

GWEN NEWS

The Newsletter for Grassroots Women's Empowerment Network

December 2016



MAFA creates awareness on land rights among rural women.

What Uganda's National Land Policy Says

WOMEN'S LAND RIGHTS

By MAFA Team

The National Land Policy is a framework policy instrument designed to address current and future challenges so that land governance may provide a solid foundation for socio-economic development and transformation in Uganda.

The Vision of the National Land Policy is "A transformed Ugandan society through optimal use and management of land resources for a prosperous and industrialized economy with a developed services sector." One of the attributes of this vision is a modernized agriculture where there is need to shift an estimated 65% of peasants who currently contribute 22% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) from subsistence to commercial agriculture to move out of poverty and attain food security using land as the major resource.

Below are highlights of key areas that small holder farmers need to know as they engage in production using land as a resource, the areas include women's rights and this is what the National Land Policy says about it.

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GWEN Opinion

An eventful year for EAGWEN

Yet it is this time of the year to count losses and gains. At the individual and at the organizational level. Losses because we have to be sincere with ourselves to say this went wrong because of this or that, and that it should not happen again as we lay these strategies to overcome or to do better. Gains because it is important to celebrate them, but also to sustain them, and even to do better!

At the East African Grassroots Women Network, EAGWEN, we can say that we have suffered losses and anxieties in 2016: the demands from the grassroots women are not only increasing, thanks to the worryingly low response from our government, but that also, chances for donor support seem to be reducing! Gains because, we have impacted some lives positively.

Losses or gains aside, the key observation that ran throughout the year was the urgent need to work even more closely, because United we stand – Divided we fall. The running theme in all the meetings or interactions partner organizations participated in was to go the consortium way i.e. different organizations working as a group to achieve one goal – but each leveraging on their strength.

The Norwegian Women and Family Association, NWF and indeed FOKUS, the supporters of EAGWEN also seem to be in conformity to the new found NGO approach in Uganda. At the EAGWEN Annual Conference held September 2016, Kristin Hansen and Anne Marit also underlined collaboration, the reason we in EAGWEN are committed to the realization of the collaboration, even with other partners.

Happy 2017 as we forge meaningful collaboration!



Ownership of land for women and children is no longer a moot occurrence.

The National Land Policy and women's rights in Uganda

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Women in Uganda play a significant role in the utilization of land for economic gain as well as ensuring food security at the household level but their right to own such land still depends on norms and customs of their communities or upon consent by their spouses.

The National Land Policy recognizes provisions in the 1995 constitution that provide for equal treatment of men and women in political, economic and social activities. It notes that the land act upholds the constitution's support of women land rights by stating that any decision made on customary land according to customs or traditions that deny women access to ownership, occupation or use of any land, or violates the rights of women, is null and void.

Policy statement in relation

to women's rights to land in the National Land Policy:

- Government shall, by legislation, protect the land to inheritance and ownership of land for women and children.
- Government shall ensure that both men and women enjoy equal rights to land before marriage, in marriage, after marriage and at succession without discrimination.

The policy proposes strategies to achieve this including:

- Recognizing and strengthening rights of women and children in all existing and emerging land tenure regimes. This involves reviewing customary laws and practices on access to and ownership of land, restoring powers of traditional leaders in land administration on condition that they respect the rights of women and other vulnerable groups and holding the head of the family to

account for their fiduciary duties over family land that they hold in trust

- Redressing gender inequality to inheritance and ownership of land in statutory law by making legal provisions for joint or spousal co-ownership of family land and the matrimonial home and providing for the right to inheritance of family land by women and children.

- Integrating women in land administration through providing for their participation in all decision making structures and processes, soliciting support of cultural leaders to implement measures aimed at protecting women's land rights and domesticating and enforcing all international conventions ratified by the government of Uganda that outlaw discrimination against women.

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NAWOU commissions UMWA to do an information delivery system for Luweero women groups

By UMWA Team

The National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda, NAWOU, commissioned UMWA to develop an Information Delivery System to integrate at least 915 women from 26 groups in Luweero.

According to the Executive Director of NAWOU, Ms. Monica Emiru, the objective of the system is to enable rural women access vital information affecting them in their value chain including information on markets, weather and improved farming methods to enable them maximize their benefits from their ventures.

Speaking about the assignment, Clothlida Babirekere, one of the team leaders, from UMWA, said that the development of such a system is long-term, due to different factors including limited information, lack of awareness and appreciation of 'information is power',

limited funding, among others.

For an effective Information Delivery System, we would have to start with a baseline study against which follow up activities will be benchmarked! In the next two months therefore, we will do some desk review, targeted interviews with the NAWOU staff, the women of Luweero, and some focus discussions.

On December 19th, the survey team reported some of the findings and the proposed next steps for this assignment: Majority of the targeted women in Luweero, get information from radio stations; have telephones but can apply one or two functions which are calling, receiving a call, texting and able to receive a text message.

Although majority said they receive agricultural related information through radio, a big number too said they get it from Chairpersons of their groups, many through telescope, a

big number through meetings, and yet others through seminars, posters, or fliers.

The preferred channel was radio followed by telephone (calling / texting)! The survey also established some of the information needs of the women in Luweero, included – reliable market information, the different markets days; where to sell their produce and at how much, or to store produce; how to water harvest and other forms improved methods of farming. When and how to grow the crops, and how to avoid / deal with the looming drought in Uganda. Others said they don't have enough information about the improved seeds, where to get them from, and how to manage them.

The survey team further noted that although all the women groups were not reached, the sample may be representative. But to avoid doubt they suggested some quick actions including validating the collected data with a bigger representative sample; training the women in ICTs especially in receiving / calling and sending and receiving a text message. Collaboration with organizations such as Info Trade, that deal in market information, as this may be one of the big source of the information that will be relayed to the women. The other proposed follow up action was to identify and establish the kind of the text message software and the financial implication. Text messages may be one of the ways of relaying information faster to the women.

Launch of Annual Gender Media Awards

By the UMWA Team

In its effort to address gender gaps in, and by the media, UMWA in November 2016, launched the Annual Gender Media Awards, the first of its kind probably in East Africa, and beyond.

The initiative was motivated by the continued glaring gaps in the media despite the presence of a progressive constitution, policies and international conventions that provide good frameworks for gender equality in the media and other sectors.

According to Margaret Sentamu, Executive Director of UMWA, there have been several

initiatives including a National Gender Policy meant to impact on gender representation and presentation in the media, but little has changed. The latest being a National Strategy to Mainstream Gender in Uganda's Media. She said the Award was one of the recommendations after a study done on Media and Elections in Uganda 2016: A Gender Analysis of the Print Media.

She says: Despite having some media awards in Uganda, that recognize excellence, gender is not part of the pack in over the 4 media initiatives currently running in Uganda.

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Margaret Sentamu, UMWA Executive Director presenting at the Gender Media Awards.

Barbara Kaija, Managing Director of Vision Group at the AGMA.



Astrid Bratli of the Norwegian Embassy.

Fight for the visibility of women in the media

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She said the first of its kind, the Gender Media Awards novice ceremony will be held May 2017, with a call for entries already out.

There will be individual submissions, but trained gender media monitors will assess selected media houses to pick the best for the awards. She noted that the exercise may prove expensive for UMWA, but it was important – to start small, hopefully other stakeholders will in time embrace the idea and support it.

The Minister of General Duties, Hon. Mary Karooro Okurut, officiated at the function, and applauded the idea, saying it is long overdue. She was optimistic that the Award will impact on the way women are being portrayed, citing an example that women appear on front pages for the wrong reasons, often in bad light.

A Program Officer with the Norwegian Embassy, Ms. Astrid Bratli appreciated the move, reminding the over 150 participants in attendance of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, among others.

These state among others, the right for all people to express themselves freely without bias. Citing that the Norwegian Government has a White Paper specifically on gender in development cooperation “on equal terms”. Astrid urged UMWA to

continue fighting for the visibility of women in the media, and hoped that the Award’s impact could be read, heard and watched in the papers, and other media in the future.

The UN Women – Uganda Office, was represented by Agripinner Nandhego, Political Advisor. She urged the media against continued gender stereotyping as the latter forms the perceptions and actions of the population. She said: “The more the media trivializes or portrays women in negative light, or as dependents, they will grow into unproductive, persons with low self-esteem, this affecting the growth of Uganda as a nation.

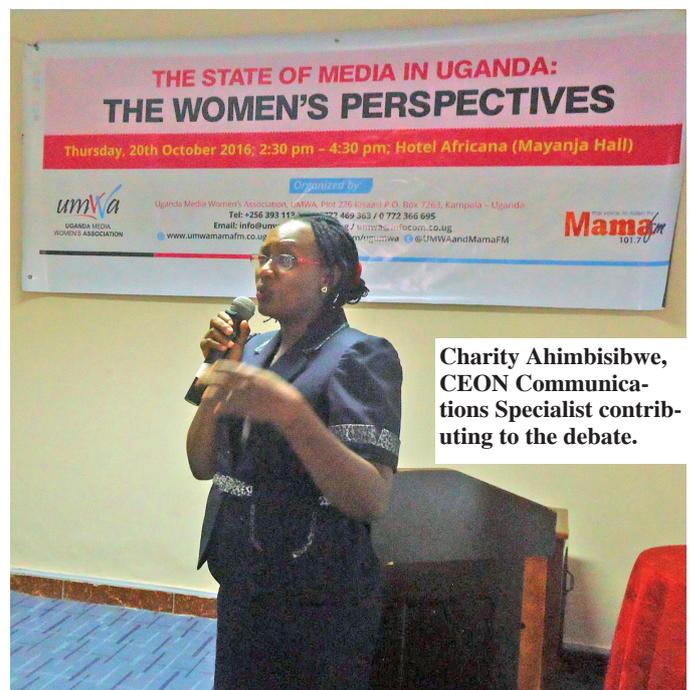
The launch was kick-started off with a panel discussion on Gender and Media. A Media manager, trainer, owner and a practitioner formed the panel that raised interesting perspectives.

A keynote speech was done by a former UNDP Resident Representative, Elizabeth Okwenje. Also one of the founders of UMWA, but now working as a team leader for the Women Situation Room, a recent African Initiative meant to troubleshoot for and around chaos or death during elections.

The launch was attended by representatives from Civil Society, Government, UN bodies, Embassies, Schools of Media, Media managers, trainers, and practitioners.



A cross-section of participants at the Annual Gender Media Awards.



Charity Ahimbisibwe, CEON Communications Specialist contributing to the debate.



New Vision's Deputy Editor, Cathy Mwesigwa at the Gender Media Awards.



UMWA'S Joan Nankya reading out resolutions.



The Minister in charge of General Duties, Hon. Mary Karoro Okurut at the AGMAs.



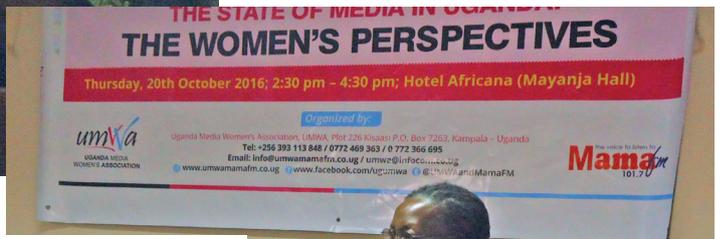
Harriet Kiwanuka, UMWA board member giving welcome remarks at the AGMAs.



Carol Beyanga, Managing Editor of Daily Monitor presenting.



Gender Media Awards at Imperial Royale.



Lina Zedriga, Director Women Peace and Security at Regional Associates for Community Initiatives (RACI) presenting on the state of the media in Uganda.



UMWA participates in the National Women's Week

By the UMWA Team

The national Women's Week is a bi-year event the last one having been organized in 2014. This year's theme was: "In Unison Confronting the Unfinished Business; United Women Can".

The seven-day activity started on October 15th, 2016 with a fundraising for cancer patients, and "walking for water".

The week was opened at a grand ceremony by the Prime Minister who recommitted the Government to women's empowerment. The Leader of Opposition, also gave opening remarks, again re-echoing that as Opposition, they will see to it that gender parity is attained at levels including within the party structures. Senior women activists, who formed the Women's Movement in the 1970s/80s spoke of their contribution, challenges, and aspirations for the woman of today or tomorrow.

Thelma Awori who worked in the UN system for a long time applauded women in the media, and the effort they put in highlighting women's issues and aspirations. She said, "Media is an influential tool, and so it should be utilized well, for the emancipation of women and the overall / development".

She urged all those involved in the Women's Movement to document their stories, including the challenges faced along the way, and the gains as well. She noted that today things are much different than before. The policies are in place, and



Rosemary Kemigisha from The Uganda Human Rights Commission giving her view on the state of media. Left is Geoffrey Wokulira Sebaggala, the Coordinator HRNJ-Uganda.

women have moved a step ahead.

They can speak, but it is important to have time to reflect and re-strategize, the reason for the bi-annual Women's Week. She added that without objective reflections and being united as women, the gains will slowly get out of hand, and will go back to the 70s!

Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA, is a founder member of the Uganda Women's Network, UWONET which is responsible for the Women's Week. On her part, UMWA participated in the general opening ceremony, and the

exhibition that attracted hundreds of people and civil society organizations.

UMWA, like 30 other civil society organizations organized a side event. She focused on the State of the Media in Uganda: The Women's Perspectives. The function attracted over 50 people and addressed by key media gurus, donors, government representatives and civil society organizations. The UMWA led function wound up with a communique on the type of Media Women Want, which emphasized a gender sensitive media. And for this to happen the session noted that there was need for increased knowledge building on gender and media for policy formulation and implementation.

Important to use the media to change the social constructs, but the media has to unlearn to do the kind of work it is expected to do, the much reason for implementing the National Gender Strategy on Media, the session participants emphasized. The strategy was designed two years ago by UMWA with support from UN Human Rights and Ministry of Gender, but has not been implemented, yet it would impact greatly the operations of the media in Uganda.

The resolutions made during the session included but not limited to:-

- Use media to amplify injustices; address sexual harassment, report cases of media abuse to Uganda Communications Commission; prioritize development issues such as gender policy vis a vis the negative portrayal of women; came up with strategies to address issues at policy level, laws, and even at the implementation level. And link activities of the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (Achieving Gender Equality).

- Apart from the session urging UMWA to be smarter in what they do, they were called upon to become more proactive, but that developmental partners should also support the work of local initiatives in the direction of Women and Media. Lina Zedriga, retired Magistrate said: "UMWA's work is so important. But you need to be more creative, short and develop that stamina".

It is important to note that despite Women and Media being part of the Beijing +5 and the Maputo Protocol – no substantial support has come to this thematic area. Even the UN Women mentions its importance, but no direct support to engender media has come though.



Prisca Baike of the Observer making a comment.



Training in Jinja for upcountry journalists.

UMWA facilitates training for upcountry journalists

By GWEN Reporter

Female journalists have urged UMWA to rejuvenate its operations in the upcountry districts as this would help them have some of their professional concerns addressed by what they referred to as a friendly organization.

At a three-day training for female journalists from upcountry districts, the over 50 participants appreciated the works of UMWA but the young ones complained that its services may have stopped with the older generation, who benefitted from it a lot, taking them to greater heights.

The objective of the training / meeting was to establish ways of continued networking among journalists. The training facilitators sought to unlock the minds of the female journalists who thought everything comes on a silver plate. The participants were reminded that journalism is a calling and the individuals who sought to take up that career must know that it is not about money but serving the country with the truth. They were also urged to value themselves through appropriate dressing, walking, expression, and who they network with, as the public is there watching their steps.

On the question whether journalists are celebri-

ties, the facilitator emphasized that never, should a journalist think or carry him/self as a celebrity, mentioning that, it is the quality of work that will make one a "celebrity". The participants were therefore urged to stop entertaining that funny feeling, and get back to the values of journalism.

The facilitator agreed with the participants on how UMWA had somehow scaled down on its activities citing limited resources, but called upon especially the young female journalists to accept responsibility at the UMWA Secretariat. Mention of several young female journalists being mentored but quickly jump to greener pastures, were abound. Said one UMWA Program Officer: "UMWA has trained several female journalists, in different aspects, but soon they move on because they don't want to take responsibility or 'fundraise' for the organization, and yet the latter function is so crucial in sustaining the organizational activities. Several public / communication officers you see in government, international or local NGOs are a product of UMWA".

Participants were reminded about the forthcoming UMWA General Elections due January / February 2017, to which they were encouraged to participate in as voters or candidates.

Before the close of the training, participants

were cautioned against formation of parallel associations as this does not only derail the credibility of individuals or organizations involved, but it also derails progress among female journalists.

Key issues that face female journalists noted during the interaction include:- Limited training and exposure, and networking skills as well as leadership, and limited knowledge on government or international operations; Sexual harassment at the workplace, limited pay; and limited capacity in journalistic work, most of them are learning on job or pursued short-term courses in fairly unrecognized institutions. Most of these fall short of professional standards.

The other big challenge several women journalists face, and yet reversible is the mindset that journalism is a job, and rather practitioners are celebrities who are 'above' society.

Lack of self motivation was also cited as another challenge facing female journalists. But by the end of the interactive session, several reported that they now appreciate the importance of change of the mind. And began appreciating the values and principles of journalism.

Young female journalist students a major target for online violence

by GWEN Reporter

If you are not aware, you better be. Online abuse, sometimes called E-violence, call it cyber crime is on the increase. Mostly targeting young women, most of them with little knowledge that indeed it is violence, and as such, most of the targeted women do not even bother to report, the easiest coping method is to block the source.

During the 16 Days of Activism for No Violence Against Women, UMWA conducted a short-term project first to establish the magnitude of the problem, and provide some mitigating factors, among female young journalist students in smaller institutions. And Yes, the results were appalling!

The 30-day project was in response to a research paper by Association for Progressive Communication published in 2005 that looked at the connection between ICT and Violence Against Women (VAW) and highlighted concerns such as innovative use of new ICTs by abusers contributing to grave concerns about the utility of these technologies in situations of domestic violence.

According to the Uganda police, online harassment is a type cyber-crime sometimes also called e-crime committed through communication technology. The crimes are committed using computer systems and the computer networks are used to facilitate the offence.

Due to gender imbalance in technological development, abusers have a greater advantage in their



UMWA trains on online harassment.

usage and as a result of this; young women experience cyber crimes including human trafficking, hacking, nudity and malicious software. Young women often times don't know how to perceive and react to on line violence, yet social media such as Twitter, Face-book and WhatsApp in Uganda is increasingly becoming

the greatest communication tools (Uganda Communications Commission 2013/2014 Report) for young people making them more vulnerable to online abuse.

The UMWA Pre-assessment Form showed that 90% of the respondents had received an unwanted message or picture or video while they try to communicate with people on social media. Much as participants said that their major source of research, communication and socializing tool is the internet, 41.6% of the respondents said they had been abused on the internet in different ways and blocking such persons was their major solution to this problem.

The engagement looked at the different types of violence that happens to women, and particularly focused on online violence and how young women can use the internet to advocate and end internet violence.

Some of the activities carried out during the 30 days included a light baseline survey, a hands-on session on how to use social media

applications, a community dialogue to establish the issues at hand and how to overcome; and a session on how to mitigate some of the impacts of online violence was also organized.

Short a project it was, participants were able to appreciate that online violence is a reality and can have everlasting effects; learnt how to mitigate it at least through blocking the source, and reporting to police.

It is however important to note that implementing such a project needs not only adequate resources but must have a pre-assessment of the situation from which the intervention will impact. For example, being journalist students one would expect that they are aware and fully understand what online abuse manifests, and how it can be curbed, but the intervention was amazed to find very low levels among the journalists, and yet they are expected to be a medium for information, and also execute the journalism role of education.



Women journalists train in online Cyber crime and violence.

Why UMWA needs rebranding to attract more support

AFTER a series of capacity building and self reflection sessions for the board, staff and volunteers of UMWA, the key recommendation was for the organization to rebrand without losing focus of what its vision, and values are.

The sessions focused on how to write a fundable proposal, a results-based report and “where is UMWA in the stages of organizational growth”. These were supported under the NWF-UMWA collaboration, and all held in May 2016.

Each session attended by over 30 participants noted that with the increasing proliferation of NGOs purporting to do this or that, UMWA may lose ground if it does not come out more clearly on what it stands for, sell it and interest more stakeholders to support it.

Noting that there was an organization, which purports to do almost similar things like UMWA, although they seem not to be on the ground, but has apparently attracted huge funding. UMWA needs to reclaim its place by becoming more visible.

“Although the participants noted the great work UMWA has done, including those who have started a similar organization, UMWA needs to get out of its comfort zone, use the resources that are available to her and assert itself”, said Gorret Nalwoga.

“It is time for UMWA to get out of these perimeter walls and shout out its contributions and success, Joan Nankya said. There seems to be a feeling among many of us that UMWA has done a lot and that people out there know about this. It is not true that people know about all these contributions because we do not have a marketing strategy. There are other small organizations



A session discusses fundable proposals.

that do extremely very little things but shout about it in the mainstream and social media”.

Annet Magada questioned: “Is it possible to revise the UMWA mission from: To enhance the visibility and status of women and other marginalized groups through awareness creation, capacity strengthening, advocacy and networking to realize gender equality; to: Make Women’s Voices Count?”

Yet Sylvia Nalukwago wondered: “How can we implement all the nice recommendations we have made here when UMWA is grappling with limited funding and yet few of us are willing to fundraise, and keep the UMWA mantle up there? Most of the people mentored by UMWA simply leave for greener pastures”.

Margaret Sentamu concurs with Sylvia: “Hundreds of people have been capacity built by UMWA, mentored, assigned great posts including the highest, but before you know it, they have joined bigger organizations.

Some of us are simply too tired to stay on another year”.

At the end of the session, what was clear was a need for regular self reflection, to strategize and implement the actions in time. With reduced funding from global partners, and yet in the presence of glaring challenges at home, UMWA is still a formidable force only needing to reflect further; the young blood to get on board, and ready to work, and the sky for UMWA will be the limit!



MAFA's Organic Farming Program

Strengthening future generations in Luweero District

BEFORE the crack of dawn, Sophia Nabakooza, a 16 year old pupil at St. Mugagga primary school, is already up and on the way to the garden!! Her sister and brothers follow suit, accompanied by their Auntie and a dog. This is their daily routine before preparing for school. Unfortunately, the yields are poor and the child headed family often goes without a decent meal a day; only relying on porridge provided at school.

Such is the case with most children in Luweero District, having to till gardens before hurriedly running to school. Most of them detest the morning rush hour and consider digging as a punishment for the stubborn pupils towards farming as well as most school going children link farming to poverty. They aspire for many things but not becoming farmers. They have negative attitudes towards this noble profession.

This poses a serious threat to future development of the agricultural sector and yet agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy.

However, this is not the case for Sophie and her sister and brother whose survival entirely depends on farming. Their plea is to have increased yields and incomes! She says, "I now sell my vegetables to the neighboring restaurants and on average, I earn shs 90,000 every season. We also eat these vegetables at home and we are able to have two meals a day in our home."

Their attitude is in line with the MAFA'S philosophy that promotes attitude and behavioral change as an important aspect in promoting sustainable Agriculture both today and in the future. There is no better way to bring about this change than in schools. Schools are centers of attitude change that are used to transform the minds and behavior of youths as well as transferring lifelong skills. Therefore, introducing them to sustainable Agriculture is important.



Children at St Mugagga Primary School during agricultural sessions supported by Maganjo Farmers Association (MAFA).



Children join aunt to crush beans, just before they embark on a journey to school.

MAFA, with support from Just a Drop, implemented a schools organic farming program. This was a demand driven program to address attitude change towards agriculture. It introduces organic farming, which is one of the sustainable farming systems chosen due to its tremendous

advantages. It is environmentally friendly, utilizes locally available resources, cost effective and produces healthy food. Organic produce also fetch better prices on the market when certified. All the above would interest children to adopt organic farming more easily, in the long run.

Climate change and sustainable development in agriculture

By MAFA Team

SEED sovereignty shows that seed keepers, food producers, scholars, activists and scientists are dedicated

to renewing a food system that is aligned with better ecological processes as well as human health. In this we see improved seeds that are drought resistant, disease free seeds, seeds that take shorter time to grow and a wide variety of seeds for a particular crop in order to cope with the changing climate in particular regions.

Maize and other cereals are the most widely cultivated crops and the foundation of world food security. The topic of

world food guide is how ecosystem-based farming systems are helping smallholder farmers to boost cereal yields despite climate change and environment degeneration. Practical applications of good agronomic practices like spacing, application of manure, planting one seed per hole in maize production show how farmers can strengthen their livelihoods, reducing pressure on the environment and build resistance to climate change

Sustainable Development goals are a set of new agenda for development with ambitious aim of eradicating extreme poverty among communities while recognizing the pressure

faced by natural resources like land wrangles, wetland destructions, deforestation, wars, bush burning, like applying an integrated landscape policy that is using the available land and one grows all sorts of crops like fruits, vegetables, body building crops, energy giving foods this can be done by growing some things in sacks, buckets so that every little space is utilized thus contributing towards achieving sustainable development within our communities and societies.



Susan from Luweero District was trained by MAFA on how to grow maize based on ecology to conserve the environment.

Barclays Bank inspires COWA trainees into business

By Okello Francis

THE one-day entrepreneurship seminar took place on 26th November 2016 at COWA grounds in line with a move to implement all round training for its trainees.

In Uganda today youth unemployment is very high. Consequent upon this many of them are living dependent lives on their parents and guardians. To curb this situation job creation amongst the youth is being encouraged by many people verbally. However the youth in most cases are not empowered enough with skills that are required to start-up businesses for themselves. Majority of them enter into business ventures that do not last barely six months due to little or no business management skills. Due to limited knowledge of business ideas many youth tend to duplicate businesses instead of coming up with their own creative business ideas from the existing one.

To address this, COWA in collaboration with Mentor Coach and Empower Uganda signed a collaboration to train second year students in entrepreneurship skills so that by the time they leave for the job market they are in a better position to start and manage their own created employment.

This venture was kick-started this year, with COWA collaborating with Barclays Bank of Uganda to equip the trainees with business ideas in the ready to work program. In this program Barclays bank is implementing a campaign to help youth set out to find employment or create self-employment with the needed skills that will help them to transition from the world of education into the world of work. The training attracted 40 participants from COWA (trainees and staff) 45 staff from Barclays Bank of Uganda were in the house! The seminar was aimed at creating business ideas to the trainees, empowerment of participants with business skills and creation of awareness about banking for businesses.

The ready to work program provides learning material that will help young people develop work skills, people skills, money skills and entrepreneurial skills. Young people can select their own learning pathway depending on individual needs and complete the learning online using computer, tablet or mobile platforms. The program



COWA Principal in a memorial action for Barclays Bank's intervention.

involves many avenues that help youth learn and equip themselves with many skills that will prepare them for the real world as they seek for employment.

In the one-day seminar COWA trainees were taken through a number of business content that require them to put into implementation including work skills, people skills, money skills and entrepreneurship they need to find employment or create employment.

Winnie Agatha Naluwoza, Student, was mesmerized: "In my life I have attended so many workshops

but the one of Barclays Bank was indeed unique. Employees from the bank came to our school to train us in employment and saving. Self-employment which was emphasized is one thing I cannot forget. The key points such as hard work, obedience, courage and capital are attributes will greatly help me when am to open up my own workshop. I also got to understand that knowing the market is also so very important. Plus creativity when coming up with products and services that are unique attract customers / clients".

COWA excels at MCE graduation

COWA trainees excelled during exhibition of students' small scale businesses exhibition at Lugogo Vocational Institute on 14th December 2016. This was a graduation ceremony of students from several vocational institutions within Kampala under the MCE Uganda students' entrepreneurship program.

It is the second time COWA trainees excel at such entrepreneurship exhibition and competition. Students who completed their training in 2015 had joint competition at Lugogo Vocational Institute out of which a student of COWA emerged as the best female entrepreneur and the other as the best exhibitor of the exhibition competition winning cash prizes of UGS 100,000/= and UGS 50,000/= respectively.

Mentor Coach and Empower (MCE) Uganda aims at empowering trainees with entrepreneurship skills, motivate them to create own jobs.



COWA alumni at the exhibition.

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COWA graduates set record

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Trainees are awarded start up equipment such as sewing machines for tailoring and basic cookery and cake decoration equipment.

At the graduation ceremony, students exhibited their newly started businesses either personal or in partnership. They ranged from textiles, snacks, cleaning agents, decorative materials, and crafts materials. This was in line with the achievement of the program goals in which the trainees were encouraged to start small with the available material resources and skills.

The heads of institutions and prominent business men and women as well as a representative from the Uganda National Curriculum Development Centre who later inspired the trainees, picked the best exhibitor. Some of the key things noted were business and product features and business manager competence. These among others include business and products marketing, packaging, pricing, customer care, business communication skills, financial management and record keeping, product branding and innovation, products variety, impact of products in meeting demands of society and the entrepreneur to solve a problem.

Of the 20 businesses exhibited, COWA scooped three awards: the best female entrepreneur and the two third runner positions.

Susan Akello, a tailoring trainee of COWA awaiting graduation next year (2017) was the best female entrepreneur. She expressed her gratitude to COWA and MCE. She says: "I couldn't believe that I was the best. I almost shed tears of joy. This has built more confidence in me. I think I won because I had a variety of products



Susan Akello displays her products during the exhibition.

ranging from bags, ladies, gents and children wear, card holders and hair bans. My products were indeed unique. I think I will be a great tailor in the near future because I am ever searching for new fashions from the fashion magazines, TV programs and the internet. I will network with more entrepreneurs to get more entrepreneurship ideas. I look forward to getting entrepreneurship mentorship where my great works will be the ones to market me".

Lawrence Obbo and Beina Owechi, both Tailoring Trainees who completed their course in November 2016 teamed up and created O and O company dealing in textiles, art and craft making. They emerged the third runner up winning a cash prize of UGS 50,000/=. Their variety of products included ladies and gents casual wear, earrings, necklaces, photo frames, bangles

and crafted shoes.

The two have kept their friendship from school time to the workplace. Beina says: "Immediately after the course at COWA, we didn't go for internship instead we started our workshop, and started making products from home. I felt very happy about the Award because now I realize that team work will push us to a higher level.

Many youth are inspired to start some businesses and the majority stop at inspiration without trying out. Those who start up some kind of businesses also have their businesses collapsing before growing due to a number of factors. It is important that parents and other stakeholders give attention to the young entrepreneurs and support them to have their businesses grown to a level of self-sustainability.

Romana Francesca, COWA Principal says:- "As a school, COWA can do a lot in inspiring and mentoring. The success of this however requires combined efforts of the teachers, parents/guardian and the students themselves. The success of building successful young entrepreneurs requires the availability of resources as raw materials and equipment. The provision of these resources require contributions from the parents/guardian and the school. Collaboration between parents/guardians makes it possible for the students to get enough material for their creativity in inventing new products for the consumer market.

This year, trainees of the Catering course were tasked on a daily basis to prepare snacks for sale to fellow students and staff for break tea. They were given money to purchase the materials needed. This gave them a sense of responsibility of specialization and division of labour. Using common food stuffs they were in position to prepare different kinds of snacks to suit consumer demands.



COWA alumni at the exhibition.

MAFA farmers in Luweero visited some credit societies in Ntebe to gain managerial experience and create partnership.



Why access to credit is the engine for modern farming

By MAFA Team

Agricultural financing has, in recent times, become a topical issue and a serious concern not only in Uganda but also in most developing countries and all corners of society.

Agricultural transformation requires increased investment to improve productivity by use of better inputs, product quality at both harvest and post-harvest time. By focusing on proper drying, storage and value addition across all stages of the value chain from the farmer to the processor and exporter. However, such process and investment needs increased access to credit yet financial lending to agriculture by financial institutions is still very low in Uganda. For example, less than 10% of the loans issued by both private and public financial institutions goes to agriculture. Because of the perception by these financial institutions that agriculture is a highly risky sector given its many challenges especially lack of collateral and risk mitigation insurances products to secure the loans as is the case with commercial and business loans.

These challenges to financial lending and borrowing have necessitated mitigating interventions by the government, the private sector and other development partners in order to help farmers

have increased access to credit

One of such institutions is Agricultural Initiative Trust (aBi). Which supports private sector-driven agricultural transformation and its services are not aligned to the government.

Agribusiness Initiative Trust offers financial and business development services in the value chain of especially coffee, maize oil seeds, pulses,

fruits and vegetables. The Trust supports market driven agri-businesses to increase productivity and quality at every stage of the value chain-from productivity on farm to processing and export-in order to boost competitiveness of the agricultural products on the local and export markets.

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MAFA supported some farm families in Luweero District to get micro loans from aBi trust to cultivate maize on large scale.

The engine for modern farming

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Current research shows that increased agricultural financing has been reinforced by other players in the financial sector. For example Agricultural Finance Yearbook 2011, a joint effort by Bank of Uganda, Plan for Modernization of Agriculture, GIZ and aBi, shows that a number of banks and other financial institutions have credit or loan schemes for agribusiness lending with Centenary Rural Development Bank being the lead lender. Others include Opportunity Bank Uganda, Housing Finance Bank, Mateete Microfinance Cooperative Trust, Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations, Savings Groups and Village Savings and Loan Associations also offer agricultural loans especially in rural areas where conventional banking services are limited or lacking.

Agriculture is part of Centenary Bank's major business areas. The bank commits 20% of its loans portfolio to agriculture, compared to the whole commercial banking system's 7% to the sector.

For example, according to Agricultural Finance Yearbook 2011, Centenary Bank's agricultural loan portfolio was about Ushs2bn in 2002 but by 2011 it stood at Ushs89bn, which translates into 17% of its total lending portfolio.

The bank has created an Agricultural



MAFA women groups have village savings and loans association (VSLA) kits where they save and borrow own money to invest into income generation projects.

Lending Department and seeks to extend credit access to the entire agricultural value chain and increase its rural outreach to farmers and entrepreneurs through small lending branches countrywide. This is expected to enhance development and reduce the national household poverty count.

With the agricultural sector's contribution towards Uganda's Gross domestic product (GDP) of 30% being twice as effective in reducing poverty prevalence in the country as compared to the GDP contributions to other sectors. Such contribution should be given heed if the country is to accomplish "Vision 2040".

From rugs to riches: A Story of one woman

By MAFA Team

We all have dreams but in order to make dreams come true, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort. Sarah may be in the rural part of the world, but with her determination, she is truly soaring high.

54 year old Sarah Kironde is married and had four children but lost her eldest daughter to HIV/AIDs and she left behind two children who are currently living with her. She lives in Kagugo village in Luweero district and is now a member of one of the groups supported by MAFA.

Before she joined Kwegatta Ge Maanyi women farmers group, Sarah was operating a very small retail shop in her local trading center that was started by her husband but the challenge was that she could not get funds to restock in case she ran out of stock so the husband would give her some little money to restock; however because the husband had to take care of the family needs, like



Sarah Kironde – Chairperson, Kwegatta Ge Maanyi Women's Group. She brick lays as one of her income generating project.

food, school fees and other needs his contribution was quite minimal. The little income from the shop would also be used up by the family needs leaving the shop dry.

"Before I joined Kwegatta Ge Maanyi group, I belonged to 3 informal groups where we would collect a pull of money and vote for

a lucky person to take it and the sequence continued until all group members would get their turn. With this money, I acquired a sewing machine in addition to the retail shop from where I would get some money for saving but it was never enough. I also belonged to BRAC – Bank where I would acquire loans and

repay weekly but the challenge was in repayment", said Sarah.

In 2011, with the support of MAFA she joined Kwegatta Ge Maanyi women farmers group to which she now remittances her regular savings. 3 months into her time there, she was able to clear the old loan she had with BRAC which gave her more flexibility.

Later in June 2014, she borrowed UGS 300,000 from MAFA micro revolving and did a brick laying project of 7000 bricks. Currently, Sarah has several income generating ventures that supplement each other and enable her to contribute to the family expenses. She hopes that one day they can put up a better house to live in.

What's important to note however, is that MAFA has not only taught her how to save and grow her income. Through the training sessions, Sarah has learnt the value of being open with her husband even in financial matters.

One woman's story of perseverance

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The tradition in most rural areas in Africa is that women are not supposed to have income of their own but rather look up to their husbands to provide for every single need at home. In the past, women that have been open with their income have risked having their husbands stop being responsible for the home basic needs. Sarah didn't want to risk that even though she somehow knew her husband wasn't the kind who would abscond his responsibilities.

"I used to be discreet about my earnings but later realized that the money I would hide never helped the situation at home. Now after several trainings with MAFA, it's a different story altogether. Today, I keep my husband updated with what's going on which has strengthened the family bond". She notes that openness as partners is key in planning for the family and fostering community development.

Sarah believes that since she is now better placed, she needs to help the people in her community especially the women that are still struggling with the effects of poverty. Besides her two grandchildren, she is also supporting a 14 year old orphaned girl who lost her father to HIV/AIDs, with school fees and school materials.

She is also influencing many people in her community into joining beneficial groups and organizations since she has seen many benefits. Her story inspires many people in the community as they have seen her professionally turn into an influential person.

Angela Zawedde, Program Officer says: "MAFA focuses on giving a hand in an effort to eradicate poverty. People like Sarah make us believe that it is indeed possible and as we continue reaching out to many others that that are in conditions that the past Sarah was, we move fourth with such confidence that it is indeed possible to eradicate poverty".

COWA students speak about the benefits of reading in the modern era.



If you want to hide money, put it in book, you will find it.

Not any more!

By Billy Francis

It is said that Africans have a poor reading culture. That if you want to hide money, put it in a book because you will find it where you kept it. Why? Because people here don't read!

But this may start changing if Ugandans come up with initiatives like Dear Day. Read on.

To promote a reading culture COWA has adopted the DEAR Day activities from Forum for Education Non Governmental Organizations Uganda (FENU) meetings. DEAR is an abbreviation for 'Drop Everything And Read'. It is a day set to promote the reading culture. In one of the FENU meetings it was reported that according to the Ministry of Education, Science Technology and Sports (MoESTS), the DEAR Day was to be included in the school syllabus. At COWA participants in the very first Dear Day activities welcomed the idea greatly and resolved to be doing the exercise fortnightly because of the positive results the first exercise had had on the participants.

It was celebrated on 17th March, 2016 nationwide. Participants read different materials ranging from Newspapers, The GWEN News Letters, the Bible, Inspirational Books; how to start and grow one's business to mention but a few. Students share views about this initiative.

One student observes:

"The articles from the GWEN newsletters were touching due to the real life portrayed. The article about the being a dot com parent challenged me so much because of what technology is doing in transmitting information across the globe within minutes which make people be abreast with current affairs".

Kibukaire Grace Consolate, a Tailoring Instructor says that everybody needs to read because it is a source of current and past information, and it is useful in the day to day life. Reading can reduce stress, and can be a source of entertainment. We are in a dynamic world.

To keep in line with the trend one needs to read widely. For instance, new equipment are being introduced which may require reading about their operation. The way teaching was done two decades ago is different today because the students are exposed to a variety of issues which in some cases give them the opportunity to sometimes challenge the instructor.

Susan Sunday Akello, a Tailoring student confesses that reading has been of much help in her communication skills. "When I switched to Kampala schools, my eyes opened greatly even after mispronouncing words incorrectly. But my teacher realized my weakness and the desire I had to learn helped me out. She started giving me story books to read to check my level of comprehension.

With time I became better as well as in class performance. When I completed my primary school I continued with the reading culture in secondary school where my reading included newspapers, magazines, text books and novels from which I got a variety of useful information. When I joined COWA it was easy for me to carry out the roles of the Information Minister which includes reading news at the Assembly.

The Dear Day activities motivated me to read outside my course literature. This is because the variety of literature read and the sharing of lessons learnt from the read information made me realize the importance of setting aside a time to read something. When we had a workshop on writing stories and articles in one of the school workshops I got more inspired.

Winnie Agatha, "I was very lazy at reading materials that were not related to the subjects taught in my class until my father inspired me to start reading. I used to wonder why my father would "waste" a lot of time in reading all the time he was out of workplace. Even at home, he would do the same, read and read!

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COWA demystifies reading

COWA trainees learn how to mix colours in a tailoring class recently.

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One day he handed me a book "Rich Dad Poor Dad" which he advised me to read at a slow pace to understand the message. I took the book reluctantly. However as the saying goes "never judge a book from its cover" I got interested in reading page after page. My father became very impressed when, one morning he heard me asking for a dictionary. When I got the meaning of some words I felt challenged to read more.

Ever since, I adopted the culture of reading. When I make good use of the school library every time I had free time. Every time I got challenges I consulted my teacher for English language. With my commitment to reading and consultation my communication skills have improved. This made me get interested in applying for the position of information minister at school. Execution of my duties then became easy".

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