HER VOICE - UGANDA WOMEN'S NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

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TOP NEWS

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*We held a **quarterly reflection meeting with 40 male champions** in Namutumba on January 28, 2025, and in Bugiri on January 29, 2025*

WHAT'S IN THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

RITA HOPE ACIRO-LAKOR
Executive Director - UWONET

Warm greetings from Uganda Women's Network!

As we step into the new year of 2025, I want to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your unwavering support and partnership in advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). Your dedication continues to inspire and drive meaningful change.

*In this special edition of **Her Voice Newsletter**, I am thrilled to share key highlights of the impactful work we accomplished in January 2025.*

In January, we undertook various initiatives to advance GEWE. UWONET mobilized women's urgency and influence across different levels, strengthening their agency for economic transformation and promoting gender equality.

Thank you for being part of this journey!

UWONET mobilized women's urgency and influence across different levels

STAFF CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND REFLECTION

A two-day UWONET staff reflection and retreat took place on Thursday, January 16, and Friday, January 17, 2025, at Kampala Nile Resort.

This retreat provided a valuable space for the team to review and assess past approaches, document best practices, reflect on key learnings and milestones from the previous year, and identify emerging challenges along with mitigation strategies. Additionally, it served as a platform for staff development in selected areas of learning. Team members were equipped with essential knowledge and skills to effectively fulfill their roles in line with the organization's mandate.

During the reflection, staff engaged in discussions on a range of critical topics, including The UWONET We Want, Resource Mobilization, Closing 2024, and Review of the Institutional Risk Matrix in the Current Context. Overall, participants appreciated the insights shared, noting that the sessions deepened their understanding of UWONET's institutional mandate and reinforced their role in contributing to a shared vision for the organization. The **session** was led by our Executive Director

The UNITE campaign seeked to reinforce efforts to eliminate all forms of GBV, promote a safer, more just world for everyone, challenge negative social norms that perpetuate VAWG, and support people to speak out and present alternative norms that support non-violence and gender equality.

Insights that inspire actions

BY: ROLAND MUSASIZI - MEAL OFFICER

Session 1: The UWONET We Want: (Thinking about Change through self-reflection-Staff)

Reminders and grounding on organizational Vision, Goal, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic objectives.
During this session, staff were reminded of the institutional fundamental guiding statements and principles as per the extended Strategic Plan 2023 – 2028. To facilitate an easy understanding of the key terms and statements and how these align with the broader mandate of the organisation, the discussion commenced with definitions of each key term including the Goal, Mission, Vision, Strategic Objectives and Core Values.

Session 2: Resource Mobilization

This session focused on enhancing staff understanding and ownership of UWONET's policies among staff for effective resource mobilization and utilization.
Staff received orientation on resource mobilization policies and strategies, including the Resource Mobilization Strategy, Resource Mobilization Policy, Consultancy Policy, and Reserve Fund Policy. The discussion focused on the objectives of each policy and the respective roles of staff and management in facilitating an efficient fundraising process to enhance UWONET's resource mobilization efforts.

Staff beneficial takeaways

1. Effective resource mobilization requires a strong team effort and collective engagement.
2. Staff reaffirmed their understanding of UWONET's Strategic Plan (2019–2028) and its alignment with resource mobilization efforts.
3. Resource mobilization is a continuous effort that requires sustained commitment and strategic planning.

SUPPORTED NAMUTUMBA DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN DRAFTING AN ORDINANCE

UWONET has continued to support Namutumba District Local Government in drafting a Child Protection Ordinance under the Scale-Up Project, supported by the European Union. This process began two years ago with the goal of addressing the persistent issue of teenage pregnancies in the district.
On January 23, 2025, UWONET presented the draft ordinance to the district drafting committee, which later submitted it to the Council Committee on Social Affairs for further review.

The primary objective of this ordinance is to strengthen child protection measures in Namutumba District, safeguarding children from harmful practices such as child marriage and teenage pregnancy, both of which hinder their fundamental rights.

Key provisions being legislated include:

- **Prohibition of child neglect**
- **Prohibition of child marriage**
- **Prohibition of teenage pregnancy**

Following its review by the Council Committee on Social Affairs, the ordinance was assessed by the District Executive Committee and the Business Committee. These committees then nominated a district councilor to formally present the ordinance to the full council. As a result, a council session was convened on January 29, 2025, for the first reading of the ordinance.

On the 29th January 2025 the Namutumba district council has had the first reading of the Child Protection Bill on Child marriages and Teenage Pregnancy .
UWONET is proud to have supported the whole process with support from European Union under the scale up project aimed at scaling up initiatives to reduce teenage pregnancy in Namutumba and Bugiri.

CONDUCTED A REFLECTION MEETING WITH 40 MALE CHAMPIONS

We held a quarterly reflection meeting with 40 male champions in Namutumba on January 28, 2025, and in Bugiri on January 29, 2025. The purpose of the meeting was to review the progress of the two-year Scale-Up Project in the districts, focusing on key achievements, challenges, lessons learned, and best practices.
Some notable achievements included increased awareness and utilization of the referral pathway, the successful re-enrollment of teenage mothers in school, and improved livelihoods for teenage mothers through skills training—supervised and supported by the male champions.

However, the male champions still face challenges such as limited transportation to reach all villages and high expectations from teenage mothers and their parents.
Among the best practices identified were collaboration with sub-county leadership and active male engagement in supporting teenage mothers.
Additionally, this meeting served as a close-out session for the male champions under the Scale-Up Project, which was supported by the European Union (EU).

UWONET conducted exit meetings in Bugiri and Namutumba, where we have been implementing the Scale-Up Project to reduce teenage pregnancy. This initiative, carried out in partnership with AMREF and NSHAWA, was supported by the EU and ran from February 2023 to January 2025.

During the meetings, local government officials acknowledged the project's significant achievements and milestones, which were evident within the districts. Notable successes include empowering young mothers with skills in tailoring, hairdressing, liquid soap making, and boosting their self-esteem. Additionally, under the project, trained health workers now provide youth-friendly services to teenage mothers attending antenatal care and delivery at health facilities.

A key policy advancement in Namutumba District is the introduction of an Ordinance Bill on Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancy, which has already undergone its first reading in the Council House.

CONDUCTED EXIT MEETINGS IN BUGIRI AND NAMUTUMBA

Crossing Barriers,
Building Bridges:
Unleashing Collective Power

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