

HER VOICE - UGANDA WOMEN'S NETWORK

NEWSLETTER

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In this special edition of Her Voice Newsletter, we are excited to share key highlights of the impactful work accomplished in February 2025.

We extend our 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, even in the face of significant challenges.

*One of the most remarkable milestones in February was the adoption of the **African Union Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls (AUEVAW Convention)**. The African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights adopted this historic decision, recognizing it as a significant step in our collective fight for gender equality and human dignity. This groundbreaking convention was adopted during the 38th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from February 15 to 16, 2025. The adoption of this convention reaffirms Africa's commitment to eliminating all forms of violence that have long silenced, oppressed, and harmed women and girls across the continent.*

Throughout February, we also undertook several initiatives to promote GEWE at both national and international levels. UWONET played a key role in amplifying women's voices and influence across different sectors, strengthening their agency for economic transformation, and advocating for greater participation of women in leadership and decision-making processes. Together, we continue to push forward, breaking barriers and creating a more just and equitable society.

LATEST NEWS

- 1 Capacity Enhancement OF Religious Leaders on Unpaid Care & Domestic Work.
- 2 Stress- and Trauma-Sensitive Approach Training - RWANDA

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meaningful change***



CAPACITY ENHANCEMENT OF RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON UNPAID CARE & DOMESTIC WORK.

On February 13, 2025, a capacity enhancement session on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) was held at St. Nicholas Orthodox Church Uganda in Namungoona, Kampala District. The session aimed to deepen religious leaders' understanding of unpaid care and domestic work and its impact on gender equality and women's empowerment.

Organized by UWONET in collaboration with key faith-based institutions, the training provided religious leaders with the necessary tools and knowledge to advocate for the recognition, redistribution, reduction, and representation (4Rs) of care work.

The training focused on the 4Rs framework—Recognition, Redistribution, Reduction, and Representation—encouraging participants to develop or utilize existing strategies to address UCDW. Through practical exercises, participants brainstormed action plans and strategies for integrating these concepts into their religious communities. This interactive approach ensured that they not only acquired theoretical knowledge but also practical tools to promote gender equality and fair care distribution.



Rev. Fr. Kasule from the Orthodox Church shared, "I had never fully recognized the immense value of unpaid care work in our homes and communities. This training has given me a new perspective on its significance, and I am now committed to raising awareness within my congregation."

A youth leader, a member of the Catholic Church, expressed her appreciation, stating, "As a religious leader, I often witness the challenges women face in balancing care work with other responsibilities. This experience has deepened my understanding of the need to advocate for greater recognition and support for these women."



FACILITATED THE NATIONAL CARE COALITION COORDINATION MEETING

The Care Coalition convened to revitalize its advocacy initiatives, with a primary focus on influencing care and tax policies. The session was led by Hon. Flavia Kalule, Woman Member of Parliament for Kasanda District and Chairperson of the Women's League. A total of 29 participants attended the coordination meeting, including eight Members of Parliament and representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) (four males and 25 females).

Challenges in Advocacy

Coalition members identified key challenges encountered in their advocacy efforts, including:

Difficulties Engaging Policy makers

- Lack of prioritization of women's issues by policymakers.
- Resistance, unwillingness, and negative attitudes from some policymakers—evident in the ongoing discussions of the Marriage Bill 2024 between the Legal Parliamentary Committee and CSO advocates.
- Limited understanding of the link between care and taxation across various sectors.
- A persistent reliance on traditional norms and values, which hinders policymakers' ability to recognize and address the evolving needs of women and marginalized communities.

Insights that inspire actions

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STRESS- AND TRAUMA-SENSITIVE APPROACH TRAINING - RWANDA

Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) was invited by medica mondiale to participate in a capacity-building training on the Stress- and Trauma-Sensitive Approach (STA) in Rwanda. The training was attended by three UWONET staff members, including the Executive Director Rita H. Aciro, Norris N. Nakimbugwe and Roland Musasizi. Other participants included representatives from the Rwanda Women's Network, as well as organizations from Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Understanding the Stress- and Trauma-Sensitive Approach (STA)

STA is a structured, low-threshold approach designed to offer support in low-resource environments to individuals affected by violence and trauma. The methodology emphasizes key principles to guide interactions with survivors, ensuring their well-being while safeguarding the mental health of caregivers and specialists. The core objectives of the STA approach include:

- Avoiding additional stress for those affected
- Preventing traumatization
- Empowering and stabilizing survivors

The training aimed to equip support providers with trauma-sensitive skills that strengthen survivors and promote their stabilization, while ensuring that caregivers maintain their own well-being.

Medica mondiale and STA

Since 1993, medica mondiale has been supporting women and girls affected by sexualized violence in war and crisis zones. The STA – Stress- and Trauma-Sensitive Approach was developed as a framework to offer competent, trauma-sensitive support to survivors.

Key Objectives of STA for Activists, Specialists, and Organizations

The STA approach is designed to help activists, specialists, organizations, and institutions:

- Adapt their services to be stress- and trauma-sensitive, making them more effective for survivors.
- Implement self-care and staff-care practices to ensure stability and sustainability in their work.
- Develop strategies to cope with the psychological and emotional impacts of working with survivors of violence.

The Role of Self-Care and Staff Care

Self-care and staff care form a critical component of the STA approach. Given the emotional burden that caregivers and specialists experience, organizations must create mechanisms to support their teams. Managers are encouraged to develop structured self-care plans, while organizations can introduce initiatives such as relaxation activities, group exercises, and peer support sessions to mitigate secondary trauma.

Four Core Principles of STA

The STA approach is anchored in four fundamental principles:

1. **Security:** Ensuring that survivors receive support in an environment that minimizes stress and anxiety triggers.
2. **Empowerment:** Recognizing survivors as active agents in their own recovery, reinforcing their dignity, resilience, and ability to rebuild their lives.
3. **Connection:** Strengthening survivors' relationship with themselves and their social networks, helping them break free from isolation and reintegrate into their communities.
4. **Organizational and Staff Care:** Recognizing that those providing support are at risk of secondary trauma, thus prioritizing self-care as a human right and a feminist act.



This training marks a significant step in building trauma-sensitive support systems within the East African region. UWONET remains committed to integrating the STA principles into its advocacy and service delivery, ensuring that survivors receive compassionate and effective care.



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