt persever anymore. I felt my life was at threat and the thought of my kids growing up without their mum hit me hard. At one point, I had suicidal thoughts and I thought of drowning myself in the lake - Esther a survivor of gender-based violence.* ”

# Women Economic Empowerment

## Empowering Women: UN Women Uganda and East African Business Council Join Forces



**Dr. Pauline Chiwangu exchanges documents with John Boscoc Kalisa after signing the MOUs at the UN Women Boardroom in Kampala**

On the 30, November in a significant and exciting milestone, UN Women Uganda and the East African Business Council officially joined forces by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). This collaboration marks a strategic partnership aimed at driving impactful change for women's economic empowerment and addressing gender inequality in Uganda and support regional trade within the East African region

30 November 2023

The partnership between UN Women Uganda and the East African Business Council is a powerful step towards fostering a more inclusive and equitable future. By combining their expertise and resources, these two influential organizations are set to create a formidable force dedicated to advancing the rights and opportunities of women across the region.

**“This signing of an MOU between UN Women and the East African Business Council to us is a big step towards shaping a better inclusive future for women. Together, we can leverage our collective efforts to empower women economically and contribute to the overall development of the region,” said Paulina Chiwangu, the UN Women Uganda Country Representative.**

John Bosco Kalisa, the CEO of the East African Business Council said the partnership is significant as it will promote gender equality in the business realm, adding that working with UN Women, gives EABC an opportunity to create lasting impact that will foster an environment where every woman can realise her full potential ■



**Left- Right: Mr. Paul Collins Okello, UN Women's Programme Managemnet Specialist, Ms Evelyn Letiyo, Acting Deputy UN Women Country Reoresentative witness the signing as Dr. Paulina and Mr. John Bosco Kalisa put pen to paper in the presence of his representative.**



# UN Women and PSFU Sign MOU to advance gender equality in Uganda

1 December 2023



Left-Right: Ms Evelyn Letiyo, Acting Deputy Representative of UN Women Uganda, Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, UN Women Country Representative, Mr. Stephen Asiimwe, CEO private Sector Foundation Uganda together with one of his staff members in orange at the extreme right.

Dr. Paulina Chiwangu exchanges documents with Mr. Stephen Asiimwe after signing the MOU at the UN Women Uganda boardroom.

On 1 December, UN Women joined forces in a groundbreaking move with the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU), signing an MoU to amplify efforts in advancing gender equality & empowering women economically. A powerful partnership paving the way for positive change in Uganda!

The MoU underscores the shared vision of both organizations to address systemic challenges and create opportunities that uplift women economically.

This collaborative initiative brings together the global expertise of UN Women with the local influence of the Private Sector Foundation Uganda, creating a dynamic force that is poised to drive substantial change in the realm of gender equality.

"We are thrilled to embark on this transformative journey with the Private Sector Foundation Uganda. This partnership is a testament to our collective commitment to advancing gender equality and creating an environment where women can flourish economically," said Dr. Paulina Chiwangu, the UN Women Uganda Country Representative.

"By joining forces with UN Women, we are reinforcing our dedication to building a more inclusive and equitable private sector in Uganda. Together, we will work towards dismantling barriers and unlocking the full potential of women in business," said Stephen Asiimwe, the CEO Private Sector Foundation Uganda ■



# Elevating Girls' potential in Tech: The Impact of Girls Can Code Initiative



Lira City Commissioner handing over laptops to selected girls during the launch ceremony.

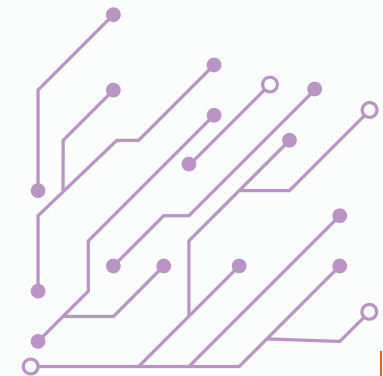
Pioneering a transformative wave in the realm of technology, the African Girls Can Code Initiative (AGCCI) emerges as a beacon of empowerment and innovation. This trailblazing endeavor, a harmonious collaboration between UN Women, the African Union Commission (AUC), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), aspires to cultivate two thousand young women across Africa into adept computer programmers and tech innovators.

In the bustling heart of Lira City, Uganda, fifty spirited young women from the Lango Sub-Region converged upon an immersive coding camp.

Spanning from July 1st to 10th, 2023, this camp metamorphosed into a crucible of creativity, skill enhancement, and empowerment. The palpable enthusiasm radiating from these young learners illuminated their aspirations, challenging societal norms and pushing boundaries within the tech domain.

The initiative's official inauguration on June 30th, 2023, marked a pivotal stride toward dismantling gender barriers entrenched in the tech industry. Further amplifying this momentum, MTN Uganda and Siemens orchestrated a transformative gesture. They equipped each participant with a "MiFi," generously preloaded with a substantial 80 GBs of data. Beyond mere connectivity, this initiative symbolized the ignition of dreams for many who had previously been tethered by digital divides.

These "MiFis" evolved into indispensable assets, paving the way for a rigorous six-month online mentorship program with Siemens. Facilitated by UN Women, these devices reached the eager hands of fifty young women in Uganda's Lango Sub-region, propelling them toward a future teeming with possibilities.





**Some of the girls that are part of the Gilrls' Can Code Initiative participating in a practical sessions using a computer to aid their creative in Lira City**

For Akullo Gracious, a luminary from Rachele Comprehensive Secondary School in Lira District, this initiative heralded a transformative milestone. Immersed in newfound digital realms, she marveled, "Owning a computer, especially in my school context, is a dream realized." Transitioning from basic tasks to intricate endeavors like website development and cartoon creation, Akullo Gracious harbors ambitions of sculpting technological solutions for communities at large.

Similarly, Akello Gloria, a visionary from Aculbanya Secondary School in Kole District, radiates gratitude for the opportunities bestowed upon her. With a tangible laptop and internet connectivity now within her grasp, she embarks on a journey of innovation. From crafting interactive artworks to mastering intricate coding languages like HTML and JavaScript, Akello Gloria envisions harnessing computer engineering to address the evolving needs of today's youth.

In essence, AGCCI's transformative impact reverberates beyond mere skill acquisition, heralding a new era where young African women stand poised to reshape the technological landscape with ingenuity, determination, and boundless potential ■





# Inaugural Women in Agribusiness Expos held in Gulu and Jinja Cities

In a collaborative effort spearheaded by UN Women, alongside the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, as well as the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, the inaugural Women in Agribusiness Expos was successfully hosted on November 21st, 2023, in Gulu City, followed by another event on December 7th, 2023, in Jinja City.

These landmark events congregated over 100 women entrepreneurs in the agribusiness sector. They had the opportunity to exhibit their offerings and engage with over 50 service providers and investors. The expos served as a dynamic platform to foster meaningful partnerships for subsequent investments.

These included pivotal areas such as capital infusion for value-added processes, customized digital financial solutions for women farmers, access to regional and global supply chains through corporate memberships, enhanced media visibility, specialized training, mentorship initiatives, business consultancy services, and cutting-edge innovation research ■



**Acholi Paramount Chief, His Royal Highness together with Dr. Paulina Chiwangu inspect some of the women in agri business participants during the expo in Gulu City**

## A Reflection from the Acholi Paramount Chief: Insights from the Gulu City Agribusiness Expo



**Beneficiaries of Climate Smart Agriculture Programme implemented by Delight Uganda in Partnership with UN Women sharing experiences with other Exhibitors**

**“Buoyed by this newfound knowledge, I envision elevating my product's presentation. Gone are the days of modest packaging; I'm setting my sights on collaboration with an investor to craft vibrant branding that captivates consumers. This rejuvenated aesthetic won't merely be superficial; it will serve as a beacon of information. Each label will proudly detail how my Shea butter actively contributes to disease prevention, safeguarding both children and adults. This expo isn't just an event; it's a catalyst for change, propelling us towards brighter futures and broader horizons”.**

## Empowering Narratives: A Woman Exhibitor's Journey in Jinja City



Ms. Sandra Nakayenze (middle) the proprietor of Zesui Dream Coffee together with her co-workers displaying their product at Women in Agribusiness Expo in Jinja.

"In our region, tradition often sees women without ownership of cattle, yet these animals become symbolic in matrimonial exchanges orchestrated by fathers and uncles. However, this expo has illuminated a transformative perspective. I've met enterprising women harnessing grass and crop residues to produce hay—a valuable protein source for cattle. By equipping these women with expertise in animal feed conservation and innovative feeding technologies, dairy farmers could significantly diminish their dependence on expansive pastures. This not only mitigates potential land conflicts arising from grazing but also enhances milk yield and quality through the nutritious hay these empowered women produce."



# Empowering Narratives: A Woman Exhibitor's Journey in Jinja City

Maggie Kirunda, a dedicated resident of Bugembe in Jinja district, devoted her days to nurturing her family and tending to her lush backyard garden. Within this green oasis, she diligently cultivated crops not only for sustenance but also to supplement the family income. Her hands bore the mark of hard work, a testament to her unwavering commitment to her household's well-being.

One sunny afternoon, a close friend of Maggie's dropped by with an intriguing proposition. "Maggie," she began with a sparkle in her eyes, "I'm attending the Women in Agribusiness Expo. You should come with me!" Curiosity piqued, Maggie probed further, "What's drawing you to this expo? Seeking funding for your farm, perhaps?"

Her friend chuckled, explaining, "Actually, I'm accompanying a friend from a cooperative in Mbale." Without hesitation, she reached for her phone, seeking permission for Maggie to join. Soon enough, a positive response echoed through the line, granting Maggie an unexpected invitation.

Upon arriving at the expo, Maggie's eyes widened in wonder. Everywhere she looked, women showcased their agricultural prowess. Yet, it was the encounter with a dynamic cooperative of female farmers that truly captured her attention. These industrious women managed seed multiplication plots that doubled as hubs for technological demonstrations and training sessions. Astonishingly, by season's end, their combined efforts yielded a whopping 20 metric tons of superior-quality seeds. These seeds weren't just a commodity; they symbolized empowerment, opportunity, and progress.

Intrigued and inspired, Maggie hesitantly inquired about joining their ranks. The cooperative's representatives, recognizing Maggie's passion and potential, responded warmly.

"For you, Maggie," they declared, "membership comes without a fee. We'll even assign you a seed multiplication plot. Your only commitment? Repay the investment over five years, and the plot becomes yours."

Eyes gleaming with determination, Maggie vowed, "I'll be back next week." True to her word, she immersed herself in the cooperative, leveraging this newfound opportunity.

Soon, the fruits of her labor began to flourish not only in her garden but also in her home. Maggie's contributions transformed the family's financial landscape, ensuring her children's education flourished. As for her husband, he marveled at the bountiful blessings Maggie showered upon their extended family, their festive gifts now a secret surprise, thanks to her thriving agricultural journey.

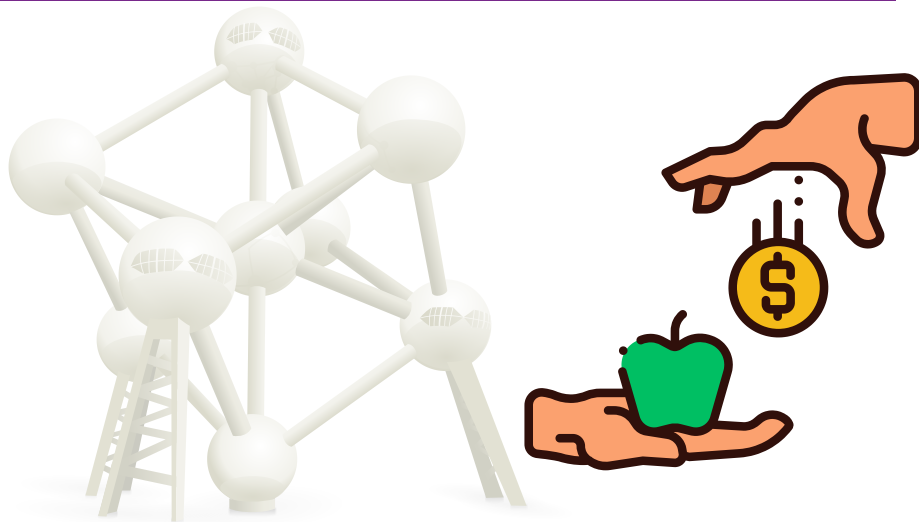


# Enhancing Climate Resilience and Income: Women's Land Rights and Fruit-Tree Intercropping in Nwoya District

In the verdant landscapes of Nwoya District, Northern Uganda, a transformative shift from age-old subsistence farming practices is taking root, thanks to a visionary approach: fruit-tree intercropping. This agroforestry system stands as a beacon of sustainable innovation, countering the detrimental effects of traditional farming that degrade soil health and expose crops to relentless heat.

Under the support of UN Women, 4,500 industrious women farmers have been empowered to lease 98 acres of customary land exclusively for fruit-tree intercropping.

This ground-breaking initiative birthed a women-led out growers cooperative, poised at the forefront of agricultural evolution. Partnering with Delight Industries, a prominent juice export company, these women cultivate fruits destined for processing, ushering in economic prosperity and newfound autonomy.



(From Middle) Angela Nakafero, Commissioner Ministry of Gender, Acholi Paramount Chief, His Royal Highness together with Dr. Paulina Chiwangu together with some of the women in agri business participants during the expo in Gulu City

14 December 2023

# Gender Equality Workshop: Crafting Uganda's Path Forward



UN Women staff pose for a group photo at the end of a workshop gender equality and Imperial Resort Hotel in Entebbe

In the heart of Entebbe, Uganda, representatives from diverse sectors convened for a crucial workshop. Their objective? To formulate a gender equality position paper guiding the NDP's strategic goals, promoting sustainable development and inclusive growth for the nation.

The room echoed with passionate discussions, as experts, policymakers, activists, and community leaders delved into the multifaceted issues that women, men, boys, and girls face daily. They understood that true progress hinged on inclusivity and gender sensitivity across all sectors.

Recognizing the transformative power of technology, the assembly emphasized the need to invest in gender-sensitive innovations. "For Uganda to leap forward," remarked Dr. Nakato, a renowned agricultural economist, "we must harness technology to elevate productivity, particularly in agro-processing, packaging, branding, and bulk marketing."

A special program dedicated to female farmers emerged as a key recommendation. It aimed not only to equip women with resources but also to ensure their safety, protection, and freedom from violence. This program championed access to irrigation, productive resources, and storage facilities, leveling the playing field for women in agriculture.

The workshop participants also underscored the importance of nurturing skills among all genders. They envisioned an environment where men, women, boys, and girls could access employment opportunities across various value chains. By fostering such inclusivity, Uganda could unlock untapped potential, spurring economic growth and innovation.

# Empowering Districts: A Step Forward in Gender Equality and Equity

14 November 2023

With backing from UN Women, the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development orchestrated a comprehensive training program spanning the Mbarara and Greater Masaka regions. The primary objective was to bolster the capacity of Western and Southwestern districts within the Greater Masaka and Mbarara regions, fostering a heightened emphasis on prioritizing gender and equity issues. The training sought to empower local stakeholders to effectively address and implement interventions aligned with the commitments outlined in the National Development Plan III (NDPIII).

The training resonated with representatives from a myriad of districts, painting a vibrant mosaic of commitment and collaboration.

Representatives from Mbarara City and surrounding areas, including Mbarara Local Government, Ibanda, Rukiga, Buhweju, and other districts, gathered with a unified purpose – to advocate for gender equality and equity in the Mbarara Region, spanning from the lively streets of Mbarara City to the tranquil landscapes of Bushenyi.

Participants from Masaka City, Lwengo, Mpigi, Ssembabule, Gomba, and beyond united in purpose, emphasizing the vital importance of tracking program execution and assessing fairness across various demographics. Their collective determination echoed a commitment to creating a more inclusive future for all, recognizing the need for effective statistical systems to generate gender and equity-disaggregated data. In charting the path forward, participants identified challenges and built essential blocks towards a brighter and more inclusive future.

Recommendations were crafted to address these challenges and guide the region towards genuine inclusivity.

Emphasizing the importance of identifying and addressing risk factors within communities, integrating proactive mitigation mechanisms into district workplans.

Advocating for the utilization of data-driven insights to inform decision-making and policy formulation, particularly focusing on gender-specific statistics to enhance understanding and address disparities



Representatives from 15 local governments for greater Masaka region pose for a photo at the end of the gender equality training.



Representatives from 15 local governments pose for a photo at the end of the regional level training on gender equality in Mbarara city



## WOMEN, PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN ACTION

# Supporting grassroots women organizations to amplify gender in humanitarian responses: A case of YUGNET

Even though local women led, and women rights organisations and community groups shoulder much crisis response in local communities, too often they are left out of humanitarian decision-making platforms and have limited access to humanitarian and other sources of funding.

UN Women through its signature initiative, Leadership Empowerment Access and Protection (LEAP) programme, is leveraging local women organization's participation and leadership capacities to ensure humanitarian efforts respond to the gender-specific needs of refugees and host community women and girls. With funding from the Government of Norway, UN Women is working closely with women led and women rights organisations to amplify women's voices and leadership in humanitarian and refugee response and recovery processes.

Yumbe GBV Reduction Network (YUGNET) in Yumbe district is one of the five local women organisations receiving technical and financial capacity building to meaningfully participate and influence humanitarian programming. This support is part of the four-year LEAP programme funded by the Government of Norway that UN Women is implementing in four refugee hosting districts of Adjumani, Yumbe, Terego and Kyegegwa.

Jackline Ewudopia the Coordinator of YUGNET says women always organize themselves in saving groups, farmers groups, Community Based Organisations but lack technical support to advance themselves. As a result, they and their work remain unknown.

*"Previously, communication, especially public speaking was a big challenge for me. I used to shy away whenever I was asked to make a presentation in a workshop or say something on behalf of the team. Even though YUGNET had existed since 2010, we had limited experience in keeping good books of accounts and thought accountability was just about financial receipts," remarks Jackline.*

Since 2022, UN Women working with its implementing partner, Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT) has been engaging local women organisations and building their capacity in various areas including institutional governance and leadership, project planning, management and reporting, financial management and gender in humanitarian action.

*"Before the partnership with COACT / UNWOMEN, YUGNET had no bank account, had never received funding through the bank and had no experience in keeping books of accounts. The capacity of YUGNET has been strengthened. YUGNET is now legally registered with Yumbe District Local Government as a CBO".*

With enhanced capacity, the visibility of YUGNET has greatly improved is now one of the key Women Led Organization in Yumbe district.

In August 2023, YUGNET signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the HEKS-EPER organisation to implement a 2½ year project to advocate and lobby for menstrual health management in Yumbe district. All this growth and achievement is attributed to the capacity building done by UN Women's partner COACT under the LEAP Programme which enabled YUGNET to develop a winning proposal.

On a personal level, Jackline says "I am grateful to COACT and UN Women for investing in me and supporting me to build my capacity and skills in leadership and empowerment. My public speaking skills have been boosted and now I have the confidence to speak in public, moderate meetings, facilitate workshops and deliver speeches wherever I am invited."



Members of Yumbe GBV Network (YUGNET) getting ready to take part in the road caravan in Yumbe town as part of activities during the 2023 16 Days of activism against Gender Based Violence. Photo Credit: CoAct





# In the words of Peluce Tuhaise:

## Equipping women in leadership builds their confidence and courage to lead effectively

Peluce Tuhaise is a District Councillor representing the women of Kyegegwa Town Council in Kyegegwa District. Peluce who is serving her second five-year term as a District Woman Councillor, participated in trainings organised by UN Women Responsible Partner, Coalition for Action on 1325 (CoACT) on peace building, conflict prevention and countering violent extremism. With funding from the Government of Norway, UN Women is implementing a four-year Women Peace and Security (WPS) programme in 15 conflict prone districts in Uganda.

Peluce shared why its important for women peace mediators to work collaboratively to articulate peace and security issues that affect women and girls.

When I received invitation to attend the training from UN Women's partner CoACT, I thought it was one of the usual trainings that leaders get invited to. However, this training was different as it opened my eyes to the peace and conflict issues that affect women and equipped me with skills and tools I could use to identify, document, and share information on the existing conflicts which enhances conflict early warning and response. Unlike other trainings, at the end of this training participants were tasked to develop action plans to demonstrate how they will apply the new knowledge and skills gained.

In my position as a district woman councillor, I had never received training that would enable me learn how best to identify issues and address them. All I did was attend Council meetings, share ordinary issues without articulating how these issues specifically affect women and girls.

The training on peace building and conflict prevention positioned me as Women Peace Mediator to collaborate with other women who had been trained to better identify and amplify issues that affect women and girls. As women peace mediators, we have now registered Kyegegwa Women Mediator's Network as a Women Led Community Based Organisation to implement peacebuilding initiatives in Kyegegwa district. The network was registered in November 2023. Within one month of our establishment, we registered 34 cases most being GBV cases and land related conflicts. We have been able to mediate some and refer other to the Community Development Officer and Police for special management. As a Network, we are working closely with the office of Resident District Commissioner, the Sub County and District Peace committees to ensure cases referred receive the attention they deserve.

As a District Woman Councillor and Peace mediator, I have been exposed to new information, knowledge, and skills especially on leadership, GBV, human rights, Gender Equality and Women Empowerment peace building and conflict prevention which I will use to impact the lives women and girls in district.



Peluce Tuhaise, Coordinator, Kyegegwa Women Mediator's Network. Photo Credit: CoACT



TPO staff during the follow up visit at Uwimaneza's house



### *"Resilience Beyond Borders: Uwimaneza's Journey from Desperation to Empowerment in the Face of Conflict"*

Uwimaneza (not real name) a refugee from Rwanda is a single mother of five children, including a set of twins. She says she was seven months pregnant when the conflict broke out in our neighborhood, and that was the last time she saw her husband. According to her, she struggled with conflicting emotions, unsure whether she had been abandoned by the husband or he had suffered a more horrible fate. She adds that because of fear, she had to move from place to place in search of safety until she found other people fleeing to Uganda and joined them. She arrived in Uganda through Nyakabande transit center. Later she was transferred to Nakivale refugee settlement. Uwimaneza says that the weight of the pregnancy and three other children made life difficult. Her husband's frequent thoughts made her concerned, worried, and in tears.

When we arrived at the settlement and I gave birth to twins, the difficulties multiplied tremendously. I got to the point where I was questioning every decision I'd ever made, and suicide looked like the only way out. When I looked at my children, I realized I couldn't abandon them, so I decided to stay and see if things could get better.

While in Nyakabande transit center, Uwimaneza was identified by one of the TPO staff as she was in dire need of advanced psychological support. She was therefore referred to staff colleague in Nakivale settlement where Uwimaneza was transferred. In Nakivale, Uwimaneza was further assessed and enrolled into the 12-session group-based therapy.

*"We were called, and asked some questions, but everything seemed to be revolving around me, every question was a yes to me. I felt bad that there might have been someone who knew about my idea of committing suicide and had reported me. Later, the team came back and grouped us in 12s and we were briefed on why they asked us the questions, what caused the effects we had. It was then that I realized I wasn't alone in finding it difficult to adapt to life here. In our groups, we started looking out for each other and providing mutual care."*



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