

GWEN NEWS

The Newsletter for Grassroots Women's Empowerment Network

December 2017



Information Minister, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze presents award to Cathy Mwesigwa of The New Vision at the Gender Media Awards.

FIRST EVER GENDER MEDIA AWARDS IN UGANDA...P3,4



How your child should not die from Vitamin 'A' deficiency ...P6



COWA sensitizes on child rights and abuse ...P13

GWEN Opinion

Hard work, resilience, accountability for 2018

The Year 2018 is here with us! With many analysts warning that Ugandans are destined for "Tough Times ahead!" Whatever that means!

But given the prevailing conditions in the country, it will not be too farfetched for GWEN News to add our voice to what the analysts have proclaimed. And neither should we fold our hands. Instead hard work, resilience, accountability, creativity, strategic partnerships, mutual respect, and having a healthy mind and body, will be key. So let's get to work!

Alluta Continua!

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Hon Sheila Kawamara Mishambi facilitates at the EAGWEN annual conference.



Women in Lwengo console Nabbaale (middle), who was injured in a wave of insecurity in the district.

Invest in coalitions - Hon. Kawamara tells NGOs

By **UMWA Team**

"The Increasing Insecurity in Uganda: The Role of Women Focused Organizations", was this year's conference theme under the East African Women Grassroot Network, EAGWEN collaboration.

Attended by over 20 participants from the participating organizations, and supported by the Norwegian Women and Family Association, NWF and FOKUS, causes of the women murders whose number had been put at 20 in the month of September 2017 alone, were discussed.

These ranged from the increased poverty, despair among the population, "reckless behaviour" among women who are said to move unaccompanied during the night, motivated by some government agencies, witchcraft, among others. But while there was no agreement on the major cause of the murders, participants noted that there was something major, that needed to be sorted by government to allay people's fears.

Likewise, participants had no doubt over the effects of women murders. These included: Uganda receives a negative image at the international level, as a country that is insecure, therefore can't attract investments; the death of the women inflict everlasting negative effects to their relatives especially their immediate families; low productivity and production in the country.

The conference participants had some practical solutions to the reduction of women murders. Participants advised

fellow women, sisters, mothers and the girl children to desist from moving alone, especially at night. That they should have some security and safety measures they can share with their colleagues such as "a woman should inform her partner about her whereabouts all the time". For example, what time to be expected at home, or whether she will delay! This will somehow help keep track of her movements and in case of an issue, relatives or police will have a clue.

The fact that the theme of the conference was alluding to the role of NGOs especially those working in the area of advancement of women, a substantial part of the discussions rotated around the strength such NGOs have in advocating for change. In a discussion led by Hon. Sheila Kawamara-Mishambi, former Member of the Legislative assembly and an ardent human rights advocate, it was felt that while the civil space for engagement is slowly shrinking in the country, NGOs need to up their game.

Hon. Sheila Mishambi said: "Instead of fighting among ourselves for donor money, credit and other things, NGOs should invest in coalition building. They should be smart and invest in grassroots movement building because with an enlightened populace, a government that is not keen on listening to its people, would be taken by surprise by an enlightened population ready to challenge and demand for what is right, or service". Hon. Sheila Mishambi cautioned NGOs against taking anything for granted because, she said, sometimes government plants moles in the civil

society movement, and before you know it such negative elements work against you, most times cooking up intelligence information for purposes of destroying a vibrant civil society.

On the role of donors in the fight against injustices, Hon. Misambi noted that not all donors, and at all times, will be on the side of the people. She said: "One day I was shocked when one of the donors in private told me why some of their actions depend on the interest of their mother country, no matter how grave a situation may look in the eyes of the local population".

The conference participants were therefore advised to have a home grown agenda, raise local resources to pursue it, instead of playing into the hands of foreigners who may have a different agenda.

The participants also noted that for the NGOs to do their advocacy work more prudently, they need to be aware of the laws, and how government operates. Be wary of disguised opportunities, ensure that they are working within the law; invest in the capacity of their staff and leadership; reduce on foreign dependence; and have a robust and committed leadership that promotes teamwork and free from corruption tendencies.

The conference is an annual event, organized under the East African Women Grassroot Network, EAGWEN. The partner organizations are: Maganjo Farmers Association, MAFA; COWA; and Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA.

Uganda hosts first ever Gender Media Awards

By UMWA Team

SOMETHING, very important in the history of the Media in Uganda happened in August 2017! It was the first ever ceremony, held to recognize and award journalists and media houses who had demonstrated gender awareness and sensitivity in their works. Held at Hotel Africana Kampala, and supported by the membership and staff of Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA, the ceremony attracted over 200 participants from the foreign missions, media training schools and agencies, government bodies and the UN in particular UN-Human Rights, UN Women, and UNESCO.

The Minister of Information, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze officiated at the ceremony; while Mrs. Jane Mpagi, the Director – Gender, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development gave the introductory remarks. The Award is codenamed – The Annual Gender Media Awards – Uganda (AGMA-U). The overall Print Media Award went to The Observer, followed by The New Vision. The best Television was NBS, followed by NTV. The next ceremony is expected in May 2018.

The History

UMWA conceived AGMA at the Dissemination Workshop of the UN Women commissioned Study on Media Coverage of the 2016 General Elections. The study done by UMWA, it indicated:- The Presence of Women as News Subjects / Sources as low as 15%, Images 18% and the Portrayal of women was found to be judgmental, and most often presented in poor light, and usually sexualized. AGMA-U was launched in November 2016. With 150 participants from the Civil Society, Foreign Missions, Media, the Academia, Research Practitioners, etc).

But Why AGMA-U?

Margaret Sentamu, The Executive Director of UMWA notes the following:-

- The existing initiatives to award excellence in media are very few, recent, and non highlighting gender perspectives.
- Important to recognize current efforts towards gender sensitive reporting.
- Pro-Gender Policies / Laws (Uganda) – are several – but little focus on media; and
- Engendering Media triggers off the much needed transformation in other sectors.



Medi Sengooba, Director Disability Rights Fund, presents a Gender media checklist to the Editor Capital FM.

The Overall objective of AGMA is: To make gender sensitive reporting a standard journalistic practice; while Specific objectives are:-

1. Identify, recognize and award the efforts of those individual presenters / journalists who, and media houses that, have communicated gender in their productions.
2. Motivate upcoming and practicing journalists to embrace gender sensitive writing as a standard journalistic practice.
3. Create awareness about the existing gender gaps (inequalities / injustices) in, and those promoted by the media.
4. Highlight the possibilities available in producing gender sensitive stories.
5. Trigger off actions e.g. an increase in the quantity and quality of media reporting especially about women whose stories, concerns, and aspirations are currently as low as 20% in Uganda's media. Media houses adopt gender policies and Schools of Journalism may integrate gender studies in their curricular.



Some of the winners of the Annual Gender Media Awards, AGMA 2017.

How the first ever Gender

From P3

So then, who was involved in the novice Award?

There were four categories of people including:-

- Individual Journalists who submitted stories for assessment.
- Selected Media Houses: 6 Newspapers, 3 Television Stations, and 5 Radio Stations.
- The Gender Media Monitoring Team, GMMT: Who reviewed and assessed with gender lenses, the content of the selected media houses and also by individual submissions.
- UMWA Leadership / Management: Provided strategic guidance.

But What Is Unique about this Award?

Unlike other Awards, AGMA-U seeks to recognize 2 categories: (a) The Individual Journalist; and (b) The Media House (Electronic / Print).

And Why Focus on a Media House? Margaret Sentamu says:

"When left at the individual journalist's discretion, nothing much can be achieved, but if it is the media house, it becomes an organizational culture".

Entries during the year 2017:

There were 26 submissions from individual journalists from 17 media houses, including: CBS, Salt TV, Urban TV, Record TV, The Observer, NBS TV, NTV, BBS Terefayina, Chimpereports.com, Mama FM, KFM, WizardS Media, Salt FM, UBC Radio, UBC TV, Radio Wa (Lira), and Radio Pacis (Arua).

Number, Types, Briefs about Media, and Programs Analyzed

Fourteen (14) media houses were assessed for various reasons including:-

- All selected media have some sort of national character / geographical.
- Offer diversity in coverage, issues, audience, and language

especially radio and television.

- Location of Stations: Kampala to ease access to the monitors.

● Newspapers had to be dailies with the exception of The Observer (tri-weekly).

Comments on the Findings / Conclusions

- There is still a huge knowledge gap about gender and media among practitioners. Gender sensitive reporting is highly mistaken for merely writing stories about women.

● Media in Uganda is highly skewed in favour of the male gender; the gender gap being 70 / 80 vis a vis 20 / 25; (News subjects / sources / images / or who delivered the content; Positioning / Placement; Amount of Space; and Portrayal / Language).

● The stories are highly driven by negative beliefs and gender stereotypes.

● The power of the media cannot be overemphasized – which is why, it should be redirected to the promotion of positive progress.

● AGMA-U is timely to contribute to such processes.

● The study results may not be conclusive – but a starting point!

Limitations

1. Interpretation of texts and specific words / phrases, as well as of images (both still and motion) varies from one individual to another. To minimize this, a four-day refresher training was organized for the GMMT. The team was not only exposed to the theoretical but also practical aspects of gender and media research methodologies.

2. Funding Gaps affected: Information from a wider spectrum that could have enriched the Awards, and what they stand for, was missed out; E.g. Only 6 out of over 15 newspapers were reviewed. Only Mondays were reviewed; Radio and television content which impact much more on the public was limited to a few programs for review; and Social media that has taken Uganda by



NBS' Solomon Serwanja receives award at the AGMA 2017.

storm, was apparently not part of this study.

3. The survey exercise took a relatively shorter period than is normally associated with comparative studies that call for longer periods of observation and analysis, to reach more conclusive deductions.
4. Very good intentioned, AGMA-U did not receive adequate

publicity.

Note: This study wholly depended on the goodwill of staff, and volunteers of UMWA. There was no external funding received for this study: Reviewing content by media houses or individual submissions.

Recommendations

To make the AGMA-U more meaningful, viable and successful, the following can be considered:-

1. Have the Awards on an annual basis – as the name suggests but:-
- Organize them in form of a series of continuous surveys that



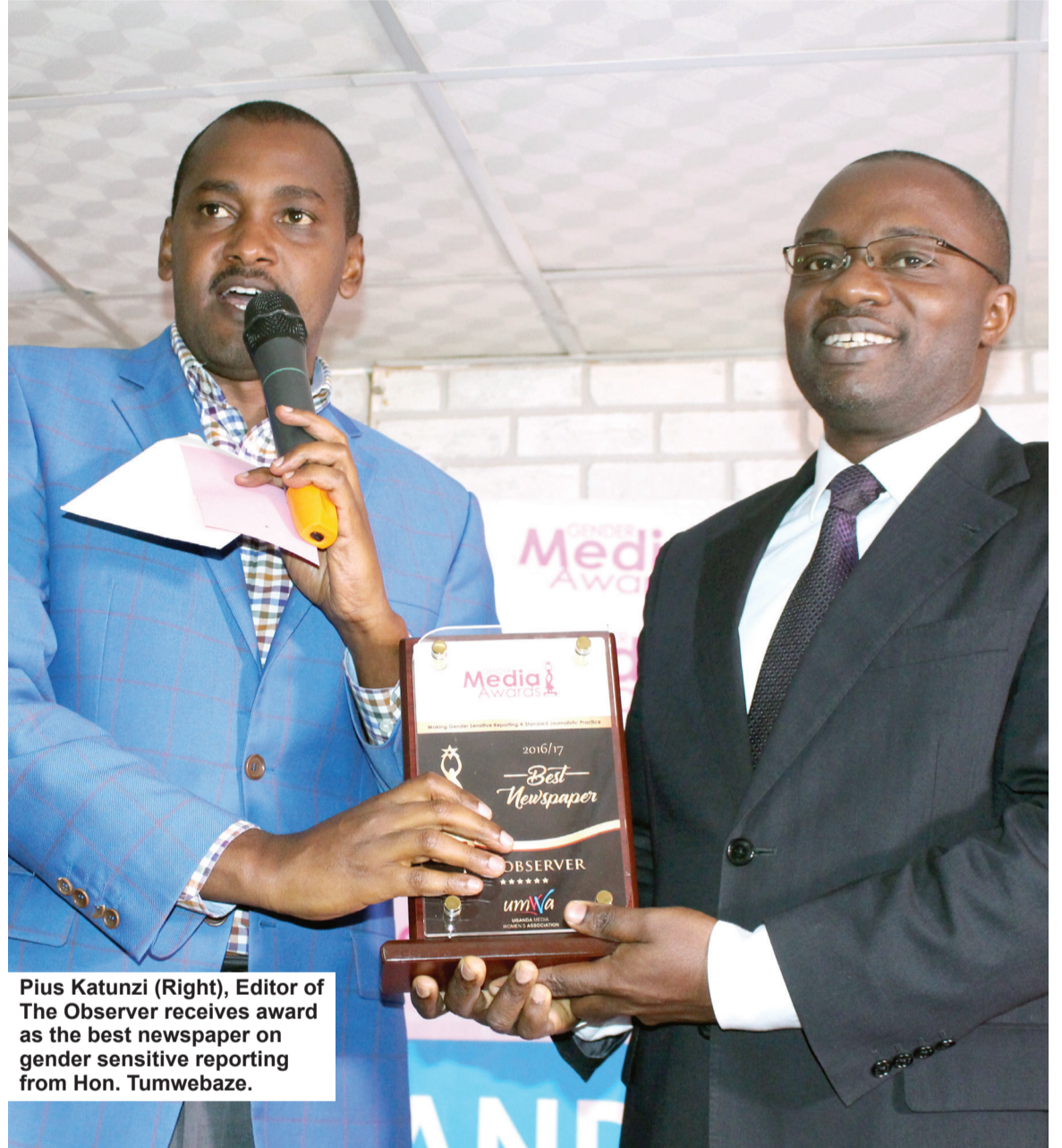
UMWA Executive Director, Margaret Sentamu outlines salient issues on gender sensitive reporting at the Annual Gender Media Awards 2017.



Media Awards unfolded



Jane Mpagi, Director, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development offers her insights at the Gender Media Awards 2017.



Pius Katunzi (Right), Editor of The Observer receives award as the best newspaper on gender sensitive reporting from Hon. Tumwebaze.

come out with periodic reports (preferably on a monthly basis).

- These should be in monthly dissemination fora with all stakeholders. That way, the AGMA-U will not come to be seen as a theatre for competition, but rather as a means towards a greater goal – changing the mindset – of having equal gender representative and fair media.

- For media houses in particular, such findings will make them much more aware about gender disparities in the media and hopefully draw their attention to the need for in-house changes geared towards the desired outcomes.

2. To make the Awards be truly representative and national in nature and scope, involve as many media houses and encourage the participation of more individuals, as is practically possible. Students of Mass Communication or Journalism can also be encouraged to participate.

3. To achieve the foregoing, involve and partner with all stakeholders:

- The Government, UN Agencies, Local and International CSOs, Media Agencies involved in training, research, production and publishing as well as Media Rights Groups and Associations.

- The corporate world should also be brought on board.

- This will not only encourage development and enhancing of close working ties, trigger off gender responsive development in all sectors, but also the generation of finances that are so essential and necessary for the smooth organization of the Awards and the positive development that would come with it.



Rosemary Okello, Margaret Sentamu and Emily Marcho at the close of the seven day training in audience research at Mama FM.

MAFA joins campaign against Vitamin 'A' deficiency

By GWEN Team

It's estimated that 190 million children under 5 years of age suffer from vitamin A deficiency (VAD), which is a major underlying cause of child mortality and morbidity. It aims at-risk populations by providing children with the necessary vitamin A.

In partnership with Vitamin Angeles, MAFA participated in a mobilization exercise to eliminate diseases associated with micro nutrient deficiencies, especially Vitamin A deficiency among neonates, infants and children. Vitamin Angeles deploys and mobilizes the availability, access and use of micronutrients especially vitamin A by at-risk infants and children in need.

"I can concentrate better because my stomach is free from worms and am challenged to work harder in the classroom next year, because I now regularly visit the clinic", Says Nalubwama Sarah a Primary Four pupil of Kachwampa R/C Primary School.

What is vitamin A?

Vitamin A, which is also known as retinol, is an essential, fat-soluble nutrient. It is stored in our body's organs mainly in the liver. When our bodies need it, it is released into the bloodstream.

Because our bodies' don't make vitamin A, we can only get it from external sources including: milk,

egg yolk, fat, butter, cheese, liver and fish liver oils.

Carotenoids are generally found in plants like: dark green leafy vegetables, deeply colored yellow and orange fruits. Breast milk is also a good source of performed vitamin A, which is why breastfeeding is an important source of vitamin A for newborns and infants.

Vitamin A helps to protect our health in several ways:

●Increases chances of survival

When children receive adequate amounts of vitamin A, they are considerably more likely to survive an infection. Their risk of dying from diarrhea is reduced by about 28%, while their overall risk of dying is reduced by a substantial percentage.

●Reduces the severity of infections

Vitamin A is critical in helping the body resist infections or diseases. It also helps to reduce the severity and incidence of many childhood infections, such as diarrhoea (15%) and measles (50%).

●Promotes Growth

Vitamin A is necessary for growth. Young children have a special need for vitamin A because they are growing rapidly. Pregnant women need vitamin A to help the growth of their unborn child. Women also need vitamin A after birth, to protect



Health workers administer Vitamin 'A' to school children.

themselves and to help their growing infants.

●Protects Eye Sight and the Eyes
Vitamin A is vital for the proper functioning of the eye. The transparent part of the eye, the cornea, is protected by vitamin A. If there

is shortage of vitamin A, it may be difficult to see. A severe shortage of vitamin A may result in blindness. Vitamin A deficiency is the leading cause of preventable blindness in children.

●Prevents Anemia

Vitamin A works to reduce anemia by facilitating the transportation and use of iron. Interventions that control vitamin A deficiency have the potential to help control anemia induced by either under nutrition or infections.

Age is just a number - Nabunnya

By GWEN Team

"Do not cry of poverty when you have a hoe". This is a Luganda proverb that inspired the naming of a farmer group Kyotamugavu Farmers Group, one of the MAFA supported groups in Luweero district.

At the end of the 1986 war in Luweero District, there was need to facilitate quick improvement of livelihoods through production of food crops in the district. Maganjo Farmers Association (MAFA) with support from FOKUS/NWF facilitated farmers to shift from dependency on humanitarian food aid then accustomed to during the war. Specioza Nabunnya's story is an inspiring one.... Read on.

Specioza Nabunnya Mugenyi, 64, stays with her husband Mugenyi and twelve grandchildren in Kyota village, Bamanika Sub-County in Luweero District.

After the insurgence war in late 80s, the majority of people who were resettling faced challenges of inadequate food production due to limited farming tools and knowledge on improved agronomic practices. They were also affected by the drastic effects of climate change such as drought and increasing pests and diseases. All contributing to

low yields in many homes including that for Specioza.

Since most families in Luweero District depend on agriculture for a living, Specioza and family embarked on working on their farm but would harvest little compared to the size of their land. "We used to apply simple technology like planting in rows spacing but registered low yields.

But when MAFA trained us in climate resilience, animal and crop management, things got better, she says adding, the training aimed at increasing household agricultural production, productivity and incomes. MAFA focused on facilitating us to improve agricultural production, changing from rudimentary to business farming.

My family and I learnt managing income generation projects. We don't regret. For example, my family which used to eat one meal, we can now afford 2 meals a day. We can save UGS 20,000 compared to UGS 5,000 per month. And our grandchildren can afford to go to school.

Currently some people visit to learn from my garden, They also buy some food and other farm products from us. At my age I am happy to explain and teach them".



Sixty-four year old Specioza Nabunnya in her garden.

'Audience research key to good programming'

By UMWA Team

PERHAPS one of the key capacity building sessions that the staff of UMWA will ever be grateful for is the seven-day session in Audience Research and Analysis. It is key or rather very important for several reasons like it was the first to attract substantial representation from different stakeholders of Mama FM.

The Board was fully represented, listeners – both men, women, the youth and persons with disabilities including children not forgetting the staff and volunteers. Through participatory methods employed by an External Consultant from Kenya, Rosemary Okello Orlale, close to a hundred people were "brought under one roof" to brainstorm and reflect on the purpose of the first women radio station in Africa, 101.7 Mama FM, founded and managed by women.

The missing link in the pursuit of Mama FM's vision was also identified, later solutions to addressing such gaps were identified. An action plan put in place, awaiting the renewed zeal of the leadership and staff of UMWA to implement.

Started 16 years ago with the technical and financial support from the Norwegian Council for Africa, NCA, FOKUS and NORAD, Mama FM was meant to target women for improved livelihoods, but over the years the thinking might have changed with some of the volunteers challenging the purpose reasoning that it is difficult to target women alone.

This argument was later confirmed through research that indeed confirmed that listeners of Mama FM are 57% women 43% men. In fact the station according to two recent surveys, was best known as a station for persons with disabilities.

Rosemary Okello, the External Consultant, after several brainstorming sessions in the July training, reminded participants that as long as the station does not carry out regular audience research, the original purpose of the station may be overtaken by events.

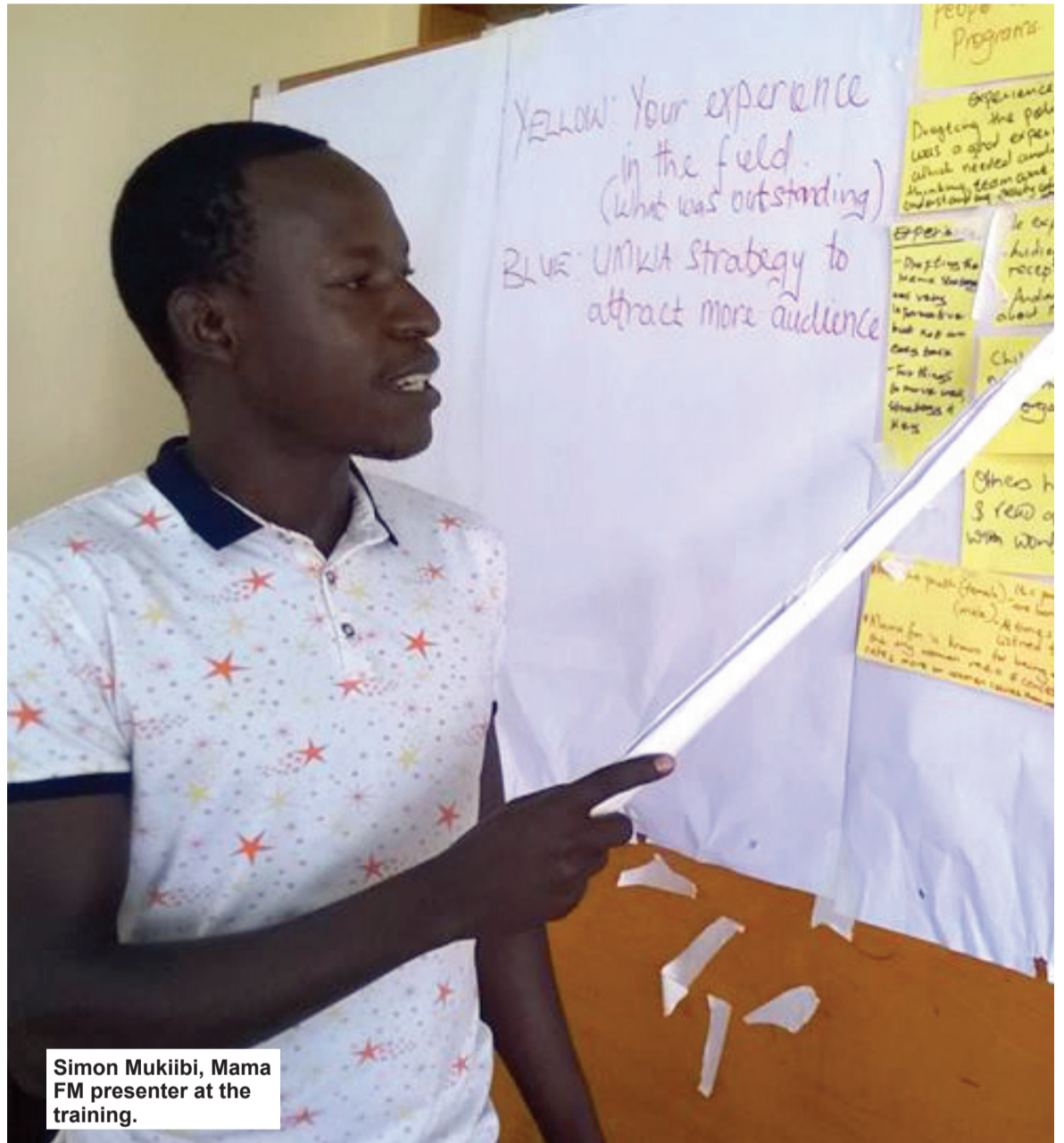
Quoting the purpose and the intended target beneficiaries of Mama FM which is to uplift the livelihoods of women, Ms. Okello underscored the importance of research. Emphasizing that listeners are the king, they need to be 'massaged' and checked on all the time; find out about their needs to which the station should conform to.

She however emphasized that sometimes because of the commercialized media environment is

operating in, also supported by rather a degenerated moral environment, the leadership or the visionaries of Mama FM must find time to re-energize staff to constantly pursue that vision as long as it was well intentioned.

Some of the outcomes of the 7-day interactive session included:

- Re-affirmation of the need for a station like Mama FM but which needs a lot of support to serve the developmental purpose which other media do not deliberately seek.
- That research is key, without which the radio station is grappling in the dark. Research needs to form part of UMWA's strategic objectives, done at least twice a year, but that all programs on the station can be reviewed at least every week.
- That UMWA as an organization, and staff for that matter, are sitting on gold in the name of Mama FM. Out of the 280 plus radio stations, only three are owned by NGOs with UMWA's radio strategically located a few kilometers out of the capital city, the seat of the power brokers.
- That Mama FM has a well thought out vision which needs to be regularly shared by all stakeholders, especially by the staff who, everyday, have to develop and broadcast programs.
- That there is need for the mindset shift especially among the staff and volunteers of Mama FM from: "I am doing a favour to Mama FM" to "Mama FM has given me an opportunity / platform to prove myself".
- That research need not be taken to be that expensive the fact that every individual program presenter can undertake a simple monitor-



Simon Mukiibi, Mama FM presenter at the training.

ing mechanism to find out who the listeners are, what their needs are, and what time of the day would they wish to listen to what topic. This can be done through phone calls or even monitoring individual programs for the desired improve-

ment.

Some of the participants speak about the training:
Emily Maractho, Vice Chairperson, UMWA: "The train-

ing helped me understand the intricacies of running community radio stations. I also reaffirmed the importance of research".

Kalanzi Lawrence: "This training may not be that new to all of us – the fact that we have done similar trainings before. What we need to do is to put all the recommendations into practice".

Gorret Nalwoga, Finance Officer: "Research without action cannot be complete. UMWA needs to utilize the findings for improved delivery".



UMWA receives national award!

By GWEN Reporter

UGANDA Media Women's Association, UMWA, has received a MEDIA EXCELLENCE AWARD! At a colourful ceremony held at Serena Hotel, attended by over 300 people, the Chief Executive Officer of Media Challenge Initiative, MCI, said UMWA was picked for this award for their continued efforts towards achieving a gender sensitive media in Uganda.

Abaas Mpindi said: "We are particularly very privileged to work with such a committed organization and individuals that care for the future generation of journalists in Uganda but most importantly a media that is transformative."

The team at UMWA is resilient and does not ask for facilitation like other people we have approached to help in this or that. UMWA is always ready to share their knowledge and skills with groups like ours which have started this journey of redeeming our profession".

Accepting the Award, the Executive Director, Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA, Margaret Sentamu-Masagazi said: "It is groups like MCI, that will redeem journalism in Uganda, reason we have and will continue to work with them. Adding, there is no such a gender story, but rather, all stories must be gender sensitive i.e. there must be equal representation of both men and women in any story, their concerns and needs sensitively represented,



UMWA Executive Director, Margaret Sentamu addresses audience at the Media Challenge Awards.

among other things.

A story about women does not qualify to be gender sensitive if all it is saying is how sexy they look!"

The function was partly sponsored by Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, KAS. UMWA plans to work with MCI as they crisscross the country looking for young talent.



The Award that UMWA received.

MAFA adopts new name

MAGANJO Farmers Association, MAFA will from 2018, be known as Combined Efforts to Save Uganda, CESA-Uganda.

Formed 2001, MAFA has been confined to a geographical location restricted to a village so to say, and yet, MAFA now works in several districts.

Abu Mubiru, the current Executive Director, also a Founder Member said: "The old name indicated that our work is restricted to agricultural activities and yet, we have since then, evolved to serving communities with clean water, and good sanitation services, promoting good reproductive health-seeking behaviour in addition to promoting women's rights, among other things not forgetting providing knowledge and skills to especially local women farmers with the aim of going beyond subsistence farming". Abu says that what has happened in MAFA is expected of any growing organization.

UMWA learns from her beneficiaries

By UMWA Team

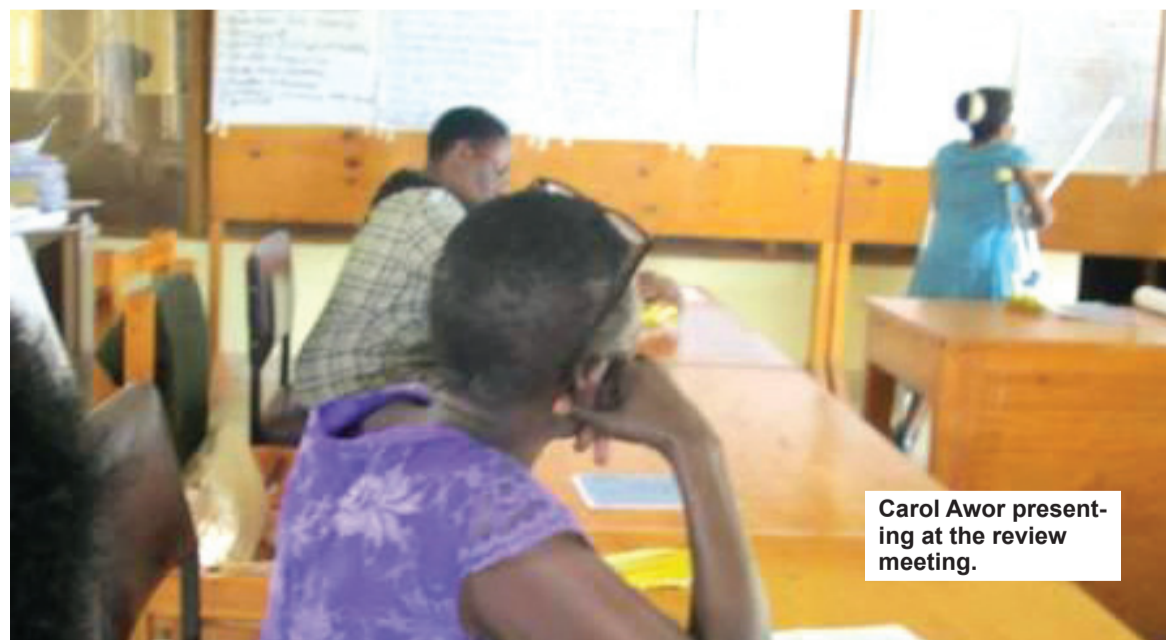
A two-day interactive session between Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA and its target beneficiaries, Women living With Disabilities, WWDs, was held in September 2017 to register some of the gains, gaps and enable participants make recommendations for improved project delivery. The session focused on service delivery in the area of politics and economic livelihoods, but also on self expression particularly on radio and, by extension other forms of media. The session was attended by 25 participants including seven UMWA staff.

Among the gains registered include: out of 19 WWDs who participated in the review, 16 had participated in one or more of the UMWA organized trainings including participating in a radio (Mama FM) talk show. Several indicated how the interaction with Mama FM had changed their lives positively.

Said one: "I can't forget the love Mama FM staff showed me ever since I started relating with the staff". Another said: "Mama FM is our Radio, as Persons With Disabilities, PWDs, there is no station in Uganda that is deliberate in prioritizing issues of PWDs. We receive free airtime".

Another said: "It was through Mama FM that I became a stronger Councilor". And another said: "I have been able to start various forms of businesses due to my interaction with Mama FM. I participated in the radio shows, and have attended numerous trainings in entrepreneurship and leadership".

On the accessibility and use of services at the likeminded organizations like National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda, NUDIPU and National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda, NUWODU, most of the participants said they were now aware of the existence of such organizations,



Carol Awor presenting at the review meeting.

and the mission they stand for but regretted that very few such organizations had deliberate efforts to reach out to them for a service although at least 9 out of 10 said they had visited such organiza-

tions for one form of inquiry or a training that they had been invited to.

The Sub-County authority provides a number of services to

different types of people. It is here that a grant for persons with disabilities is given out to those operating in groups.

When UMWA learnt from her beneficiaries

From Page 8

The participants at the Review Meeting expressed knowledge about this facility, and indeed informed that they had visited the Divisions of Kawempe and Nakawa, but had more suggestions for improvement, than what they had gained from interacting with the officials out there.

Like for NUDIPIU, NUWODU, the Sub-County Divisions were found to be operating a Top-Down type of administration, very insensitive to the PWDs and in several instances not ready to go to the grassroots.

The WWDs recommended thus: There is need for the said service providers / NGOs or the Division authorities to be clear about the types of services that are offered, and how they can be accessed. That the leaders should have sensitization seminars, that should be brought to the grassroots level. That the authorities should be trained in Rights, and Disability sensitivity to increase on their understanding of the people they serve. Relatedly, that the WWDs should be facilitated to participate in the pro-

grams that are currently purported to benefit them. There was also a strong recommendation to the authorities to increase on the grant allocated to PWDs in addition to shortening the process of accessing it.

The participants also had some recommendations for Mama FM. Said one: "Mama FM should increase on the number of hours for the program on disability issues. It would also be good if the authorities organize at least eight trainings for our benefit remembering that we have been a forgotten group of people for a long time". In a nutshell, the participants felt that the gains so far made due to the intervention need to be reinforced and sustained, but a lot more needs to be done. They recognized that "Mama FM is a good link between them, and the service providers on one hand, and with authorities".



Some of the participants at the review meeting held at UMWA.



A cross section of COWA fashion designers during the symposium.

COWA students shine at

By Okello Francis

IN most cases one cannot prove what he/she does best unless one goes through an experience. Many people in the private and formal sector are engaged in provision of educational services in the Business Technical Vocational education (BTVE) at different levels of abilities based on the availability of equipment and expertise.

COWA is one of the institutions involved in youth empowerment through vocational education, and partners with institutions like Uganda Association of Private Vocational Institutions (UGAPRIVI), Forum for Educational Non Governmental Organizations in Uganda (FENU) among others.

This year through ICEP an Australian organization, COWA joined Sharing Youth Centre Vocational School, and Luigi Institute for Higher Education (LHGI) in a three-day symposium at Sharing Youth Centre Nsambya, 28th to 30th September, 2017 at Sharing Youth Centre Nsambya. The symposium was guided by the theme "Revitalizing Vocational Education and Training in Uganda". This was aimed at creating more awareness to the public about the importance of vocational education in human resource development. The symposium attracted stakeholders in the educational sector including Assistant

Commissioner (BTVE), the Executive Secretary (UBTEB), UGAPRIVI Central Chapter Chairperson, Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) Deputy Director, Head of Membership Department (USSIA), Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Manager, and SKY project (AVSI Foundation) in a roundtable discussion about "Innovations in Skilling Uganda".

The Principal COWA CVTS Francesca Romana Bilak encouraged the public to change the mindset about vocational education as many view it as a last resort for those who have failed to proceed to higher educational level in the formal education up to the university level. She pointed out that from the family level, interests and talents of children should be identified, encouraged and guided. Francesca Romana also appealed to the Government and policy makers to partner with the private sector to find suitable ways of how dual training system can be promoted to enhance vocational training.

The Assistant Commissioner BTVE James Mugerwa who attended the symposium round table discussion also uploaded the four organizations for organizing the symposium. He urged them to carry out the symposium yearly, to inspire more people to take up and appreciate vocational education.



COWA Catering trainees explaining beef roasting during the symposium.

COWA CVTS during the symposium exhibited the courses offered at the school which include: Catering, tailoring and garment making, hair dressing and beautification. COWA trainees share their experience:

Nalukwago Aidah a student of Hair Dressing says: "The first day things looked

difficult and so, I was fearing. But I later got challenged into action because it was kind of competition so I had to prove my talent. The following day we managed to get two clients who were happy and even appreciated us with a token of appreciation. Having my services appreciated by a client made me very happy because our services and the customer care we exhibited attracted



COWA Deputy Principal welcoming guests to COWA tent.

a three-day symposium

more clients. In the modeling exercise, I learnt more about bridal make up and day to day make up. It was a great opportunity for me to do "make up" for clients. I enhanced my confidence. I loved the dress I modeled in which made me look very beautiful".

Oryema Ronald a second year Catering says: "At first I felt nervous but gained confidence the moment things started happening. There were so many people visiting different stalls with different items to exhibit.

In our tent we prepared a variety of snacks including juices, snacks and food which we sold out. This awakened my entrepreneurship mind after visualizing exactly what it meant to do a catering business from the class rooms' theoretical lessons. As a school we prepared a creative cake before the actual symposium. This was baked and decorated as a team, a thing which made me realize more the merits of team work under the supervision of our instructor. We felt very good to complete the cake on our own and the process gave us a sense of ownership and responsibility of representing the whole school.

I was among those who were interviewed by a chef from Royal Suites Hotel. I emerged the winner due to the way I



COWA trainee explaining Italian shirt to the Assistant Commissioner BTVET, Mr. James Mugerwa.

explained the processes. I was confident and creative. I realized that COWA's trainees were better than those from other institutions. Some of them were copying ideas from us much as they were also good. I feel it is important to enhance vocational training through such kind of symposium and the organizers need to do it yearly and

the fashion show. I made office wear and shoes.

We also practiced modeling as fashion designers so that we get used prior to the actual modeling. During the competition I got scared due to the many people looking at me but later got used. Fashion show to me was an exposure to reality of vocational skills that we use the products every day so people should encourage their children to join vocational schools. I was exposed to various fashions and how to do modeling with the cat walks. Our competitors wore clothes not made by themselves which gave us an edge".

Exposure to the outside world is an avenue to learn something new and appreciate others even better. Students get a lot of classroom skills of production in the vocational training. However the bigger picture of the market for their products may not be visualized well unless an exposure to the real market world is done. Exposure through study tours and exhibitions exposes students to the different sectors where their products and services are required. The symposium was such a good avenue. They were in position to appreciate the equipment used at school and the skills imparted. It is therefore important that the students and their instructors participate in such events for improved professionalism.

different locations".

Moita Sharon a second year tailoring trainee: "The news for the COWA students to participate in the symposium sent us in panic. We got very excited. For two weeks we were kept very busy as our instructors guided us on making our own clothes for

Women tipped on safety



ASP Rehema Nakigudde sensitizing the participants.

measures

By Okello Francis

Of recent there has been a lot reports on women murders and rape in different parts of the country especially in Wakiso in particular Entebbe. This brought into day light the high degree of vulnerability and suffering many women and girls face. One would imagine why such cases were pronounced in Entebbe close to the seat of State House. The situation sent very many people especially women into panic attracting attention of security personnel. The frequent reports from the media on such killings that drew residents' and police attention awakened people's thoughts for personal safety.

COWA CVTS organized a two day security sensitization seminar under the theme "Violence Against Women" for is trainees, staffs, alumni and women from the surrounding community on 2nd and 3rd November 2017. The seminar was facilitated by a lawyer and police personnel from the child protection and family unit of Kabalagala police post.

During the seminar participants were sensitized on the different forms of violence faced by women in their communities including homes, workplaces, schools and public areas where they access public services. For this the women were equipped with information regarding causes of violence against women in the society that they need to be aware of and develop safety precautions about them.

According to Kutegana Betty one of the participants, many women are suffering effects of gender based violence which render their lives and wellbeing at great risk. "Many of us especially



Participants listening to the facilitator during the seminar

those living in urban areas and our husbands have abandoned their responsibilities to providing basic needs of the family to us. Whenever we complain to draw their attention to their responsibilities our rights are violated and we are beaten. This leaves us physically and emotionally hurt reducing our productivity to provide for the family", Kutegana Betty.

According to Nankya Annet, many women fear the law reason they do not report such cases which makes enforcement of the law very difficult. She also added that women especially those moving late at night unaccompanied from their workplaces are prone to being raped. She cited an example in Namuwongo where several women have fallen victim of rape for moving late in the night, alone.

AIP Kawuba George, Officer in charge of Operations, Nsambya Gogonya told the participants that violence against women is as a result of failure to respect

the law, gender inequality and in some cases politically motivated as some politicians use it to win public favour.

ASP Nakigudde Rehema, the Officer in charge of Child and Family Protection Unit, Kabalagala Police Post said most of the abuses against women are as a result of gender superiority against the other. She says many cases of violence against women result from poor communication between husbands and wives which, if well handled by the partners may not have culminated into violent acts. Most of the abuses are triggered by unfaithfulness and irresponsibility of the partners.

She narrates: "Much as men are in most cases blamed for violence against women, we need to realize that women also play a big role in some of these cases. For instance due to paying attention to rumours and money issues in a family, a pregnant women wanted to pour hot water on the husband

but as a neighbor's child was passing the hot water was poured on the child who died on the way to the hospital. The women are now remanded in prison on murder charges. Yet differences would have been resolved amicably through mutual discussion".

Another example is of a boy who reported her mother to police for failing to provide food yet the father leaves money for food everyday, but she diverts the money to drinking alcohol and blames the husband for not providing for the family. She said most cases of domestic violence are escalated by the belief that once a man pays dowry, he is free to behave anyhow including beating the wife.

ASP Nakigudde Rehema emphasized that many of the domestic violence cases can be fused through open discussions and mutual respect. Adding, that women also need to support their husbands in providing for the family for peace to prevail in their

families. She pointed out: Failure to control the temper results into breaking the law, later ending up in prison and ultimately leaving children suffer with no basic needs which further creates a cycle of violence.

Violence against women is not a new phenomenon in the society. Women rights activists, civil society organizations and government bodies are engaged in the fight against violence against women, continues to be awash with such cases but one wonders when this will stop. Perhaps until when the power relations in the home are re-addressed to equally benefit men and women! One may wonder why this is so despite the fight against it. Even though cases of violence against women is aired in the media daily, activists and other stake holders need to continue with the fight taking into account different means applied for the results which may take some time to be realized.

COWA organizes seminar on protection against child abuse

A parent expressing concern about girl-child abuse during the workshop.



By Okello Francis

Despite several interventions by government and other child rights advocacy organizations to end child rights abuse in the country, there are still a lot of such cases especially in urban areas in the form of defilement, forced marriages, exposure to uncontrolled media, child labour, child neglect and child sacrifice as a result of realities of globalization and urbanization, life on the streets, poverty and the erosion of the social fabric that play a center role in ensuring protection and proper growth of children in the cultural context, drug abuse, domestic violence and alcoholism.

Children are supposed to grow in environments where peace is practiced and they are exposed to positive issues of concern in the society. It is bad for children to grow in violent environments as this facilitates a cycle of violence which sees children also becoming violent in their adult life. Many of the COWA CVTS students report of such experiences in their lives according to the tracer studies done at school. To try to address such trauma, COWA organized a sensitization seminar for local leaders, staff of COWA and some members from the surrounding community on 5th September 2017. The seminar was aimed at creating awareness so that the children are helped from homes, schools and villages they come from. Different testimonies from this workshop proved that domestic violence and child abuse is indeed a common occurrence in the communities we live in.

According to Ninsiima Amelia a social worker at COWA CVTS most of the deviant behavior of the trainees result from exposure to domestic violence and child abuse. She gave an example of one "troublesome student". It was established that the child had grown up being subjected to abuse and the unbecoming behaviours of his parents which

A local leader sharing ideas on child protection.



torment him whenever he is attacked. She said that the boy needs a lot of love and encouragement to do well at school because he always complains that no one appreciates his efforts in everything he does at school.

According to Ssebalamu John Baptist the Secretary for Family and Child Protection in the LC 1 Cabinet of Nsambya Church Zone, child abuse is a common phenomenon in the neighbouring villages too especially in the form of child neglect, and failure to provide basic needs especially education. According to him this is to an extent attributed to financial hardships faced by a number of parents in the area. "There are many children who come to YES Centre where our office is located and it is the place where the office of the Youth Chaplain of Kampala Arch diocese is located. The good reception the children receive at the Centre makes them feel comfortable without thinking of going back home. We tried to find out why they do not go to school and most of them told us their parents lack money to finance their education. For some time some of them now seem to have given up hope for education. Some of these children especially Congolese and Burundian refugees spend much time on our football pitch due to lack of what to do. However we have realized that most of the parents in this area even those who seem to be capable of financing their children's education seek for other people and charitable organizations to pay tuition for their children. The situation is alarming and there is great need for other stakeholders such as civil society organizations and government bodies to come up and address the situation to sensitize the parents and source for means of empowering the children with basic vocational skills to equip them with knowledge for employability.

ASP Nakigudde Rehema the in charge of Child and Family Support at Kabalagala Police Post said, that many children suffer child abuse due to the effects of domestic and gender based violence from their respective homes. "The misunderstanding and fights between spouses have adverse effects on the children which creates in them violence as a way of life. I keep receiving cases that result from quarrels between parents. This results

in failure to provide for the children. This is done by one partner to punish the other but it is the children who suffer the consequences in form of refusal to pay their school fees, denial of food and other basic needs of life", ASP Nakigudde Rehema.

ASP Nakigudde says that most of the domestic violence cases that culminate into child abuse are due to financial mismanagement in the family and unfaithfulness of the spouses. Once the children are at school, parents and teachers need to work closely for the proper guidance of the children. Parents should get better ways of solving their differences instead of fighting in front of the children and the need to provide for their children. It is very important for the parents to encourage their children to develop high self-esteem.

Parents must in their guidance of the children know who stays with their children during their absence. Friends of the children should also be known by the parents as in most cases, such friends lead the children astray. The ASP Shared a story that could have been prevented if the parents were involved in their children's protection and guidance. A girl told police that her mother used to tell her to go and look for money for her personal needs. She later ended into casual sex with a High school boy. One day the boy and his friends gang raped her. She planned for revenge not matter when it would happen. When the boy joined the University, the girl would steal from him, got into drugs together with the boy and his friends who sexually abused her. But her plan was to kill that boy. So she would keep a knife to strike at the right time. But time came when the girl was caught with marijuana, later confessing the experience.

Every parent nurtures a child to grow into responsible adulthood. It is therefore important for parents to guide their children, support each other to shape them into reasonable and responsible citizens. Parents also need to know the kind of hostels to take their children as many of them are not legal yet most of them are known to accommodate wrongdoers. Community leaders need to work with hostel owners to ensure the safety of their children.

MAFA now provides hygiene services

ECONOMIC empowerment cannot be complete without the proper hygiene health seeking behaviours and practices. With support from well-wishers, MAFA has gone full cycle in their areas of operation to promote and facilitate just that, in Luweero District.

Says Angella Nakato, MAFA's Program Officer: "The community's knowledge about good health and sanitation practice is also limited in rural areas like Luweero District, making it very easy for places around to become breeding grounds for all sorts of infections and diseases. Treatment is very expensive which makes children stay in poverty cycles".

She adds, "We started these sessions with basic teaching on how to protect yourself from common ailments. Simple things like making sure your drinking water is boiled, use of the latrine, and the proper washing of hands with soap after toilet, being important factors".

MAFA in the recent past has therefore embarked on providing basic knowledge and facilities to provide better health conditions. These include emphasis on drinking boiled water, washing hands with soap after visiting a toilet. They have also constructed VIP toilets that are gender and disability friendly.



Taking boiled water and washing hands are very important to keep good hygiene.

MAFA helped me ignite my fruit business



MAFA has helped support farmer entrepreneurs like this woman.

Fourty-year old Jamirah Ddumba was two years ago, given mango fruit and avocados trees from Maganjo Farmers' Association (MAFA) as a start-up for her fruit trading business. This was enough trigger! Jamirah unstoppable! She has bought land, and already planted in over 50 coffee seedlings using a loan from MAFA.

She says: "Am a widow and own 13 mango trees and five avocado trees, I sell each mango tree UGS 400,000 and avocado at UGS 150,000 each season and with two seasons a year, my life cannot be any better.

My status has risen within the community. I'm no longer known as a poor widow but as a woman of responsibility and responsible for the well being of the village.

I can now pay school fees for my children and still afford to participate in our saving group. Economic empowerment is very valuable especially to women", says Jamirah.



At her Demonstration Farm, Sarah (Centre) talks to a visiting group from a neighbouring village.

Sarah created learning centre in her home village

CONTINUED exposure to modern methods of farming and exchange tours, continue to make Sarah Kironde a phenomenal woman. You can't write about MAFA's impact without mentioning Sarah Kironde.

Now she has created a Learning / Demonstration Centre in her home village. She says: "I am happy that I am able to benefit my community through the talks and demonstrations that I provide to them".



UMWA organises training in ICTs





Nalukwago Aidah, a Hair dressing trainee with COWA attending to a client during the symposium.

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