



HER VOICE NEWSLETTER!



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- Capacity enhancement of police officers on gender-responsive policing
- Learning exchange visit to Germany



GBV survivor support services

We sheltered GBV survivors in Kamuli and Namutumba districts. Cases reported in October included Family/child neglect, Land, Defilement, and Assault, Economic violence.



GBV Regional Exchange



UWONET was honored to participate in the Three-Day GBV Regional Exchange held from October 16-18, 2024, organized by **Kvinna till Kvinna** in Rwanda. The exchange brought together participants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, and Uganda.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

RITA HOPE ACIRO-LAKOR

Dear readers, Warm greetings from Uganda Women's Network.

As we close the month of October, I express my gratitude for your support and partnership in advancing GEWE. In this special 10th edition of Her Voice Newsletter, I am excited to share some of the key highlights around our work.



October was a month of celebration in Uganda as the nation marked its 62nd Independence Day with vibrant festivities. The occasion was commemorated under the theme "Independence Day: A Recommitment to Secure and Fortify our Destiny." Reflecting on the historic events of October 9, 1962. In October however, we conducted various engagements as later mentioned below aiming at advancing Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. UWONET continued galvanizing women's leadership and influence at different levels and sectors; enhanced women's agency for economic transformation for gender equality and women's empowerment (GEWE); enhanced knowledge management, voice and accountability, as well as laying focus on resource mobilization, networking, and institutional development.

UWONET used different tested approaches and methodologies to engage stakeholders towards her mandate. Enjoy the reading !





CELEBRATING 62 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

Uganda marked its 62nd Independence Day with vibrant celebrations under the theme Independence Day: A Recommitment to Secure and Fortify our Destiny." Reflecting on the historic events of October 9, 1962, thousands of Ugandans gathered at Kololo Independence Grounds to witness the pivotal moment when the Duke of Kent handed over the Instruments of Power to Dr. Milton Obote on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen.

As UWONET and its members, we proudly celebrated the remarkable women of Uganda, honoring their social, economic, cultural, and political achievements. The day served as a tribute to their invaluable contributions and active participation in the struggle for independence, highlighting their enduring legacy in shaping our nation's history.

During the **Commemoration of the International Day of Care and Support 2024** at the Royal Suites in Bugolobi, held under the theme "*Transforming Care Systems to Achieve the SDGs in the Context of Beijing+30*," the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development honored UWONET for its significant contributions to addressing unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW).

The event's chief guest, Hon. Minister Dr. Peace Mutunzo, presented the award to Lydia Nakato, a WE CARE Project Officer, in recognition of UWONET's efforts and impact in promoting care work as a critical component of achieving sustainable development goals.





REGIONAL EXCHANGE LEARNING

UWONET was honored to participate in the Three-Day GBV Regional Exchange, held from October 16–18, 2024, organized by Kvinna till Kvinna in Rwanda. The exchange brought together participants from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, and Uganda. UWONET E.D RITA HOPE ACIRO-LAKOR and Norris Linda a Partnerships officer attended the event. The annual gathering, which started in 2019, has addressed critical topics over the years, including:

- Formation of gender-related norms and identifying key influencers
- GBV and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR)
- GBV during the COVID-19 pandemic
- GBV and Mental Health
- GBV and Negative Gender & Social Norms
- Shifting negative gender and social norms underlying violence against women and girls (VAWG) (2023)



The platform has served as a vital avenue for reflection, learning from best practices, and strategizing collective actions for GBV prevention and response.

This year's exchange centered on evidence-based programming to address GBV against minors, particularly girls. It provided an opportunity to share best practices and strategies for transformative change while fostering collaboration and collective action to address gaps and challenges in tackling GBV against minors.

The meeting concluded with the development of Country Action Plans to combat GBV against minors in the respective countries for the period of November 2024 to October 2025. Progress on these action plans will be reviewed during the 2025 GBV Regional Exchange.



SHIFTING SOCIAL NORMS ON UNPAID CARE AND DOMESTIC WORK

High level dialogue to disseminate findings

EPRC in partnership with UWONET organized a high-level dialogue held on 30th October 2024 at Serena Hotel to disseminate the project end-line findings on shifting social norms surrounding Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW). The project was a collaborative effort by the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC), School of Women and Gender Studies (SWGS), School of Social Work and Social Administration (SWASA), Care International, and the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) that aimed to address gender inequities in UCDW by influencing societal perceptions, promoting policy changes, and engaging communities in transformative behavioral shifts.

The high-level dialogue aimed to share Findings by discussing how the P.O.W.E.R. model has transformed gender and social norms, reshaped public perceptions, and encouraged cost-effective attitudes toward unpaid care work, enhancing its appreciation across various stakeholders and, to sustain Public Debate by encouraging ongoing discourse on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) and promote its value among diverse stakeholders.



Dr. Madina Guloba

Representatives from government bodies, including the Ministries of Gender, Labor, and Social Development, attended alongside international organizations and NGOs specializing in gender equity, social norms, and economic empowerment. The event also convened community-based organizations (CBOs), academic researchers, private sector stakeholders interested in inclusive workplace policies, key project beneficiaries, community members, and 12 members of the Uganda Women Parliament Association (UWOPA).



Key Discussions and Recommendations

Dr. Madina Guloba presented the project findings on behalf of Prof. Grace Bantebya Kyomuhendo, detailing the implementation of the initiative since its launch in 2021. The project, titled “From Promises to Actions: Shifting Gender Norms and Public Perceptions about Unpaid Care Work in Workplaces and Families in Uganda,” involved comprehensive evaluative and action research aimed at developing evidence-based tools and policy recommendations. Using the POWER model integrated with the socio-ecological framework, the research identified key drivers and risk factors influencing norms around unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) at the individual, family, community, and institutional levels.

Figure 1: The ‘P.O.W.E.R’ model



In her presentation, Dr. Madina emphasized that while the end-line findings revealed positive shifts, sustained efforts are essential, particularly through policy reinforcement and cultural sensitization. She stressed that by fostering multi-stakeholder collaboration and committing to long-term behavior change, this progress could serve as a foundation for building more equitable and inclusive societies.

Way Forward

The full implementation of the P.O.W.E.R. intervention has significantly improved attitudes among both men and women regarding the redistribution of unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW) within households. It has reduced the stigma associated with men participating in such tasks. Addressing attitudes toward UCDW requires a holistic approach that combines individual, household, and community-level interventions.



CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT OF WROS ON FEMINIST APPROACHES TO INFLUENCE FEMINIST CARE AND TAX POLICIES

The training of women rights organizations on feminist principles was one of the initiatives under the project titled Fostering feminist collective voice for gender-responsive tax and care policies in Uganda. The training brought together women's rights organizations focused on economic empowerment, tax and budget advocacy groups, and representatives from key ministries, including the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, the Ministry of Water and Sewerage Cooperation, and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development.

The training encompassed feminist principles, care work, tax education, and coalition building. Participants gained insights into the connections between the care economy and taxation, feminist theories, and the impact of tax policies on women. The training was both timely and highly relevant, as reflected in the participants' shared expectations. These included exploring the relationship between the care economy and taxation, learning about feminist theories that inform recent developments in their countries, and understanding how tax policies disproportionately affect women compared to men, among other key topics.

Susan Acheng stated that the invisible burden of unpaid care work disproportionately affects girls and women, perpetuating inequality. In Uganda and Africa at large, girls are often forced to leave school to provide unpaid care, hindering their education and future prospects. This feminized burden, rooted in historical, cultural, and faith-based expectations, sees women and girls spend an about 10–13 hours daily on unpaid care responsibilities. She further stated that discussions around Unpaid Care and Domestic Work are complex due to entrenched religious, social, and cultural norms.

Action agreed

Following a session on care coalition building, participants agreed to form a care economy coalition to consolidate efforts made by various stakeholders towards amplifying the voices of care givers.

GBV SUPPORT SERVICES

GBV ADVISORY CENTRES

As mandated, we provide comprehensive services to empower survivors of gender-based violence (GBV), particularly women and girls, ensuring they can access justice in an environment tailored to their unique needs.

This initiative falls under Thematic Area III: Knowledge, Learning, Voice, and Accountability, aligned with Strategic Objective 3. 3: To challenge the negative cultural social norms, practices and advocate for the enforcement of laws and processes that protect and promote women's rights and access to justice by 2028.

The advisory centers and GBV shelters were established in Kamuli and Namutumba districts in 2014.

Persistent issues include land disputes, family neglect, assault, defilement, economic and emotional abuse, evictions, and domestic violence. A particularly pressing concern is men evading their parental responsibilities, a problem exacerbated by societal biases that challenge women's rights to property and land inheritance. These biases often fuel conflicts over land ownership, further deepening the cycle of inequality and discord.

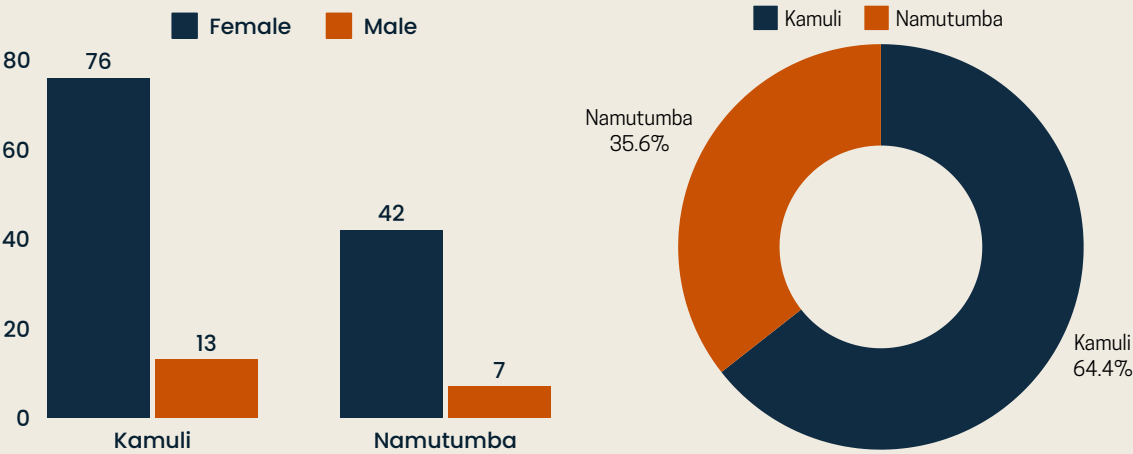
Cases & clients in numbers

In Kamuli district, our assistance reached a total of 118 clients (98F, 20M), 76 clients in Kamuli district (63F and 13M) In Namutumba district our assistance reached a total of 42 clients (35F and 7M).

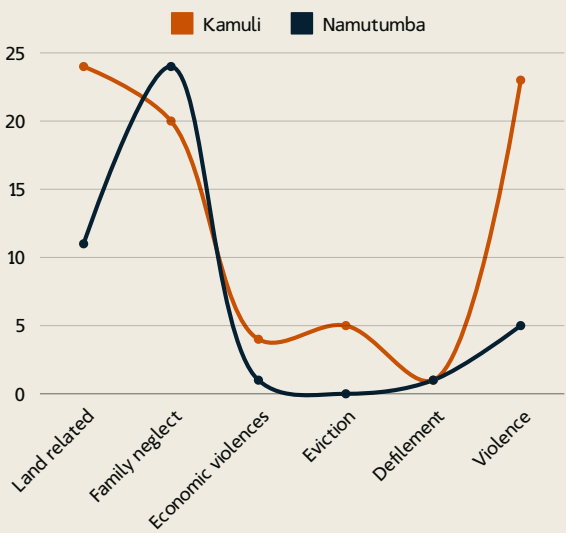
In the month of October, essential services provided to clients included the efficient reception and registration of clients/survivors, offering legal aid, providing psychosocial support, conducting mediations, offering continuous guidance, providing shelter facilities, case follow-ups, facilitating medical aid, and ensuring appropriate referrals for survivors in need.



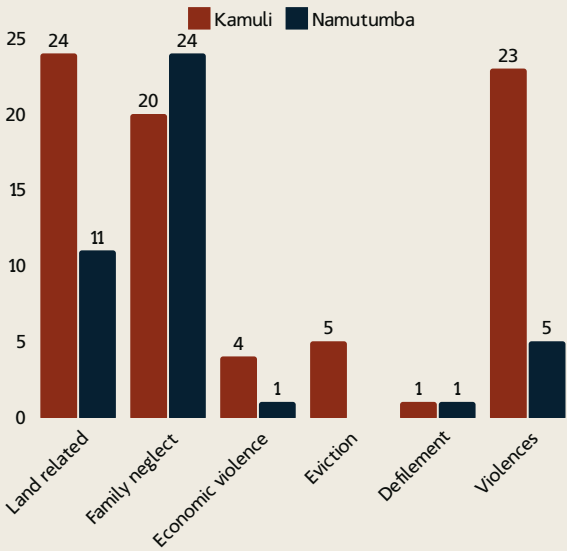
Number of cases handled in October



Case Variations



Nature of cases handled



64% Kamuli
36% Namutumba

50 Mediations
7 People Sheltered
12 Referrals
92 Toll free calls
28 Cases handled by paralegals



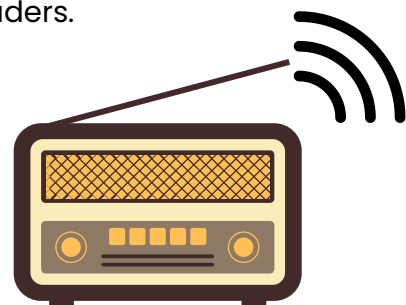


RADIO TALK SHOWS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LEADERSHIP AND CIVIC PROCESSES

The radio talk shows conducted in the 4 regions are part of the ongoing initiative designed to empower women and girls to actively engage in leadership, democracy, and good governance.

This initiative is aimed to address critical issues of women's underrepresentation in leadership and decision-making processes at both local and national levels. The background of this project lies in the recognition of the significant barriers that women face in accessing leadership opportunities. Factors such as cultural norms, lack of education, and limited access to resources often hinder women's active participation in civic matters. By engaging the community through radio talk shows, we sought to raise awareness about the challenges and promote discussions on the importance of women's involvement in governance and civic engagement.

The talk-shows featured key stakeholders, including local leaders, women activists, and community members, who shared their experiences and insights. It provided a platform for dialogue, encouraging listeners to rethink traditional perceptions of women's roles and advocate for greater inclusivity in civic processes. Discussants included; Electoral commission Administrators, elected Councilors, Executive Directors of WROs/CSOs, Elders/Opinion leaders LC IVs, Religious and Cultural leaders.





In Nwoya district, key issues affecting women's leadership include; GBV: the district has responded by passing the GBV ordinance and the draft is in the 3rd reading by the district council. There a surge in Teen pregnancies in Nwoya district and Teen pregnancy ordinance is being developed too, women have a heavy burden of UCDW that has affected women leaders and those aspiring into the leadership, monetization of election campaigns, stopping women for certain positions ring fenced by men, voters' biases on women etc. largely hinder their participation in leadership.

Callers including Madona lakot, Anthony purongo, Simon okot Marie, Mark, Santo Opobbo, Capsule kinene and Innocent encouraged women to sand for leadership positions and use all the available spaces and opportunities, not limiting themselves to affirmative action e.g Santo Opobbo a caller from Purongo suggested that a woman should pick up the nomination form to contest for LC5 Chairperson seat in the upcoming 2026 election and she shall be support by men.

Caller: Lotyang from Rengen expressed his appreciation to the panelists for taking the time to educate the public. He noted that women often naturally hesitate to take on leadership roles due to the authoritative behavior of men in the community. However, he emphasized that women possess great potential to become effective leaders.

Messenger: Lokong from Kaabong, "one of the female parish councilors in Kaabong is consistently sidelined when it comes to participating in council decision-making. This has created significant challenges for her, hindering her ability to effectively serve and advocate for her community".

THANK YOU

In a very special way, we thank all the district local governments in which UWONET directly worked, Members, Partners and Allies. Sincere appreciation to development partners i.e. The Embassy of Kingdom of Netherlands, Oxfam Uganda (HEWLETT FOUNDATION), USAID/Civil Society Strengthening Activity, EU, ADC, Kvinna Till Kvinna, Akina Mama Wa Afrika, Horizont3000 and Dan Church Aid for supporting these processes that refines the network's mandate in the ever changing context of operations for Women's Rights and Gender Equality.

This work wouldn't be complete without you.

**Crossing Barriers,
Building Bridges:
Unleashing Collective Power**

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