



# EXCEPTIONAL *Women*

PG 20 - 22

IMPACT OF THE MALE  
GAZE ON ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE

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PG 24

CROWN JEWELS  
OF KARAMOJA

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PG 46

TALES OF  
TRAFFICKED  
WOMEN  
REBUILDING  
THEIR LIVES



By Jacky Achan

In 2016, the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) was launched to empower women to improve their income levels, and contribution to economic development.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development in 2020, indicated over sh106b had been disbursed to various women groups in the country under UWEP. Today, the figure could be much more.

However, besides UWEP there are several other programmes that are aiming to economically empower women, including the Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation and the Parish Development Model (PDM) that prioritises women, who get 60% of the revolving funds.

Reports show government currently allocates sh100m per parish per year in the Parish Development Model Fund. In addition to improving access to financial services for women and equipping them with skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services, government programmes have also aimed to accelerate gender equality through economic empowerment of women.

**VULNERABLE WOMEN**

Reports show financially vulnerable women are more susceptible to gender-based violence. Globally, several studies show that the prevalence of intimate partner violence (IPV) is associated with the financial dependence of women on men.

Today, March 8, as Uganda joins the rest of the world to celebrate International Women's Day under the theme "Accelerating Gender Equality through Women's Economic Empowerment" in Katakwi district, the big question is; Have the initiatives had a positive economic impact for women and have they accelerated gender equality?

**UGANDA LEADING**

According to the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) based at Makerere University, the World Bank, in its 18th economic update for Uganda, said women comprise 40% of all business owners, "making the country one of seven countries in the world to achieve gender parity in the rate of entrepreneurial activity." Though, these businesses remain small and informal.

Also according to the 2019 Mastercard Global Index of Women Entrepreneurs, Uganda was found to be one of only seven countries that achieved gender parity in terms of the number of women driven to pursue entrepreneurial activities.

# GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT



Uganda now has many businesses owned by women

**REPORTS SHOW FINANCIALLY VULNERABLE WOMEN ARE MORE SUSCEPTIBLE TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. GLOBALLY, SEVERAL STUDIES SHOW THAT THE PREVALENCE OF INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE (IPV) IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE FINANCIAL DEPENDENCE OF WOMEN ON MEN.**

The findings indicated that one in three of all businesses in Uganda is owned by a woman, the highest rate in the Middle East and the Africa region.

However, most businesses are started out of necessity rather than opportunity, tend to lack innovation or the potential to diversify and few grow large enough to employ others.

## THE CHALLENGES

Like most wealth creation initiatives, those targeting women have been established without first doing a proper needs assessment and prioritising the needs of these women, states Nakato.

"Moreover, these initiatives have also been implemented in a piecemeal manner which affects their sustainability.

"It should be taken into consideration that women are not a homogenous group. They have different needs based on various factors. Hence, for proper targeting, a needs assessment is important prior to programme implementation," she says.

"Further, no evaluation is done of completed and existing initiatives before rolling out new ones to establish what works and how such initiatives can be designed and implemented," she adds.

This calls for a continuous monitoring of these initiatives to be able to ascertain challenges encountered and guide in reviewing their implementation and design of new initiatives.

She says evidence also shows that most women who benefit from these initiatives end up forming

similar business enterprises within the same location and this causes a lot of competition in accessing the available market, which makes many enterprises fail early on after inception due to unprofitability.

"There is a need for more training on income-generating activities and business development services to the women before rolling out these initiatives so they can understand the vast universe of businesses that they can venture into to allow uniqueness," she adds.

Nakato says most initiatives have also been designed to cater for short-term targets rather than long term impact and contribution to the economy. "This is why we observe that most enterprises formed, for example, from UWEP are micro in nature," she says. "We need long-term support for the women to move from the current micro businesses to larger businesses to ensure sustainability."

She also says there are some stringent requirements in accessing the funds from some of these initiatives like business registration which makes it hard for many potential grassroots women from benefiting from such schemes.

A 2019 World Bank report also showed that women-owned firms earn 30% less in profits than male-owned businesses, on average. Women owned only

19% of firms with more than 10 employees and only 10% of firms with 100-500 employees with a median number of only seven employees.

**SUPPORT TO WOMEN**

In 2021, Dr Albert Byamugisha, the senior technical advisor on the SDGs and the head of the SDGs Secretariat, said in terms of economic empowerment, there has been increased support to women entrepreneurs through government programmes.

He said government is supporting women entrepreneurs putting women in the right position.

From some other observers the initiative has improved women's access to financial services, equipped them with the skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services, women have been availed with interest-free revolving credit to initiate or strengthen their enterprises.

But how factual are the observations and the impact on gender equality.

**SUCCESS STORIES**

Dr Linda Nakato, a research fellow at the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) based at Makerere University using the example of UWEP, agrees there has been some success, considering that nearly 200,000 women have benefited from the programme and nearly 18,000 different projects were started.

She, however, says UWEP has been limited in monitoring and evaluation of where we were before and where we are now.

This is likely the case for other government programmes aimed at accelerating gender equality through economic empowerment of women.

"To answer the question of whether the programmes have had a positive economic impact on women or accelerated gender equality, is a bit hard and needs impact evaluation.

"We need bigger evidence to properly answer the question, for instance, when you see the general objective of UWEP, it is a bit hard to link to the question asked," she says.

Nakato says to establish whether the programme has had a positive economic impact and celebrated gender equality through economic empowerment, calls for proper monitoring and evaluation in terms of where we are then, and now. "Since some women got money and started business, how has it closed the gap?," she says, adding that it can be only properly answered through proper monitoring and evaluation which is lacking.

UNITED NATIONS



NATION UNIES

# INVEST IN WOMEN: ACCELERATE PROGRESS

## UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL ANTÓNIO GUTERRES MESSAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2024

**W**omen and girls have made great gains - demolishing barriers, dismantling stereotypes and driving progress towards a more just and equal world.

Yet they face immense obstacles. Billions of women and girls face marginalization, injustice and discrimination, while the persistent epidemic of violence against women disgraces humanity.

Our world still reflects millennia of male-dominated power relations.

And progress is under attack, with a fierce backlash against women's rights.

At our current rate, legal equality is

some three hundred years away.

We must move much faster.

On International Women's Day, we stand with women and girls fighting for their rights, and we commit to accelerating progress.

This year's theme - invest in women - reminds us that ending the patriarchy requires money on the table.

We must support women's organisations on the front line.

And we must invest in programmes to end violence against women, and to drive women's inclusion and leadership in economies, digital technologies, peacebuilding and climate action.

This all depends on unlocking finance for sustainable development so that countries have funds available to invest in women and girls.

We also need to increase the number of women leaders in business, finance, central banks and finance ministries. This can help drive investments in policies and programmes that respond to women and girls' needs.

Women's rights are a proven path to fair, peaceful, prosperous societies. It is good for us all.

Together, let's take urgent action to make it a reality.

Thank you.



United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres

## UNDP INVESTING IN GENDER EQUALITY, WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

**T**he United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the leading United Nations development organisation fighting to end the injustices of poverty, inequality and climate change.

Working with a broad network of partners in 170 countries, UNDP helps nations to build integrated, lasting solutions for people and planet earth.

UNDP has over the last 50 years been supporting the Government of Uganda to achieve sustainable development, create opportunities for empowerment, protect the environment, minimize the impact of natural and man-made disasters, build strategic partnerships and improve the quality of life for all citizens.

Gender equality and women's economic empowerment remain integrated across all UNDP programming in Uganda including development solutions relating to poverty



and inequality reduction, innovation and entrepreneurship, trade and investment, digital transformation, governance strengthening, peace building, resilience building, climate, environment and energy.

### DIRECTIONS OF CHANGE

Across its programmes, and driven by national development choices, UNDP pursues three directions of change. All three reinforce each other and are fundamental to gender equality.



UNDP staff are committed to elevating gender equality and women's economic empowerment in Uganda

### STRUCTURAL TRANSFORMATION

UNDP will work with countries to shift the underlying systems and power structures that determine development. Linking issues and partners, asking questions and holding difficult conversations helps development build on a foundation of gender equality and inclusion.

In this regard, UNDP can serve

as a convener and advocate as much as, if not more than, a programme provider.

### LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND

This principle responds to the will of governments to 'reach the furthest behind first' and is rooted in human rights and principles of equality and non-discrimination.

The strategy includes a focus on addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of deprivation, disadvantage, and discrimination. For instance, discrimination against women based on sex and gender is inextricably linked with factors such as race, ethnicity, religion or belief, health, status, age, class, caste, and sexual orientation and identity. Other factors are urbanization, migration and displacement, natural disasters and armed conflicts.

### BUILDING RESILIENCE

UNDP helps countries develop capacities to prevent, mitigate and respond to diverse risks and crises. This depends on fully involving women, on equal terms and at all levels, including in decision-making.

UNDP will put gender equality at the center of resilience-building by diminishing structural obstacles and empowering individuals.

# SOLUTIONS ADVANCING GENDER

## THREE ENABLERS

**1 FINANCE**  
By 2025, UNDP is committed to mobilizing public and private sources of finance to channel \$100 billion towards gender equality globally, including through gender-responsive fiscal policies and tax reforms.

Efforts will be rooted in aligning public and private finance with gender equality commitments through integrated national financing frameworks for Sustainable Development Goals.

Tax reforms, gender-responsive budgeting and planning and assistance in developing sovereign debt instruments, and gender-responsive green and blue bonds will help to include more systematically gender equality in the Sustainable Development Goals.

**2 DIGITALISATION**  
The enormous power of digital transformation can help close gender gaps in access to and use of digital technology. Globally, men are still 21 percent more likely to be online than women, rising to 52 percent in the least developed countries.

UNDP will help countries put measurable gender equality goals at the center of national digital strategies, building on the digital gender divide index developed with interested partners.

Other priorities are extending gender-responsive digital public and financial services and the promotion of women's economic empowerment and using digital tools for income generation and entrepreneurship.

**3 STRATEGIC INNOVATION**  
To address issues using a more systemic and transformational lens, UNDP will use a portfolio logic, addressing multiple facets of gender inequality at the same time. UNDP will use sensemaking methods to provide governments with policy options that avoid the trap of 'silver bullets'. The Accelerator labs will help activate the global research and development capability of UNDP to provide governments and other partners with a unique set of capacities for exploring non-obvious solutions, with a particular emphasis on women's grass roots. UNDP will promote a culture of listening, learning, testing and self-reflection to push gender equality forward.



### PRIVATE SECTOR GENDER EQUALITY SEAL

**U**NDP and Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) recently held the Gender Equality Seal Awards in partnership with the Government of Uganda.

Forty private sector companies from different sectors including manufacturing, banking, telecommunications, hospitality, media, health and ICT were awarded with the Gender Equality Seal (GES) Gold, Silver and Bronze certification which is part of the global UNDP Gender Equality Seal initiative promoting investment in systems that integrate gender equality within workplaces and business strategies.

A further 50 companies received recognition for undertaking steps within the GES certification.

The GES is a tool for private enterprises and public institutions to contribute to achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### WOMEN ADVANCING INTRA-AFRICAN TRADE

**I**n Uganda, UNDP supports women and youth-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) through skilling, grants, and access to local, regional, and international markets. UNDP has promoted cross-border trade for women, particularly targeting women and youth led SMEs to participate in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Intra-African trade offers a unique opportunity to generate employment, unlock market opportunities, capital and financing necessary to expand economic growth opportunities, drive technological advancements, and accelerate the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable



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**The recognition of award is not because there is no problem. It is a recognition that we have a problem. I want to thank these companies who have taken the bold step in making a Sexual Harassment Policy. If we want to engender the workplace we must focus on the private sector. For companies that have participated, I want to thank you, I want to congratulate you, and I want to encourage you to set an example for other companies.**  
Hon. Betty Amongi, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development



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**Centenary Bank's zero-tolerance approach to sexual harassment and intentional efforts to grow female leaders at different organizational levels have yielded positive results."**  
Ms. Solomy Luyombo, General Manager of Human Resources at Centenary Bank

by reducing gender gaps and promoting both equality in the workplace and women's empowerment; promoting equality in employment, decent work, inclusive growth and economic empowerment; and encouraging fair, inclusive and sustainable growth.

This transformative initiative has led to private sector institutions experiencing improved worker satisfaction and productivity, as well as the increased potential for profits.

Uganda was the first country to

pioneer the GES in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2016 and, spearheaded by UNDP in partnership with PSFU, the GES has since attracted over 90 companies.

Companies undertaking the GES certification process commit to achieving gender equality by transforming their corporate processes through incorporation of gender perspectives into their overall management system. GES certified companies are integrating comprehensive measures to change their organizational structure and

culture, creating fairer and more decent conditions for workers.

UNDP Uganda is leading the Gender Equality Seal by example, having twice (2018-2022 and 2023-2026) secured a Gender Equality Seal Gold Certification for development agencies.

UNDP has also rolled out the GES for Public Institutions, where Makerere University through the School of Women and Gender Studies is pioneering this initiative within public institutions.



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**We should pivot our efforts to actions that ensure that women are utilizing the opportunity presented in the One African Market. Our examples today confirm that there is action on the ground, that things can work, but also that we need much more action - concerted action - to ensure that women can transcend in their success to the next level.**

Ms. Ahunna Eziakonwa, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director Regional Bureau for Africa

Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

Through the AfCFTA, a free trade area has been established

among 55 African Union Member States. According to the World Bank, the AfCFTA can boost intra-African trade by 52.3 percent by

2025, increase Africa's income by up to US\$ 450 billion by 2035, and lift 30 million Africans out of extreme poverty.

# EQUALITY, WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

UNDP trade initiatives include:

- Collaboration with Uganda Airlines for promotion of African trade and export opportunities. In October 2023, Uganda Airlines launched new routes to Mumbai and Lagos aiming to ease connectivity, promote tourism, and enhance Uganda's export offer within the context of the AfCFTA.
- Trade and Business Forums. UNDP supported convening of two Trade and Business Forums with India and Nigeria ahead of inaugural flights as a platform to present and discuss opportunities that these new destinations offer.
- Lagos Trade Mission by 40 Women in Business. UNDP supported 40 business women to travel to Lagos and explore business-to-business linkages as well as secure business deals with companies in Lagos and the larger West African market.
- Women and Youth entrepreneurship, technology adoption, and digital skilling. UNDP has enhanced these capacities through provision of Youth for Business grants and establishment of a self-paced e-learning portal that enables access to information on trade opportunities.

Women-led initiatives that have benefited include Endiro (a coffee value addition company that has expanded into Nigeria), Akello Banker and Kuunda (fintech companies that have expanded into Burundi and Nigeria).

● Economic empowerment of over 3,000 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) to create livelihoods opportunities. Conducted in Amudat, Kitgum, Tororo, Kasese and Kampala, this programme offered skilling, provision of start-up kits, small grants, and equipping women artisanal miners with stone crushers to boost value addition, productivity, and profitability.

## WOMEN AND CLIMATE ACTION

Advancing gender equality in the context of the climate crisis remains one of the greatest global challenges of the 21st century. Women across the globe are increasingly more vulnerable to climate change impacts than men. This is in part due to women's greater involvement in ensuring food security for the family and community, in providing water for domestic use, and women's dependence on natural resources for various reasons



UNDP private sector partner Endiro Coffee



Solar infrastructure installed at Bukomero Health Center IV

including energy production and other domestic needs.

Climate change will continue to exacerbate gender inequalities following the differentiated roles

of men and women structured by cultural and social norms, unless there are deliberate efforts to reform these norms. This is further aggravated

by unequal access to land, knowledge, financial resources, food insecurity, and other factors that expose women and girls to gender-based violence, leading to health, psychosocial and economic challenges.

According to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), women represent 80% of people displaced by climate change. The UN Environment Programme's Global Environment Outlook (GEO-6) also highlights that despite progress made in access to basic drinking water, women still spend 16 million hours per day collecting water in 25 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, compared to 6 million hours by men and 4 million hours by children.

This alone underscores why social equity and gender equity remain key attributes for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically on SDG5: Gender Equality, SDG6: Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG7: Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG10: Reduced Inequalities, and SDG13: Climate Action.

Women hold a pivotal role in responding to climate change and possess important local knowledge and leadership skills in natural resource management. This capacity must be harnessing through empowering women and girls and fostering inclusive participation in climate change decision making. There is an urgent need for women and men to have equal opportunities for realizing their full potential, while contributing to and benefiting

from social, cultural and economic development.

UNDP and partners prioritize inclusive nature-based solutions in the achievement of Uganda's Vision 2040, the 2030 Agenda and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In recognition of the need for greater women's inclusion and leadership in Uganda's sustainable development, UNDP has partnered with the Government of Uganda and multi-sector partners to support in various ways.

● Gender mainstreaming into Uganda's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the Paris Agreement, through identifying gaps and opportunities in priority sectors including energy, agriculture, and waste management.

● Provision of Climate Action Challenge Grants to engage women and youth led organizations and local communities for climate change mitigation and adaptation technologies such as biogas, energy efficient cooking stoves, solar, forestry, drip irrigation and waste management, contributing to the implementation of Uganda's NDC.

● Solarization of 24 Health Centers IVs in rural areas of the country in ensuring uninterrupted and quality healthcare services, increased capacity to handle emergencies, and reduced maternal and child mortalities in health facilities.

● Support to over 300 women artisanal miners in Tororo, Kasese and Karamoja to implement sustainable mining operations with emphasis on environmental protection, adoption of appropriate technologies, avoidance of wasteful mining, and health and safety protocols.

● Development of the Uganda Natural Resource Information System (NARIS), an open-source data visualization platform that monitors and mediates deforestation and encourages transparency in natural resource governance.

● Implementation of the Biomass to Electricity Project, being piloted at Mulago Hospital to encourage Uganda's large institutions such as hospitals and schools to shift from the use of biomass to electricity for cooking.

● Training and capacity building of women in various areas including climate smart agriculture, alternative livelihoods, entrepreneurship, business management, financial literacy.

# ADVANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND

## ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS

**T**he global Spotlight Initiative to eliminate violence against women and girls is a United Nations initiative in partnership with the European Union and other partners, forming the world's largest targeted effort to end all forms of violence against women and girls.

UNDP has sustained its impactful collaboration with the Spotlight Initiative, dedicated to the eradication of all forms of violence against women and girls. This comprehensive approach encompasses a range of strategies including the promotion of legislation and policies to prevent violence, the reinforcement of national and regional institutions, the cultivation of gender-equitable social norms, attitudes, and behaviors, and the assurance of high-quality essential services for survivors of violence.

UNDP achievements under the Spotlight Initiative include:

- UNDP's support to the Civil Service College of Ministry of Public Service has enabled the development of the GBV Online Course, helping to build capacity of over 2,000 civil servants to mainstream gender-based violence response in planning and budgeting processes.
- The Nsamizi Institute for Social Development and Uganda Management Institute have also integrated GBV planning and budgeting in academic programmes at the certificate, diploma and master's level of education and have trained over 5,000 beneficiaries.
- In partnership with the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, UNDP strengthened District Local Government capacity to provide survivors of GBV with safe spaces to access essential services and vocational training, through the Terego Reception Center and the Amudat GBV Shelter.
- Legal Aid Open Days in Kasese and Kitgum districts reached 1,921 beneficiaries. In addition, 2,367 survivors of gender-based violence obtained legal aid through the Legal Aid Service Provider's Network's Legal Aid Call Centre.

## REFUGEE AND HOST COMMUNITY LIVELIHOODS

**U**NDP and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) have implemented the Uganda Host and Refugee Community Empowerment Project, an initiative to support improved



**IBSA Project beneficiary farming in Nakapiripirit**



economic empowerment of refugees and refugee hosting communities of Adjumani, Lamwo and Obongi.

This initiative has served to strengthen economic capacities of beneficiaries - predominantly women and youth - through cash-for-work activities, financial literacy and business mentorship, and support to establish Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), thereby promoting the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus.

10,720 beneficiaries have been supported through participation in cash-for work livelihood activities such as

road construction, tree planting, cooking stove construction and farming. Meanwhile, capacity of local authorities in Adjumani, Lamwo and Obongi has been strengthened through participation in GBV sensitization activities and training on delivery of psychosocial therapy, established to support refugee and host community resilience.

In partnership with the Government of Japan, UNDP has implemented the Building Resilient Refugee and Host Communities project, seeking to build community resilience for enhanced gender responsive livelihoods and sustainable

environmental management. This project has reached 1,490 beneficiaries through cash-for-work activities which have so far constructed 8 kilometres of road through Palabek Refugee Settlements, repaired 400m of road through reinforcing technology, established over 50 acres of woodlots, and constructed over 1,000 energy savings stoves.

## WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

**T**he Karamoja subregion in North-Eastern Uganda has been historically vulnerable to shocks, with global crises of recent years

escalating challenges of food security in the subregion. While contending with the lasting effects of COVID-19, Uganda has experienced new threats arising due to the War in Ukraine and Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak which greatly affected the subregion and overall economy.

UNDP has partnered with the India, Brazil, South Africa (IBSA) Trilateral South-South Cooperation Fund, the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR) to address persistent food insecurity and malnutrition in the Karamoja subregion, particularly in the green belt districts envisioning a future where both people and planet thrive, aligned with the principles of the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus.

The project will promote women-led large-scale commercial farming of staple cereals, oilseed, legumes, poultry, piggery, and other viable livestock enterprises to boost nutrition, production, and incomes of women and youth.

Through selecting communities throughout Karamoja, the project aims to strengthen food production systems and value chains, and will contribute to the transformation of agricultural production, diversification of economic opportunities for improved livelihoods and enhanced resilience of Karamoja women and youth. The project also aims to leverage South-South Cooperation to experiment best practices for large-scale commercial farming as an integrated and self-sustaining strategy for food security, value chain development, women economic empowerment, poverty reduction, resilience, and peace building.

As a result of this intervention, nine women-led large scale commercial farms for staple cereals, oilseed, and legumes will be established in the initial year of the project, including support to selected households on small scale production of poultry and piggery. Food production systems and value chains for those products will also be established to facilitate value addition and marketing to boost production, incomes, and better nutrition. The long-term impact of the project is to transform agricultural production, diversify economic opportunities for livelihoods and enhance the resilience of the people of Karamoja.

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**The Karamoja sub-region has substantial opportunities. Our belief is that by combatting poverty and hunger within households, we can empower the women here to produce their own food and generate income. This empowerment will safeguard their children, particularly young girls, from being trafficked to Kampala's streets and facing teenage pregnancy.**  
H.E. Lulu Xingwana,  
South African High  
Commissioner to Uganda

# WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

## PILOTING E-COMMERCE IN UGANDA'S INFORMAL SECTOR

**D**isruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic led to the closure of familiar open markets, posing a severe threat to the livelihoods of vendors who were reliant on public access to their fresh produce and essential goods. Responding to the urgent need for adaptation, UNDP spearheaded a transformative collaboration with Jumia Food. This innovative partnership, born out of necessity during unprecedented times, not only bridged the gap imposed by lockdown restrictions but also signaled a behavioral shift, benefiting both vendors and consumers throughout Uganda.

This partnership enabled thousands of informal market vendors in seven markets, including Nakasero, Wandegaya, Nakawa, Naalya, Kalerwe, Bugolobi, and Kibuye to operate during the strict lockdown to control the spread of COVID-19 and thus supporting government efforts to promote business continuity. With over 4,000 vendors and a diverse array of 300,000 unique products sold online, this initiative made a significant impact.

Notably, 60% of vendors were women and youth. In the first year alone, there was a remarkable 40% increase in daily sales. Further, under the E-Commerce Platform, 900 youth were skilled and employed as market agents and produce pickers. Selected women also received training in digital saving platforms such as Momo, Airtel wallets, and Mcash. The tangible outcome of this transformative approach is evident in the market vendors who saw their monthly sales more than double since adopting the digital platform.

The insights from this intervention have significantly influenced UNDP's ongoing commitment to ecosystem strengthening for Uganda's accelerated digital transformation. Notable initiatives include the development of the National E-Commerce Policy and Strategic Plan, the creation of an MSME self-paced digital skilling platform, and the establishment of an MSME Business-to-Business and Market Intelligence platform.

Building on the success of deploying digital platforms for enhanced market access and opportunities, the UNDP Uganda team extended its



IBSA Project beneficiary farming in Nakapiripirit



4,000 market vendors were supported by the initiative

efforts to establish digital payment platforms and e-commerce systems. This targeted approach specifically prioritized women-led SMEs, aiming to bridge the digital divide for women and vulnerable populations.

## HARNESSING THE DIGITAL ECONOMY THROUGH GENDER SENSITIVE E-COMMERCE MODELS

**T**he COVID-19 pandemic served as a catalyst for innovation in the healthcare sector, propelling Rocket Health, a pioneering telemedicine provider in Uganda at the forefront of transforming healthcare since it was established in 2012.

Recognizing the unique opportunity amid the crisis,



UNDP is providing training and resources to young people to enhance their vocational skills

UNDP partnered with Rocket Health to leverage technology in bolstering their comprehensive healthcare services, spanning remote doctor consultations, mobile laboratory sample pick-ups, pharmacy deliveries, home vaccinations, and physical specialist clinic consultations.

The collaborative efforts birthed the PEARL Project, an initiative aimed at supporting the tourism industry's emergency response to health crises through telemedicine and last-mile medical services for tourists. As part of Uganda's broader COVID-19 recovery endeavors, this showcased Rocket Health's commitment to contributing to the nation's resilience in the face of the pandemic.

Beyond its transformative role in healthcare, UNDP recognized Rocket Health's potential and extended its support, granting the company the opportunity to contribute to the Spotlight Initiative. Rocket Health utilized mobile channels to disseminate crucial information on GBV awareness, covering topics such as identification, reporting, and care for survivors. By sending the keyword 'GBV' to 8080 prepaid short codes, users could access this valuable information, and the success of the initiative was evident as 1,936 beneficiaries subscribed to the mobile health content on GBV. This highlighted the effectiveness of leveraging mobile technologies for raising awareness and disseminating vital health information. Rocket Health's technology-based digital tools have also positioned the company as a leader in digital health and a staunch advocate for gender equality in the workplace. The company's dedication to fostering a safe and inclusive environment, coupled with its innovative healthcare approaches, has left an indelible mark on the landscape of Ugandan healthcare, exemplifying resilience and visionary leadership during times of uncertainty and challenges.

Rocket Health also turned its attention to fostering a workplace culture rooted in gender equality. A survey revealed that over 50 percent of staff were unclear about what actions or behaviors constituted sexual harassment. With support from UNDP, Rocket Health initiated a comprehensive gender mainstream programme within the organization. This programme included the development of a robust sexual harassment policy, training for senior management on identifying and addressing sexual harassment issues, and education for all staff on workplace sexual harassment.



## COMMEMORATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

A message from Country Program Director, AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) Uganda Cares.

International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated annually on the 8th of March. It is a day when the global community reflects on the achievements regarding the delivery of gender equality and women's empowerment. The day also serves as a call to action for accelerating progress towards gender equality and women's empowerment.

AHF Uganda Cares joins the global community in celebrating International Women's Day with the theme "Inspire Inclusion". The theme underscores the importance of inspiring everyone to recognize and appreciate women's inclusion in all facets of life, leading to a more equitable world. When women are encouraged and empowered to participate fully, the best of their potential is harnessed for the good of society, they experience a greater sense of control of their lives and destiny.

AHF Uganda Cares has continued to be a beacon of hope in the challenging situation of the HIV epidemic, with women being disproportionately affected. Cognizant of this fact, AHF Uganda Cares considers the unique needs of women and girls while pursuing the organizational mission to provide comprehensive

HIV and patient-centered care to individuals living with and affected by HIV. Women are significant caregivers in a home and often spend on treatment. In a public-funded HIV program in the country where it is known that 40% of HIV funding is out of pocket, it is evident that much of the out-of-pocket expenditure is borne by women. AHF Uganda Cares has intervened to reduce the out-of-pocket spending on drugs by providing a buffer for MoH-provided drugs and others not provided by MoH, especially the opportunistic infection drugs. This enables its patient community, including women, to spend money on other critical family needs. Additionally, using a gender-sensitive lens, AHF Uganda Cares has constructed and renovated over 25 ART clinics in the county to provide for the privacy and decency of HIV clients, where over 64% are women.

Since 2016, AHF Uganda Cares has been concerned about the health status of adolescent girls and young women (AGYW) aged 15-24 years. This group constitutes the women of tomorrow and sadly accounts for a high number of new HIV infections. More than twice AGYW were infected with HIV in 2016 in comparison to



**Henry Magala**  
Country Program Director-  
AHF UGANDA CARES

boys and young men. Pregnancy data also showed that 25% of pregnancies are accounted for by teenagers, and the majority end up carrying out unsafe abortions. The situation has not changed much. In order to combat the troubling trend among young women and girls, AHF Uganda Cares launched the Girls Act program. Girls Act aims at empowering AGYW to take control of their lives by making informed and right decisions. A leadership and peer approach was adopted where 25 regional leaders were trained in leadership skills and to reach out to fellow young girls with basic facts about the prevention and management

of HIV/STIs. The approach has paid dividends where over 1,000 AGYW have been reached with HIV/STI prevention measures. Through a peer approach, the leaders have counselled and supported AGYW to live positively with HIV. Economic dependence as a driver of unsafe practices has been addressed by equipping over 500 AGYW with vocational skills to produce items like crafts, soap, counter books, and confectionery. This has empowered young girls to meet their basic needs like sanitary pads, hence reducing susceptibility to transactional or transgenerational sex. Transactional sex for such items as sanitary pads has resulted in high HIV infection and teenage pregnancy among Adolescent Girls and Young Women. Through the Girls Act, some AGYW are supported to stay in and complete school, receive sanitary pads, and are trained on life skills, which are crucial in setting up girls to become empowered women.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we call upon the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, as well as all stakeholders, to take decisive action to:

- To provide tax waivers on

sanitary pads.

- Fully operationalize sexuality education within the country context for the in-and-out of school young people as an empowerment to make the right and appropriate decisions regarding their sexual reproductive health, family, and career life
- Strengthen laws and policies addressing gender-based violence, including enforcement of specialized courts or units to handle GBV cases swiftly and effectively.



**AHF Uganda Cares initiated the Girls AIDS Campaign to transform the young people (ACT). Girls ACT aims at empowering AGYW to take control of their lives by making informed and right decisions.**

AHF Uganda Cares affirm collaborative support and commitment towards empowering adolescent girls and young women to participate in issues that affect their well-being. Since women bear the blunt of HIV as caregivers and infected by HIV, their inclusion in HIV programming and decision making can be impact with high social dividend is very vital. Together, we can inspire inclusion and create a future where every girl can realize her full potential.

*Thank you.*

### About AHF

AIDS Healthcare Foundation (AHF) is a global non-profit organization providing cutting-edge medicine and advocacy to over 1.9 million people in 46 countries worldwide in the US, Africa, Latin America/Caribbean, the Asia/Pacific Region, and Europe. Founded in 1987, AHF is currently the largest non-profit provider of HIV/AIDS medical care in the world. In Africa, AHF operates in 13 countries; Uganda, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

AHF Uganda Cares, Plot 54 B, Kira Road, P.O Box 22914 Kampala. Tel: +256 200 506100 Email: ahfugandacares.org, Facebook: AHF Uganda Cares



## EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION



Happy women's day



**His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni**  
President of the Republic of Uganda



**Hon. Betty Amongi Ongom**  
Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development



**Hajjat Safia Nalule Juuko**  
Chairperson EOC



**Mr. Joel Cox Ojuko**  
Vice Chairperson



**Sister Mary Wasagali**  
Member of Commission



**Ms. Denise Tuslime**  
Member of Commission



**Mr. Habib Seruwagi**  
Member of Commission

The Equal Opportunities Commission wishes all women in Uganda and around the world a Happy women's day.

At the Equal Opportunities Commission, the International Women's Day is one of the most important days on the annual calendar. The day is an opportunity for the Commission to celebrate women's achievements, raise awareness about women equality, lobby for accelerated gender parity, and fundraise for female - focused charities.

Over the years, the Government of the Republic of Uganda under the able leadership of His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni has endeavored to

put equity issues affecting women into consideration.

As we celebrate this year's International Women's Day, the Equal Opportunities Commission wishes to leverage this opportunity to thank His Excellency, and the entire Government of Uganda for:

- Fostering economic empowerment for women
- Recruiting, retaining and developing the diverse talents of girls and women
- Nurturing women and girls in leadership, decision-making and business

- Designing and building infrastructure that meets the needs of women and girls
- Providing the healthcare system that takes care of the needs of women and girls
- Involving women and girls in sustainable agriculture and food security
- Providing women and girls with access to quality education and training
- Elevating women and girl's participation and achievement in sport

To all the women out there, Happy Women's Day!

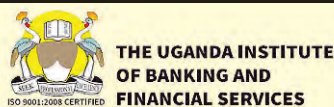
Here's to celebrating your strength, resilience, and all the incredible contributions you make to the world. The Equal Opportunities Commission wishes you a fantastic Women's Day filled with love, empowerment, and inspiration. You deserve all the recognition and appreciation today and every day.

You can contact us for all complaints/cases of discrimination or marginalization on the following address:

Head Offices: Level 1, Kingdom Kampala, Nile Avenue,

Postal Address: P. O. Box 27672, Kampala, Uganda, Toll Free Line: 0800100440, or General Lines +256 414 223234, +256 414 223253

Or Email us on: info@eoc.go.ug / https://www.facebook.com/EOCUG https://twitter.com/EOC\_UG



## INTERVIEW WITH UGANDA INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES CEO, MRS. GORETTI MASADDE



**MRS GORETTI MASADDE**

**1. This year's International Women's Day theme is 'Inspire inclusion,' how can that be achieved in Uganda?**

Uganda has designed and implemented several mechanisms to empower, develop and include women, where inclusion means equal access to opportunities and resources. However, many have continued to stagnate along the way or simply remain behind, across all demographics, hence being excluded.

The keyword for me in this year's theme is "Inspire" when interpreted as "to cause a particular thought or feeling, motivate, etc." I think that even when the mechanisms, policies, and practices (hardware) are in place we need to develop the software i.e. motivate the stagnated women, girls, and men alike to embrace the available hardware for inclusion. This could be through creating awareness, confidence building, mentoring, coaching, and communicating the benefits of women inclusion for the individual, organization, and society at large. Women can support fellow women and men can support their mothers, sisters, daughters, friends, and peers on the journey for inclusion. Organizations too can provide supportive working environment that inspires inclusion and progress e.g. work at home policies, spaces for children at work etc.

All in all, this year's theme provides an opportunity to augment and improve the current inclusion efforts for better results.

**2. You rose to the rank of one of the most prestigious jobs in the nation, how did you do it?**

The desire for natural progression in my career. There is a saying that if you are going to do something, do it anyway. I have embraced the opportunities along my career to diversify and learn more about various fields and aspects of business. I am a trained food scientist that branched out into marketing which allowed me to work and understand in various fields like banking, food processing, wildlife conservation, social marketing, sales, business management, professional body management etc. I have also not shied away from making difficult decisions such as leaving jobs that did not align with my progression even when I had no job to go to. I did this twice to reflect, work on my areas of improvement and grow. In addition, I have taken on several challenging opportunities and tasks that have served me well. Very importantly my work speaks for itself. Whenever I get into a role, I must make a positive difference. Because of this, I've always been called upon for the different roles I have acquired in my career. I'm also a lifelong learner. If I do not know something, I read about it and apply what I learn. A key point is that I have had several cheerleaders that have given me feedback, referenced my work and achievements and forwarded my name for these roles even when I didn't know, and I am grateful to them. Lastly and most importantly I have had to grow in working with, managing, caring, and loving people! At this point in my career, this is the most essential part of this journey.

**3. Who or what is your inspiration in life?**

There are many things that inspire me. My parents have been my biggest source of inspiration, they sacrificed heavily and did everything they possibly could to get us through school. Looking back, I can only imagine what they went through! I think I get my work ethic from them. Secondly the desire to be the best version of myself, (not the best among others), pushes me to continuously do and be better. Thirdly, I am inspired by people who have done the seemingly impossible, if they can, I can. Fourth, the universe inspires me. I am coming to realize that nothing is impossible. There is a solution to practically everything; we simply need to be attentive, observant, and ready to receive. Fifth, my past inspires me. When I look back at the successes, the hurdles I have been through and overcome, I am inspired to move forward. Sixth My husband, children and siblings inspire me. Knowing that I cannot let them down keeps me going. Last and most importantly God as the umbrella above all the six, knowing that He is there for me inspires me! In a nutshell, all these things together inspire me.

**4. What have been some of the challenges you have encountered on your way up and how did you overcome them?**

The biggest challenges I have encountered on my way up have been lateral and vertical conflicts. These have been due to serious disagreements, personality and character differences which are normal, being misunderstood, taking others for granted or being taken for granted, not communicating well, misrepresenting myself or my position etc.

In these situations, I have always depended on my moral compass. I have stood up for what I believe is right until proven differently. I have chosen not to change who I am, no matter the circumstances. I have had to speak up for myself, regardless of the scenario, and there has been power in that. Most importantly I have and continue to respect and appreciate people, who they are, what they feel, think, need, want, and bring to the table. I am seeking to understand people even as I seek to be understood. This has helped.

**5. Even in your position, have you ever faced issues of resistance or opposition from men? How did you handle that?**

It hasn't been resistance as such but rather coming face to face with superiority or inferiority complexes where you are reminded that you are a woman, by how people behave around you. But I have not given the "you are a woman" reality any attention, nor taken it as an obstacle. Instead, I have focused on being an equal professional like everyone else in the room, and what I bring to the table. This has been beneficial.

**6. At school, some girls always outshine the boys, why is it that when it comes to the field they are nowhere to be seen or are occupants of lower-caliber jobs? What is the solution to that?**

I think the root cause of the problem is fear, which some gurus define as "False Evidence Appearing Real - FEAR". It also ties back to the stereotypes around being a woman in the workspace. The fear of intimidation particularly at higher levels, fear of insubordination, fear of taking hard decisions, sanctioning peers, failing to balance work and life especially as a wife and mother, fear of not matching up to expectations etc. As I previously said, the solution lies in skilling, mentorship, coaching, role modeling as well as raising awareness of the limitless opportunities available to women today. Girls can desire to be something bigger from an early age because they have seen it happen. Most importantly, you must continue to study, learn, in whatever way that you can. Education and knowledge are critical in empowering people to do better for themselves. For example, one may have to undertake some courses to earn a qualification even though they are excellent at what they do. This builds confidence.

**7. How can more women join the topmost jobs in the banking sector and other fields?**

You need to want it. You need to reshape your mind and get rid of the societal prejudices that come with being a woman. You need to be objective, genuine and comfortable with your womanhood. Confidence is key. You also need to be open to challenges. Remember to always do what must be done. You shouldn't have the "I cannot attitude". If you are ready for growth, it will happen.

**8. How do you juggle marriage, motherhood, and the career world?**

There's no manual for this, it has been one of the most difficult things for me, and I am yet to master it. The key thing I have done is give love! I have also been open and humble. My husband has been very supportive, showing up where I may not. My children, siblings, and a "gang" of two close girlfriends have been super supportive and I am grateful. All in all, love more than anything has helped me.

**9. In the banking world, it is reported that more men access funds (loans) than women. How do we get more women access to money so that they, too, can be on the road to development?**

The challenge starts with the general belief that men are the providers, this puts them in a position where they must be financially able to provide, making them more financially literate, active, and aggressive. On the other hand, women are less concerned about making "more" money. They have lower awareness of what, why, how, and where of borrowing from banks and paying back. Others even believe having money makes them unattractive to men. Additionally, many women do not own property and therefore are unable to borrow from banks.

Furthermore, women are very careful with their money so they often don't feel the need to borrow because they always have something and believe they can grow organically. The problem is that they do not understand the opportunities for growth that exist with borrowing. To address this, we need more financial literacy for women to motivate them to borrow. In addition, banks have come up with tailored products and programs that continue to attract women. Other programs in the microfinance sector like group lending/ borrowing have been very helpful and need to be accelerated for women across demographics.

**10. What advice do you give to women who want to be successful in life?**

I believe women should embrace their femininity in all spheres of life. Set specific goals for yourself, determine where you want to go, then work backwards and forwards to achieve them. Stay loyal to yourself and your ideals while accepting challenges as they arise. Always try to be a better version of yourself; success awaits.

### THE UGANDA INSTITUTE OF BANKING AND FINANCIAL SERVICES (UIBFS) INTRODUCES ITS NEW "BREAK-NECK SPEED" TEAM.

In line with the vision of being a Centre of excellence in financial services training, research, and consultancy, the Uganda Institute of Banking and Financial Services (UIBFS), with the guidance of the Board and leadership of their Chief Executive Officer, Mrs. Goretti Masadde, has gone through a thorough restructuring of the management team and staff.

Directorate charged with the development and implementation of the UIBFS strategy for business growth, research, and consultancy.

The institute has undertaken a rigorous transformation and realignment process which involved: the creation of Directorates to spur efficiency and effectiveness, formulation of a new strategic plan 2024-2028, and enhancing its training and professional courses which tags into its mission "To Accelerate Professionalism and Inclusion among providers and users of financial services."

The world is ever-changing rapidly, and we are in trouble if we do not match the speed at which innovation is happening around us, explains Goretti. "We need to adopt a BREAK-NECK SPEED approach!" The CEO shares that the goal is to keep the Institute in step with all Digital and Technology changes that are constantly upcoming in the market, this will allow the Institute to remain relevant to its stakeholders internally and externally.

Dr. Kansime Mary Nyende is the Director Professional Development a Directorate charged with delivering the institute Professional Development and Training strategy. Ms. Birungi Christine is the Director Business Development, Marketing and Membership, a

The current CEO of UIBFS was recruited in April 2020. She is an all-round foresighted leader with a determination to drive the Institute to new and broader horizons along with her team. The Institute seeks to be on top of the new market trends in the banking and financial services sector to effectively support the industry.



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- ★ PGD Agricultural Risk Management & Finance



# UGANDA BUSINESS AND TECHNICAL EXAMINATIONS BOARD (UBTEB)

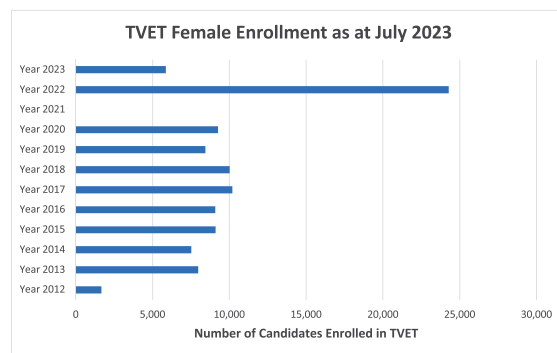
## Celebrating International Women's Day 2024

### EMPOWERING WOMEN AND GIRL CHILD THROUGH TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET) IN UGANDA UBTEB's commitment to gender and Equity registers monumental strides in TVET assessment

According to the Strategic plan 2020/2021-2024/2025, UBTEB prioritized the need to integrate gender and equity issues in all assessment policies and procedures in order to realise more female candidates in academic disciplines which are dominated by male counterparts. The Board has over the years profiled female candidates who have made tremendous contributions in the world of work in various engineering professions.

As a result of various Governments' commitments to support more female students in TVET training institutions in Uganda, the number of female students assessed by the Board continue to increase in a consistent manner.

#### PROGRESS OF FEMALE CANDIDATES ASSESSED BY UBTEB SINCE 2012



#### Why more females in TVET

**Economic empowerment**  
TVET equips girls with practical skills that enable them to access high-demand jobs in various technical and vocational sectors, such as Construction, Manufacturing, Hotel & Tourism, Telecommunication, and Oil & Gas. These jobs offer higher and attractive salaries, providing greater economic independence and stability for women.



Ms. Ritah Nakimuli with First Lady/Hon. Janet Kataaha Museveni Minister of Education & Sports in 2018 at President's Office Conference Hall Kampala

Ritah is currently doing a Diploma in Mechanical Engineering at Buganda Royal Institute of Business and Technical Education in addition to her National Certificate in Automotive Mechanics awarded by UBTEB. She was recognised as one of the innovative students. She owns a garage and Technical School in Mityana district.



Carol Abenaitwe works as a Marine Engineer at Uganda Civil Aviation Authority. She holds a Diploma in Boat Building and Marine Mechanics from Fisheries Training Institute in Entebbe awarded by UBTEB.

UBTEB over the years has witnessed high numbers of female candidates in TVET disciplines of areas of Business, Leisure, hospitality and ICT disciplines among others.

Plot 7 Valley Drive, Ntinda, P. O. Box 1499, Kampala Uganda, Phone: +256 (0)392 002 468,

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# BEAUTIFY YOUR HOME WITH FLOWERPOTS

Sending flowers is a simple yet meaningful way to celebrate the extraordinary women in your life on Women's Day. Elevate the gesture even further by presenting them with a set of planters. This will not only inspire them to plant a garden in their backyard, but you will forever be etched in their memory, writes **Rita Mukasa**

A beautiful garden can increase a home's value. Flowerpots may make your tiny yard seem like a paradise in the middle of nowhere. These planters and flowerpots are all the rage at the moment. Florist Gladys Kaaya has taken to them wholeheartedly and is not looking back. "It has been difficult for me to get good plastic pots," she says, adding: "I have been buying pots from different sources for over a decade as part of my collection." Some of the marketable pots, according to Kaaya's observations, fade and crack readily. Not many options exist, and the ones that do tend to be monochromatic. "Mukwano pots are unique. They come in a wide range of sizes, colours and patterns. A month ago, I came



**Mukwano's flower pots are affordable**

upon these containers. In the middle of a Nakawa traffic jam, a seller flashed them next to my car," she recalls. "I couldn't believe I had acquired beautiful pots at a laughable price and I bought all six pieces he had," she continues. Ever since then, Kaaya has stockpiled flowerpots throughout her house. They serve to adorn both her outside and interior. She cultivates a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, and flowers using them.

**THREE DESIGNS TO CHOOSE FROM**  
You can choose from three distinct styles for these pots: Gardenia (long rectangular), Jasmine (square at the top), and Orchid (round at the top). Black, dark green, dark brown, and light brown clay are some of the colours available. "For large orders, we can also make them in the colours you want," Mukwano Industries Uganda Limited's regional sales manager for plastics, Kaushal Sharma says. At the same time,

## WHY MUKWANO FLOWERPOTS

Mukwano Industries Uganda Limited's regional sales manager for plastics, Kaushal Sharma, says these planters are top-notch. You may open or close the draining holes and they come in a variety of sizes and styles. Also, they provide a good planting volume, which is extra bonus. According to Kaushal, Mukwano pots are a great improvement over clay and concrete pots because the former are heavy and unyielding. This makes them fragile and cumbersome to handle. Plus, unlike plastic, clay containers do not wick water well. If you want to keep soil from drying up, you will have to water plants more often when it is hot outdoors because they leak water faster. Mukwano plastic pots, on the other hand, are pliable and sturdy despite their light weight. Worst of all, they are resistant to water absorption, which means they will not promote surface rot and fungal growth. They perform in sunny and rainy weather.

there are two types of these beautiful containers. Virgin plastic makes up the light brown

and white varieties, whereas recycled plastic makes up the black, dark brown and dark green varieties, which are better for the environment. Kaushal says these pots are aesthetically pleasing and would complement both indoor and outdoor design schemes. Additionally, they have a lot of versatility. You can cultivate mints and other herbs for your indoor kitchen garden or you can plant seeds to grow flowers, seedlings and veggies like spinach, onions, etc. "You may make your own special designs with the pots because they are all different heights. According to Kaushal, one way to display plants from different perspectives is to arrange shorter ones in front of taller ones. To serve as the group's anchor, you can also select big, bold planters.

**DISCOUNTS FOR WHOLESALERS**  
Design, size and colour determine the budget-friendly rates, according to Kaushal. He says discounts are also available to wholesalers and agents. "Come see us at the Mukwano Factory Outlet at UMA Lugogo," he says.



**EAGLE Rock**  
Pride in Plastics

## Plastic Flower Pots and Watering Can.



- ▶ Virgin and recycled plastic flower pots
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**ANDAMA ALFRED KILI**  
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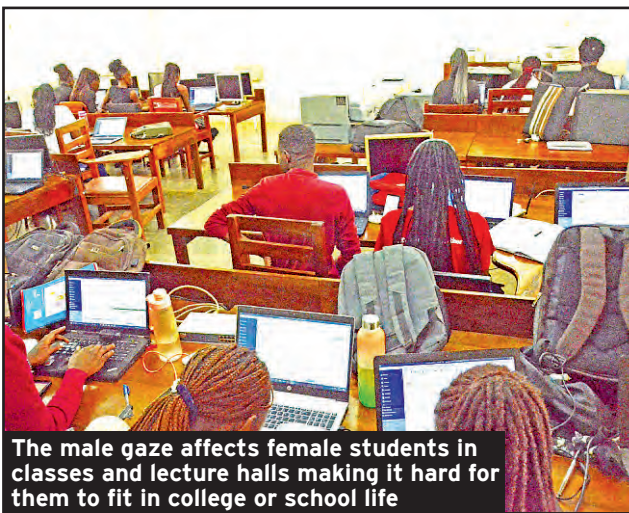
# IMPACT OF MALE GAZE ON FEMALE STUDENTS

**W**ithin the hallowed halls of academia, social relationships exist. One of these happens to be the male gaze, which shows up in subtle, but important way and affects how female students experience and think about how to interact with people of the opposite gender. This phenomenon is

everywhere on university campuses, from lecture halls to student life. It affects how people engage, how they see themselves, and their academic goals. For my graduate studies, I explored how the male gaze affects female students at Makerere University, focusing on what it means for their confidence, self-esteem and gender equality at the university.

Laura Mulvey and other feminist film theorists came up with the term "male gaze" to describe how visual media and social interactions are often shaped around a straight male point of view.

The male gaze comes from patriarchal structures that make men see and show women as objects of their desire, often basing their identities on how they



**The male gaze affects female students in classes and lecture halls making it hard for them to fit in college or school life**

- look.
- In a normal college setting like Makerere University, it shows up in many ways, such as treating female students like objects, unequal power dynamics
- in the classroom and pressure on campus to meet unrealistic beauty standards.
- The male gaze affects female students in classes and lecture halls.

**THE EFFECTS OF THE MALE GAZE ON FEMALE STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH CANNOT BE UNDERSTATED.**

This can be through the expectations and biases that male classmates set, or it can be more direct cases of internalised objectification. Female students feel like they are looked at closely and judged based on how they look and how well they follow the campus's beauty

standards. This pressure to fit in makes female students feel bad about their bodies, self-conscious, and insecure, which makes it harder for them to fully participate in college life and school work.

Because of what life on college expects of female students, they often have to pay extra. The female students pay for these things on their own, though parents and close siblings sometimes pay for them.

It's important to note that some female students, who can't pay for these things, end up in dangerous sexual relationships with men who help them pay these bills.

The effects of the male gaze on female students' mental health cannot be understated. Constant

**Continued on page 20**



## KALANGALA INFRASTRUCTURE SERVICES LTD IS PROUD TO JOIN THE MOTHERS OF THE NATION TO CELEBRATE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 8<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2024

Kalangala Infrastructure Services Ltd (KIS) proudly commemorates International Women's Day on March 8th, 2024, joining the citizens of Uganda and the world at large in celebrating women's achievements and contributions. As a leading private utility company in Uganda, KIS has been pivotal in providing essential services for Kalangala District's development since 2012. The company values its public-private partnership with the government, particularly under the leadership of H.E. President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, fostering a conducive environment for sustainable investments in critical infrastructure on Bugala Island.

Recognising the country's women

empowerment efforts and advancement, KIS applauds the dedication and expertise of its fifteen (15) female employees across various departments. The company also acknowledges the invaluable contributions of the two (2) women directors on its board. At both the board and executive levels, KIS women have worked tirelessly to enhance service sustainability and provide essential technical support.

In addition to its internal support for women, KIS has championed community programs that empower women locally and nationally. KIS actively promotes equal opportunities for women-led companies within its concession area, offering various goods and services

consumed daily. Projects like the USAID-supported productive use of energy initiative have empowered over 40 women's groups in Kalangala District, building their capacities and fostering financial inclusion. KIS's commitment to social and economic transformation extends beyond its services, reflecting its dedication to uplifting women in society.

Looking ahead, KIS seeks to continue its impactful operations, notably ferry services that have transformed connectivity between Bugala Island and the mainland. The company's request for the Ferry Support Payment extension beyond 2025 signifies its dedication to fostering regional development and economic

growth, focusing on empowering women and underserved groups. By enhancing transportation links and promoting trade and tourism, KIS has played a vital role in the population growth and economic vibrancy of Kalangala District.

As KIS remains steadfast in its mission to collaborate with the government and contribute to Uganda's prosperity, the company exemplifies a commitment to sustainable development and inclusive growth under President Museveni's visionary leadership. This International Women's Day, KIS reaffirms its support for women's advancement, reflecting its broader dedication to societal progress and empowerment.



**Part of the KIS Female team**



## Celebrating Women at Qcil

Today, we take a moment to honor each of you our incredible female colleagues at Quality Chemical Industries Limited - Qcil. Your dedication, resilience, and contributions are the backbone of our success, and we want to celebrate the invaluable unique strengths and talents you bring to our workplace.

Your unwavering commitment to excellence and the positive impact you make every day is truly inspiring. As we mark this special day, Qcil attests its unwavering commitment to supporting women, fostering a workplace where every voice is heard, and continued progress and success is fueled by the collective contributions of all its talented individuals.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Qcil family. Here's to the remarkable women who shape our present and lead us into a future filled with endless possibilities.





# WOMEN SHOULD FEEL VALUED IN SOCIETY

Continued from page 18

exposure to objectification and unrealistic beauty standards can lead to feelings of inadequacy, anxiety and depression.

Moreover, the normalisation of the male gaze perpetuates a culture of misogyny and sexism, further marginalising female students and hindering their sense of belonging and well-being on campus.

Much as the effect of the male gaze was found to rest more on the female students, male students too were affected by the male gaze as they exert it. Male students acknowledge being distracted by their own gaze, especially during lectures, which takes off their concentration from the subject matter being discussed.

It is, therefore, important to recognise the male gaze and address its effects, especially on female students in institutions of higher learning. In this case,



**The male gaze affects how female students experience and think about how to interact with people of the opposite gender**

- inclusion of deliberate talks and messages on women's agency helps to identify the male gaze and expose its effects on students, thereby finding remedies to the negative effects.
- Male students should be included in the discussion of the vice in male only peer groups at universities.
- Dialogues on sexuality

- should be organised to address the negative effects of the male gaze.
- Both female and male students should be involved in addressing the effects of the gaze.
- In order to progress and change the negative effects of the male gaze on women at the university, female artists and actors that

- students admire and follow in the media, such as the arts, movies and TV shows, should help emphasise women's agency instead of the opinion of the society on them.
- It should be noted that many female students are actively challenging this norm, advocating for inclusivity and reclaiming

**"IT IS THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION AND A COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING GENDER EQUALITY AND INCLUSIVITY THAT WE CAN CREATE A CAMPUS CULTURE FREE FROM THE CONSTRAINTS OF THE MALE GAZE."**

- their autonomy and agency.
- From programmes like KISH (Kicking Sexual Harassment out of Higher institutions of learning) and other student-led initiatives, the students are promoting

body positivity, hence advocating for gender equality and less female objectification.

Finally, the male gaze casts a long shadow over the experiences of female students in higher institutions of learning, impacting on their academic performance, social interactions and mental health.

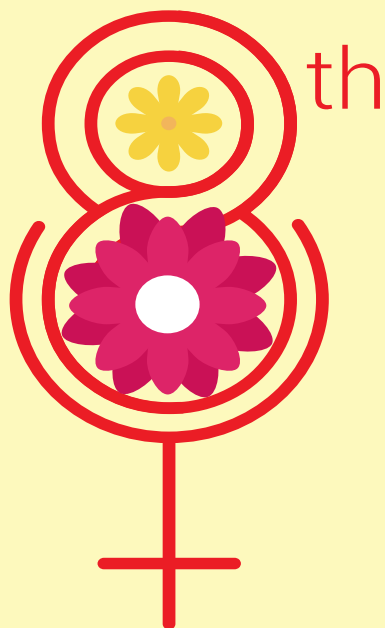
By acknowledging its presence and actively working to challenge and dismantle its influence, universities can create environments where all students feel valued, respected and empowered to thrive.

It is through collective action and a commitment to fostering gender equality and inclusivity that we can create a campus culture free from the constraints of the objectifying gaze – the male gaze.

- **The writer researched on the subject for his Master of Arts in Gender Studies at Makerere University.**



**UEDCL**  
Lighting up your world



**MARCH**  
2024

## HAPPY WOMEN'S DAY!

The Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL) Board and Management extend their congratulations to all women in the nation and around the world for reaching on this auspicious day, which is dedicated to honoring women's contributions to society.

The theme, "Accelerating gender equality through women's economic empowerment," aligns with the gender-inclusive policies of UEDCL. The goal of UEDCL is to increase the number of women in management and leadership roles.

**#WeLightupYourWorld**



# KATAKWI DISTRICT: LEADING THE WAY IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

**F**ounded 27 years ago, Katakwi District will host the national celebrations for the international Women's Day for the very first time today. The venue selection aligns with the theme *Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress*, emphasizing the need for inclusive societies and women's empowerment. In a sense, Katakwi models empowerment of women.

After Jessica Alupo was elected district woman MP, the President named her Vice-President. With Alupo at the helm of leadership, Katakwi has been transformed from a backwater district no one wanted to be connected with to a progressive one. The home sub-county of Alupo, Ongongoja, was referred to as having no village to look up to, but as fortunes turned, it emerged as the sub-county ahead of the rest, as Alupo often invites ministers and diplomats to meet her there.

"We didn't want to be associated with our district, but our accent often betrayed us," Augustine Otuko, the Vice-President's political affairs private secretary, says.

He adds that people from other areas referred to them as Katakwi lusuko and insulted them as backward and impoverished.

The district has produced other prominent women, such



- as Catherine Echookit, a high court judge; Josephine Ossiya, the executive director of Capital Markets Authority; Hilda Akabwai, the former CEO of FIDA, who is also a Uganda Railway Corporation board member; Frances Atima, the head of inspectors of schools at the education ministry, among others.

- During the rebel insurgency in eastern Uganda, many people in Katakwi were forced out of

- their homes and lived in camps until 2002 when people started returning. Okore sub-county was highly affected, with residents deserting it to seek refuge in Soroti town.

- "We no longer have people in camps and all the sub-counties have schools where children access education peacefully," the LC5, Geoffrey Omolo, says.

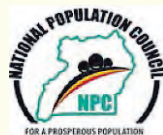
- The first woman MP of Katakwi district, previously Soroti,



**VP Alupo (right) with visionary women donate pads to Katakwi schools**

- was Grace Akello, the current ambassador to India. Alupo, a former UPDF soldier, entered politics and served two terms until she lost to Violet Akurut Adome, who served one term. Alupo won in 2021. She's the second woman to serve as vice-president under President Yoweri Museveni. Katakwi has had four district

- chairpersons, including Stephen Ilemukorit, Robert Ekongot, Walter Elakas and Geoffrey Omolo. With a paved road connecting Katakwi to Karamoja, business is growing. After Kasilo in Serere district, Ocor-Imongin cattle market is Teso's second-largest. Katakwi residents will perform *Ekiriakira*, a high-jumping dance, for guests today.



## National Population Council



### International Women's Day Message



**H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni,**  
President of the Republic of Uganda



**Hon. Matia Kasajja,**  
Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development



**Hon. Amos Lugoobi,**  
Minister of State for Finance Planning and Economic Development (Planning)



**Prof. Fred Wabwire-Mangen,**  
Chairman, National Population Council



**Samuel S. Omwa,**  
Ag. Director General National Population Council

The Board, Management, and Staff of National Population Council wish H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda, Women, and all Ugandans a happy International Women's Day.

The global theme for this year is, "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress." The global theme underscores the significance of prioritising resources and efforts toward women's advancement to achieve broader societal goals. By investing in women, societies can accelerate progress across various sectors including education, healthcare, politics, and the economy.

For Uganda, the domesticated theme, "Accelerating Gender Equality through Women's Economic Empowerment", is important to us as National Population Council because we believe that there can never be success without women empowerment. The theme therefore calls upon us to prioritise women's economic empowerment to unlock the potential of a half of Uganda's population, leading to improved livelihoods, increased productivity, and more inclusive economic growth.

Gender equality is central to eradicating poverty, enhancing prosperity and breaking cycles of deprivation. On this

special occasion, as we celebrate the values of diversity and inclusiveness, we should all be reminded that gender equality is the foundation of economic and social progress.

National Population Council supports gender equality and women empowerment by advocating for young girls to stay in school until completion, campaigning against gender-based violence, child marriage and teenage pregnancy, and promoting family planning and reproductive health.

Uganda must continue to address the challenges that hinder an equal role for women in society. This includes addressing the issue of equal access to education, addressing gender-based violence, reducing disparities in health and employment outcomes, fighting child marriage and teenage pregnancy, and reducing the risks of poverty and exclusion for marginalized groups.

Investments in girls' education, vocational training, access to finance, and support for women-owned businesses can create an enabling environment for women to thrive economically. By doing so, Uganda can unlock the full potential of its demographic dividend and pave the way for sustainable and inclusive

development and poverty reduction.

To effectively harness the demographic dividend through women's economic empowerment, it is crucial to implement policies and programs that address the barriers women face in accessing education, financial services, land rights, and employment opportunities. Similarly, investing in job creation, skills training, and entrepreneurship opportunities for women and young people can unlock the demographic dividend in Uganda, driving sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Additionally, efforts should be made to challenge societal norms and stereotypes that limit women's participation in the economy and decision-making processes. By ensuring gender equality, women can fully participate in the workforce and contribute to economic growth.

We at National Population Council commit to continue advocating for gender equality and equity, and other priorities for harnessing the demographic dividend which include; fertility decline, human capital development, job creation, and good governance.

**Who We Are**  
National Population Council is a government agency established

by an Act of Parliament in 2014 to coordinate the implementation of the National Population Policy and Population Program and to advocate for integrating population factors in development plans at all levels. National Population Council transitioned from Population Secretariat, which was established in 1988 as a semi-autonomous institution under the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

**Our Vision**  
A hub of distinction for promoting and coordinating population policies and programs in Africa

**Our Mission**  
To improve the quality of life of the people of Uganda by influencing government policies and programs to address population patterns and trends in a sustainable and inclusive manner

**National Population Council**  
Statistics House, Plot 9, Colville Street,  
P.O Box 2666 Kampala, Uganda  
Email: npcsec@npcsec.go.ug  
Website: www.npcsec.go.ug X@NPC\_Uganda

*We wish all Ugandans a happy International Women's Day!*



## MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Simbamanyo House, Plot 2, George Street. P.O Box 7136, Kampala  
0414 343572, E-mail: ps@mglsd.go.ug Twitter: @mglsd\_UG Facebook: @mglsd



### STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 2024.

**Theme: "Accelerating Gender Equality through Women Economic Empowerment".**

**Venue: BOMA GROUNDS, KATAKWI DISTRICT.**



H.E Gen. Yoweri K. Museveni  
President of the Republic of Uganda



Hon. Amongi Betty Ongom  
Minister for Gender, Labour  
and Social Development



Hon. Mutuuzo Peace Regis  
Minister of State for Gender  
and Culture Affairs



Hon. Asamo Hellen Grace  
Minister of State for Disability  
Affairs



Hon. Gidudu Mafwabi Dominic  
Minister of State for Elderly  
Affairs



Hon. Sarah Mateke  
Minister of State for Youth and  
Children Affairs



Aggrey David  
Kibenge  
Permanent Secretary

**T**oday Uganda joins the rest of the world to celebrate the International women's day which is observed on 8<sup>th</sup> March of every year.

This day which is observed as a national holiday is being celebrated under the global theme; "**Count Her in: Accelerating Gender Equality through Economic Empowerment**". This theme, showcases the need for economic empowerment in advancing gender equality and fostering an equal footing for women in the current society.

The National theme; "**Accelerating Gender Equality through Women Economic Empowerment**" emphasizes the sentiment that women's economic empowerment is key in achieving gender equality. This is because it enables women to fully participate in the economy and decision making processes.

Women's economic empowerment does not only advance the rights and opportunities women may have, but it also unlocks their full potential in society and the economy. In a country where poverty has predominantly a female face especially among households headed by divorced and widowed women (17%) and unmarried female headed households (2%), the country can accelerate progress in reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development through prioritising and investing in women's economic empowerment.

#### **NATIONAL LEGAL AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORKS FOR GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT.**

Uganda is a signatory to several international and regional instruments on gender equality and women empowerment, including the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the 2030 agenda for Sustainable Development with its attendant

Sustainable Development Goals and the stand-alone goal on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (SDG:5), the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on The Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), the Gender Policy of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), East African Community Treaty and its Gender Policy and The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Gender Policy (COMESA, 2002).

Since 1995, critical legislative provisions that prioritize gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are well articulated in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, detailing fundamental guiding legislation for the national agenda on women's human rights. Specific provisions affirm commitment to women's rights, including Article 32 on affirmative action for marginalized groups, Article 33 on women's rights, and Article 180 on local government representation, specifically Article 180(2), which provides for reservation of one-third of the membership of each local government council for women.

#### **GOVERNMENT'S INTERVENTIONS TO ACCELERATE GENDER EQUALITY THROUGH WOMEN ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

The Government of Uganda (GoU) has been consistent in its pursuit for gender equality and the empowerment of women. Over the years, the Government has taken significant strides in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in national development planning. It has made significant gains in its socio-economic development, maintained peace and stability for over 3-decades and is on course to become an upper middle-income country by 2040. The economy has more than doubled from

UGX 64 trillion in FY2010/11 to UGX 162.12 trillion in FY2021/223 in nominal terms.

The Government of Uganda has made these strides to address the gender gap in financial inclusion and ensure that women have equal access to financial resources through the following ways;

1. The Joint Programme of Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Project (UWEP) and the Youth Livelihood Programme. Cumulatively by end of FY2021/2022, UWEP had disbursed UGX116.8 to finance a total 18,244 women enterprises reaching 205,879 individual women. YLP had disbursed UGX169.414 to finance a total 21,280 youth projects benefiting 251,679 youth (46% of whom are female).
2. The Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) scheme. Under this programme, eligible older persons receive UGX 25,000 per month to support them meet their basic need of life. Since inception of the programme in 2010, the programme has paid out UGX 656.25Bn to 426,430 older persons (254,307 females and 174,123 male).
3. JUA-KALI Enterprises to Transition into Formal Economy (SENTE) Programme. The Programme seeks to boost the growth, productivity, and profitability of enterprises in the informal sector by providing support in the form of business tool kits and equipment with the aims to facilitate their transition into the formal economy. The Programme has so far supported 552 Jua kali groups (7,167 males and 9,174 female) drawn from 120 constituencies from all regions of country.
4. The MGLSD is currently implementing a Grow project supported by the World Bank with
5. USD 217 million including USD 40 million for refugees and refugee host districts. This will drive increased access to entrepreneurial services that enable women entrepreneurs to grow their enterprises in Uganda. The project targets 60,000 women owned enterprises (including 3,000 refugee-owned business, 280,000 women entrepreneurs and employees including 42,000 refugees and 14,000 host communities).
6. The Presidential initiative project on skilling underprivileged girls/ young women aged 17 to 35 years started in 2017 under State House with an aim of empowering them with various basic skills in tailoring, weaving, embroidery, knitting, shoe making, hair dressing, bakery and confectionery. Over 75,000 girls since inception have graduated from the training and each girl is provided with USD350 as start-up capital. Most of the girls are now able to provide for themselves and their families.
7. The Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga) was launched in August 2019 as part of the broad government strategy targeting to transform 68% of homesteads from subsistence to market oriented production with the overall objective of promoting job creation and improving household incomes. The initiative is centred on 18 categories/ enterprise/ emyooga covering majority of the hitherto, financially excluded Ugandans, including women in the informal sector.
7. *The Parish Development Model (PDM)* is one of the reforms to actualize the National Development Plan III goals. The Government launched PDM in FY 2020/2021 as a last-mile service delivery mechanism to transition 39% of the households



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**STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION TO MARK THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY, 2024.**

below the poverty line from subsistence to a money economy and as a wealth creation programme implemented at the lowest economic planning unit - the Parish. Under the financial inclusion pillar 30% has been ring-fenced for women to deliver essential economic and social services to solve critical challenges that have trapped women in poor resource households in the vicious cycle of poverty for a long time.

8. The initiative to support Jua-kali Enterprises to transition into the formal economy (SENTE). The programme seeks to boost the growth, productivity, and profitability of enterprises in the informal by providing support in the form of business tool kits and equipment. To date the programme has so far supported over 552 Jua kali groups (7,167 males and 9174 female) drawn from 120 constituencies from all regions of the country.
9. The Private Sector Foundation (PSFU), the Government is undertaking the Gender Equality Seal Certification Programme

for Private Enterprises aimed at enhancing gender equality and responsiveness private sector workplaces and promoting women's economic empowerment. So far 100 Private Sector Companies have been enrolled under this initiative.

10. Government of Uganda in partnership with Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), is implementing the Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment (CRWEE) in Karamoja and West Nile Regions of Uganda. This is aimed to accelerate rural women's economic empowerment through targeted interventions across the country rural women.
11. In the quest to increase women's participation in public procurement, in 2021, the government amended the PPDA Act 2003 to incorporate women among special interest groups (youth and people with disabilities) to benefit from the 30% provision on local content.
12. Government started to document

and secure land rights of women and other marginalised groups under customary land tenure system through issuance of certificates of customary ownership (CCOs) and the Succession Act 2022 (Amended) accords 15% of the interstate property to the surviving widow(s).

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

While the above achievements are important and ought to be celebrated for they have somewhat managed to accelerate the gender equality through empowering of women, the country can even do more and explore other approaches that can address the visible gaps left. This is possible through the following recommendations;

1. Promoting gender responsive local production and use of locally manufactured goods and services.
2. Promoting gender responsive public procurement including the operationalization of the reservations for women, youth and persons with disabilities. In Uganda 60% of the budget is spent on public procurements yet only 1% of women owned businesses participate in Public

- Procurement.
3. Creating supportive environments for women and men in SME development including establishment of enabling infrastructure and facilities for women enterprise growth, productivity and transition.
4. Promoting decent work and productive employment for all women and men including investing in appropriate technologies to reduce the burden of unpaid care work.
5. Mainstreaming GBV prevention and response in legislation, policies, programmes and strategic plans, Program Budget Framework Papers, Ministerial Policy Statements of MDAs, LGs and Private Sector Organizations including review of laws and policies with the aim of strengthening GBV prevention and response.
6. Promoting positive social norms, values and practices and transform negative norms, beliefs and practices at all levels
7. Promoting women's access to appropriate technologies and use of digital solutions for improved production and value addition and marketing.

**MESSAGE FROM UN WOMEN COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVE ON IWD 2024**



**Dr. Paulina Chiwangu**  
**UN Women Country Representative**

I am delighted to join you to commemorate the IWD, especially at a time when the world is facing multiple crises that are putting immense pressure on many communities to prioritize gender equality and Human Rights at the center for development to accelerate implementation of SDGs. Prioritizing equal opportunities, building resilience and women's and girls' rights across all aspects of life is the only way

to secure inclusive prosperity, just economies, and a healthy planet for future generations. The global theme for this year's International Women's Day is **"Invest in women: Accelerate progress."**

Achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls requires sufficient investments. There is need to maximize both the quality and quantity of financing to SDG 5: "Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls" to unlock the potential of Women and girls in Uganda.

One of the key challenges in achieving gender equality by 2030 is an alarming lack of financing with a staggering USD 360 billion global annual deficit in spending on gender-equality measures. Gender equality remains the greatest human rights challenge. Investing in women is a human rights imperative and cornerstone for building inclusive societies. Progress for women benefits us all.

The current economic hardships are pushing more women into poverty. Globally, 1 in every 10

women lives in extreme poverty, and projections indicate 342.4 million women and girls will not have moved out of extreme poverty by 2030 unless we shift current trends. As we commemorate International Women's Day, we call on development partners including the private sector to increase investment in targeting women at various levels. Implementing gender responsive financing is a key strategy to achieve economic development and alleviating poverty.

UN Women calls on collective action and invites all stakeholders to join our efforts to advance financing for gender equality, including through private finance, and jointly lead and shape the path to a more inclusive and sustainable economy and to drive accountability for the achievement of SDG 5.

As we know already, well targeted investments in women and girls can be a tool to stimulate economic growth. For example, investments in both physical and social infrastructure can reduce women's unpaid labour burden, freeing up

time to spend in remunerative labour activities with benefits for gender equality and the household. Further, a large body of evidence indicates that women's increased access to income results in more resources invested in children's health, education, and development.

It is equally important to invest in interventions to end violence against women and girls to enable us to shape a better future for all. violence against women and girls in all its forms, prevents women from participating meaningfully in socio-economic and political processes in the country. It is also a hindrance to peace, a hindrance to security, and a hindrance to sustainable development. We must continue to fight all violence and its root causes.

This International Women's Day let's come together to unlock financing across different sectors, to track budget allocations, to do more gender-responsive budgeting and to implement gender equality and women empowerment programmes.



# MEET THE CROWN JEWELS OF KARAMOJA

Just like it was said about Bethlehem, it has been said countless times about Karamoja. Can anything good come out of Karamoja? Despite its reputation for poverty and conflict, Karamoja is a region rich in culture, history and resilience. Its women are exceptional. As we mark Women's Day **Olandason Wanyama and Mary Karugaba** profile some of the women flying the region's flag high. These women are breaking barriers and making significant strides in various fields, from education to entrepreneurship. They are shining examples of strength and determination, proving that indeed, good things can come out of Karamoja.



**Anna Lomonyang**, is the executive director of Karamoja special children hope initiative, a non-governmental organisation helping those who require special needs. Lomonyang, is passionate, social, humanitarian and cooperative. She is a professional teacher for special needs with a diploma from Kyambogo University, and still pursuing a degree in the same field.

**Dorcus Angom**, A very straight forward and open woman, diligent, knowledgeable and selective. She does not entertain nonsense. Angom is a human rights advocate, a programmes manager at Riam Riam, a civil society network in Karamoja. She is currently pursuing a masters in development studies at the Uganda Martyrs University. She hails from Kotido district.



**Esther Davina Anyakun** The state minister for disaster is also the Woman MP Nakapiripirit district. Anyakun is an informed lady, who is socially centered. She also loves fulfilling commitments. As the current Woman MP for Nakapiripirit district, Anyakun, who has previously, worked with USAID projects in Karamoja as a regional coordinator, has a master's in business administration, diploma in health management, among other qualifications.



**Margret Iriama** The former Woman MP for Moroto district (2011-2016) is a professional, reserved individual. She is strategic, kind, open and a focused strategist.



**Nuria Hafta Teko** Teko is currently the vice-chairperson of Kotido district, who holds a diploma in social works from Lira University. She is a daughter of the soil and says her aim, who is strategic in her dealings with people and inclined to the welfare of her constituents, but quiet with kind words.



**Stella Atyang** is currently the Woman MP for Moroto district. She holds a degree in micro-finance and community economic empowerment from Uganda Martyrs University. She is an informed legislator, culturally sensitive and a devoted catholic. Atyang has a degree in micro-finance and community economic empowerment from Uganda martyrs university.



**Stella Namoe**, is a former Woman MP for the greater Moroto district from 2006-2010. When Napak was curved out of Moroto, she became the MP of the new district in 2010 till 2021, when she lost the seat to Faith Nakut. She has a bachelor's degree in development from Nkozi University. She hails from Napak district.

**Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Justice Jane Frances Abodo**



Born on August 18, 1973 in a big family in Kangole, Napak district in Karamoja, Justice Frances Abodo was raised by a priest. She studied at Kangole Girls Primary School and later enrolled at St. Mary's College Aboke, Lira, where she finished her O'level. She worked her way from a diploma to a master's of law degree. Abodo rose through the ranks from a trainee state attorney to assistant DPP, senior assistant DPP, primary state attorney, senior state attorney and state attorney. She later worked as senior assistant DPP and in charge of the DPP's office's Anti-Corruption desk. In 2010 to 2014, she was overseeing the day-to-day administrative tasks of the newly established DPP unit, as well as managing the team-building exercises and human resources.

**Dr Sidonia Angom**, Currently spearheading the establishment of Moroto University, a constituent college of agriculture under Gulu University. She is the first Karimojong to attain a PhD in the sub region.



She hails from Abim district. Angom is social, strategic, informed on issues of professionalism and a tough hard worker. When Dr Sidonia Angom speaks, you see energy and determination in every sentence she makes. This is the determination that has characterised her whole life. Born in 1968, in Abim district, Angom believes that once you are determined the sky is not a limit. This is true, given her life's journey from a secretary

at Makerere University to a PhD holder heading the establishment of an agricultural university (constituent college) in Moroto, the first of its kind. While a secretary at Makerere University, Angom says she was inspired to go for further studies by the numerous women doctors and professors at the university. She began by enrolling for a degree and later a master's in UK. "When I joined Kampala International University, I was the only person with a master's. The rest had PhDs. I decided to enroll for one, which I acquired from the University of Kwazulu Natal in Daban South Africa," Angom adds.

**Doris Akol**, a former Commissioner General of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), now works as a technical assistance advisor for the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC. During her tenure at URA, revenue increased significantly from sh9.7 trillion in FY2014/15 to sh14.5 trillion in FY2017/18, representing an absolute growth of sh4.8 trillion. Previously, she was a partner at Dentons' Kampala office. She got the African Women in Leadership Award from the African Virtuous Women Awards Organisation in Abuja, Nigeria in 2018. Although Akol comes from Karamoja, she grew and studied in Kampala. She worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers where she later joined URA as a legal officer and rose through the ranks.



**Rose Nauwat**, is the former Woman MP for Amudat district (2011-2021). She is focused, strategic in her dealings, but kind and quiet. Today, Nauwat, who has a master's in public administration, runs a business in Kampala.

**Florence Naduk** Naduka is currently, the executive director of Matany Girls vocational institute. She formerly, worked with Office of the Prime Minister coordinating programmes in Karamoja sub-region.



Naduk is open minded, social and tough on issues. However, she is free, approachable, development and result oriented.

**Faith Nakut** is the current Woman MP for Napak district. She is focused, eloquent, has lots of courage. She is passionate about issues regarding her constituents. She is result oriented and has a master's in business administration



**Rose Lily Akello**, The state minister for ethics is also the MP for Karenga district. She was previously the Woman MP for Kaabong before the creation of Karenga.





# UGANDA POLICE FORCE

## Uganda Police boosting women at all levels



By Carol Kasujja

It is that time of the year when we join the world to observe and celebrate International Women's Day. This year's theme is, Invest in women: accelerate progress.'

The International Women's Day, as highlighted by the UN Women, is a time to reflect on the progress made, to call for change and to celebrate acts of courage and determination by ordinary women who have played an extraordinary role in the history of their countries and communities.

Policing is traditionally a male-dominated profession, but over the past decades, more and more women have chosen law enforcement as a career. As work environments and skills evolve, female officers are aiming higher in terms of their career aspirations and are taking on a wider range of roles and responsibilities.

In Uganda, law enforcement agencies like Uganda Police Force (UPF) have recognized the need to increase diversity across all areas of policing and are working to attract and retain female talent.

Through various programmes, Uganda Police Force has put in place policies and structures that support women's recruitment and deployment across a wide spectrum of roles that has helped to remove the barriers in the various departments.

Last year as the world celebrated International Women's Day, Inspector General of Police Martins Okoth Ochola congratulated all Ugandan female Police officers and other staff upon their commitment towards serving their country in a male-dominated profession.

"We, celebrate all female officers, volunteers and staff. In the Police, gender equality and empowerment remain a priority, both in our policing operations and leadership roles," Ochola said

According to statistics, the UPF continues to see a steady progress with the number of women in the force increasing and that of women in senior roles of leadership. According to the Police report 2023, there are 7,777 female Police officers in Uganda, making it 18.3 percent.

"We are supporting the theme and continue to encourage all women in the UPF to aim higher to achieve what they are capable of and to believe in themselves. What's encouraging is that today, there are more women in policing, more women in being promoted into higher ranks and in specialist roles in IT, Forensics, top leadership," Ochola observed.

Ochola noted that the IWD theme is inspiring, because equality for all is essential, Gender equality works both ways and it's important to have equal levels of access to opportunities to enable all of our employees to reach their full potential.

"We are also grateful and respectful to the women and men, who have campaigned for gender equality for many years. At the UPF, we are fortunate that our organization recognizes and celebrates the need for equality for all,"



Ochola noted.

On several occasions, the IGP, has always advocated for an improvement in the welfare of female officers and support to the growth of the department of women affairs. True to his word, more female officers are benefiting from the different welfare schemes and projects available in the directorate of welfare and production.

The Uganda Police Force (UPF) is cognisant of the barriers facing women who apply for and join the UPF, and who thereafter participate in operational policing. Accordingly, it continues to devise strategies to address these issues. The UPF formulated a Gender Policy in December 2017, accompanied, in the following year, by a three-year Gender Strategy and Action Plan.

### Deployment.

Recently Police established strategies to encourage women to join the Uganda Police Force. They developed a community outreach strategy to specifically attract more women into the Police Force.

The presence of the Women's Affairs Department in the UPF advocating for women's increased representation, equal opportunities recruitment policy and the quota system are some of the institutional measures in place to increase women's deployment. Although opportunities are open to both men and women, it is mandatory for all advertisements to carry an employment equity statement that encourages women to apply. Teams are also required to apply the 30% quota for women during recruitment and selection for deployment.

A 2023 Uganda Police report on 'Results of the Measuring Opportunities for Women in Peace Operations (MOWIP) Assessment,' showed that more than 50% of both male and female respondents indicated awareness of female colleagues who have benefitted from affirmative action measures including the 60 + 2% during interviews and lowering of scores for driving tests.

The UPF's Police Advisory Committee (PAC) is an established structure that ensures that all committees in the UPF consist of a minimum of 30% of female officers; that female officers are deployed in command positions; that a

As part of the pre-deployment training, all officers are required to undertake gender related courses such as; sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). The objective is to increase awareness of, and prepare the officers to respond to issues of SGBV at the individual and community level. The pre-deployment training also covers technical areas i.e. computer training and report writing skills, both of which are of added advantage for deployment

The police leadership completed the amendment of the police standing orders that were discriminatory to female police officers.

"In the police standing orders that were last amended in 1984, female police officers had to seek permission from the Inspector General of Police to get married to a civilian. A female officer was referred to as Sir. All these discriminatory sections were removed in the amended police standing orders.

A female police officer, when taking oath, was required to refer to herself as 'he,' something police bosses stopped saying it was wrong and unconstitutional.

### Recruitment and Retention

Affirmative action measures currently in place for recruitment, training and promotion of female officers are: employment equity clauses in all job openings encouraging women to apply; 30% quota for women recruits; and an additional two (2) percentage points for women candidates who attain the pass mark during interviews for deployment.

### Sexual Harassment Concerns

The Policy provides that sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse will not be tolerated in the workplace. The Strategy and Action Plan calls for regular statements to be issued to UPF members and the public regarding such positions. This re-affirms, for UPF officers and personnel, the seriousness with which sexual harassment is considered and dealt with by the UPF.

Despite challenges faced by many, women in uniform have performed beyond their expectations in serving their motherland without prejudice or self-pity which is why we need to celebrate their enormous achievements.

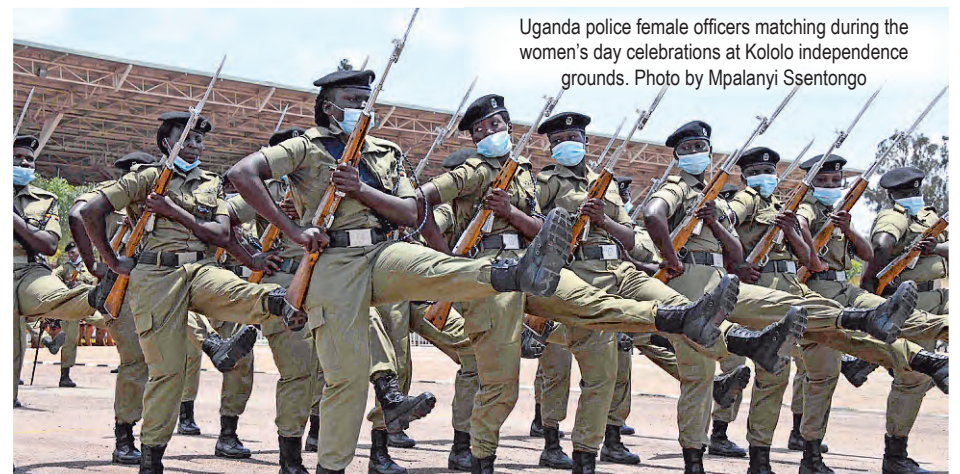
Directorate of Gender and Women Affairs is established; and that a gender-responsive and intergenerational mentorship and leadership programme is introduced for junior female staff.

To be able to have world class trained officers, the UPF established partnerships with different agencies to strengthen capacities and equip women officers with the requisite skills for peacekeeping missions. Because of that, there is an increasing number of female officers in the deployment of VIP protection, offices, and residencies.

Among the good practices in UPF is the existence of an enabling policy framework that includes a Gender Policy, the Gender Equality Strategy (2022-2025) and the Sexual Harassment Policy. Collectively, these progressive policies aim at promoting an inclusive and gender responsive institution (GRI) that respects and upholds the dignity of women, men, boys and girls.

### Training

The Gender Policy also addresses gender bias and awareness across the UPF; and stipulates that UPF training must be gender-responsive, with training facilities and an environment conducive to the full and active participation of female and male officers. At least 30% participants in the training programmes must be women. Basic infrastructure, including accommodation and sanitation at training institutes, must be improved to make it more appealing to female participants.



Uganda police female officers marching during the women's day celebrations at Kololo independence grounds. Photo by Mpalanyi Ssentongo



# MASTERCARD'S COMMUNITY PASS PAVES THE WAY FOR DIGITAL INCLUSION

Nearly half of the global population faces challenges in receiving basic needs due to a lack of infrastructure affecting access to food, education, and healthcare. Community Pass, innovative digital infrastructure powered by Mastercard, aims to bridge this gap by providing a shared platform for service providers to increase their reach and reduce the cost of delivering essential services to low-income, rural, and frequently offline communities. Tara Nathan, Executive Vice President and Founder of Mastercard Community Pass, shared valuable insights at the second annual Community Pass Customer Summit held in Kampala, Uganda, focusing on the platform's evolution, objectives, accomplishments, and future prospects. Below are excerpts with **Francis Emukule**.



Tara Nathan, EVP and Founder of Mastercard Community Pass

**Q** What inspired the creation of Community Pass?

**A** The stark reality is that many individuals globally lack access to critical digital services that are readily available to us in major urban centers, whether in Kampala or New York City. Simple tasks, like remote payments amidst challenging times such as COVID-19, are often taken for granted by those privileged enough to have digital access. This disparity and need for service delivery led to the creation of Community Pass. The platform's mission is to extend digital and financial inclusion to remote and underserved communities and to create a long-term solution and ecosystem for these communities to thrive.

**What have been some of the most significant digital solutions Mastercard has created for people living in fragile economies in Africa in general, and Uganda in particular?**

Community Pass stands as one of our most significant innovations, establishing digital infrastructure that works offline and considers all players along the value chain to support service provision for rural and marginalized communities. By creating an ecosystem of players, Community Pass goes beyond merely developing an application and handing it to users.

Take, for example, our focus on agriculture—a sector, according to World Bank data, that accounts for 20-40% of GDP in many Sub-Saharan African countries. Community Pass plays a pivotal role in assigning a functional digital identity to smallholder farmers who were

- previously invisible on the grid.
- By providing them with a unique digital identification and digital transaction history, these farmers can transact both offline and online and can find better opportunities to sell their produce, get access to higher quality inputs, and secure credit through financial institutions.

- Community Pass effectively lowers the cost of delivery for all ecosystem players, which encourages more participants to enter the market and thereby lowers operational costs for the farmers. Traditional bank processes to obtain a loan can take up to six months, rendering it cost-prohibitive for most. However, unique digital identification provides Community Pass customers with the comprehensive data they require to enable quick decision-making on loan approvals and efficient service delivery to farmers.

**How have you been able to ensure that whoever is providing the farmer inputs is selling authentic products?**

The Farm Pass platform brings together various agri-sector stakeholders from the supply and demand sides in one agricultural marketplace, increasing competition and transparency in farming communities. Our approach involves collaborating and establishing networks with trusted farmers, particularly through manufacturers, as we digitize the entire value chain to ensure traceability.

**How many people have currently been onboarded to Community Pass in Uganda, and what are the specific challenges or gaps in Uganda that the**

**THE PLATFORM'S MISSION IS TO EXTEND DIGITAL AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION TO REMOTE AND UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES AND TO CREATE A LONG-TERM SOLUTION AND ECOSYSTEM FOR THESE COMMUNITIES TO THRIVE.**

- platform has effectively addressed?
- Globally, more than 5 million users are now using Community Pass, and in Uganda alone, over a million users are registered. Our success is due to our ability to attract service providers, including

banks, to join the platform. We leverage Mastercard's resources and assets, including data privacy and protection, for users; we are a trusted aggregator with franchise rules. Farmers benefit by having access to an expanded market, as buyers compete for their produce. With the upcoming launch of our credit option, we aim to empower farmers further by providing them with access to credit for increased procurement of quality inputs.

**Could you provide more details on how anonymised and biometric data are utilized in facilitating access to financial and other services via the Community Pass platform?**

To ensure access to important services like credit, it's crucial to address data security and privacy. Community Pass plays a key role in this by giving farmers control over their data through biometric authentication. Different authentication methods are used each with permissions to ensure that farmers' data is managed with their explicit consent. Additionally, using farmer

data has greatly improved the efficiency of the credit assessment process, making it quicker and more effective.

**For remote farming communities with no connectivity, how is Community Pass able to ease accessibility to financial services?**

The system works smoothly both online and offline, tailored to meet farmers where they are now and guide them towards their future goals. Through the provision of a Community Pass card, farmers can perform numerous tasks, ranging from receiving government benefits to securing quality inputs, applying for credit, documenting harvests, and receiving payments. This approach ensures that farmers have access to a comprehensive toolset that empowers them at every step of their journey.

**How does the Community Pass Summit in Uganda contribute to developing a digital ecosystem for service delivery to rural communities in Uganda?**

The success of this system and platform hinges on the collaboration of an entire ecosystem of players. What stood out to me during this Summit was the wide range of participants that attended, from financial institutions to farmers, cooperatives, and device and card manufacturers. The involvement of such a diversity of actors is crucial for extending services to rural populations. Our collective responsibility is to continually seek and engage new partners, expanding the ecosystem to drive down costs. Community Pass aims to make the platform affordable, easy to use, and invaluable to farmers.

**How does the Community Pass Customer Summit foster collaboration among diverse practitioners such as investors, financial professionals, entrepreneurs, government, and operators?**

The Summit emphasized Community Pass' commercially sustainable approach, aiming for a lasting impact in rural communities that will serve present and future generations. With this approach, Community Pass attracts a broader subset of collaborators and places a strong emphasis on their long-term viability. Ecosystem partners are selected based on their commitment, tenable business plans, and strategic visions, ensuring lasting success and impact. With these partners and with the insights gathered at the 2024 Summit, we will continue to refine our approach to building, deploying, and scaling the Community Pass platform.



By John Masaba

# UNPAID CARE WORK WORSENS GENDER INEQUALITY — REPORT

**U**npaid care labour is worsening gender inequality in Uganda, according to a new analysis, which calls for robust legislation to address the issue.

Because it has a disproportionate effect on women and girls compared to boys and men, particularly in terms of economic empowerment, the report by the Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) and Oxfam states that the matter must be addressed immediately.

Child, elderly and sick care are all examples of persons who provide unpaid care.

Laundry, cooking, grocery shopping, cleaning and assisting other families with their errands are also part of it.

The International Labour Organisation classifies activities, such as gathering food, fuel, water, as well as family labour in agriculture, as part of this category.

**UNPALATABLE STATISTICS**

There is a lower probability

that individuals, who are the primary carers at home, will have the time to go to school or find employment. Because of this, it is significantly more challenging to be able to overcome poverty.

The report titled: *Strengthening Capacity for Effective Women Economic Empowerment and Care Work Interventions* states that "for many women, for example, these duties are in addition to their paid jobs, creating a 'double burden' of work."

**ELDERLY, CHILDREN**

When it comes to providing unpaid care for children, the elderly and people With disabilities, women and girls dominated the field at a rate of 45%, while only 12% of men were involved in this line of employment.

As a result, they put aside other opportunities to earn money in order to perform



Some women are subjected to unpaid care labour, such as working in the gardens

their responsibilities.

According to the report, 7% of the women who were surveyed stated that they did not perform this work "all the time," although only 4% of their male

counterparts disclosed the same information.

When it came to those who claimed not to participate in such unpaid care labour at all as part of their daily routine, the

numbers for men were higher, coming in at 85%, compared to 48% for women.

This was the case when it came to those who reported not participating

at all in such work. It further stated: "The situation is not any different in the agriculture sector, where 55.2% of women were found to be involved in agriculture for subsistence compared to only 38.4% among men."

Only 33.5% of women own land in the agricultural sector, whereas 62.5% of males do.

This disparity pertains to the allocation of ownership rights for agricultural land.

**PARLIAMENTARY JOBS**

According to the research, there has been improvement in politics, with an increase in the number of women acquiring jobs in political positions.

As an illustration, in 1989, just 18% of women held seats in Parliament and other elective posts.

Continued on page 44



## MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

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H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni  
President of the Republic of Uganda



Maj Gen. Kahinda Otafiire  
(Minister of Internal Affairs)



Gen. David Rubakuba Muhoozi  
(Minister of State for Internal Affairs)



Lt Gen. Joseph Butamanya Musanyufu  
(Permanent Secretary,  
Ministry of Internal Affairs)

### Happy Women's Day Celebrations to all Ugandans!

The Minister, Minister of State, the Permanent Secretary, Management and Staff of Ministry of Internal Affairs Congratulate H.E Yoweri Kaguta Tibuhabwe Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, Cabinet, Parliament, the Judiciary and the people of the Republic of Uganda as we celebrate the International Women's Day.

The Ministry is comprised of various autonomous and semi-autonomous institutions whose functions complement each other to execute the Ministry's Mandate as we ensure a peaceful, secure and stable Uganda.

By Davis Buyondo

# WOMEN ROLLING BACK ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE

**E**cocide is a term that refers to extensive damage, destruction, or loss of ecosystems, often caused by human activities. The term is used to describe severe environmental harm on a large scale, that results in the disruption or complete collapse of ecosystems, leading to the degradation of biodiversity, pollution and other detrimental environmental effects.

In environmental conservation, women are not merely key stakeholders, they are dynamic agents of change, whose invaluable perspectives, knowledge and skills bring a distinct and crucial dimension to conservation endeavours.

According to Erena Nalule, an environment activist from the Community Transformation Foundation (COTFONE), amid the worsening environmental challenges, women, who are the most affected by climate change, have now emerged as powerful catalysts for change in their communities.

She told *New Vision* that there is a campaign underway focusing on planting fruit trees and cultivating indigenous foods with women at the forefront. Additionally, they are dedicated to safeguarding the existing ecosystems from any potential destruction by encroachers, mainly farmers.

Knowing the historical trend where men have often played a dominant role in environmental degradation, Nalule explained that they took a comprehensive approach encouraging them to plant more trees than they have destroyed, but also commit to ongoing women-led tree planting initiatives.

Simultaneously, she added, they empower women to play a crucial role by persistently monitoring and reporting any instances of environmental violations, ensuring a collaborative and impactful approach to conservation.

The initiative committee is led by Zaituni Nangobi, Betty Nakalanda, Tauhida Namatta, Beatrice Nambalirwa and Maurance Natukunda, who have planted different fruit tree species and climate resilience crops in different communities in Kisseka parish, Lwengo district.

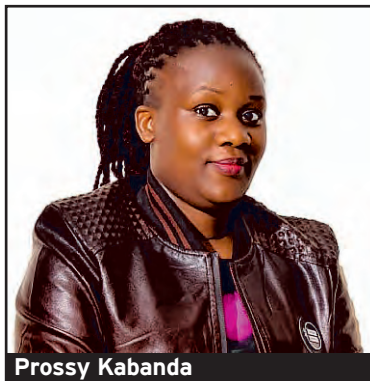
Nangobi said climate change challenges in their district are rooted in uncontrolled charcoal burning and inadequate solid waste management, particularly concerning plastics and single-use polythene bags.

These challenges, she said, have detrimental effects on soil fertility and disrupt rainfall patterns, highlighting the urgent need for sustainable solutions in addressing these environmental concerns.

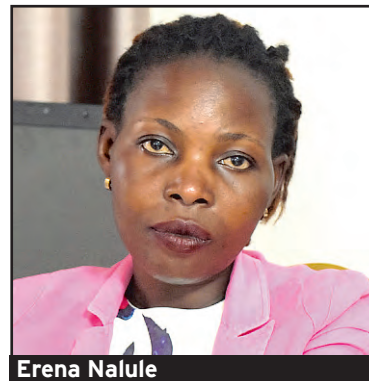
Mary Jude Namulema, the environment officer for Lwengo district, said this is a proactive



Judith Chandia



Prossy Kabanda



Erena Nalule

approach to environmental conservation. She stressed that the initiative is in line with the district's continuous campaign for environmental sustainability.

Namulema further emphasised the importance of such efforts, stating that if the district was to embrace similar initiatives, it could substantially contribute to safeguarding the entire region from the adverse effects of climate change.

## MASAKA

In Masaka district, Prossy Kabanda, an eco-feminist and board chairperson of the Biodiversity Conservation Foundation (BCF), plays a vital role in the preservation of biodiversity, focusing particularly on Ramsar sites, such as Nabajuzi in Masaka city.

Unfortunately, this area faces challenges, such as encroachment by residents and contamination with solid waste, primarily stemming from community garbage. With the heightened vulnerability of women and girls to climate change, Kabanda said women must take a central role in addressing this crisis.

"Empowering them in leadership positions provides an avenue for influencing policies and spearheading campaigns that contribute to climate change solutions," she noted.

The concept of eco-feminism emphasises the intersectionality of gender and environmental issues. However, women in various parts of the country and the world at large are using this framework to address ecological challenges.

Together with other women, Kabanda spearheads regular plastic collection efforts at various landing sites, such as Lambu in Bukakata sub-county, Masaka district to combat the rising plastic pollution in Lake Victoria and other crucial wetlands.

## LUWERO

Nezikokolima Environmental Group is a women-led initiative

## GENDER-INCLUSIVE CLIMATE INITIATIVES

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) from Uganda and Sweden recently joined forces to launch an ambitious climate initiative in Masaka region.

The campaign aims to revolutionise the landscape of climate activism by actively involving both men and women in practical community engagements.

The focus on educating boys and men, who historically

contribute to environmental harm, is aimed at eliminating harmful social practices and combating sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).

In involving both men and women, the campaign seeks to ensure that the consequences of environmental degradation are understood by all, as women and children disproportionately bear the brunt of climate change impacts.

devoted to empowering youth and women for self-sufficiency while concurrently working towards mitigating plastic pollution in Luwero district.

Judith Chandia, the founder and chief executive officer of Nezikokolima Initiative, started the Schools Greening Initiative for Better Learning among vulnerable communities in Butuntumula sub-county, which ignited a wave of positive change in the lives of children, youth and women within their communities.

With a mission to empower and promote self-reliance, Chandia explained that she has

successfully engaged at least five primary schools, where more than 1,500 eager learners have benefited.

"Our commitment extends beyond traditional education, since we believe in hands-on learning. Through community-wide clean-up events, we educate on waste management, focusing on the danger of plastic pollution," she added.

Through the innovative approach of this initiative, the collected plastic bottles are transformed into trendy earrings, necklaces, bangles and vibrant flowers, generating income that directly supports the children and community.

"Together, we are turning everyday waste into opportunities for growth, education and a cleaner environment in addition to providing income-generating opportunities for participants," Chandia said.

She added that through campaigns and educational programmes in communities, they sensitise residents, especially women and youth, about the impacts of plastic pollution. They further advocate for reduced plastic usage and promote eco-friendly alternatives through workshops, seminars and outreach programmes.

Florence Nakandi, another dedicated environmental activist in the Masaka region, has been tirelessly championing the preservation

of the Lwera wetland in Kalungu district.

The Lwera wetland spans about 20km along the bustling Kampala-Masaka highway and is regarded as one of the largest wetlands in Uganda.

It is also a crucial water catchment area and a connecting link for numerous rivers and wetlands across Gomba, Mpigi, and Kalungu districts. Its strategic location and extensive reach underscore the ecological significance of Lwera as a vital component of Uganda's natural landscape.

Unfortunately, this vital ecosystem was allocated to sand mining and rice-growing investors, destroying numerous acres. The aftermath has been devastating, with the region experiencing heightened instances of flooding and increased temperatures.

Nakandi emphasises that the issue extends beyond Lwera, since other wetlands in Wakiso and various parts of the country are equally under threat.

Her commitment to safeguarding these natural habitats highlights the urgent need for comprehensive conservation efforts to mitigate the broader environmental impact on both local communities and ecosystems.

## GOVERNMENT WARNING

Sam Cheptoris, the environment minister, issued a stern warning to those encroaching on wetlands, stating that the Government is prepared to "crush" anyone who disregards the law, regardless of their position or influence.

This stern stance comes as alarming statistics reveal a 2.5% loss, equivalent to a decline of 6,146.6 sq. km, in wetland coverage between 1994 and 2015.

Uganda, as a signatory to the Convention on Wetlands, actively joins the global community in raising awareness about the vital role of wetlands for people and the planet.

Uganda's dedication to the preservation of wetlands stands as an inspiration for other nations grappling with similar challenges, encouraging combined efforts to safeguard these irreplaceable ecosystems.

However, as Uganda marked World Wetlands Day with a reaffirmation of its commitment to conservation, conservationists and CSOs voiced apprehensions.

They accused National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and the Government of potentially undermining conservation efforts by purportedly protecting investors engaged in encroaching upon wetlands.



Florence Nakandi



# WOMEN STILL PAID LESS THAN MEN

From page 42

This percentage has steadily increased over the years, reaching a peak of 25% in the election year of 2001.

During the year 2006, it reached a high of 31%, and then in 2011, it rapidly increased to 35%. It appears that there is more progress being made on this front, even though it increased to 32%.

The data, which was made public on February 28 at the Skyz Hotel in Naguru, Kampala, appears to agree with a report that was published by the World Bank in 2020.

This report suggests that women earn only two-thirds of what males earn all across the world today. A study found that women receive only 63 cents for every dollar that men earn in the workplace.

**NOT ALL IS GLOOM**

Reacting to the findings, Arthur Bainomugisha, the executive director



The percentage of women holding parliamentary office has increased over time

of Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment ACODE, said the Ugandan woman is better off than before in the context of the progress so far.

He added that some of the

provisions in the country's policies, including the 1.5-point award to women joining public universities have helped many women to come through.

"I did mass communication in my first

degree and I know that we have more women than men at Makerere University because of the 1.5," Bainomugisha said.

This, he said, came through the affirmative action and women's

## WAY FORWARD

Arthur Bainomugisha, the executive director of ACODE, said it is time to review affirmative action to include effective women's economic empowerment.

"Empowerment of women is critical because more than 50% of this country are women, but most of them are trapped in our gender and cultural barriers," he said, adding that this would help improve the quality of life of "our women" and help them explore the full potentials outside their homes.

Charles Opio from Oxfam Uganda agrees, adding that this would create economic equality, adding that a lack of it is a threat to women's rights.

Matembe said there is a need for more engagement between civil society and policymakers.

She said what the country currently has in abundance as a result of their activism is social empowerment more than economic empowerment.

Matembe noted, however, that what they were envisioning when she joined women's activism in the years past was not just social empowerment but also economic empowerment for all women.


movement, adding that it is a big achievement and it is there for everybody to see.

"Women are now not only seen, but they are heard," Bainomugisha said.

Former gender minister Miria Matembe, also said progress has been made.

"Before we criticise, we have got to acknowledge

that we are not where we were 40 years ago," she said. Matembe said some people tend to rubbish Uganda's success story, arguing that liberated women are "only here in Kampala", but that this is not true because the story of success reverberates countrywide.



**Office of the Auditor General**

Happy Women's Day!

**The Office of the Auditor General joins the rest of the world in commemorating the International Women's Day and Congratulates all the Women of the Republic of Uganda upon celebrating yet another Women's Day 2024 under the theme: "Count her in; Accelerating Gender through economic Empowerment".**

The Auditor General, Mr. John F.S Muwanga and Members of Top Management salute members of OAG Women's Forum for their invaluable contribution towards achieving the Office mandate.

**Our Vision:**  
'A model Supreme Audit Institution that adds value to society.'

**Our Mission:**  
'To provide our stakeholders with independent audit results that promote good governance for better service delivery.'


**Our Core Values:**

- **Integrity and Ethical Conduct:** Being honest and morally upright.
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UGANDA BUREAU OF STATISTICS


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President of the Republic of Uganda



**ALBERT BYAMUGISHA (PhD)**  
Board Chairman (UBOS)



**CHRIS N. MUKIZA (PhD)**  
Executive Director/  
Chief Statistician

Happy International Women's Day


The Board, Management and Staff of Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) congratulate His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda, Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the Women and all the people of Uganda on the occasion of celebrating the International Women's Day, 2024.

In line with the theme for this year's celebrations, "COUNT ON HER": Accelerating Equality through Economic Empowerment," UBOS reaffirms her commitment to support Uganda's socio-economic transformation agenda through the production and dissemination of quality statistics. In addition, UBOS commits to coordinating, monitoring and supervising a vibrant National Statistical System (NSS) to inform planning, policy formulation and measurement of development outcomes.

In this regard, therefore, **UBOS appeals to the general public to cooperate, support and participate in the National Population and Housing Census (NPHC) 2024. The Census 2024 will provide data and information to support the development and measurement of achievements realized in a gender sensitive and inclusive manner. Such critical information will support gender sensitive policies and programmes.**

**CENSUS 2024 – "It Matters to be Counted"**

**CENSUS ENUMERATION 10<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2024**



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# WOMEN DRIVING FOOD SECURITY RESEARCH

Gender equality is essential for sustainable development, and the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) recognises the vital role of women in agriculture. NARO promotes gender equality and the economic empowerment of women by offering them equal opportunities. This year's Women's Day theme - "Accelerating Gender Equality through Women's Economic Empowerment" - aligns with NARO's objective to empower women in agriculture.

**Prossy Nandudu** profiles some of the women at NARO who are revolutionizing Ugandan agriculture.



**DR WINNIE NALUKENGE NKALUBO, DIRECTOR NATIONAL FISHERIES RESEARCH INSTITUTE, JINJA**

She studied hydrobiology, the science of life and life processes in water. During a field excursion on Lake Victoria, she developed a deeper interest in aquatic life, leading her to focus on fisheries.

One of the key challenges at our institute is the lack of fisheries data to inform policy. With my team, we have developed a digital solution to aid in data collection from water bodies. This solution will help determine the number of fish stocks, disappearing species, diseases and other challenges that fish face, but are currently unknown.

To ensure the usefulness of the findings, we involve local communities in data collection to facilitate implementation.

The digital solution can be accessed via computers or mobile phones,



as almost all people in fishing communities now have access to smartphones.

**ADVICE**

I encourage young and upcoming female scientists, including those already working, to support and mentor each other.

**DR JOLLY KABIRIZI, SPECIALIST IN DAIRY FARMING**

Kabrizi holds a PhD in agriculture, majoring in animal science.

She worked for National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) as a researcher for 35 years and currently trains farmers. She is also a professor at Valley University of Science and Technology in Bushenyi district, focusing on improving livestock productivity in the region.

**Motivation:** My mother worked with communities in various capacities as a trainer and farmer, so I felt compelled to follow suit by becoming a scientist in the field of agriculture.

**Innovations:** I have introduced over 20 feed innovations aimed at improving dairy cattle nutrition and household income. I have worked with farmer groups in 127 districts of Uganda and coordinated several donor-funded projects in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda. Some of the innovations include the Nutrient Feed Block, 22 Napier grass fodder varieties tolerant to stunt disease, the



famous Pakchong 1 super napier grass and others. I have won several local and international awards.

**Balancing Family and Work:** It was not easy to balance office work and family life. I thank my supervisors in NARO, who supported me and helped shape who I am today. These include Victoria Ssekitoleko, Dr Cyprian Ebong, Dr Theresa Ssengooba, Dr Yona Baguma and Dr Swidiq Mugerwa, among others.

**A word to aspiring women researchers:**

Please ensure that you meet all expectations placed on you. Your supervisors and donors will seek you out even after you have retired. Make sure all stakeholders are aware of your research outputs.



**DR PAMELA PAPARU, PROGRAMME LEADER, LEGUMES**

Paparu is a plant pathologist with a specialisation in beans. She was recently promoted to head of the legumes programme at the National Crop Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI) in Namulonge, Wakiso district. As a team leader, the focus is on generating new bean varieties that respond to market demands, are high-yielding and drought-tolerant. So far, two new bean varieties have been released: one is a climbing bean and the other is a bush bean. Special attributes of the new releases include high yields and higher nutrient content. "I have been climbing the ladder right from a research officer in 2007 to my current position, and the driving force is my focus on the task ahead of me once given an opportunity. That is how my colleagues encouraged me to apply and compete for the position I hold today."

**ADVICE**

The employment field is challenging, because many things depend on the kind of spouse you have. Therefore, young women should be careful about the people they choose to associate with. In some cases, you may have to learn to compromise. When at home, leave your CV and master's degree in the office and focus on being a wife and mother. However, remain focused on your goals.

**DR BARBARA ZAWEDDE MUGWANYA, RESEARCH DIRECTOR AT MUKONO ZONAL AGRICULTURE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE (MUZARDI)**

Mugwanya holds a PhD in plant breeding, genetics and biotechnology with a specialisation in Biosafety. Additionally, she specialised in environmental science policy and management.

What motivated me to pursue agriculture is that I grew up watching my dad practice it and I learned that agriculture is the backbone of this country.

When I started working in agriculture, I realised that there are technologies, such as biotechnology, that can help farmers solve some challenges, such as persistent pests and diseases that cannot be addressed using conventional methods.

That is why I studied biotechnology as a new technology that could help farmers solve emerging challenges in agriculture. I focused on regulation and communication because while these technologies are beneficial, they need regulations.

**Innovation Being Promoted**

In my previous role, I worked with youth, educating them on the use of advanced technologies.

At my new station, I have the opportunity to work with more youth, encouraging them to embrace urban farming. How can we manage to keep chickens, piggeries, and fish while also growing vegetables in a small space? That is the Integrated Farming System that we are promoting among the young people who come to MUZARDI.

**Balancing Family and Work**

I have a supportive family and parents,



who assist with the children whenever Mr Mugwanya and I are away for work. Young women should learn to compartmentalise their work so that family time doesn't interfere with work. This approach has worked for me.

**Message to Young Women**

Young women please never give up on your goals. Many women abandon career advancement due to family pressures. You don't have to travel abroad to advance your career; choose a sandwich programme where you don't have to be away from home for long. Establish good communication skills with your spouse."

**DR IMELDA KASHAIJA**

Kashaija is a specialist in agricultural research with focus on developing science-based solutions to crop pests, like plant nematodes (microscopic or not seen with eyes directly) insects (worm-like) that destroy plants through roots. Over time, she has gained knowledge and experience in general crop protection.

"My love for sciences started from O'level because the aim was to become a medical doctor. I was offered a science course for my first degree and studied chemistry, botany and zoology. These finally led me to serve society, not as a medical doctor but a 'plant doctor', through agricultural research.

I started as a scientific officer at the agriculture ministry in 1986. Then became a research officer in NARO when it was established. Here I have steadily grown through both the technical



and leadership ranks to principal level technically and deputy director general administration.

**Innovation you are proud of?**

I am proud of being among the first scientists to identify the nematode pests that were causing toppling of bananas in Uganda, as well as being part of the banana research team that developed solutions to control the banana nematode and weevils.

While still a director of research at Kachwekano Zonal Agricultural Research and Development Institute

(KAZARDI), I lead a team of scientists that developed new potato varieties. They include the NakPot and Kachpot varieties.

**WORK AND FAMILY BALANCE**

One may wonder whether this kind of work did not disorganise my home. No, it did not. I had to cultivate trust among my family members so that even when I am away on such time-taking official duties, when I work long hours and come home late, they know I am at work for their good or benefit.

Leadership often brings you stressful moments. I tried hard not to carry home the office-based stress and 'power' it on children or house helpers. In this way, I balanced family, research and leadership services.

**Advice**

My message to women aspiring to be scientists and researchers is that decide what you wish to be at an early stage.

By Davis Buyondo

# HOW TRAFFICKED WOMEN ARE REBUILDING LIVES

**O**ver 100 women are assembling at the Maria Theresa Foundation (MTF) in Kalangala town council, Kalangala district. This group consists of women aged between 20 and 30. They were rescued from human trafficking, and trying to forge new beginnings to regain lost dignity.

Today, they are convening to make their weekly contributions to the savings scheme. They have a collective plan to start various businesses to sustain themselves.

*New Vision* has learnt that during these gatherings, the group discusses strategies to combat the trafficking of women, children, with a focus on girls.

Most of them are single mothers who were forced into prostitution and marriages while in captivity, resulting in unwanted pregnancies.

These women hail from different parts of the country, including Kasese, Luwero, Masaka region, Mityana, Mubende, Mbale and Fort-portal. Their traffickers made enticing promises of lucrative job opportunities.

However, they ended up in Kalangala. They were taken to the scattered islands where they would be forced into prostitution, selling marijuana, Khat, forced labour and forced into marriage.

Sharon Nanyonga, a 26-year-old single mother in Kalangala Town Council, fell prey to human trafficking at 18. A strange woman approached her in Masaka and lured her with a promising job at a corporate organisation in Entebbe, offering good pay to support her struggling family.

At Entebbe, instead of the corporate job, she was taken to Nakiwogo and put on a ship to Kalangala. There, she spent a night in a guest house. The next morning, she was informed that she would be working temporarily at a local restaurant while they continued to process her promised corporate job.

Things later changed as her boss became harsh on her forcing her to do heavy tasks without pay. For three years she toiled, she used to sleep in the restaurant amid death threats.

However, as she contemplated an escape, a group of fellow survivors of human trafficking, who were tipped off by Good Samaritans, intervened and liberated her.

This group not only facilitated her fresh start, but also supported her in establishing a boutique. Now, she is an active advocate dedicated to assisting other victims in their journey to reconstruct their lives.

"People should not judge a waitress in a bar or a commercial sex worker for they may not know their story. They could be victims of human trafficking," she said.

**Trafficking survivors and single mothers gather to contribute their weekly savings and chat ways of improving their livelihoods at Maria Teresa Foundation in Kalangala**



Nanyonga shares a similar plight with Nayiga Nsangi and Deborah Musiime, both 24 years old plus other women in the group. Nsangi hails from Lyantonde, while Musiime is from Mbarara.

According to Nsangi, she was enticed with an opportunity to work in a wholesale shop in Kampala, but ended up in a bar in Kalangala without receiving any wages. Her employer instructed her to find her means of survival, which compelled her to engage in relationships with men.

As for Musiime, she was brought from Mbarara with the assurance of a job in a major Mobile Money shop in Kalangala, but found herself in a bar and restaurant instead. Her hopes and plans to look after her people were shattered upon reaching Kalangala, yet she lacked the funds to return to Mbarara.

However, many of these women have sought refuge in their umbrella organisations where they share ideas and motivate themselves to be better people.

They have since vowed to collaborate with local authorities to rescue trafficked children, facilitating reunions with their families, while also aiding women in starting anew.

**LOCAL LEADERS**

Gerald Kalyango, the Mazinga sub-county councillor, confirmed the prevalence of the crime in his area, attributing it its remoteness.

"Certainly, there is limited action that can be taken unless the victims come forward to report to the local authorities and seek assistance," he stated.

The councillor further noted that trafficked females are usually harassed and intimidated which is why they choose to remain silent.

"To combat human trafficking, the Government should intensify mass sensitisation on human

**TRAFFICKING ROUTE**

**Kalangala, consisting of 84 scattered islands and located in Lake Victoria, has become a productive route and destination for domestic trafficking.**

**According to Maria Nakitende, the executive director of Mother Theresa Foundation, Kalangala, says islands such as Mazinga and Nkose-Lujabwa are primary hubs for trafficking, while Bubeke Namisoke and Jjanna islands fall in second position.**

**Nakitende pointed out that the peculiar structure of the district makes it challenging for local authorities to effectively combat the crime. Initially, she explained they began with three survivors of human trafficking, but the number grew to over 100 survivors, mostly single mothers.**

**They have successfully worked with local authorities, the Police, district probation office and other non-profit organisations such as Kalangala Human Rights Defenders Network (KHRDN) to rescue, reunite and rehabilitate the survivors," she explained.**

**"A significant majority of those identified as victims are women and girls who are largely sexually exploited, especially in areas marred by poverty, conflict, and gender inequality," she noted, adding that they have a wider network and it only takes a keen person to identify a person being trafficked," she said.**

**The trafficked women and girls, according to Nakitende, are taken to different clients on the main Island (Bugala) and other scattered islands while others are taken to Kenya and Tanzania.**

**"Upon receipt, we follow a legal reporting process to involve the Police in subsequent investigations. Subsequently, individuals are enrolled in projects such as poultry, piggery, catering, knitting, etc, based on their interests and potential, to improve their livelihoods," she added.**

trafficking and establish various stations where they can seek assistance," he said.

**PROBATION DEPARTMENT**

Willy Nkumbu, Kalangala's senior probation and social welfare officer, acknowledges that although domestic human trafficking is gradually decreasing, it remains a significant issue which requires collective resolution.

According to Nkumbu, from October 2022 to February 2023, the department rescued over 10 boys from forced labour and more than 15 teenage girls from prostitution and forced marriage through public awareness and a collaborative intelligence network.

Some victims were reunited with their families, while others were rehabilitated by Maria Theresa

Foundation and other human rights organisations.

The officer further reported the successful rescue and detention of the offender at Kalangala Police Station. He noted that trafficking victims are often children from poor families, lured by opportunities for a better life.

**HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS**

In 2022 alone, the Kalangala Human Rights Defenders Network (KHRDN), together with the local authorities rescued ten trafficked girls under 18. They include three girls from Bukomansimbi, two from Kyazanga in Lwengo district, one from Rakai and others from Masaka villages.

According to Deo Miiro Mpolampola, the KHRDN coordinator, some had spent over two years and others one year in

different islands. He also blamed the vice on the district and community leaders' laxity in reporting these cases, as well as the poverty that traffickers utilise to lure victims or persuade families to accept the offer.

**ANTI-TRAFFICKING ACT 2009**

Section 3 (1a) of the prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act 2009 states that a person who recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a person, using the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for exploitation, commits an offence and is liable to imprisonment for fifteen years.

According to the US Department of State's 2023 Trafficking in Humans Report, Uganda does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking but is making significant efforts to do so.

**2023 ANNUAL CRIME REPORT**

The Uganda Police Force Annual Crime Report 2023 indicates a decline in trafficking cases. The report further indicates 496 cases of human trafficking compared to 668 cases in 2022.

A total of 421 human trafficking cases with 1,149 victims were registered in 2021 compared to 214 cases registered in 2020 with 666 victims, according to the Annual Police Crime Report 2021.

The law enforcement authorities and several NGOs/CSOs and human rights activists operating in these islands say the traffickers use the ship and boats to transport their victims. They add that they have tried to make significant efforts to eliminate trafficking in the most affected islands.

Unfortunately, they lack the financial resources to do effective operations to save, reunite them with their families or resettle the victims in their respective communities.

Martins Okoth Ochola, the former Inspector General of Police, emphasised the importance of digitalising the human resource management system and enhancing scientific innovations in investigations due to the evolving nature of crime.

Specifically, these efforts are aimed at countering emerging crimes such as cyber offences, environmental violations, terrorism, and human trafficking.


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# THEY CAME, SAW AND STAYED

In 1996, the Government, through women empowerment, introduced the affirmative action policy to address imbalances created by history, customs and traditions. Consequently, special seats were reserved in Parliament. Several women took up the opportunity and got engaged in active politics. As a result, today there are 189 women MPs (including 14 Ex officio members) constituting 34% of women in the 11th Parliament. There are 14 women cabinet ministers constituting 45% out of 31 cabinet ministers and 24 women state ministers constituting 48% out of 50 ministers of state. Of the total, 146 women represent districts, 16 women have battled men for the Constituency seats and have won. Rebecca Kadaga tops the list of long-serving women MPs. In no particular order, **Mary Karugaba** profiles women who have served as legislators for more than 15 years.

**Rebecca Kadaga (Kamuli Woman MP)**

Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga is the longest-serving Woman MP in Parliament. She has been representing Kamuli district since 1989. Born on May 24, 1956, Kadaga, a lawyer and politician, has served as the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda from May 2011 until May 21, 2021. She currently serves as the First Deputy Prime Minister of Uganda. Kadaga concurrently serves as Minister for East African Community Affairs. She served as the first woman speaker in the history of the Parliament of Uganda after succeeded Edward Ssekandi. As a speaker, Kadaga's contribution to women's empowerment cannot be underrated. Several decisions and legislations were passed under her leadership. Previously, Kadaga served as minister for parliamentary affairs, state minister for transport and communication, state minister for regional cooperation and foreign affairs. Kadaga's qualifications rotate around law.



**Catherine Mavenjina (Elderly, Northern Uganda)**

Born on October 9, 1948, Mavenjina has been off and on the political ladder. She first joined Parliament in 1994 as a Constituency Assembly delegate. Mavenjina served as a state minister for public service up to 2000 when she was defeated. She was appointed resident district commissioner Moyo in 2001-2005. Mavenjina contested again in 2006 and won the elections as District Woman Representative for Zombo until 2011. She was again defeated during the 2011 elections and joined Zombo district local government in 2013. She bounced back in Parliament in 2021 as MP representing the elderly, a position that was recently created. A lawyer and an administrator, she also worked as a magistrate for the Kampala City Council Court and the Juvenile Court.

**Janet Grace Akech Okori-Moe (Abim Woman MP)**

The longest-serving Woman MP from Karamoja region, Janet Okori-Moe, joined Parliament in 1994 as a Constituency Assembly delegate. She served as an MP for Abim district until 2001 when she was uprooted and was appointed deputy resident district commissioner Tororo. Okori-Moe bounced back from 2006 to 2011. From 2013 to 2015, she worked as a senior Presidential Advisor on Education. In 2016, she fought her way again into Parliament. Okori-Moe was born on September 3, 1966. She is a teacher by profession.



**Ruth Nankabirwa (Ex- Official)**

The longest-serving female minister in Buganda, Ruth Nankabirwa, joined Parliament in 1996 as a Constituent Assembly delegate and later Woman MP for Kiboga district, a position she held until 2021 when she was uprooted by the National Unity Platform's (NUP) Christine Kaaya. Nankabirwa, however, bounced back into Parliament as an ex-official when she was appointed energy minister.

**Jessica Alupo (Katakwi Woman MP)**

Vice-President Jessica Alupo has been on and off the Parliament ladder. She first joined Parliament in 2006 until 2016 when she was defeated in the primaries by Viola Akurut, formerly working with Uganda Human Rights Commission. She was then education minister and the National Resistance Movement party flag bearer for the Katakwi Woman Parliamentary seat for the 2016 elections. Alupo, however, in 2021, fought back and regained her seat. She was appointed vice-president by President Yoweri Museveni in 2021.



**Jenipher Namuyangu (Kibuku Woman MP)**

Born on July 27, 1968, Namuyangu started her political journey in 1994 when she was elected Youth Representative for Eastern Uganda to the National Resistance Council until 1999 when she stopped and went into teaching as a Lecturer at Nyabyeya Forestry College in Masindi. In 2001, she bounced back as Woman MP for Pallisa. She was again re-elected to the same position in 2006. Between 2003 and 2006, she served as state minister for industry. Namuyangu was appointed state minister for water resources in 2006, serving in that capacity until May 2011. In 2010, Pallisa was split to form Kibuku district. She then ran as the parliamentary representative for Kibuku County, but lost to Saleh Kamba. Namuyangu contested again in 2016, prevailed and was appointed state minister for local government on June 6, 2016 and is currently the state minister for Bunyoro Affairs.



**Anifa Kawooya (Mawogola West)**

Commonly known as 'yellow girl' because of her strong attachment to the ruling National Resistance Movement, Kawooya is the Woman MP for Mawogola West Constituency. She is also the state minister for health in charge of general duties. She has been in Parliament since 1994 as a member of the Constituency Assembly representing Masaka before a new district of Sembabule was carved out. Born in January 1957, Kawooya also worked as the NRM caucus treasurer. She was also the speaker of Sembabule district local government. She served as the senior principal revenue officer of Uganda Revenue Authority URA. In 2001, she worked as the deputy resident district commissioner of Rakai.

**Margaret Aleper (Kotido Woman MP)**

Alepa has represented the people of Kotido in Parliament since 2006. Before joining Parliament, she worked with Kotido district local government as a monitoring assistant and a teacher in different schools. Alepa holds a bachelors of education from Kyambogo University.

**Betty Amongi (Oyam South)**

Within the body politics of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), the gender minister, Betty Amongi, is considered as the link-pin that glues the 'alliance' between the opposition party with the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM). First elected in Parliament in 2001 at the age of 24, Amongi has persistently been on the Parliamentary ladder to date, serving in different capacities. She was born on November 15, 1975 in Akao-Idebe village in Oyam district. She is a lawyer, political scientist, and diplomat. She is considered one of the influential female politicians to reckon with. She was re-elected in 2006, 2011 and 2016 and 2021 to represent Oyam South Constituency.



**Rukia Nakadama (Mayuge woman MP)**

An administrator, Rukia Nakadama joined Parliament in 2006. She maintained the seat up to 2016 when she lost to National Resistance Movement-leaning independent candidate Julie Mukoda Zaabwe. In 2017, Nakadama became a board member of the National Forestry Authority until 2021 when she contested again and retained her seat. Nakadama was appointed Third-Deputy Prime Minister. She is also Honorary Consul of Pakistan in Uganda.



**Naome Kabasharira (Ntungamo)**

Although Kabasharira has been on and off the Parliament ladder, she is among the top women politicians that are regarded as fighters. In the 2020 elections, she was involved in the deadliest fights in Ntungamo that saw her uproot and stop the dominance of the incumbent and strong man Mwesigye Rukutana from Rushenyi County, a constituency he had represented since 1998. Kabasharira was born on December 10, 1967 and joined Parliament in 1994 as a National Resistance Council (NRC) member until 2001. She came back in 2011 and in 2016 Kabasharira was defeated by the then MP Beatrice Rwakimari. She bounced back in 2021 as independent.



**Betty Aol Acan (Gulu City)**

The former Leader of Opposition in Parliament, Betty Aol, joined Parliament in 2006. She has held on to the Parliamentary ladder to date. She has served as shadow minister in different areas. Before joining Parliament, Aol worked with Gulu local government as a councilor, St Mauritz Centre as a programme officer and Sacred Heart Girls Secondary School, Layibi College and Awere Secondary School as a teacher.



By Jacky Achan

# UGANDA HAS THE SEVENTH-HIGHEST INCIDENCE RATE OF CERVICAL CANCER GLOBALLY SCREEN REGULARLY TO ESCAPE CERVICAL CANCER DEATHS

Cervical cancer has a pre-cancer lesion or abnormality, which means that it takes long to manifest as cancer. Although preventable, it kills women.

"The pre-cancer stage can be identified, treated, and the patient monitored so that the cancer does not develop," Dr Juliet Birungi, a consultant gynaecological oncologist working with Mulago Specialised Women and Neonatal Hospital (MSWNH) says. However, most women are not in the habit of screening for abnormalities in their genitalia that could become cancerous.

Birungi says the vulva, vagina, and cervix will have some pre-cancer abnormalities. The hospital also screens for other cancers, like breast cancer.

## WHY THE CONCERN?

Cervix cancer is the most prevalent among women. Birungi says most women visit the facility when they are at stages three and four - quite advanced - where there are limited chances of a cure. It is unfortunate that the pre-cancer abnormalities are there, but most women will not have them checked, allowing the cancer to develop.

According to the BMC Cancer Journal, Uganda has the seventh-highest incidence rate of cervical cancer globally and the second-highest in East Africa, with a rate of 28.8 cases per 100,000 people per year. The annual incidence of cervical cancer is reported to be 6,959 cases, with a corresponding mortality rate of 4,607 deaths. Cervical cancer is the number one cause of cancer-related deaths in women in Uganda.

The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) is responsible



Mammogram equipment at Mulago Specialised Women and Neonatal Hospital

PHOTOS BY MOSES NSUBUGA



Dr Evelyn Nabunya. ED - Mulago Specialised Women's Hospital



Dr Juliet Birungi - consultant gynaecological oncologist

method," Birungi reveals.

"The MSWNH has a screening clinic where women can walk in and screen. Also, it offers opportunistic screening, which means that before a patient receives a service like family planning or any surgical operation for any condition, we offer screening for cervical cancer first," Birungi says.

Whereas it may not require written consent, verbal consent is paramount because the procedure is intrusive. "How do I get to your private parts without your permission?" the doctor asks.

## DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT FOR CERVICAL CANCER

"Many people come to the hospital with a discharge, which may not be cancer, but if it is too much, smelly, and persistent, a test will be done," Birungi says.

She also says people can bleed during intercourse, menopause, or between menstrual cycle periods (below 21 days). By the time they start having pain in

the lower abdomen, the cancer is quite advanced.

She appealed to women to screen for cervical cancer and also report early in case of symptoms for early detection. "Let the cancer be detected early so we can treat it when the chances of cure are high," Birungi says.

She adds: "The tenets of managing cancer are three: surgery, chemotherapy, and radiotherapy. We can use one or a combination of all three, depending on the stage of cancer.

Surgery is usually for cancer at an early stage. However, if the patient needs chemotherapy or radiotherapy, then we can refer them to the Uganda Cancer Institute (UCI). The institute has a department of gynaecological oncology and radiation oncology that deals with women's cancers. We collaborate with them to care for women with cancer. MSWNH also works in collaboration with UCI to train super-specialist doctors in the field of women's cancer.

for over 90% of cervical cancer cases. The majority of people get HPV at the time they initiate sexual intercourse, but the majority will clear the virus, explains Birungi.

"However, there are people who do not clear the virus; and are at risk of developing those pre-cancer abnormalities that could later progress to cervical cancer," she says.

So who are the people who fail to clear the virus and are at risk? These are people who smoke, those who engage in sex early - before 21 years, people with multiple sex partners or those with a partner with multiple sex partners. There are also those with HIV/AIDS and people who are immunosuppressed.



Mulago Specialised Women and Neonatal Hospital has high-tech investigative modalities to aid diagnosis of cancer

## SCREENING

When tests are conducted depending on what is found, a decision is made on whether to treat or follow up, depending on the different abnormalities.

"We have a robust screening programme for HIV positives because they are at high risk of getting cervical cancer. We utilise the screen and treat

protocol. This means that at the point when cervical cancer is screened for, if an abnormality is found, it is treated to avoid loss of follow-up. "The challenge is that when you test someone and tell them to come back after two weeks for their results, they do not. To avoid that kind of lost follow-up, we adopted the screen and treat

it protects them from pre-cancer abnormalities that will progress to cancer. It is over 90% protective. It has been tested and proven as an effective way of preventing cervical cancer," she says. Birungi also advises women to avoid early sexual intercourse, smoking and multiple sex partners.

## Secondary prevention measures

This happens when the virus has been acquired. Screening is done for the age of 25 and above.

●**Pap smear:** This is given to women aged 25 and older.

●**Visual Inspection of the Cervix with Acetic Acid (VIA):** This is an

effective, inexpensive screening test that can be combined with simple treatment procedures for early cervical lesions. "We commonly use vinegar, applying it to the mouth of the womb (cervix), observing any changes that could signify those abnormalities. If there are changes, then the patient is treated," states Birungi. ●**Visual Inspection with Lugol's Iodine (VILI):** This was the first method used for cervical cancer screening, introduced in the 1930s. "We put iodine in the mouth of the womb (cervix); if it's normal, there is a different way it stains. If it's abnormal, it stains yellow

(mustard yellow). It shows those abnormalities that we can treat," Birungi says. She adds that the visual inspections and pap smears are done every three years, if normal.

●**HPV DNA testing:** An HPV DNA test is done to determine if someone has the actual HPV virus, and if normal, it is repeated after five years. If it is positive, further testing and treatment can be done. This test has a very high reliability. HPV tests are not done for women under 30 years because many people will have infections in their early sexual lives, which would otherwise clear.

## CERVICAL CANCER: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY PREVENTIVE MEASURES

●**The Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccination** for girls between the ages of nine and 14 years is the most plausible preventive method. The Government provides it as part of the immunisation schedule.

"We chose that age because we presume that they haven't yet initiated sexual intercourse, hence have not been exposed to the HPV, and their immune response to vaccination is great. They normally get two doses. We also have a catch-up vaccination for those 15 to 26 years old.

"Not that the vaccine prevents them from getting the virus, but





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# WOMEN IN PROSECUTION

Being a successful prosecutor requires courage since they must continuously traverse the complexities of the law and make difficult choices that can have long-term consequences for people's lives. A successful prosecutor must also have a strong moral compass and a desire to seek justice above all else. Farooq Kasule profiles the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Jane Frances Abodo and some of the seasoned female prosecutors who are part of her staff.



**DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (DPP) JANE FRANCES ABODO**

As the first female DPP and first female judge from the Karamoja sub-region, sometimes I feel a lot of weight on my shoulders, because I know that many look up to me. I chose to be a prosecutor and not a private lawyer and I have been at it for the past 24 years. We go through so much and most of the time people misunderstand us because we seem to be unempathetic. You listen to the story of a young child who was defiled by her own father and cry with them. By the time I go to court, I am fighting for that. We should not be misunderstood when fighting for justice. Being a prosecutor and getting to the helm of prosecution comes with a number of challenges. Joan Kagezi was killed in 2015. We know she was taken out of action because of the work she was doing. We have so many prosecutors that have been threatened and we know these are not idle threats, but this has made us stronger. My message to those aspiring to be prosecutors is your background does not define where you will end, but hard work, keeping the faith, integrity and surrounding yourselves with the right friends will take you far. When I told my mother that I had enrolled for law, she called me a judge and this inspired me to work hard. Born in 1973, Abodo holds a bachelor of laws degree from Makerere University and a post-graduate diploma in legal practice from Law Development Centre. She also holds a degree of master's of laws from Trinity College Dublin in Ireland. In 2015, Abodo was recognised by the Uganda Law Society as the best prosecutor of the year having recorded the highest conviction rates in the country.



**ASSISTANT DPP, RACHEL BIKHOLE**

Being a prosecutor, you must be willing to serve under tough circumstances to ensure the most vulnerable are the most served. As a committed and practicing Christian, I have found it easy and have always handled my duties with courage alongside principles of integrity, impartiality and professionalism. Bikhole holds a master's of law in international criminal law from the National University of Ireland. She is also a member of several professional associations, such as the International Association of Prosecutors.



**PRINCIPAL ASSISTANT DPP CAROLYN NABAASA**

I had always desired to help the vulnerable, especially women and children get justice. This desire was fulfilled when I joined the ODPP. Being a prosecutor earned me an opportunity to serve the vulnerable at international level when I served as justice affairs officer with the UN Mission in Somalia for two years. My message to the aspiring lawyers is that the ODPP is a place where you find a professional and homely environment to nurture your career as an advocate while you receive all the support you need to enjoy what you do. Nabaasa is a seasoned prosecutor in charge of appellate prosecution in the ODPP.

**CHIEF STATE ATTORNEY IMMACULATE ANGUTOKO DRARU**

It is my love for literature and English, coupled with profound support from my parents who believed so much in me that landed me into the legal field. I am passionate about justice for victims of crime and every act of fairness. I have found the work very fulfilling. My biggest challenge is when a victim is denied justice as a result of an omission by any of the actors in the justice chain or technicality. To the aspiring young female lawyers, my message to you is that it is possible to pursue your dreams and thrive if your purpose is to do so. Do not give up, just set your target and work towards it. Draru is also the president of the Uganda Association of Prosecutors.



**CHIEF STATE ATTORNEY SHERIFAH NALWANGA**

One of the best decisions I ever made was to become a prosecutor. My decision was driven by the need to advocate for the rights of all victims of crime. I felt the need to represent them at all stages and ensure that they get all the justice they deserve. To the aspiring young lawyers, it takes courage to be a voice for the victims. Nalwanga is attached to the department of gender, children and sexual offences.



**ASSISTANT DPP, SAMALI WAKOOLI**

To be a prosecutor is both challenging and fulfilling. The challenges are many, some arising from the system and others with the law, but also taking a prosecutorial decision calls for annoying one as you please another. This brings up issues of personal security even when one is just doing their job. To become a prosecutor, I was motivated by the story of an old widow in our village who was evicted from her land and her house was destroyed. Wakooli has worked with ODPP for 18 years. She holds a bachelor of laws degree from Makerere University and a post-graduate diploma in legal practice from Law Development Centre.

**SENIOR STATE ATTORNEY JACQUELYN OKUI**

From my childhood, I loved peaceful environments and was always engaged in settling disputes. In Senior Six, I was convinced that I was supposed to be a lawyer. At law school, I enjoyed criminal justice-related courses mostly and excelled in them. I was therefore, confident in the end that my destiny was in criminal justice as a prosecutor. That is why I applied to be a state attorney. To the aspiring young lawyers, be your biggest cheerleader. Okui holds a master's of law in international human rights and criminal justice from Utrecht University in the Netherlands. She is also the public relations officer at the ODPP.



**CHIEF STATE ATTORNEY EMILY NINSIIMA**

To be a prosecutor is to carry the weight of responsibility on one's shoulders. The responsibility not only to uphold the law, but also to stand as a voice for the voiceless. From navigating bureaucratic red tape to facing off against formidable defence lawyers, the road to justice is fraught with hurdles and obstacles that can test our strength, resilience and our unwavering commitment to the cause of justice.



**SENIOR STATE ATTORNEY, VIOLA TUSINGWIRE**

Being a prosecutor has tremendously impacted my personal life. Through the rigours of calling, I realised that my purpose in life is to serve selflessly and positively impact every individual before

the justice system. Prosecution involves enormous volumes of work due to the high occupational hazard. You often leave the court floor with disgruntled parties harbouring resentment for your fulfilment of your mandate. The onus of tomorrow's crime-free society lies with us.