



Gender Transformation & Empowerment



UWONET

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

THRIVING THROUGH ADVERSITIES



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ACRONYMS

ACODE	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment	IWOP	Interparty Women Platform
AGM	Annual General Meeting	MIS	Management Information System
AI	Artificial Intelligence	NDP	National Development Plan
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer	NGO	None Governmental Organisations
CBVs	Community Based Volunteers	PDM	Parish Development Model
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all Discrimination Against Women	PLP	Peer Learning Platform
CIJ	Customary Informal Justice	SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations	SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
CSW	Commission on the Status of Women	SGBV	Sexual Gender Based Violence
DWRN	District Women's Rights Network	UCDW	Unpaid Care and Domestic Work
GBV	Gender Based Violence	UN	United Nations
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UWONET	Uganda Women's Network
GEWE	Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment	VAW/G	Violence Against Women and Girls
GROW	Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Entrepreneurs	WD	Women Deliver
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions	WPI	Women's Probono Initiative
ICT	Information Communication Technology	WRO	Women Rights Organisations
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons		
ILO	International Labour Organisation		

STRATEGIC DIRECTION (2019-2028)

For her strategic direction from 2019 to 2028, UWONET will be guided by the following vision, mission, goal, core values, and thematic focus areas.



VISION

A Ugandan society free from gender discrimination



MISSION

To transform the unequal gender relations through collective visioning and action.



STRATEGIC GOAL

Improved gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in Uganda by 2028.

THE CORE VALUES



In order to effectively undertake her mission, the following are the core values during execution of this strategic direction:

Unity in Diversity: We acknowledge respect and celebrate diversity in the Women's Movement and strive to achieve unity amongst women and organizations and with like-minded actors.

Women's dignity: We recognize, respect, promote and protect women's inherent sense of self-worth and self-respect.

Justice: We uphold the principle of fairness in our operations and relations, and we are opposed to discrimination.

Equality: In pursuing our endeavour, we treat men and women equally, without gender discrimination and we strive for the elimination of all forms of unequal relations.

Accountability: We hold ourselves accountable to go to the highest level of ethical behaviour and responsibility in our actions, while mindful of integrity in our performance.

THEMATIC FOCUS AREAS



Galvanize Women's Leadership and Influence at Different Levels and Sectors.



Women's Agency for Economic Transformation for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).



Knowledge, Learning, Voice and Accountability.



Institutional Governance and Management.

WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with great pride and deep reflection that I present this Annual Report for the year 2023. We celebrated three decades of relentless advocacy and transformative work that has significantly advanced the rights and well-being of women and girls ultimately improving gender relations and hence development across Uganda. At the same time, we navigated a complex landscape marked by ongoing repercussions from the COVID-19 pandemic and a reduction in funding that has affected our operations and reach amidst other obstacles.



The theme “Thriving Through Adversities” could not be more fitting for this report. It underscores the resilience, innovation, and unwavering commitment of UWONET to continue advocating for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) despite the odds. We have faced funding constraints, shifting political climates, and increasing demands on our services, yet we have not wavered in our mission. Instead, we have adapted, innovated, and persisted in our efforts to amplify the voices of women and girls, ensuring their rights and needs remain at the forefront of national and global agendas.

Three decades ago, the founding members of UWONET had a vision: to see women's organizations and individuals working together to make a positive difference in women's lives. These organizations worked in different areas for women's empowerment, but there was a missing link. Common concerns like violence against women, inadequate participation in politics and decision-making, economic

marginalization, and challenges in education and health services required collective action beyond the mandate of any single organization. This need for unity led to the formation of Uganda Women's Network as an 'issue network' to bring together women's organizations and individuals to work on these critical concerns in women's lives.

Over the years, UWONET has contributed to uplifting the political, social, and economic status of women by amplifying their voices in the public domain. It has nurtured a cohort of dedicated advocates.

In 2023, UWONET continued to solidify the foundation for the future. We continued to galvanize women's leadership, enhance economic empowerment, and strengthen our institutional governance. These efforts are crucial not only for the sustainability of UWONET but for the broader women's movement in Uganda. The strides made in these areas are a testament to the strength of our network, the dedication of our members, and the support of our partners.

In this Annual report, you will read about the interventions in women's leadership, movement building, women's access to justice, enhancement of economic empowerment with a focus on unpaid care and domestic work.

Looking ahead, we recognize the importance of strong institutional governance and management in sustaining efforts. As we continue to build on our legacy, we remain committed to fostering a culture of equity, transparency, and collaboration within UWONET and beyond.

Going forward, I am confident that UWONET will continue to thrive, guided by our shared vision of a society free from gender discrimination. Our work over the years and most specifically in 2023, would never be possible without your unweaving support. I extend my heartfelt thanks to our development partners, members, staff, and all those who have walked this journey with us. Your support and commitment are the bedrock upon which UWONET stands.

Together, we will continue to overcome challenges, seize opportunities, and push the boundaries of what is possible for gender equality in Uganda. Our journey of passion and dedication over these thirty years is a testament to the resilience and strength of all the women of Uganda, and we dedicate this milestone to you.

RITA H. ACIRO LAKOR

Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIRPERSON

This past year was not just another chapter in our story but a significant milestone as UWONET celebrated 30 years of impactful advocacy and transformation in the lives of women, girls, boys, and men across Uganda. The anniversary was more than a celebration of our achievements; it was a reaffirmation of our commitment to championing the rights of women and girls, even as we face new and emerging adversities and rollback to gender equality.

In 2023, UWONET actively participated in significant global gatherings such as the Women Deliver Conference, the Commission on the Status of Women, and the celebration of the Maputo Protocol's 20th anniversary. These platforms reaffirmed our commitment to aligning our local efforts with global gender equality movements, ensuring that the perspectives and experiences of Ugandan women are represented and valued in international forums. Our involvement in these global spaces is a testament to UWONET's role as a key player in the global gender equality agenda.



Our work has consistently focused on enhancing access to justice for women, advancing economic empowerment and independence, strengthening women's leadership and influence, reshaping the narratives around unpaid care and domestic work, and embracing the energy of young people to fuel movement building.

As we look back on this journey, it is clear that our strength lies in the collective efforts of our network. I extend my deepest appreciation to all those who have contributed their time, energy, finances, and passion to make UWONET an inspiration of hope.

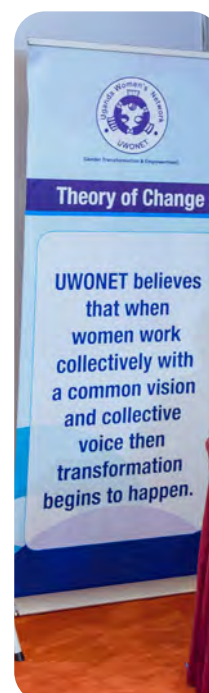
I sincerely appreciate UWONET members, staff, and development partners for their unwavering support to the network and for believing in our vision, which has garnered numerous ambassadors for GEWE in Uganda.

Our journey over the past three decades has been of passion, dedication, and relentless pursuit of justice. As we continue this journey, let us remain united. Together, we will continue to make significant strides toward a more just and equitable society for all.

Dr. Victoria Flavia Namuggala

Board Chairperson, UWONET

THE THEORY OF CHANGE



UWONET believes that when women work collectively with a common vision and collective voice then transformation begins to happen. The enhancement of women's movement and employment of women and girls is central for this transformation. It will require a functional, fully operational, re-sourced, efficient organization that can adequately address the needs of her membership and the movement, which will result into improved gender equality and empowerment of women and girls in Uganda. Women and girls will know their rights, have a voice and the ability to act against gender discrimination and live a dignified life.

This will also increase the numbers and influence of women leaders across the sectors; the women's movement will influence the enforcement of gender responsive laws and policies; increased accessibility and affordability of public services including justice, employment opportunities, sexual and reproductive health, and improved working relations and support from Government and donors. Ultimately, this will be achieved through building agency, capacity development, resource mobilization, deepening strategic engagement of stakeholders, advocacy for improved operating environment, collective visioning and action.

A GLANCE AT THE YEAR 2023

2023 marked a significant return to normalcy following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the secondary impacts of the pandemic continued to affect various sectors, including efforts toward Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). There were noticeable rollbacks on progress, necessitating renewed efforts and strategies to address emerging challenges.

Dwindling funding for the Global South resulted to a notable reduction in the financial resources available to Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in the Global South. This decline in funding affected operations of CSOs including UWONET leading to reduced outreach.

UWONET celebrated 30 years of her existence and her profound contributions to transforming the lives of women, girls, boys, and men in Uganda, with an unwavering commitment to Gender Equality.

Major Global Gatherings on GEWE

UWONET in 2023, participated in the following global platforms that focussed on advancing GEWE;

1. Women Deliver Conference 2023 (WD2023) – The sixth Women Deliver (WD2023) conference, a flagship event advocating for gender equality and women's rights, was held in Kigali, Rwanda from July 17 to 20, 2023 gathering over 6,000 activists, policymakers, and changemakers worldwide. Under the theme *“Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions,”* the conference emphasized the importance of intergenerational partnerships in achieving gender equality, funding feminist movements, and adopting evidence-based approaches from the Global South. Key discussion areas included sexual reproductive health and rights, intersectional feminist principles, climate change impacts on women and girls, gender-based violence, unpaid care work, grassroots advocacy, and strategies to overcome barriers to gender equality.

2. The sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (**CSW67**) was held from March 6 to 17, 2023 in New York, with the theme *“Innovation and technological change, and education in the digital age for achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.”* Extensive discussions and panels emphasized bridging gender gaps in digital access and innovation. The CSW remains the principal global intergovernmental body dedicated to promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women.

3. The **Maputo Protocol**, formally known as the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, marks its 20th anniversary as a landmark legal instrument in the fight for women's rights and gender equality across the continent. Adopted by the African Union on July 11, 2003, in Maputo, Mozambique, the protocol represents a significant commitment by African nations to protect and promote the rights of women, addressing gender inequalities in social, political and economic spheres. Over the past two decades, the Maputo Protocol has catalysed numerous legislative and policy reforms at national levels, contributing to the advancement of women's rights in Africa.

4. Generation Equality Midpoint Moment– Held during the UN General Assembly in September, this event evaluated progress and renewed commitments towards achieving gender equality by 2030. It brought together leaders from governments, civil society, and the private sector to discuss and recommit to gender equality goals.

5. International Women's Day 2023: Commemorated under the theme “*DigitALL: Innovation and technology for gender equality*,” aligning with the CSW67 theme. The focus was on the critical role of digital technologies in achieving gender inclusion, despite structural inequalities that limit women’s access and use.

6. Ratification of the ILO Violence and Harassment Convention (C190): On August 7, Uganda ratified this convention, reinforcing its commitment to combat workplace violence and harassment. The Employment (Amendment) Bill passed by Parliament on May 25 also advanced workers’ protections, including measures against sexual harassment and protections for domestic and casual workers.

Legal and Political Context

a. Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023

The enactment of the Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023 by the Parliament of Uganda intended to prohibit same-sex relations and associated activities. While celebrated by some as preserving societal beliefs and values, it was seen as an attack on the freedoms and human rights of sexual minorities. The law’s enactment affected Uganda’s foreign relations, resulting in the withdrawal of foreign aid critical to public social services and infrastructure development, impacting many, especially rural communities. services and infrastructure.

b. Closure of UN Human Rights Office

The closure of the UN High Commission for Human Rights offices in Kampala, following the non-renewal of the host country agreement, raised concerns about diminished state compliance with human rights standards. The UN Human Rights office played a crucial role in monitoring and reporting on human rights violations, including those related to gender equality and women’s rights. This raised concerns about diminished state compliance with human rights standards and reduced support for Women’s Rights Organizations and activists.

c. Electoral Cycle Preparations

Electoral Commission Roadmap in August 2023, the Electoral Commission unveiled the roadmap for the 2026 general elections, with an estimated budget of 1.3 trillion Uganda shillings. Preparations will focus on enhancing women’s participation as candidates and voters, emphasizing information dissemination and training.

d. Economic Context

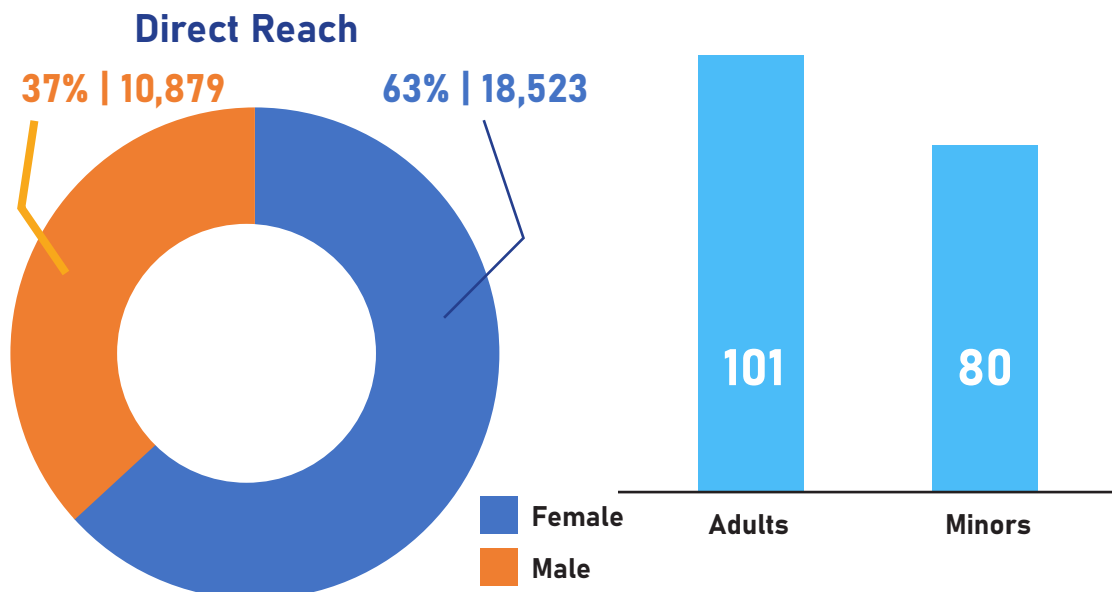
Uganda made significant strides towards economic stability and growth in 2023, with a 5.2 percent growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), up from 4.7 percent in 2022. Private consumption increased, tourism rebounded, and crude oil projects progressed rapidly. However, private sector investment retracted due to the government’s deflationary monetary policy and reduced public investments. Despite a decline in inflation to 2.6 percent by December 2023, the costs of education and health services rose, impacting women and children directly. Poverty reduction trends decelerated, with 41.7 percent of the population living in poverty.

2023 Reach In Numbers

Total Beneficiaries
directly reached

29,402

181 Sheltered



- ➔ 29,409 (10,879 Males and 18,523 Females) beneficiaries reached directly with our various interventions.
- ➔ 5789 Women and Girls supported to access justice

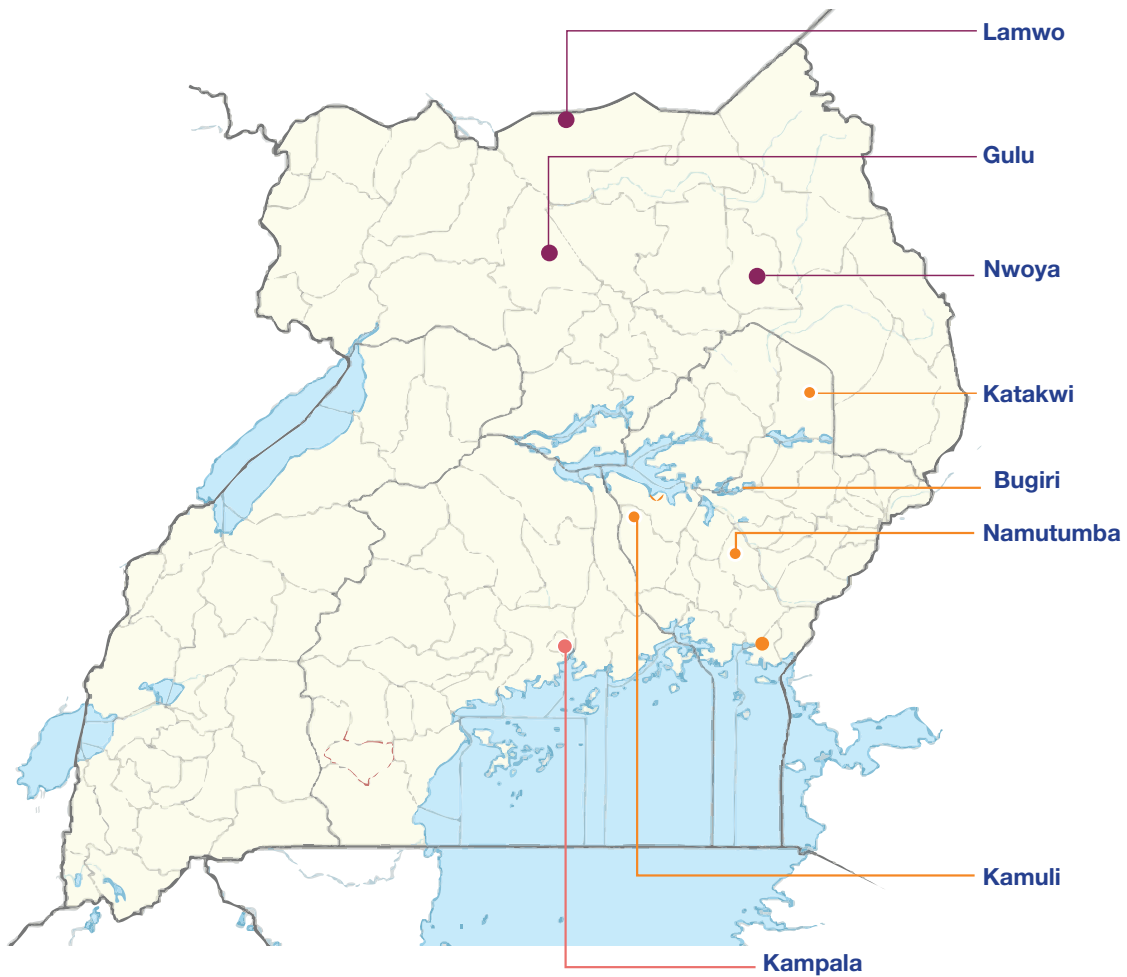
- ➔ Development Partners and 8 projects implemented
- ➔ 92% of the activities fully implemented, 3% implementation crossed to 2024 and 5% postponed

In 2023 our followers on X platform grew from **16,000 to 19,100 followers** that has increased online active participation and feedback..

The districts of operation were; **Kampala, Gulu, Katakwi, Namutumba, Kamuli, Bugiri, Lamwo and Nwoya**. The implementation was coordinated through the Head office in Kampala and two field offices in districts of Kamuli & Namutumba.

Number of funded projects	12
Number of development partners	10
UWONET member organisations	24
Number of Individual members	9
Number of District Women Networks	37
Number of Districts of operation	56

2023 Geographical Coverage



UWONET's Key Thematic Focus Areas

In 2023, UWONET's operations were hinged on her Strategic Plan 2019 – 2028, focusing on four interlinked thematic areas and key strategic objectives:

THEMATIC AREA 1:

GALVANIZE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND
INFLUENCE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND SECTORS



THEMATIC AREA 2:

WOMEN'S AGENCY FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION
FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



THEMATIC AREA 3:

KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING, VOICE AND
ACCOUNTABILITY



THEMATIC AREA 4:

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT



Approaches Used In The Year 2023

UWONET employed a number of strategic approaches in her operation in the year 2023. **These included:**



THEMATIC AREA

01

GALVANIZE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND INFLUENCE AT DIFFERENT LEVELS AND SECTORS



"Women should be celebrated every day...It does not just honour the iconic women who have changed history, but encourages new generations to dream big and know that anything is possible." **Molly McCook**

Strategic Objective 1: To foster strategic and programmatic actions that promote women's participation and influence in leadership and decision making in politics, civil service, private sector and selected civil society.

Outcomes

Increased number and influence of women in leadership (elective, public service, selected civil society organizations and the private sector).

Reduced gender inequalities and sexism in institutions at different levels.

Increased numbers and influence of young women in leadership

Galvanizing women's leadership at all levels is crucial for fostering inclusive and equitable societies. When women are empowered to lead, they bring diverse perspectives and solutions to the table, addressing issues that might otherwise be overlooked. Women's leadership promotes gender equality, challenging traditional power dynamics and patriarchal structures in the formal and informal spaces. Additionally, women leaders often will prioritize social issues such as education, healthcare, and community development, driving positive change and improving the quality of life for women and girls. Ensuring women's representation in leadership roles also strengthens democratic processes, making institutions more responsive and accountable to the needs of the women and girls. Ultimately, this is key to achieving sustainable development and social justice.



Kamuli Women Leaders engaging in a group discussion.

In 2023, notable milestones marked progress of gender equality and women's rights on the international, regional, and national fronts across various aspects of life. Despite significant advancements in the women's movement, it is crucial to acknowledge the existence of several challenges that continue to bar women and girls from the attainment of their potential.

In an effort to galvanize women's leadership and influence, UWONET implemented the following activities: training, mentorship and reflection spaces for district and sub-county women's caucuses of local councilors, the mid-term review of the National Women's Manifesto 2021- 2026, reflection spaces for women leaders, mentorship and support for district women's rights networks among others. These interventions at national and sub-national level produced the following key results.

1.1 Revamped accountability for women's concerns through the mid-term review of the National Women's Manifesto 2021- 2026.

To strengthen government accountability for addressing the concerns of women and girls as outlined in the Women's Manifesto, a midterm review was conducted. This review assessed progress on the five priority areas, identified existing gaps and persistent challenges, and provided recommendations and strategies for including key gender demands for the remaining years of the manifesto (2023–2026).

Below are some key findings as per priority manifesto areas of Women's Health, Educational for Women and Health and Women in leadership and decision making.

Women's Health:

- ➔ **255 Health Center IIs were upgraded to Health Center IIIs.**
- ➔ **400 Health workers were recruited**
- ➔ **Health facility deliveries increasing from 62% to 64%**
- ➔ **The National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancies (2022/2023–2026/27) was introduced, and the government continued campaigns related to ending HIV/AIDS.**

Significant gaps: remain, such as low health staffing levels, which are still about 45%, well below the proposed 65%, and insufficient budget allocation to health, which remains below the Abuja Declaration's target of 15%.

Education for Women and Girls:

- ➔ Development of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage and Teenage Pregnancies (2022/2023–2026/27).
- ➔ Issuance of revised guidelines by the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) for the prevention and management of teenage pregnancy in school settings.
- ➔ Reintegrating expectant and teenage mothers into school settings, and primary school enrollment trends show parity between boys and girls, credited to the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program.

Significant gaps: Including declining education quality in UPE schools, high dropout rates, especially among girls, and threats to UPE sustainability due to funding issues.

The current completion rate is 30%, meaning that for every ten girls who start primary school, only three complete it and proceed to secondary level. The completion rate at the Ordinary level is 34.8% (boys at 36.2% and girls at 33.5%). Additionally, there are inadequate menstrual hygiene facilities in schools and a lack of female teachers. At the tertiary level, enrollment is 258,866 students, 72% of whom are in universities, with a higher proportion of males (56%) than females (44%).

Women in Leadership and Decision-Making:

- ➔ Progress in the judiciary includes 44 female (48.9%) and 47 male (51.08%) Justices and Judges.
- ➔ 39 female (56.5%) and 30 male (43.47%) Registrars, and 190 female (48.5%) and 201 male (51.4%) Magistrates.
- ➔ In the 11th Parliament of Uganda, 189 women MPs (including 14 Ex officio Members) constitute 34% of the Parliament. In Cabinet, 14 women serve as Cabinet Ministers, making up 45% of the 31 Cabinet Ministers, and 24 women serve as State Ministers, constituting 48% of the 50 Ministers of State.

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Despite these advances, there are still gaps, such as the limited resources available for the orientation of newly elected leaders, which has particularly affected the performance of women leaders who face additional barriers in their roles.

Given the slow progress in some areas, the women of Uganda will continue to hold the government accountable for addressing their concerns. The findings from the Women's Manifesto will inform gender concerns in the development of the National Development Plan IV (NDP IV), the 10th CEDAW shadow report, the Beijing +30 CSO report, and other related processes.

1.2 Enhanced effectiveness and influence of women in elective leadership for GEWE



Facilitator leads participants in a session in Namutumba district.

The increased effectiveness and influence of women in elective leadership roles as a result of phased capacity-building and mentorship sessions by UWONET and her partners., This ensured that women leaders are well-equipped to drive meaningful change and advocate for policies that benefit their communities that significantly contributed to promoting GEWE in the targeted districts. For instance, in Namutumba, women councillors successfully initiated a motion to create an ordinance aimed at ending teenage pregnancy and child marriage. This motion was a direct response to the local social tolerance of child abuse and was spearheaded by the women's caucus with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) chairing the process. To date, two meetings have been held towards drafting this critical ordinance. These efforts have not only empowered women leaders with practical skills but also fostered a more inclusive and responsive local governance environment.

In Kapujan Subcounty, council committees were formed following training sessions that empowered women leaders to understand their roles and participation in council leadership. Before the training, the Speaker and Chairperson of the council were performing the roles of all the committees, which compromised the independence of decision-making. This was contrary to the Local Government Act, which stipulates that standing committees should be elected to discuss sector-specific issues and present their reports to the full council for approval and resolution. As a result of the training, the committees were properly constituted, and a woman was elected as the Chairperson of the Finance Committee, ensuring better governance and adherence to the law

1.3 Facilitated reflection spaces towards addressing GEWE concerns

UWONET facilitated spaces and platforms for women leaders to share, reflect, learn, re-learn, and re-strategize for enhanced coherence and partnerships for GEWE. Under the theme “Fostering Gender Equality in the Current Context in Uganda,” the space brought together women leader representatives from Women Rights Organizations (WROs) to discuss the prevailing concerns of women and girls in the social, economic, and political spheres. The aim was to jointly draw strategies for the effective participation and support of women leaders. As a result of the meeting, several key agreements were reached: strengthening strategies to enhance institutional governance within WROs to address setbacks such as the NGO exhibition; addressing mental health concerns; tackling potential feminist divisions; and establishing think tanks for cohesion. These agreements aim to create a more unified and effective approach to advancing gender equality and empowering women leaders in Uganda.



Facilitating reflection spaces is crucial for addressing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE) concerns as it provides a structured environment for stakeholders to critically analyze ongoing efforts, share experiences, and identify challenges and successes. These spaces encourage open dialogue, fostering a deeper understanding of the complex issues surrounding GEWE. By reflecting on current strategies and practices, the women can identify gaps, generate innovative solutions, and adapt their approaches to be more effective. Additionally, reflection spaces empower participants by valuing their insights and experiences, leading to increased ownership and commitment to GEWE initiatives. Ultimately, these spaces enhance collaborative efforts, ensuring that interventions are more inclusive, responsive, and impactful in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

1.4 Strengthened partnership with women leaders in the political parties to enhance gender-responsive decision-making and outcomes.

A delegation of women leaders from IWOP engaged UWONET to collaborate on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE), addressing gender inequalities, exchange of information to support advocacy, leadership, and economic empowerment. UWONET highlighted key gender priorities from the National Women's Manifesto 2021–2026, encouraging women leaders to align their efforts with these priorities for collective action. Both parties agreed on action areas to synergize efforts in advancing the women's manifesto such as holding media advocacy and roundtable meetings with different political parties.



IWOP, a coalition of nine political parties, provides a unified platform for women to advocate for their rights and participate fully in politics and decision-making. It is essential for Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) to work with women in political parties because this collaboration amplifies the collective voice and influence of women in shaping policies and decision-making processes. By partnering with women in political parties, WROs can ensure that GEWE issues are prioritized on political agendas. This synergy fosters a more inclusive political environment where women's perspectives and needs are represented and addressed. Additionally, it strengthens advocacy efforts, enabling women to effectively challenge discriminatory practices and promote legislative reforms that advance women's rights. Working together also provides mutual support and mentorship, helping women navigate the political landscape and build their leadership capacity. Ultimately, this collaboration is vital for creating sustainable change and achieving greater gender parity in political participation and leadership.

1.5 Influencing for gender responsiveness to advance gender equality and women's empowerment.

A motion was successfully moved for the renovation of teachers' houses at Katakwi Township Primary School. As a result, seven teachers' houses were renovated, significantly improving teachers' accommodation and reducing late arrivals from distant locations. In addition, there was a notable increase in women leaders elected and appointed to leadership positions within the district. Out of the seven committees in the Katakwi District Council, five are now headed by women, including the Education, Finance, Health, and Human Resource Committees. Previously, women chaired only one committee. In Ngariam Subcounty, one woman councilor was appointed as the Vice Chairperson of the Subcounty Executive Committee, and two women were appointed to the standing committees for health and finance. Additionally, the district caucus launched a campaign titled "Going Back to School" in response to the rise in teenage pregnancies following the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, 16 child mothers returned to school in Angodingod, Akoboi, Kapujan, and Guyaguya sub counties.

The caucusing model is the strategic approach utilized by UWONET with the sole aim of enhancing the solidarity, effectiveness, influence for gender responsiveness among the elected women leaders. It enhances their influence in pushing for legislative changes, provides mentorship and capacity building, and strengthens their political skills and leadership. The caucus ultimately increases the visibility and impact of women in politics, leading to more inclusive and representative governance. UWONET believes that encouraging cross-party causes amongst women leaders accelerates peer support necessary for the advancement of GEWE. Through the district network in Katakwi, UWONET convened caucus review meetings. The review meetings targeted Katakwi district women's caucus and 8 sub county women caucuses, reaching a total of 100 women leaders. The platform aimed at reflecting on the legislative agenda, assessing success, challenges, and lessons learned and as a way to position women's leadership and influence in council. Key achievements registered included;

THEMATIC AREA

02

WOMEN'S AGENCY FOR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT



Strategic Objective: To enhance collaboration and women's capacity to influence actions to advance economic justice to promote GEWE by 2028.

Outcomes

Increased capacity of UWONET's members and allies to advocate and influence feminist transformative economic justice to promote women's economic empowerment and agency.

Increased recognition, reduction, redistribution and representation of the unpaid care and domestic work.

Enhanced collective action to influence change on negative social-cultural norms and resilience to climate change towards women's economic empowerment and agency.

Enhancing women's economic empowerment and agency is crucial because it unlocks their full potential, driving both individual and societal progress. When women have control over economic resources and decision-making, they can contribute more effectively to their communities, improving economic stability and fostering sustainable development. Empowered women are better equipped to break free from cycles of poverty, influence policy changes, and advocate for their rights, leading to more equitable and inclusive societies. Additionally, economic empowerment enhances women's self-confidence and agency, enabling them to make informed choices and pursue opportunities that benefit themselves, their families, and their communities. Ultimately, advancing women's economic empowerment is vital for achieving broader social and economic development goals and ensuring a more just and equitable world.

Despite the challenges women face, including patriarchal norms that perpetuate inequality and marginalization, UWONET has actively worked to address these issues. In 2023, UWONET focused on enhancing the knowledge and skills of women farmers and women in business regarding land rights and agribusiness, organized interface meetings with Agricultural Extension Officers, created networking spaces with the private sector, and held information sessions on government economic programs. Additionally, conducted national advocacy colloquiums on women's economic empowerment and raised awareness and influenced policy on Unpaid Care and Domestic Work. These interventions at national and sub-national level produced the following key results;

2.1 Enhanced economic participation of women in agribusiness



UWONET together with her district partners in Nwoya and Lamwo district conducted Capacity enhancement sessions for women farmers and business groups focusing on farming as a business, smart farming practices, saving culture, enterprise selection, profitability analysis, market information and linkages, value addition, and women's land rights. A total of 450 women from 16 groups in Lamwo and Nwoya districts were reached through this initiative.

As a result, some of these women have diversified their income-generating activities in agriculture by integrating commercial crops such as sunflower. For example, Invisible Hope Uganda, an implementing partner in Nwoya District, introduced the Kokorom farmers group to existing economic opportunities within the district. Under the National Oil Seed Project, the group received 10 kilograms of hybrid sunflower seeds for planting in August 2023. They cultivated the seeds on one acre of land and, in the same year, harvested 10 bags, equivalent to 600 kilograms of sunflower seeds. The group sold each kilogram at 1,400 Ugandan Shillings, generating a total revenue of 840,000 Ugandan Shillings. The group reinvested the earnings by purchasing 90 kilograms of sunflower seeds, which were distributed among the 9 other members of the group for planting in 2024. This approach is designed to ensure that each member has their own sunflower garden, enabling them to increase production and income.

2.2 Agriculture extension services brought nearer to women farmers for enhanced productivity

In 2023, as part of efforts to boost the productivity of women farmers, UWONET facilitated platforms that provided information on agricultural extension services to women farmers. These platforms enabled women farmers to access agricultural advice, bridging the gap between extension workers and the women farmers. Consequently, by the end of 2023, all UWONET 16 women groups in Lamwo and Nwoya had received advisory services on making compost manure, accessing seeds and

pesticides, particularly for managing armyworms, and using local remedies for pest management. This was envisaged to improve the productivity of the women farmers in the subsequent seasons of 2024.

Agricultural extension services support women farmers overcome barriers in agriculture, enhance their agricultural productivity and improve their livelihoods.

2.3 Enhanced access to information on government economic programs and available opportunities

Six information sessions were organized at the sub-county level in Lamwo and Nwoya districts to share with women groups information on available government economic programs and opportunities. These sessions were facilitated by district local government officials such as Agricultural extension workers, production officer and community development officers. The available programs presented included the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project, Parish Development Model (PDM), Local Economic Growth Support, Uganda Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers Program Project, Northern Uganda Farmers' Livelihood Improvement Project, National Oil Seed Project (NOSP), and Horticulture Market Acceleration Platform Project, among others. As a result, unregistered women groups were registered, and those with issues received relevant assistance. For instance, in Nwoya, the "Koko Rom" farmers group from Koch Goma Sub County received 20 kgs of sunflower seeds under NOSP, which were planted on 2 acres. Additionally, 43 women received funds from PDM and YLDF as startup capital to engage in business. Two farmer groups, consisting of 50 members in Nwoya, submitted documents to the Senior Commercial Officer regarding the Local Economic Growth Support, which will be considered in 2024.

2.4 Gender-responsive land justice as an engine to Women's Economic Empowerment

UWONET and her district women networks built capacities of 60 informal justice actors on gender-responsive administration of justice, and case management materials (stationery) were provided to enhance land case mediations and referrals. Resultantly, women gained confidence in the informal justice system and reported land cases in Lamwo and Nwoya districts. A total of 84 land conflict cases were reported by women; of these, 47 cases were concluded, and 21 women received their land and are now engaged in agriculture. Additionally, 37 cases are pending mediation.

One example of successful mediation involves Ajok Christine, a 47-year-old resident of Lakalac village in Amar parish, Koch Goma Sub County, Nwoya district. Christine faced a land conflict with her sister-in-law for over 10 years. She reported: "The dispute began in 2012 when I returned from a trading center, which was formerly an IDP camp, after my husband's death and found my land taken by my sister-in-law. This led to my children dropping out of school, forcing me into petty jobs for survival".

She added "I sought justice through Rwot Kweri, a local traditional structure with expertise in land conflict mediation. However, the initial attempt at resolution failed due to counter-accusations and quarrels between the parties. I waited two more years before approaching the LC1 office in 2015. Despite efforts, my sister-in-law's family refused to participate in the mediation process, causing further misery. In August 2023, I learned about Informal Justice Actors through a church announcement and registered this case again with Lipton Opiro, a religious leader residing in Koch Goma Sub County. Lipton Opiro later informed me that my sister-in-law's family agreed to mediation, and he organized a meeting between family members, Invisible Hope Uganda, and other relevant stakeholders to address the long-standing land conflict. A written agreement was signed by the parties as a binding contract for the case settlement in the presence of the mediator. Both parties appreciated the MOU, saying that it is an authentic document to protect their land."

Christine said, “It is a great step to empowerment now that I have my land back and I am using it for agriculture to feed and support my family.”

Through the CSO GBV coordination meetings in Nwoya and Lamwo districts, CSOs complemented the efforts of informal justice actors. During these meetings, action plans for advocacy and awareness on women's land rights were developed. In Nwoya district, CSOs and district duty bearers collectively advocated for the GBV Ordinance, with a drafting team selected in subsequent meetings. Similar efforts in Lamwo district focused on raising awareness about women's land rights and GBV. Specific outreaches were held during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV.

In addition, the emerging concerns from these districts informed discussions at the national level land and women's economic empowerment advocacy colloquium. Key discussions emphasized the need for massive awareness and support for women and families in obtaining Certificates of Customary Ownership to increase land accessibility and productivity among marginalized groups. Other discussions focused on broadening access to credit with less emphasis on collateral, enhancing support networks, and establishing secure saving systems.

2.5 Enhanced appreciation of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW) as an economic, development and gender equality issue

UWONET has continued to raise awareness on the recognition, redistribution, reduction, and representation of UCDW through capacity building, information forums, advocacy spaces, community engagements, and media initiatives with various stakeholders. UWONET has successfully shifted perceptions of UCDW from being viewed as a Western concept to an integral African issue. By collaborating with men within communities and working through care coalitions and assemblies, influential actors have been identified to help change social norms within these communities. The current shift in policy conversations, particularly those linked to the national and regional outcry on the impact of climate change on Africa, and drawing lessons from care work, represents significant progress.

An online information-sharing session on the existing legal and policy frameworks regarding UCDW was held, aiming to build a critical mass of informed activists to revamp pressure for implementation. The session addressed frameworks such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Articles 16, 22, and 23), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (Articles 5 and 11), and the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, particularly Target 5.4, which focuses on recognizing and redistributing women's unpaid care workload through public services, infrastructure, and social protection policies.

At the regional level, the session highlighted the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (Articles 18 and 13), the African Platform for Action, the Dakar Declaration of 1994, and the Beijing Platform for Action of 1995, which enjoin states to reduce the workload of women and girls by providing appropriate technologies for farming and household tasks. At the national level, the 1995 Constitution of Uganda (Articles 21, 31, 32, and 33), the National Social Protection Policy (2015), the Early Childhood Development Policy (March 2016), the National



Water Policy, the Energy Policy (2002), the Employment Act (2006) Sections 56 and 57, and the Draft Employment (Domestic Workers) Regulations (2022) were discussed.

UWONET also held national advocacy spaces to broadly discuss policy and investment in UCDW, emphasizing the need for a National Care Policy. Such a policy is crucial in creating a sustainable care system that supports both caregivers and those in need of care, contributing to the overall well-being of society. Given the current burden on women, a comprehensive framework developed by the government would address caregiving challenges across the country, ensuring care is accessible, affordable, and of high quality while promoting the well-being of caregivers.

UWONET continued to utilize various platforms to discuss UCDW, including community outreaches, the creation of care coalitions and caucuses, and sharing existing data on policy analysis, such as the impact of Uganda's tax regime on energy-saving appliances and its effect on unpaid care and domestic work. Media engagements, including television and radio talk shows, webinars, and social media platforms like Twitter chats and spaces, were also utilized to reach a wider audience and stimulate public discourse on UCDW.

2.6 Inaugural Commemoration of the International Day of Care and Support

On October 30, 2023, UWONET hosted a civil society convening to commemorate the United Nations General Assembly's (UNGA) historic announcement of the International Day of Care and Support. This milestone is outlined in Resolution A/RES/77/317, which establishes November 29 as the annual observance date. The convening was organized with three key objectives: to celebrate this groundbreaking step towards recognizing the care economy; to explore the implications of the International Day of Care and Support for government and non-government policy and decision-makers; and to galvanize civil society efforts and commitment towards advocating for a progressive care economy.

The International Day of Care and Support aims to raise awareness of the critical role that care and support play in achieving gender equality. It acknowledges that the global care workforce consists of 249 million women and 132 million men. By 2030, the number of care recipients is expected to reach 2.3 billion, driven by an additional 100 million older persons and 100 million children aged 6 to 14 years. Currently, women perform 76.2% of the total amount of unpaid care work, dedicating 3.2 times more time to it than men¹.

The day's discussions were anchored by presentations that summarized the Resolution and examined the significance of the newly established day in promoting gender equity and transforming women's unpaid care work. Several speakers highlighted that the Resolution and the assigned commemorative day represent a long-awaited recognition of unpaid care and domestic work (UCDW), which care advocates have championed for decades.

During the inaugural commemoration, the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD) declared October 29 as the National Day of Care and Support, a day to recognize caregivers' contributions and promote a care-friendly environment. The MGLSD also committed to formalizing the annual commemoration of this day through official gazettelement.

¹ <https://www.un.org/en/observances/care-and-support-day>

THEMATIC AREA

03

KNOWLEDGE, LEARNING, VOICE AND ACCOUNTABILITY



Strategic Objectives

1. To challenge the negative social cultural norms and practices and advocate for the enforcement of laws and processes that protect women's rights and access to justice.
2. To strengthen networking and information sharing amongst stakeholders through spaces/forums.

Outcomes

A functional women's movement collectively advocating for gender equality and women's empowerment at all levels.

Reduced social tolerance to negative practices and norms towards girls and women (SRHR, VAW and GBV).

Improved work environment for women and young girls in the Labor market

Increased understanding and influence amongst stakeholders on implementation of laws policies and processes that promote women's rights and access to justice.

Women's organizing, information sharing, advocacy, and movement building are essential strategies for achieving Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). They create a unified and powerful voice to challenge systemic gender inequalities. Through collective action, women can effectively lobby for policy changes, hold authorities accountable, and ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all levels of decision-making. Organizing and movement building also provide platforms for sharing experiences, knowledge, strategies, and resources, which strengthens women's capacity to sustain advocacy for their rights and address issues such as Gender-Based Violence, economic

inequality, and political underrepresentation. These strategies foster solidarity, resilience, and sustained pressure for social change, ultimately leading to more equitable and inclusive societies where women's contributions and rights are fully recognized and valued.

UWONET continues to be a point of reference for knowledge on GEWE hence in 2023, various visitors were hosted at UWONET in search for Knowledge on GEWE.

To strengthen voice and influence for GEWE on global fronts, UWONET participated in the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the Women Deliver Conference 2023 (WD 2023), and the Maputo@20 celebrations under the auspices of the Coalition for Solidarity on African Women's Rights (SOAWR).

Additionally, national advocacy and organizing were strengthened through events such as the 5th National Women's Week, press conferences, national colloquia for gender-responsive legal and policy reform, and commemorative events like International Women's Day, the 16 Days of Activism Campaign against VAW/G, and the Day of the African Child.

To challenge negative patriarchal and systemic practices, UWONET organized accountability spaces on GEWE, and campaigns on preventing and responding to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAW/G), providing holistic support (psychosocial, legal, and medical services) to abused women and girls. UWONET organized community awareness and dialogues to reduce social tolerance of Sexual Gender-Based Violence (SGBV), undertook research, held media engagements, and coordinated legal and policy advocacy. UWONET also provided capacity enhancement and mentorship to primary and secondary school learners, formal and Customary Informal Justice (CIJ) actors, community-based paralegals, health workers, male peer educators, grassroots Women's Rights Organizations (WROs), and other justice system stakeholders working towards advancing women's rights. This enabled different community volunteers/groups, like paralegals, to positively impact GBV prevention and response interventions and policy-making at local, national, and global levels, especially in areas related to GBV, movement building, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), child protection, and gender equality.

These interventions at national and sub-national levels yielded the following key results:

3.1 Revamped Women's Organizing through the 5th National Women's Week

UWONET together with her members, partners and Allies convened the physical 5th National Women's Week under the theme "Women's Organizing Re-imagined! Thriving through Adversity." The women's week was composed of various activities aimed at identifying strategies to address the persistent factors disempowering women in social, economic, and political spheres. The main activities at national level included; the Annual Members Forum, the UWONET @30 celebration, School Awareness Campaigns on abuse, Legal Aid Camps, the Annual Media Briefing on the state of women's rights in Uganda, Breakaway Parallel Sessions on topical issues for women and girls, the National Intergenerational Dialogue and the Award Ceremony for unsung heroines. subnational activities included; legal aid clinics in Kamuli and Namutumba districts, providing information on legal protections for women's rights, justice referral pathways, and School outreaches focusing on prevention of child abuse, defilement, early marriages, and early pregnancy. in addition Justice referral pathways were shared, and school Gender-Based Clubs were established in Namutumba and Kamuli. The 5th National Women's Week amplified specific issues affecting women and girls that needs a collective effort by different actors to be addressed; these included; the media sidelining women's voices and issues due to audience and business interests; labor exploitation, particularly affecting women and children, escalating poverty and property loss, growing insecurity, land grabbing, and removals without compensation; teenage pregnancy and contraception for school children.

The women's week discussions also emphasized different strategies to address issues affecting attainment of GEWE including holism, collectivity, situationality, critical allyship, intellectual engagement, community engagement, youth engagement, involvement of duty bearers, He-for-She initiatives, and collaboration promote ownership and sustainability of all efforts. The various discussions reiterated the key asks and recommendations across various sectors, including health, education, women's economic agency, leadership, and decision-making, as highlighted in the National Women's Manifesto for the period 2021–2026 under the theme "Her Voice, Your Mandate."

3.2 UWONET at 30 Anniversary.

UWONET celebrated her 30th anniversary, marking three decades of transformative contributions to the lives of women, girls, boys, and men in Uganda for gender equality. The UWONET@30 featured lived memories from senior women activists who were pivotal in UWONET's establishment. This was particularly empowering for young women in the network, providing inspiration and continuity in their advocacy efforts. The event aimed to bridge the generational gap, ensuring the continued vitality of the women's movement by addressing both historical and emerging challenges crucial for achieving a more inclusive and equitable society. The celebration also served as a platform for fostering collective visioning and collaborative action across different generations in the pursuit of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). UWONET used this opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate exceptional women who have shown tireless dedication to championing gender equality in Uganda.

3.3 Women Deliver Conference 2023 (WD2023)

The Women Deliver Conference is a premier global event dedicated to gender equality and the health, rights, and well-being of girls and women. It brings together a diverse range of stakeholders, including advocates, policymakers, researchers, young people, and private sector representatives, to discuss and advance solutions for gender equality and women's empowerment. The 2023 conference, organized by Women Deliver, a global advocacy organization committed to promoting gender equality and improving the health and rights of girls and women.

The sixth Women Deliver Conference (WD2023) was held in Kigali, Rwanda, from July 17 to 20 2023. The conference gathered over 6,000 activists, policymakers, and changemakers from around the world under the theme "Spaces, Solidarity, and Solutions." The conference emphasized the importance of intergenerational partnerships in achieving gender equality, funding feminist movements, and adopting evidence-based approaches from the Global South. Key discussion areas included sexual and reproductive health and rights, intersectional feminist principles, the impacts of climate change on women and girls, gender-based violence, unpaid care work, grassroots advocacy, and strategies to overcome barriers to gender equality.

As part of the WD2023 conference, UWONET organized a side event hosted as a Gender Development Round Table Engagement which brought together 28 activists and changemakers to discuss emerging challenges and strategies for progress. This event facilitated critical discussions on the importance of partnerships, effective resource mobilization, and sustainability in advancing gender equality. UWONET also highlighted the state of women's organizing in Uganda and the situation of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). The visibility and networking opportunities at various events secured partnerships that have bolstered resource mobilization efforts.

Following the conference, UWONET held a debrief meeting with Women's Rights Organizations (WROs) and activists who were unable to attend WD2023. The purpose of the meeting was to share key insights from the conference and collaboratively develop strategies to hold the government accountable for its global and national commitments to GEWE.

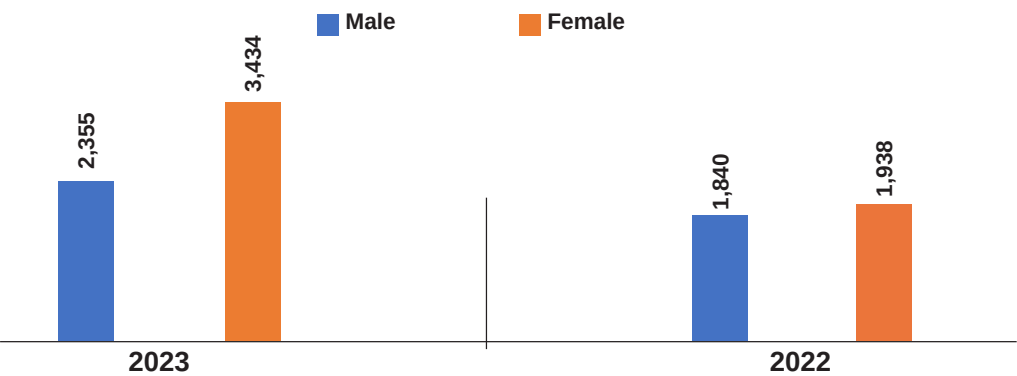
3.4 The 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)

The sixty-seventh session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW67) was held from March 6 to 17, 2023, in New York, under the theme “Innovation and Technological Change, and Education in the Digital Age for Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls.” The session featured extensive discussions and panels focused on bridging gender gaps in digital access and innovation.

During CSW67, UWONET hosted a side event that highlighted technology as a strategy for reducing Unpaid Care and Domestic Work (UCDW). The discussions ushered a call for the government to increase investment in addressing the factors perpetuating the gender digital divide. Specifically, there was a strong appeal for making ICT facilities more affordable for women by reducing taxes on technologies and innovation equipment, which would, in turn, help alleviate the burden of UCDW.

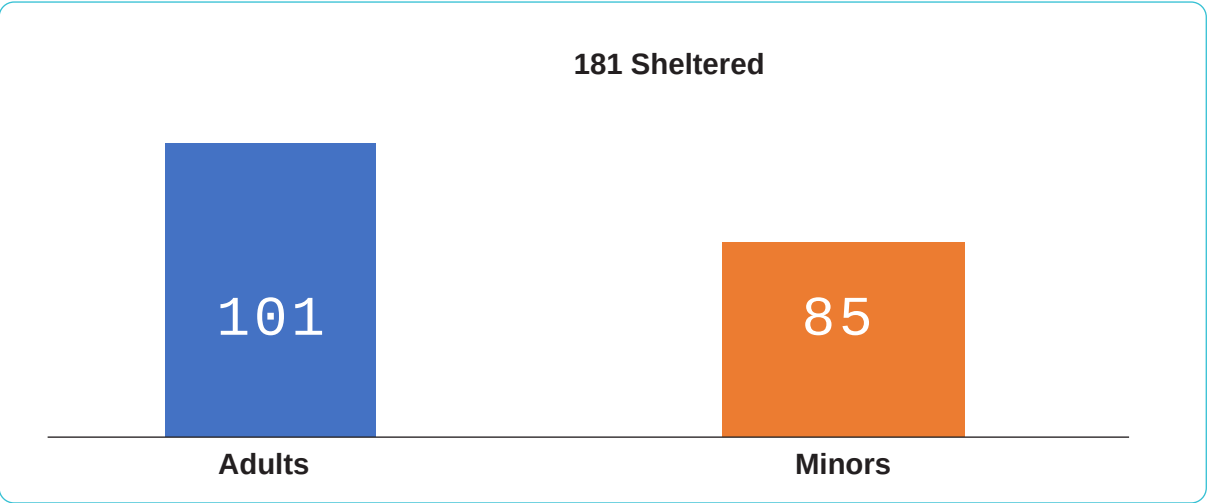
3.5 Strengthened access to justice mechanisms for women and girls leading to an increase in number of people accessing justice services

Throughout 2023, the GBV shelters offered continuous services to abused women and girls. In 2023, 5,789 people received GBV services compared to 3,778 in 2022 indicating an increase of 2,011 who benefited in 2022 as illustrated in the graph.



In addition, 1,600 clients received legal and psychosocial services through Toll-free lines compared to 1100 in 2022 indicating an increase by 5000 clients.

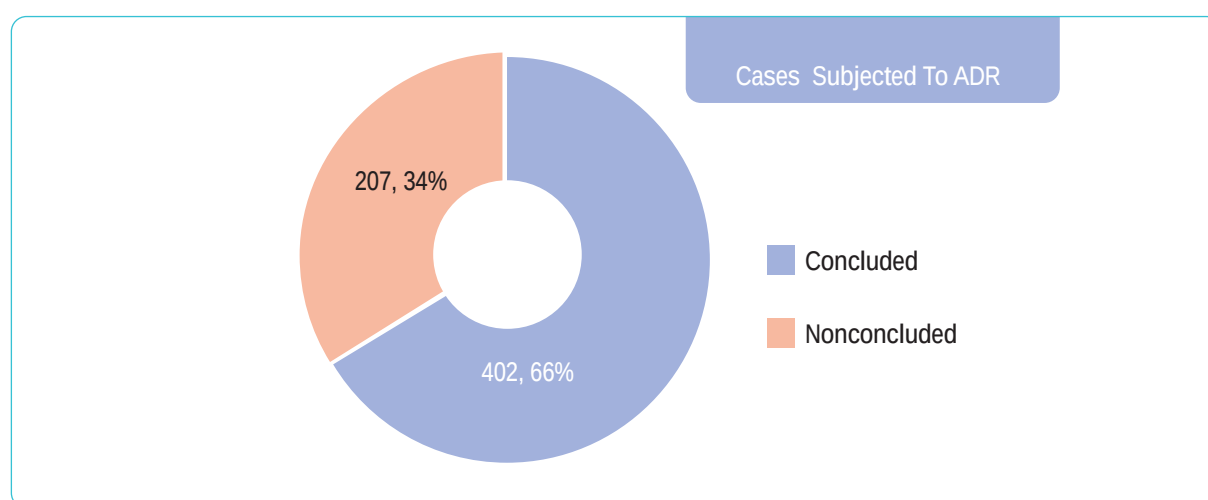
In 2023,UWONET received 181 survivors of violence (80 minors and 101 adults) sheltered and subsequently resettled in safe environments where they are protected.



The shelters were continuously stocked with essential items to ensure a comfortable stay for survivors, including those with children.

Similarly, the advisory centers in both districts remained operational, enhancing access to justice, particularly for women survivors of GBV. These centers attended to walk-in clients, providing a range of services, including free legal advice, psychosocial support, and referrals to state and non-state offices or structures when necessary. A total of 1,367 walk-in clients (248 male and 1,119 female) were assisted at both advisory centers, and an additional 1,600 clients received online legal and psychosocial support via toll-free lines. This enhanced access to justice for those unable to visit UWONET offices in person.

Furthermore, 609 cases were registered for mediation, with 402 successfully concluded and resulting in signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). Mediation proved instrumental in enabling clients to achieve justice without navigating the highly commercialized and bureaucratic formal justice systems, particularly the courts.



To further enhance access to justice in the community, UWONET deployed 40 paralegals in Kamuli and Namutumba, strengthening the support provided by the advisory center teams. Since August 2023, the paralegals have registered 254 cases, of which 108 have been concluded and 146 are still pending. The presence of paralegals has enabled women to resolve some of their issues without necessarily traveling to UWONET offices, thereby reducing the time required to resolve issues and ultimately allowing women more time to attend to personal and family matters.

3.6 Justice structures established and strengthened at community level

UWONET empowered various categories of Community Based Volunteers with the necessary information and resources to provide basic legal education, psychosocial support, and mediation services, helping expedite the resolution of disputes within their mandate. This group included:



These community based structured conducted 8 radio talk shows, 12 community outreaches, and 8 school outreaches reaching 4,422 participants (2,107 male and 2,315 female) who were equipped who received various services.

As a result of these efforts, there is an enhanced understanding and appreciation of the legal protections for women and girls, as well as a growing recognition of the harmful social norms and practices that impede access to justice. This increased awareness has led to noticeable changes in practices among informal justice actors. For instance, in Kisozi sub-county, Kamuli district, Mr. Lukuulaa William, a clan leader, applied the knowledge he gained about the law of succession to fairly mediate an inheritance dispute. "Thank you, UWONET, for teaching us about the law of inheritance. I managed to handle a family land dispute, and previously, I had no basis for granting the claimants (girls) land, as our clan did not recognize women's right to inherit property," said Mr. Lukuulaa William. This shift in perception and practice highlights the positive impact of UWONET's outreach and dialogues in changing attitudes toward gender equality and justice.

Additionally, UWONET strengthened synergies among CSO coalition members in Kamuli and Namutumba districts to enhance the prevention and response to VAWG. Collaborative efforts were established with organizations such as Pearl Action for Women Inclusion (PEAWI), Ivukula Women's Development Association (IWODA), National Community of Women Living with HIV in Uganda (NACWOLA), Hold Uganda, Nsinze Sub County HIV AIDS Workers Association (NSHAWA), Bulange People Living with HIV (BPLHA), She- Leads Kamuli, Aida Education Group for the Youth (AEGY), Center for Economic Empowerment (CEP), and FIDA Uganda's Kamuli office. These partnerships resulted in the joint implementation of activities, such as the commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism against GBV, where CSOs in Namutumba and Kamuli districts collaborated with UWONET to reach out to communities through legal aid camps. By November 2023, CSOs in Namutumba, together with women councilors, had initiated the process of developing an ordinance to prevent child marriage and teenage pregnancies.

To enhance the understanding of gender-responsive justice and build practical skills in delivering women-centered justice, UWONET developed and distributed various knowledge materials to different stakeholders. Quick reference guides on key legal provisions were created and printed for both formal and informal justice actors, aiding them in the accurate and accessible dispensation of justice in cases involving women and girls. Additionally, quick fact sheets were produced based on gender analyses of the Sexual Offences Bill (SOB) 2022, the Employment (Amendment) Act 2023, and the Succession (Amendment) Act 2022. These fact sheet, serve as effective communication tools to enhance public knowledge and appreciation of gender-responsive legal reforms.

3.7 Research and Knowledge Building for Evidence-Based Programming, Advocacy, and Policy Influencing

UWONET has consistently strengthened its work by integrating evidence-based research and insights from various investigative efforts. The organization also aims to contribute to the existing body of literature on women's access to justice. This commitment was evident in the research studies, learning initiatives, and documentation conducted throughout the year. Most notably, UWONET undertook an assessment of the gender responsiveness of the Justice, Law, and Order Sector (JLOS) services to establish a clear framework for accountability and equitable access to justice for women and girls. The assessment highlighted the need for sustained advocacy for gender-sensitive legal and policy reforms, along with increased government investment through enhanced budgetary allocations.

Key recommendations for the Government of Uganda (GoU) included reducing detention durations, investing in proper investigations, especially for Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) cases, and providing basic necessities such as menstrual hygiene products. Additionally, the recommendations called for legal aid services for women and girls at police stations and during court proceedings, increased deployment of female police and prison officers, and the establishment of specialized child care and women-friendly facilities in courts, such as waiting rooms for breastfeeding mothers, playrooms for children, and evidence rooms. The findings were disseminated to duty bearers at both the national and sub-national levels, with specific requests for improving gender responsiveness to enhance justice service delivery.

UWONET produced a three-part video documentary highlighting the plight of female justice seekers and the support provided by the organization. This documentary, broadcast on NTV, a television channel with nationwide coverage showcased the multi-sectoral interventions for GBV prevention and response, as well as the investments and partnerships aimed at enhancing women's access to justice. It featured transformative stories of female survivors who benefited from legal, psycho-social, and shelter services, along with the significant contributions of Community-Based Volunteers. The documentary is available on UWONET's website, social media accounts, and YouTube. It can also be accessed via this link

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1PoJnP1zVbz2_000mzGWMwseWbBpklOr?usp=sharing.

3.8 16 Days of Activism Campaign Against GBV

The 16 Days of Activism Against GBV is an annual international campaign that runs from November 25th, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, to December 10th, Human Rights Day. The 16 Days of Activism focuses on raising awareness, advocating for policy changes, and mobilizing communities to act against GBV. Each year, different themes are highlighted to draw attention to specific forms of violence or to the rights and protections that should be afforded to women and girls. The campaign engages a wide range of stakeholders, including governments, civil society organizations, community groups, and individuals, all working together to end GBV and promote gender equality.

In commemoration of the 16 Days of Activism under the theme 'Invest to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls,' UWONET launched a social media campaign on X to raise awareness about various forms of GBV, the referral justice pathway, and call-to-action messages. The campaign garnered 8,741 views, effectively amplifying the call for increased investment and action to combat violence against women and girls.

THEMATIC AREA

04

INSTITUTIONAL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT



Strategic objectives

1. Strengthening the capacity of UWONET's membership and the district women's networks for strategic, programmatic and administrative interventions by 2028.
1. Strengthening UWONET's institutional capacity for strategic, programmatic and administrative interventions by 2028.

Outcomes

Enhanced membership growth and participation in the network

Strengthened the existing partnerships and building new strategic partnerships for improved results and visibility

Diversified and sustainable resource base for UWONET; enhanced technical capacity for effective governance and programme management

Improved monitoring evaluation and learning systems at the UWONET Secretariat

Strengthened capacity for information generation on best practices for improved knowledge management and programming.

Given the current volatile CSO operating environment, it is crucial to have strong institutional governance structures and policies to enhance credibility and sustainability. Institutional governance and management play a significant role in boosting an organization's performance in delivering on its mandate for gender equality by providing clear strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and optimizing resource utilization. Robust governance structures establish policies and frameworks aligned with gender equality objectives, while effective management practices promote operational efficiency and adherence to these policies. This includes setting measurable goals, monitoring progress, and implementing corrective actions as needed. Transparent decision-making processes and inclusive leadership foster a culture of equity and collaboration, essential for effective governance. In 2023, UWONET adhered to key governance processes, met its legal obligations under NGO regulations, and built internal capacity, all of which contributed to achieving key milestones. Below are key actions undertaken.

4.1 Re-strategizing UWONET's strategic direction 2019-2028

UWONET conducted a mid-term review of her strategic plan (2019–2023) through a national wide stakeholder consultation, as part of the recommendation, UWONET strategized through increasing the thematic focus areas from three to four and more strategic actions were introduced to match with the changing dynamics and effects of Covid-19. As a result, the plan was extended with a focus on consolidating and reshaping the direction for the remaining years up to –2028 and hence the extended Strategic Plan (2019–2028). The extended Strategic Plan (2019–2028) was officially launched by the State Minister of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, Hon. Peace Mutuuzo, who thanked UWONET for accepting to adjust her strategic plan to meet the needs of the public after Covid-19 which was a commitment towards attaining her strategic goal. UWONET received congratulatory messages from development partners, CSOs, and other stakeholders. The Mission Director of the US Mission in Uganda, Mr. Richard Nelson, delivered official opening remarks, and the keynote address was given by Dr. Roswitha Kremser, Head of Office for the Austrian Development Cooperation. In her remarks, she thanked UWONET secretariate and all member organizations for amplifying voices, inspiring change and shaping policies at both national and subnational level.

4.2 UWONET website reconstructed and launched

UWONET unveiled a newly reconstructed website that addresses current needs and aligns with modern communication trends making it easier to navigate and access valuable resources. The website upgrade also improved access to feedback with new features a. The redesigned site was aligned to UWONET's strategic plan (2019–2028) and significantly boosts the organization's visibility and engagement with its audience. Furthermore, the website now serves as a crucial tool for resource mobilization, enabling the organization to attract support and partnerships more effectively. The website can be accessed at www.uwonet.or.ug

4.3 Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) is a crucial event for UWONET, serving as the highest decision-making body within the organization. In 2023, UWONET held its AGM, bringing together Secretariat and Board members to present key milestones and accountability for the year 2022. During the meeting, the 2022 Annual Report and audited accounts for the year ended December 31, 2022, were presented and adopted by the members. The members expressed their appreciation for the Secretariat's unwavering commitment to championing GEWE and advocating for the rights of women and girls. The AGM also featured a reflective session titled "A Walk Down Memory Lane: 30 Years of UWONET in Advocacy for Gender Equality and Women's Rights." Former Executive Directors and Chairpersons of UWONET were invited to share their experiences, offering insights that reignited activism and ensured the network's continued alignment with its mission. This session was particularly empowering for the young women in the network, providing them with inspiration

and a sense of continuity in their advocacy efforts. Additionally, during the AGM, the 5th National Women's Week 2023 theme, "Women's Organizing Reimagined: Thriving Through Adversity," was unveiled and launched. This marked another significant milestone in UWONET's ongoing commitment to advancing women's rights and gender equality.

4.4 The Board of Directors provided oversight support

The Board of Directors played an essential role in guiding the organization toward her mission of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. Their leadership and oversight are critical in ensuring the effective achievement of the organization's strategic objectives. Over the course of the year, the Board held four quarterly meetings, encompassing both committee-specific (Programmes Committee, Finance Committee and Human Resource Committee) and full board discussions. These sessions allowed the Board to receive in-depth updates on program progress, resource mobilization efforts, policies and human resource matters, enabling them to fulfil their oversight responsibilities. The Board ensured that project implementation stayed aligned with the organization's goals and contributed to the desired outcomes. In addition to routine updates, the Board addressed emerging challenges, refined strategies for resource mobilization, and made adjustments to human resource management.

In 2023, as part of board mandate; they passed the key following policies to guide operations of the institution;

- ➡ Reserve Fund policy
- ➡ Resource Mobilization Policy and Strategy
- ➡ Consultancy policy
- ➡ Grant Making Policy
- ➡ Cost Share Policy

Their active participation and strategic insights were instrumental in driving the organization's success and keeping it focused on advancing gender equality and women's empowerment in a dynamic and often unpredictable environment.

4.5 Boosted communication and data storage equipment and systems

To enhance performance and efficiency in the current Information Communication and Technology (ICT) environment, UWONET procured several key pieces of equipment, including a high-power audio system, a JBL wireless microphone system, a portable external SSD drive, and two tablets. These additions have significantly improved storage capacity, data collection, and communication efforts. They are now used for graphic design, presentation development, and social media engagement, thereby enhancing overall evidence-based reporting and advocacy.

In addition, UWONET developed and installed an institutional Management Information System (MIS) to enhance data management, streamline operations, and improve decision-making processes across the organization. This system serves as a centralized platform for collecting, storing, and analyzing data related to various programs and activities, ensuring that information is accessible, accurate, and up-to-date. The MIS is envisaged to significantly improve the efficiency of reporting, monitoring, and evaluation, allowing for real-time tracking of project progress and outcomes. Additionally, it will strengthen the organization's capacity to manage resources, coordinate activities, and support evidence-based advocacy efforts, ultimately contributing to more effective program implementation and greater impact in advancing gender equality and women's empowerment.

4.6 Compliance to Statutory Bodies

For an institution to be successful in fulfilling her mandate, it is critical that NGOs meet their obligations under the various laws and policies that govern their operations. In 2023, UWONET met her obligations through the timely submission of returns to various bodies amidst at times the difficult situations. This enabled smooth institutional operations, sustainability and resource mobilization.

4.7 Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

In 2023, UWONET conducted monitoring and evaluation activities across various projects, including quarterly, half-year, and end-of-project evaluations. These activities were designed to assess progress towards achieving the intended results, as well as the effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the projects. The findings offered valuable lessons and informed the design of appropriate implementation mechanisms. Additionally, regular staff meetings were held, including program-specific, administrative, and financial meetings. These meetings facilitated reflection and were crucial to the organization's stability and continuous improvement especially in meeting donor requirements and feedback to stakeholders.

4.8 Staff capacity enhancement



UWONET organized a training session on advocacy, resource mobilization, and results-based reporting for her staff to address institutional capacity gaps identified during an online assessment. The training covered key topics such as understanding advocacy in the current context, different forms of advocacy, identifying relevant advocacy issues for UWONET's work, and results-based reporting. This initiative significantly enhanced participants' understanding of the role of advocacy in the organization's work, how to sustain advocacy efforts for meaningful results and impact, and provided practical solutions to the challenges staff faced in report writing. The new knowledge acquired was subsequently applied by the staff to finalize the institutional advocacy strategy and to improve their resource mobilization skills and knowledge.

4.9 Peer to peer learning platforms for district networks

UWONET hosted a virtual Peer Learning Platform (PLP) for District Women's Networks across the country under the theme, "Empowering Women's Networks and Organizations for Collective Impact on Gender Equality and Civic Advocacy." The event reached thirty participants and focused on the operational environment for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as well as statutory obligations and compliance. As a result, a peer-to-peer learning platform was established. Participants reported a significant increase in their knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of statutory compliance. The platform also fostered enhanced collaboration by encouraging the sharing of experiences and identifying common women's rights and gender issues, which will inform both sub-national and national advocacy efforts.

4.10 Nurturing the Next Generation: Intern Reflections on their UWONET Experience

At UWONET, we believe in nurturing the next generation of gender equality advocates by providing young people with meaningful opportunities to gain practical experience in the field of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE). Through internships and community service, interns are exposed to the real-world challenges and intricacies of advocating for women's rights, while contributing to our mission. Below are a few reflections from some of the young people who have recently completed their internships with us, sharing the impact of their experiences:

"My 225 hours of community service here at UWONET have given me the best hands-on experience and getting to understand the details of GEWE" Cecilia Anzoa Irama.

"My supervisor at the University was impressed by my internship report and experience acquired" Danita Turiho

Reflection and Learning

1. 2023 was an incredible year for UWONET, we convened spaces and facilitated processes for strategizing and alliance building with the women's movement and other human rights actors. The following are key lessons that were documented.
1. Within our movements, organizing, resisting and responding to the challenging context is sharpening and the potential for collective action across diverse movements has dramatically grown.
1. Legal literacy- increasing legal literacy among women has empowered them to seek justice and assert their rights more effectively hence restoring their
1. Mentorship and support networks for women leaders- establishing mentorship programs and support networks
1. has been critical in fostering confidence and leadership skills among women.
1. Linking women with access to credit facilities, and financial literacy training significantly boosts their economic independence.
1. Creating linkages between women entrepreneurs and markets helps in scaling their businesses and improving their economic stability.
1. Providing women with training on basic climate-resilient agricultural practices and sustainable livelihoods has enhanced their resilience to climate impacts.

Photo Collage







2023 UWONET TEAM

2023 UWONET TEAM

No.	Name	Position
1.	Rita Hope Aciro Lakor	Executive Director
2.	Sarah Jesca Agwang	Director of Programmes
3.	Walter Andama	Finance and Administration Manager
4.	Ramadhan Muweleza	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Coordinator
5.	Naluwooza Julian	Programme Coordinator Women's Leadership
6.	Susan Harriet Achen	Programme Coordinator -Women's Rights and Access to Justice
7.	Norris Linda Nakimbugwe	Resource Mobilization and Advocacy Officer
8.	Hilda Nattyaba	Programme Officer Women's Leadership
9.	Edith Nabuzana	Finance Officer
10.	Anthony Nakhaima	Accounts Officer
11.	Sayda Nankwanga	Office Administrator and Human Resource Officer
12.	Markus Lejsek	Technical Advisor for Resource Mobilisation
13.	Roland Musasizi	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Assistant
14.	Pereth Niwahereza	Program Officer, Women's Economic Agency for Economic Transformation
15.	Lydia Nakato	Programme Assistant, Women's Economic Agency for Economic Transformation
16.	Paul Okula	Procurement Assistant
17.	Kazibwe John	Information Technology Officer
18.	Sheilla Ayot Nyeko	Communications Officer
19.	Angella Nakiyemba	Administrative Assistant
20.	Murhon Hilda Viola	Legal Officer / Coordinator, Kamuli GBV Shelter and Advisory Center
21.	Nabwire Justine	Legal Officer / Coordinator, Namutumba GBV Shelter and Advisory Center
22.	Nyemera Racheal	Programme Officer -Women's Rights and Access to Justice
23.	Lydia Nairuba	Legal Officer and Coordinator FATE project
24.	Nabirye Harriet	Social Worker / Counsellor, Kamuli GBV Shelter and Advisory Center
25.	Evelyn Nyasenya	Social Worker / Councillor -Namutumba GBV Shelter and Advisory Center
26.	Olive Zimba	Administrative Assistant, Kamuli GBV Advisory Center
27.	Sanyu Ritah	Administrative Assistant, Namutumba GBV Advisory Center
28.	Ivan Sajjabi	Secretariat Driver
29.	Butele Samuel	Office Logistics Assistant
30.	Polly Silivia	Office Assistant and Hygiene Officer
31.	Nabandha Sarah	Shelter Matron, Namutumba GBV shelter
32.	Amuron Ritah	Shelter Matron, Namutumba GBV shelter

No.	Name	Position
33.	Aisha Namuganza	Shelter Matron, Kamuli GBV shelter
34.	Zikusooka Milly	Shelter Matron, Kamuli GBV shelter
35.	Mawerere Arafat	Diver, Kamuli GBV Shelter and Advisory Center
36.	Mulisha Michael	Diver, Namutumba GBV Shelter and Advisory Center
37.	Joan Namulondo	Hygiene Assistant, Namutumba GBV Shelter
38.	Munywanyi Elvis	Hygiene Assistant -Kamuli GBV Shelter
39.	Samuel Kabale	Security Guard, Kamuli GBV shelter
40.	Mudadi Tonny	Security Guard, Kamuli GBV shelter
41.	Malanga Emmanuel	Security Guard – Namutumba GBV shelter
42.	Waiswa Charles	Security Guard – Namutumba GBV shelter

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

No.	Name	Position
1.	Dr. Victoria Flavia Namuggala	Board Chairperson
2.	Perry Aritua	Board Vice Chairperson
3.	Josephine N. Mukumbya	Board Treasurer
4.	Regina Bafaki	Board Secretary
5.	Mary Harriet Lamunu	Board Member
6.	Hon. Tezira Jamwa	Ex-Officio
7.	Rita Hope Aciro Lakor	Ex-Officio

UWONET MEMBERSHIP

UWONET's member organizations include:

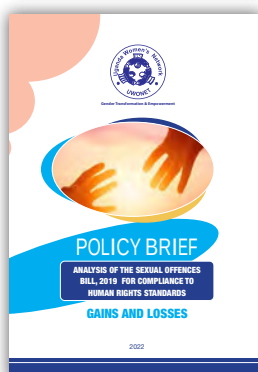
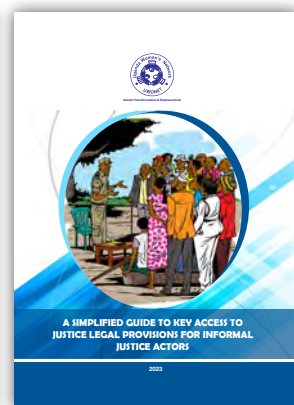
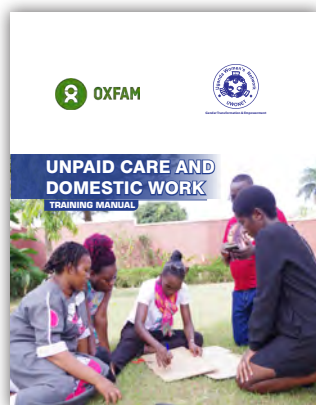
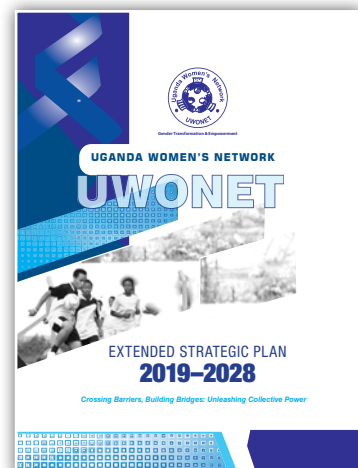
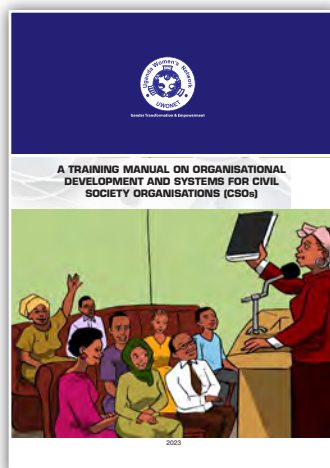
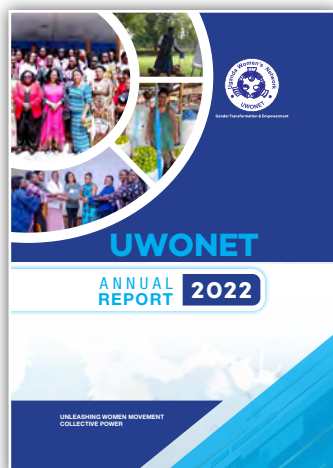
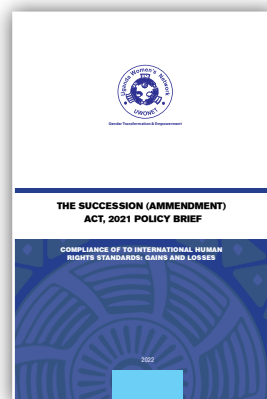
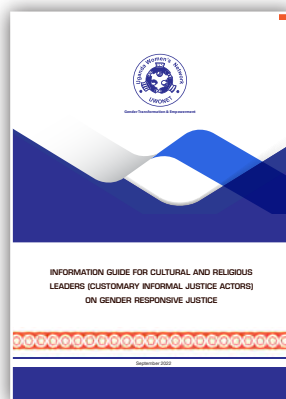
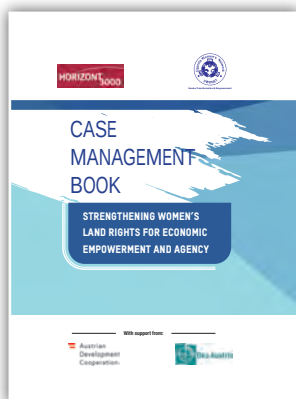
1. Action for Development (ACFODE).
2. Association of Uganda Women Medical Doctors (AUWMD).
3. Association of Women Lawyers in Uganda (FIDA-U).
4. Center for Women in Governance (CEWIGO).
5. Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA).
6. Centre for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP).
7. Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE).
8. Women's International Peace Centre (WIPC).
9. National Bahai Committee for Advancement of Women.
10. Ripple Effect.
11. Slum Aid Project (SAP)
12. Uganda Women's Trust (UWT)
13. Women Engineers, Technicians and Scientists of Uganda (WETSU)
14. Department of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University (WGS)

15. Community Development Resource Network (CDRN)
16. Disabled Women's Network and Resource Organization (DWNRO)
17. Empower Children and Communities Against Abuse (ECCA)
18. Institute for Social Transformation (IST)
19. Uganda Network on Law Ethics and HIV/AIDS (UGANET)
20. Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET)
21. Women's Democracy Network – Uganda Chapter (WDN).
22. Women's Probono Initiative (WPI)
23. Women Human Rights Defenders Network (WHRDN)
24. National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU)

The Individual Members are:

1. Ms. Annette Tumwijukye
2. Ms. Debbie Kaddu Serwadda
3. Ms. Hope Kabuchu
4. Dr. Alice Kagoda
5. Ms. Judy Kamanyi
6. Dr. Mary Nabachwa Ssonko
7. Ms. Maude Mugisha
8. Ms. Veronica Namagembe
9. Hon. Sheila Kawamara–Mishambi.

Publications In 2023



Ushering 2024

In the new year 2024, UWONET will continue to advance the concerns of women and girls and amplify GEWE in social, economic and political spheres. The work of the network will be hinged on the 2019 to 2028 Strategic Plan specific to four thematic areas which include;

1. Galvanize Women's Leadership and Influence at Different Levels and Sectors.
2. Women's Agency for Economic Transformation for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).
3. Knowledge, Learning, Voice and Accountability.
4. Institutional Governance and Management.

UWONET'S Development Partners



DAN CHURCH AID



HORIZONT3000



EUROPEAN UNION



GERMAN AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION



IDLO



EMBASSY OF THE KINGDOM OF NETHERLANDS



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Thank you all.

Financial Statement 2023

UGANDA WOMEN'S NETWORK

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

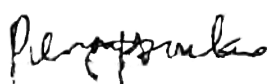
	Note	2023 Ushs	2022 Ushs
Income			
Grant Income	4	3,314,623,179	3,819,834,111
Other Income	5	259,699,010	22,779,965
Total Income		3,574,322,189	3,842,614,076
Refunds to Donors	17	(62,551,996)	(86,376,339)
Total Income net of refunds		3,511,770,193	3,756,237,737
Expenditure			
Galvanize women's leadership and influence at different and sectors	6(a)	483,763,440	931,726,970
Knowledge management, voice and accountability	6(b)	696,315,083	482,249,014
Women's agency for economic transformation for GEWE	6(c)	466,463,267	476,462,879
Institutional development and organisational strengthening	6(d)	1,511,421,809	2,323,699,566
Capital Expenditure	10	159,446,152	15,011,961
Total Expenditure		3,317,409,751	4,231,152,390
Surplus/ (deficit) for the year		194,360,442	(474,914,653)

UGANDA WOMEN'S NETWORK

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS 31 DECEMBER 2023

	Note	2023 Ushs	2022 Ushs
Non-current assets			
Equipment	7	255,579,190	201,360,161
Leasehold prepayments	8	275,000,000	287,500,000
Intangible assets	9	5,986,019	5,158,766
Total non-current assets		536,565,209	494,018,927
Current assets			
Receivables	11	108,511,860	152,102,751
Cash and Bank		639,248,716	529,648,548
Total current assets		747,760,576	681,751,299
Total assets		1,284,325,785	1,175,770,226
Accumulated fund			
Restricted fund	13	509,426,536	512,388,525
Capital fund	14	536,565,209	494,018,927
General fund	15	(211,519,609)	(408,842,040)
Total accumulated fund		834,472,136	597,565,412
Current Liabilities			
Payables and accruals	16	449,853,649	578,204,814
Total accumulated fund and liabilities		1,284,325,785	1,175,770,226

The financial statements on pages 29 to 54 were approved and authorised for issue by the Board of Directors on 8th October 2024 and signed on its behalf by:



Chairperson



Treasurer



Executive Director

CONTACT US:

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[@uwonet](#)**