

GWEN NEWS

The Newsletter for Grassroots Women's Empowerment Network

October 2016



Time for work: Woman rides bicycle to farm. When will Government address the gender specific needs of women like this?

Is the gender gap in agriculture responsible for the slow progress?

GWEN Opinion Women's Movement needs refurbishing

Social movements can be funny! You can be in, without you being consciously knowing that you are supporting a social cause!

Take for example, individuals who work for, or women focused organizations. By practice, they are working towards improving women's lives by facilitating them to realize their rights. But pose a question to some of these individuals, about the Women's Movement in Uganda. Chances are that many have not heard about such a movement, do not understand it or cannot place themselves in that equation!

But why is it that several individuals or women focused organizations are not clear about the Women's Movement, yet it started almost 90 years ago in Uganda. The EAG-WEN Annual Conference (September 2016) had some of the answers. We have not bothered to trace its origins, there is no meeting point between the young and the old: limited mentoring of young women or men into the Women's Movement. The Movement has become divided on class; is monetized; infiltrated by politics. It has become an occupation rather than being led by passion; no proper leadership, etc.

The movement belongs to a clique; to organizations, it is closed. No shared vision! It belongs to the elite women! The list went on and on. But what the participants agreed on, which is also shared across the board. That the Women's Movement needs refurbishing! We need time to take stock, get re-energized, all of us to become conscious that we are in; bridge the intergenerational gap, the young ones to appreciate its values, and consciously prepare to take on the mantle. That way we will be able to sustain the Women's Movement in Uganda. "Very important to appreciate where we come from, the gains made, how to consolidate them, and together we look into the future!" Said Jackie Asimwe, one of the facilitators of the conference!

Alluta continua!

How gender gap is responsible for slow agriculture progress

They form half the population, contribute to development in the same measure, but women still lag behind, and with them rope in the developmental equation. So what needs to be done? Christine Nakalanzi asks. Read on.....

Women, on average, comprise 43% of the agricultural labor force in developing countries but own far less land and livestock than men, have less access to agricultural credit and are rarely targeted for extension services. Women farmers typically achieve yields that are 20-30% lower than men however, the vast majority of studies suggest

that women are just as efficient as men and would achieve the same yields if they had equal access to productive resources and services. Bridging this gender yield gap would boost food and nutrition security globally. Given equal access to resources as men, women would achieve the same yield levels boosting total agricultural output in agricultural countries by 2.5-4%. The additional yield could reduce the number of undernourished people in the world by 100-150 million (12-17%) Source: FAO

tion in smallholder agriculture'. The research involved a case study in Kenya focusing on tea growers. The case study was selected with the aim of including a country where fair-trade production occurs and different cultural contexts of gender relations exist.

Women form a significant minority of membership, leadership and salaried employees and three main barriers to women's active participation as members, leaders and employees emerged from the case study.

1.Ownership of land or crops creates a bias in favor of men, it is widely accepted that women own less land than men globally,

generations who are receiving more education than their parents and are more exposed to life outside their communities.

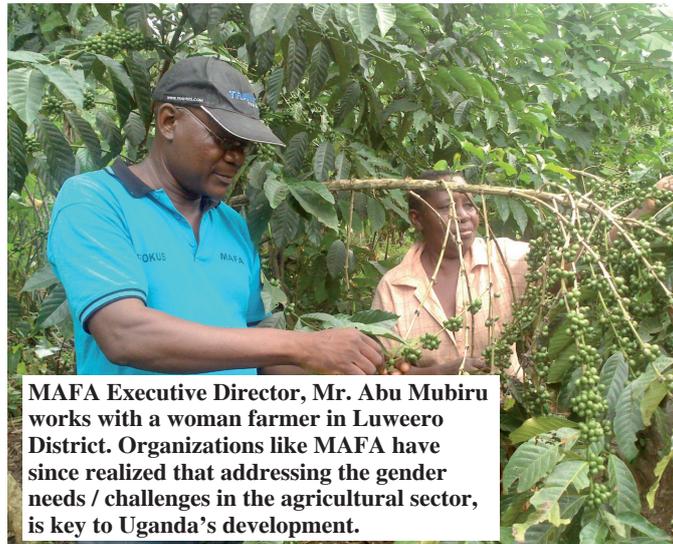
A typical day for Women tea farmers in Kenya

Women get up as early as 4:30 am to milk animals, make breakfast, prepare children for school, clean the house and fetch water, before heading to the fields with their husbands. Work in the fields ends around 1pm, with any harvested tea then taken to the buying centre by both men and women, or women alone. In the afternoons and evenings women continue with unpaid care work- preparing food, working in kitchen gardens, tending animals, collecting firewood, caring for children-while men spend more time socializing with friends and relaxing. Women reported that they go sleep as late as 11:30pm. Women were being offered leadership positions but not being willing to take them up.

There needs to be clear incentives if women are to take up more active participation. In Kenya, ideas included training on business management and book keeping, as well as livelihood activities, facilitation of loans for women to buy or rent land; and investing in children facilities. Supporting the development of alternative income streams was also popular with women in Kenya.

In Kenya women suggested dairy farming, poultry farming, vegetable and fruit cultivation, and bee keeping as possible options. Women in Kenya also prioritized labor saving technology such as mills for de-husking lentils and piped water into houses.

Given that women have historically been excluded from leadership, it is not surprising that in Kenya people were of the view that they do not have necessary knowledge and skills to be leaders. There are women in the case study who have succeeded as leaders and can act as role models for others, and with targeted support(such as leadership training and opportunities to exchange experiences with women in other organizations),



MAFA Executive Director, Mr. Abu Mubiru works with a woman farmer in Luweero District. Organizations like MAFA have since realized that addressing the gender needs / challenges in the agricultural sector, is key to Uganda's development.

In March 2015, the fair-trade foundation published a report entitled 'Equal Harvest: Removing the barriers to women's participa-

although the precise breakdown is hard down is hard to come by.

2.Local customs and attitudes related to the role of men as household heads and primary decision-makers and women being expected to perform the majority of unpaid care work (i.e. domestic chores and caring for their children and dependent adult) which increases their total work hours and acts as a constraint on their availability to participate actively in producer organizations.

3.Age, marital status, education can also affect women's freedom to participate. At the same time, attitudes and behaviors are changing, particularly among younger



UMWA produces study on Uganda's 2016 elections

By the UMWA Team

The February 2016 General Elections are done. Time to count losses and gains. For those organizations and people interested in gender equality, it is time to assess how the two genders performed. At UMWA, our specific interest was how the media covered the elections.

We put on the gender lenses and analyzed the performance of five newspapers: The Observer, Daily Monitor, New Vision, Red Pepper, and Bukedde. Five newspapers were picked for different purposes – they represent different interests.

For example, The New Vision, is public-owned but also the largest. The Daily Monitor is one of the first independent newspapers, but also regarded as “opposition mouthpiece”. Bukedde, apart from being a vernacular paper, it is also public-owned. Red Pepper is independent, but again seen as a paper that state secrets are exposed. On its part, The Observer, also independent and like Red Pepper, and Daily Monitor, it was founded and run by professional journalists.

The five newspapers all profess to transform the lives of all Ugandans, meaning that they report diversity and should work for the total progress of both genders.

The gender analysis was done for three months (December 2015 – February 2016). The Global Gender Media Monitoring Tool developed by the World Association for Christian Communication, WACC, was largely applied.

The study was justified by the glaring gaps between men (80%) and women (20%) coverage, in the media despite the latter's numerical population

strengthening which is 51% against that of men 49%. The International Conventions in particular the CEDAW, and the Beijing Platform Action together with the Uganda Electoral Commission media guidelines, and the National Institute of Journalist Union also justified the assessment of the media coverage from a gender perspective.

While the overall objective was to get evidence that would motivate media managers and practitioners, change the way they report about women, the specific objectives were:- To establish the visibility accorded to both women and men during the print media's coverage of the (2016) elections;

To analyze the presentation of stories, with a direct bearing on women; Analyze the portrayal of women and men, in election-related stories; Find out who, between female and male journalists, delivered which election-related stories; Identify and point out some best or worst practices of press coverage (2016 Election) for learning or replication purposes; and propose recommendations to address the identified gaps in realizing a gender sensitive print media in Uganda.

The study results showed that the print media in Uganda was not responsible to women. It was rather skewed to the male politicians, technicians and voters.

●The visibility of women (candidates or voters) during coverage of the 2016 general elections in Uganda was significantly low relative to that of men, not only in terms of being read about or being heard, but also being seen in pictures. The study findings show that the representation of women as news subjects was only 20% as opposed to 80% for men. Emanating from the study

also is that there is a direct linkage between one's status in Ugandan society – sex, occupation, and family status – and the likelihood of being covered in election related stories and providing additional information, in the case of the role, news subjects or the source play in the news stories.

●Study findings indicate further that voices heard during coverage of the 2016 elections were predominantly of men, while women's voices were invariably invisible. The proportion of female news subjects directly quoted was 15% as opposed to 85% males. Considering that females comprised 20% of the total number of news subjects and yet only 15% of all those quoted were female means that the likelihood of a female news subject being quoted is reduced by at least 5%, the reverse being true for the males. It should be noted, however, that even in stories that focused on women, more men (73%) than the women themselves in those stories (27%) were quoted. The number of the news subjects or sources photographed was much higher (82%) for the males, females having constituted only eighteen (18) percent.

●Also emerging from the study is that news stories with a direct bearing on women, were not given adequate coverage. For example, stories specifically about women / a woman represented only 9% of the total number of stories. Those that made reference to gender equality / policies formed only 5% of all stories; those that highlighted issues of equality between women and men constituted only 1% of all stories and those that challenged / reinforced stereotypes constituted 1%.

UMWA conducts gender analysis of the print media

From to Page 3

●Further observed in the study is that stories that had a direct bearing on women rarely found space on the front page, leave alone the first five pages, except when they are sensational or scandalous in nature. Similarly, it was found out that such stories occupied less space i.e. based on whether they occupied a full page, half a page, a third of a page, a quarter of a page, or less than a quarter of a page. Those that occupied a full page combined with those that occupied a half page contributed only 35% while those that occupied one third of a page, a quarter page or less than a quarter page, combined, accounted for 65%.

●The Women's "pull outs" Her Vision in The New Vision, and Full Woman in Daily Monitor can be efficient tools for promoting women's empowerment. However, they were found instead to be reaffirming gender stereotypes. The news stories about the elections formed only 3% and even then, it was mostly men's perspectives sought. Full Woman actually has a sub-section "Man Talk" where stories on women and elections were allocated. On the other hand, 97% space was about home care and parenting, fashion and design, relationships, beautification, and such other related issues.

●Further revealed by the findings is the gendered portrayal in coverage evidenced in photographs and the story texts, that tilted more in relation to women than men. Some of the photographs featured had elements of sexism, while others perpetuated gender stereotypes such as of women as care givers and as prone to emotion, among others. Moreover, in some photographs featuring women, they are shown playing secondary roles e.g. entertaining people at campaign rallies, while in others, their photos tended to be smaller in size than those of men, in the same story.

●Relatedly, the language used in some of the stories, with regard especially to female news subjects or even news sources, was seen to be generally sexist (by referring to women as "speaking blankets", "oil wells", "juicy", "bootylicious"); demeaning (by referring to adult women as "girls", "gals", "babes", "thigh vendors", "prostitutes", etc); and, judgmental by intoning that women are capable of making independent



Uganda's newspapers fell short of the gender lens in the 2016 general elections.

decisions, are indecisive, weak and dependant as well as generally not being informed. Other words and phrases reflected women's perceived subservience to men, such as "master" and "boss" in reference to men and "servant" in relation to women.

●Delivery of news during the study period followed a similar pattern. The representation of female journalists delivering the news was only 7% as opposed to 74% for men, the remaining 19% was delivered by journalists whose sex was "not known" having been referred to as "our reporters, or staffer". More (73%) female journalists covered stories that had national implications than they covered stories with local dimensions (27%). Male journalists also covered more of national stories (51%) as opposed to 48% for local stories. However, they covered all the stories with international implications. Such coverage points to gendered patterns in task allocations by media houses.

●The study findings indicate further that there is a relationship between the sex of the reporter and the gender dimensions of the story. Female journalists (reporters) were found to be more likely, than men, to feature more female news subjects; to quote more female sources; to file stories that highlight issues of gender equality; as well as stories that challenge stereotypes. On the other hand, male journalists (reporters) were seen to file, more than women, stories that quote more male news sources; and stories that depict more women than

men as victims or passive participants and those that have women as a central focus. However, both female and male reporters were seen to have an equal likelihood of filing stories that refer to gender equality rights legislation, and policies.

Following the appalling results that leave a lot to be desired in today's world where both genders should be seen to enjoy equal rights, the research team, and indeed other stakeholders made some recommendations to remedy the situation. They included among others, adhering to and enforcing legal frameworks that guide media operations; respecting the principle of equality and fairness in respect to female and male news subjects and sources; avoiding the use of images and language that are sexist, derogatory, discriminative and stereotypical through development of appropriate gender-inclusive policies to impact on the curricular, content, and staffing in general.

The National Strategy to Mainstream Gender in Uganda's Media developed by Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA (in 2014), with support from the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, should also, as a matter of urgency be reviewed and implemented as it embodies detailed actions in addition to those mentioned above.

FOKUS partners in Uganda agree to consortia arrangement

By GWEN Reporter

As global dynamics impact on the world's economy resulting into reduced funding to the "emerging democracies" like Uganda, civil society organizations and agencies that have been used to foreign funding have, but to change their ways of thinking.

For example, civil society organizations and NGOs in particular, in the South either have to find alternative ways of funding; by cultivating other sources of financial support, for example by starting income generating activities. Another way is to work in a consortium, raise funding in a group and implement activities in that manner.

These and many other thoughts formed part of the two-day Annual EAGWEN Conference held September 2016. The conference is part of the EAGWEN annual activities supported by FOKUS through the Norwegian Women and Family Association (NWF). EAGWEN is the East African Grassroots Women's Network formed by three local Ugandan women-oriented NGOs: Maganjo Farmers' Association (MAFA), Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA), and Companionship of Works Association (COWA).

This year, the conference was attended by three other partner organizations also supported by FOKUS: Eastern African Sub-regional Support Initiative for the Advancement of Women (EASSI), FIDA-Uganda, and National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU). In attendance were two officials from NWF, Kristin Hansen and Anne Marit.

Noting that fundraising has become more challenging, the participating organizations resolved to work more closely even in terms of fundraising. UMWA, for example, which runs a women focused radio station (Mama FM), but also conducts grassroots sensitization on social issues for the empowerment of women, reported that the year 2016 funding was just a third of what was received last year.

"This has become difficult for us to run a radio station, as it requires four times what is received as an overall budget. Running a radio



NWF Representatives:
(R-L) Anne Marit Hovstad, Kristen Hansen and Merethe Brattetaule.

station is no mean assignment", Catherine Apalat, Programs Director, Mama FM noted.

By the end of Day Two – the six organizations had agreed to explore ways of collaboration, which should be followed through for implementation.

The Norwegian Women and Family Association (NWF), team also endorsed the collaboration idea, pointing out that even funding from FOKUS can be tricky especially for the EAGWEN partners come 2018. In fact there were such indicators in 2016 to the partners which would have plunged the work of the partners in worse danger.

The first part of the conference was used by participants for reflection on the performance of the Women's Movement.

It was noted among others, that staff / volunteers working in women-related organizations need to first appreciate why such organizations, without which they will neither appreciate their contributions, nor will their work be in line with vision of the Movement.

Jackie Asiimwe, FIDA-Uganda, who facilitated this session said, "It is important to know and appreciate where we come from, the gains so far achieved, underlining that such did not come on a silver plate, but

women before us, fought for those gains. The reason why despite the irregularities in elections, I wake up in the morning to go and vote because, adult suffrage for women was fought for".

The participants noted that the Women's Movement in Uganda needs re-energizing to pick the storm that it used to have in the 80s and 90s. That it is important to deal with those challenges that keep the actors divided according to class, knowledge, tribe, religion or politics.

Mentoring young women into the Movement was another recom-

mendation for the elders to take on, while the younger ones were urged to get the passion to work for women's emancipation instead of focusing on "money first before I execute assignment A or B".

It was also noted that presently, the Women's Movement seems to have allowed itself to be co-opted into the regime, by accepting tokenism; has also become a club for a few "learned people" and that the would-be movers are too scared to raise their necks lest they are swallowed by the regime.

Turn to Page 6



The panel discussion on the women's movement in Uganda: L-R Christine Nankubugwe-EASSI, Joan Nankya-UMWA, Francesca Romana Bilak-COWA, Monica Emeru-NAWOU.



Participants after the two-day annual conference stage for a group photo.



Participants during the annual conference

FOKUS partners in consortia arrangement

From Page 5

On the issue of how the EAGWEN partners had performed in the first half of the year, it was noted that despite the late delay in the disbursement of funds, the partners, had executed the planned activities, but that the Kroner had appreciated against the US Dollar meaning that the projected budget in Uganda Shillings will be less. This would affect the planned activities in the next half of the year.

The three EAGWEN partners also agreed that the passion they have for transforming lives of the less privileged motivates them to do much more, but this may be challenged by the reduction in funding.

The direct beneficiaries of the projects who composed six out of the 20 participants, participated in a special session, discussing the financial support from Norway. They said that "little funds does not mean little effort or impact".

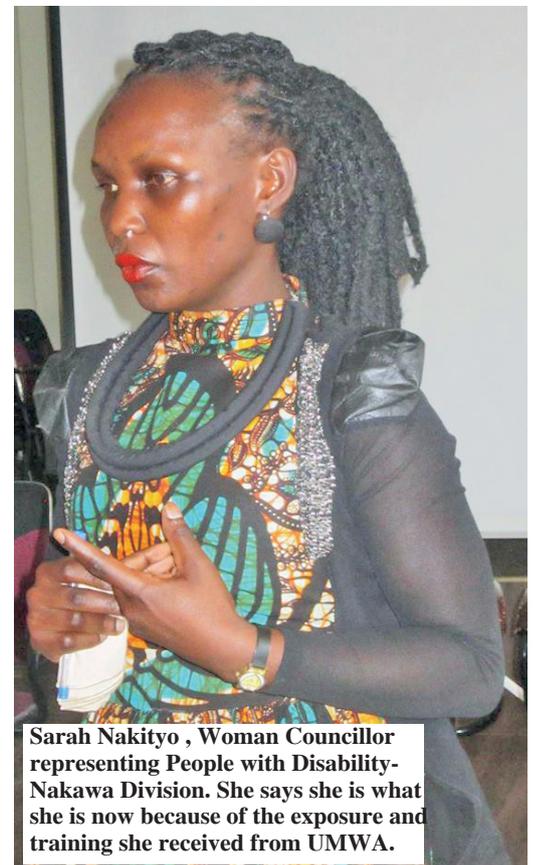
They appreciated the support and each of them shared how their lives had changed due to the interventions. All told tearful stories narrating how they felt marginalized, discriminated, voiceless, before the intervention, but now they are visible, and their contributions to families or communities, is profoundly appreciated.

Said Sarah Nakityo, a lady living with a physical disability, a single mother, and was abandoned by her husband. "Participating in the UMWA trainings made me what I am. Today I'm a Councilor and working as support staff at an International School. It is no longer a problem for me to provide for myself and my child needs including school fees. I am enjoying my life to the fullest. And after this session, I have already booked for a swimming session. I participate in radio programs. I love myself, thanks to the training".

Christine Nayiga, having participated in the MAFA supported trainings says, "I'm now a voice of the grassroots women at agricultural shows". Yet Angella Adekur, of COWA spoke of "confidence building and passing a Diploma course after being motivated by the training".



Angella Zawedde-MAFA says grassroots women still do not have full control of resources like land and the farm yields and majority of women are still earning less



Sarah Nakityo, Woman Councilor representing People with Disability-Nakawa Division. She says she is what she is now because of the exposure and training she received from UMWA.



In a nutshell the Women's movement is not about women organizations, rather about the different actors and touching and impacting the lives of all women particularly grassroots women.

UMWA eases access of SRHS to WWDs and female youths

By GWEN Reporter

The barriers to accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health Services (SRHS) by persons with disabilities especially women; and the female youth hinges around lack of knowledge about their rights, the available services, unfriendly service providers, and limited media messages, should therefore be directed towards addressing the health rights needs of this category of people, as well as information about the available services at various service centres.

This was the conclusion after a three-day interactive meeting between the youth, Women With Disabilities (WWDs), health service providers, media managers, community leaders, and staff / management of UMWA.

Supported under Stem van Afrika, UMWA organized a three-day dialogue to identify the barriers, lay strategies on how the mentioned marginalized groups can access the SRHS; enhance the skills of the media to advocate for increased knowledge and SRHS to WWDs; and the latter to claim, access the SRHS.

Catherine Apalat, Programs Director, Mama FM says: "Bringing the four groups of people together, facilitated information flow among them, helped to identify the barriers, and how these can be addressed in the shortest time possible. As Mama FM we are proud that the stakeholders have already committed improved services to WWDs and the female youth. These are categories of people who have been unknowingly / knowingly sidelined by SRHS providers. Scenarios like below motivated us to come up with such project".

Scenario 1: *One woman living with disability explains that when she went to the hospital when she was going to give birth, she found a nurse and when she saw her pregnant, she called other nurses loudly to come and see a disabled person who is pregnant. About six nurses came and started asking me to climb the delivery bed which was too high for me. They then laughed at me and asked me how I climbed the bed when I was getting pregnant. They left me there struggling to climb the bed until I failed and I delivered on bare ground.*

Scenario 2: *One of the participants who was a youth explained that, when she went to test for STDs at a government health center, she found very many people in the queue at OPD and when she reached at the service desk and explained to the nurse what she had come to do, the nurse recorded down and after writing she shouted "this girl wants to go for pregnancy test. Direct her to room 3.2" Everyone knew what I had come to do which made me feel embarrassed. I could not even proceed. Never went back.*



Mama FR presenters in a demo-talk show with members of the Uganda Albino Association.

One of the participants explained that, at Komamboga health center, a doctor was asking women who had gone for antenatal services to pay UGS 1,000 before he attends to them. Many of the mothers, majority of whom were youth pregnant mothers went back home without obtaining the services because they couldn't afford to pay the UGS 1,000 amount required by the doctor.

A person living with disability, PWD, said that one day she went to Mulago Hospital and she was called in an examination room. Reaching the room she was told to undress and then many doctors entered the room. One of them started explaining to others that, "this is how polio affects the legs and the leg gets smaller due to the polio infection" He then ordered me to turn around. It was ashaming because I was necked standing in front of many male doctors!

to apply the law on construction, which provides that all buildings are accessible to all people. PWDs should have separate entries; centres should not be high. For double storeyed – lifts or elevators should be provided, and ramps provided at a bungalow-like facility.

- Both media managers and practitioners, need to be oriented into friendly service provision covering the youth and PWDs. The service providers should drop the judgmental language; understand that all people require health services including SRH. The providers should empathize with the WWDs and the youth.

- The special interest groups – WWDs and the youth ought to be trained in communication skills; and negotiation so that they do not just shy away because a nurse has barked at them or has declined to give them a service. The said skills should go with added knowledge in the law, and the services available at each centre. The participants agreed that "Knowledge is power".

- The media ought to appreciate the needs of youths and PWDs. Thus they can do so if they are sensitized in the international obligations for the rights of these special groups. But also they ought to remember that their profession requires them to be fair, just and balanced; serving everybody instead of the powerful, or the able bodied people.

The three-day meeting agreed on strategies that would improve access to services to either WWDs or the female youth.

- Impress upon the Health Centres

Grassroots women pick skills in advocacy and negotiation



Participants at an advocacy training.

A three-day training in negotiation and advocacy skills was conducted April 27 – 29, 2016 for grassroots women leaders from Kawempe Division. Over 45 participants including five men, participated in the highly interactive training.

Lawrence Kalanzi, one of the facilitators noted: “The inclusion of men in the training targeting women is important as men tend to pose challenging but sometimes nagging questions which re-awaken women to stand up for their rights”.

The training under the UMWA – NWF collaboration focused on especially identification of

women’s issues that needed to be advocated for, what challenges are faced by women leaders, qualities of a good leader, the difference between a politician and a leader, effective communication, and tips on how to have your issue sail through to that person / organization, you are lobbying. At the end of the workshop, participants committed themselves to change:

Justine Namuwonge: “Will stop depending on my husband because I have learnt that there is no job that a woman cannot do”.

Leocadia Namatovu: “I am going to be a better good time manager”.

Clothlida Namagembe: “I am inspired to be like the facilitators of this session. They are good at listening, communicating, critical, but respectful!!”

Jane Nansereko: “I’ll avoid being a politician, but act as a leader”.

Teo Nannyonga: “Am going to ensure a good relationship with the people that entrusted me and gave me the leadership role as their chairperson”.

Village Savings Loans Association (VSLAs) major source of micro credit for grassroots women



Village Savings Loans Associations (VSLAs) is a methodology where the rural and urban people organized in groups, especially the women to save their small money and when it accumulates, the money is provided to a few members of the group to invest into micro income generation projects.

Kwegatta Ge Maanyi Women’s Group support by MAFA in Luweero District saves in a VSLA kit.

Mr. Mubiru Abu, The Executive Director – Maganjo Farmers Association (MAFA) says, VSLA methodology helps the women who have no bank accounts to save on a daily basis, weekly or monthly basis. Their accessibility to affordable low interest credits without any collateral or security is also eased and keeping the women in groups where they share other social ideas. Through these micro



Kwegatta Ge Maanyi Women’s Group support by MAFA in Luweero District saves in a VSLA kit.

credits from the VSLA methodology, women organized have managed to undertake various income generating projects including: poultry keeping, dairy goats rearing, mushroom growing, market vending, retailing and brick laying.

This has improved their household incomes; been able to feed their families, educate their children, meet medical bills and improved on their shelter, triggering off improvement in livelihoods.

UMWA facilitates dialogue between journalists and Persons With Disabilities

By UMWA Team

It was an interesting interaction! You see, two groups of people were brought under one roof, for 3 days; each suspicious of each other! It was the persons living with disabilities, and journalists. They were 48 and each group equally represented! And so the accusations or debate started.

Persons with disabilities to the Journalists:

Journalists do not respect us, don't give us positive or adequate coverage, when you do, you trivialize us, over sympathize with us making us feel helpless, you use negative language when describing us, and many times you do not seem to have enough information about our issues. You report about us in a stereotypic language that do not motivate us.

The Journalists fired back:-

Persons with disabilities take themselves as a special group, they don't want to open up when approached by a journalist, and when they do most of them expect money for an interview given. Most of us journalists face communication challenges for example, we do not know sign language.

Persons with disabilities do not appreciate that, as practitioners, we work under strict deadlines; there is no time to waste on a person who wants to take his/her time. As journalists, we cannot say we have adequate information on issues to do with disabilities.

And when all was said and done, it was clear that there was information and skills gap on both sides, the reason for the three-day training in disability mainstreaming in journalism, held June 8th to 10th, 2016.

The highly participatory training dealt with



UMWA's Project Officer Joan Nankya comments on project.

among others, understanding disability, the types and special needs / fears by persons with disabilities. The human rights principles. The human rights monitoring mechanism, the media and how it operates. How journalists and persons with disabilities can work more closely to highlight issues of the latter in the media.

Role plays and other practical exercises were very much part of the three-day session, which facilitated further interaction enabling each group appreciate each other, and like they say, "walking a mile in my shoes".

Practical exercises on how journalists can collect and produce radio programs and newspaper articles that are inclusive of disability issues formed a greater part of the training. By the end of Day Three, the objectives of the training were almost achieved with the following outcomes achieved.

- Journalists and PWDs established a common ground to work closely together on reporting on issues of PWDs.

- The journalists shared the challenges they experience while interviewing and collecting stories

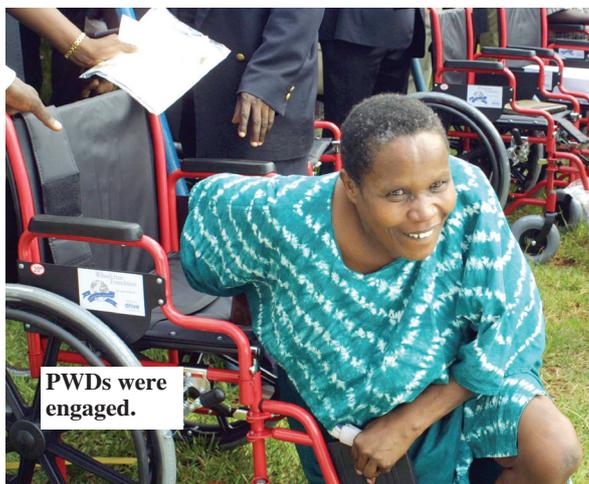
from PWDs. The PWDs also shared the challenges they experience during story collection and the two parties agreed to improve /change their working methodologies.

- Some PWDs appreciated the fact that the training enabled them to meet journalists (those who report on disability issues with actuality) that they had always wanted to interact with and this facilitated further networking and information sharing on issues related to disability.

- Journalists pledged to lobby the law enforcement institutions to enforce the relevant PWDs laws. They also pledged to handle issues (news) concerning PWDs in the same way general issues are handled.

The 3-day training was part of the UMWA-NWF collaboration. Said Joan Nankya, UMWA Project Officer: "We try as much as possible to provide a learning atmosphere where the so-called participants are brought under one roof, identify the problem, thrush out their fears / anxieties and anger, and later, together design strategies to address such challenges in life".

Two months down the road we have since seen improvements in inclusive reporting by the journalists; women with disabilities visiting Mama FM and to influence programming, or participating in them without fear or favour; and some inquiring about a service of any nature.



PWDs were engaged.



Ex - UMWA Chairpersons officiating at the excellence award ceremony.

Female journalists receive awards of excellence

By UMWA Team

The February 2016 Uganda elections may have proved to be the most challenging elections in this country, thanks to the militarization, intimidation, threats that characterized the period. The journalists had yet a harder time covering the elections, as unfortunately state machinery was engineered against them. Men and women journalists suffered the same, but the latter seem to have employed several coping skills that saw them excel during the difficult times.

This election witnessed several female journalists do the extraordinary. Staying up late in the night through to the dawn, to give updates on elections. Others were seen battling with the state security agencies in search for a story, some ending up tear-gassed, beaten, and others sexually abused. Female journalists also showed the rare coverage to head media houses election teams and did just the good and upscale work.

To motivate young female journalists, or sustain what those female election reporters / managers did between December 2015 and April 2016, UMWA organized a half-day event to recognize and award those who shared the rare skill.

About 40 female journalists were recognized. These came from the electronic and print media. Mama FM Program Director, the two News Editors, and the whole News Department walked away, each with a Certificate of Rare Excellency



COWA embarks on social skills

By Okello Francis

Many youths face a lot of challenges which their parents may have no idea about. They suffer silently due to a number of reasons, fear being one of them. One of the key reasons why the fear or silence of the youth, is the apparent 'absence' of busy parents who spend more time at work than at home. And if the situation is not handled, it results into health related complications for the youth.

It is for that reason that COWA-CVTS, has started a sensitization program on selected health issues directly affecting the students. Already the sensitization sessions on cervical cancer and STIs and coping mechanisms have been done, which played a big role in exposing hidden health challenges the youth face in their private and public lives in society.

Nalunkuma Fatuma, a Senior Woman Teacher at COWA in her interaction with the trainees has discovered that majority of them stay with their relatives whom they may not be very free to share with some issues.

She says:- "Our girls need a lot of sensitization about menstruation and its management. There is a big challenge in awareness levels because most of the parents do not have adequate and reliable information that they can pass on to their children. As female teachers we have to help the young girls. They need to have their confidence built. As a school we need to incorporate it as part of the soft skills taught to the youth".

Daisy Auma, a student in Computer Applications is one of the youth who did not have information about menstrual management when she first experienced it at the age of 15.

She says:- "I felt very shy and never wanted any boy to know about it because I thought they would laugh at me. When I first had that experience I reported to senior woman teacher who explained what all was about and cautioned me against sex as this was a sign for possible conception if I did not practice protected sex. It was the senior



COWA staff and students pose for a group photo with Fr. Gerald, after Mass.

woman who taught me how to use pads although my mum used to buy them as part of the school requirements. My mum never told me about what they were for until after six months when she wondered if I had started MPs. I could not open up to her for fear of beating me".

Parents need to talk about it to girls as soon as they approach 13 years in a woman to woman (mum-girl or senior woman teacher-girl) talk. Girls with related challenges should approach someone they have trust in to be helped out".

Susan Sunday Akello, a tailoring student says:- "Early and constant sensitization will equip the teenagers with knowledge and coping mechanism which will enable them stay in school without fear. Personally I began my menstruation when I was about 11 years. At first I thought I had hurt myself in the private parts so I didn't tell

anyone about it as I was feeling shy. When the situation continued, I told my close friend who advised me to seek medical attention. After the doctor's examination I was told that I had a condition referred to as Dismenoraya which would disappear with time in age after giving birth. He told me it would always be occurring until I give birth in future.

This was really scary as it meant that I had to first produce a child to get healed. But leaflets from the Straight Talk Foundation ameliorated my problem as there was an article talking about the same problem and how to deal with it. I am glad that COWA and St. Francis Hospital Nsambya are now carrying out sensitization campaigns on menstruation challenges".

COWA CVTS Remembers Rev. Fr. Stephen Collins

By Okello Francis

In the office of the Principal of COWA Centenary Vocational Training School (COWA-CVTS) a portrait of Rev. Fr. Stephen Collins hangs. He is the founder of COWA-CVTS formerly known as the AIDS Widows Orphans Family Support (AWOFS).

It was founded to give back lost hope to widows and orphans to Aids pandemic.

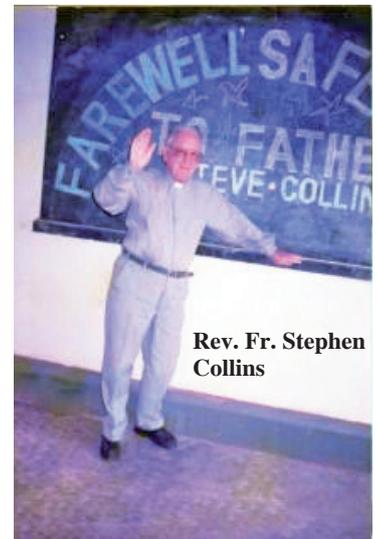
Rev. Fr. Stephen Collins was a missionary of the Missionaries of Africa White Fathers Congregation. Born in Scotland on 26th December, 1921, he died on 21st

June 2016 in Glasgow.

In his memory, a Holy Mass was organized by students and staff of COWA; and led by Rev. Fr. Gerald Chabanone the Sector Superior for the Missionaries of Africa-White Fathers in Uganda.

According to him Fr. Stephen spent 69 years of his missionary life in Uganda, Great Britain, France and South Africa.

In 1990 he did pastoral work especially supporting the vulnerable women who were affected by the AIDS pandemic.



Rev. Fr. Stephen Collins

Turn to Page 12

Remembering Fr. Collins

From Page 11

Based in Lourdel House at Nsambya – Kampala, Fr. Stephen first mooted the idea of AWOFS in 1992, launched it and by 1998 when he was transferred to Edenglen – South Africa where he did a similar job, AWOFS had grown. Fr. Stephen retired in 2006; he spent his last days at Glasgow home for the elderly in the Great Britain where he died on 21st June, 2016.

Francesca Romana, the Principal of COWA-CVTS says that she joined COWA in 1998 when Fr. Stephen was about to leave for his new appointment in South Africa. She says: "We are here to celebrate the life of our hero. He lived the commandment of God of love one another as I have loved you. At COWA we follow his objective of love for humanity without discrimination".

Betty Adong, the Deputy Principal says: Fr. Stephen Collins was a cheerful giver. He was always happy despite being sick. He was very much mindful of his staff and would most times find out from each teacher if there was any problem and would help in generating ways of dealing with the problem.

He would mobilize support from abroad including financial and human resource. Students from Europe would come to give support to the AIDS victims. I learnt a lot from Fr. Stephen's personality: openness, helping the needy and vulnerable, hard work, results based teaching, first and money later, staff motivation, and serving for humanity. Fr. Stephen makes me remember him every time I work with our team as an administrator, teacher and a mother".

Lamon Dorothy, COWA-CVTS Tailoring Instructor since the days of Fr. Stephen Collins says: "Working with him was very interesting



Rev. Fr. Stephen Collins

because he was full of generosity. In the 1990s the AIDS pandemic was at its highest in Ugandan. Fr. Stephen mobilized AIDS patients without considering their ethnicity and religious affiliation and got them accommodation. He believed in human dignity, no matter what.

When the AIDS patients and their families had given up, he mobilized support from abroad for even psychological support, including prayer retreats for the patients to strengthen each other. He enrolled children of those dying with Aids and those who were infected with HIV at AWOFS for vocational skills training. Some beneficiaries were supported to rent rooms for abode, while others

bought food items. Others with pieces of land were supported to build small structures. Fr. Stephen indeed left a legacy in Ugandan".

Namugerwa Luki, working with the Tailoring Department is one of the direct beneficiaries of the AWOFS project, having joined in 1996 as a student after completing her Ordinary level of education. She says: "Fr. Stephen will live in the hearts of many due to the many good things he did for humanity. He loved people. He encouraged those infected with the HIV virus to open up to get treatment and carry on with productive activities for a living. He encouraged and supported those who had no professions or sources of income to start up small scale businesses.

He enrolled widows and their children between the ages of 12 and 20 for vocational skills training at AWOFS, now the current COWA Centenary Vocational Training School. When the students completed their studies, Fr. Stephen provided them with start-up equipment. This went a long way in helping the youth start their own projects instead of looking for jobs that are scarce in today's Uganda. The start-up equipment project is still running by AVSI up to date. This gives me happiness because I see the fruits of his efforts still going, thanks to his Italian friends through AVSI.

Fr. Stephen went a notch higher. He supported the best performing students to upgrade to Diploma level. Fatuma Nalunkuuma and I, are some of the beneficiaries. We are both instructors in the Tailoring Department.

From the personality and works of Fr. Stephen, any willing community worker can draw a lot of lessons from his humanitarian work. It is no wonder that in 2015, one of the buildings at COWA was named after Fr. Stephen, in remembrance of his works, but also as a reminder to his values and works moving!

Compelling reasons for value addition

By MAFA Team

Despite farmers putting a lot of other resources and hard work in their farm work, they tend to get the least out of it when it comes to the market. But why is this? How can this change? The answer is simple – value addition.

For as long as we stay comfortable with the way we have traditionally handled agricultural produce, we shall stay poor. In Uganda, most fruits, vegetables and other foods are eaten and the leftovers are usually thrown away, and yet – if much more money would have been ripped from these processes if local farm-

ers had a skill to add value to their produce at each stage.

Uganda has been endowed with good weather that does not reach extremes, enabling us to produce agricultural goods at least twice a year. When the harvest comes, it is too big for us to consume, leaving a lot to waste. Almost nothing is preserved. There seems to be nobody, least government officials who spend time to share information on value addition, and how it can transform the ordinary farmer into a progressive one. This is despite the availability of such national programs.

Turn to Page 13



Kwegatta Ge Maanyi Women's Group – MAFA trained group members on how to dry maize on a tarpaulin (improved traditional method) before it is sold.

Why value addition is the way to go



Musale farmers group stores maize in a silo – one of the stages of adding value to fetch more money

Look at the four scenarios:

- The cost of a basin of tomatoes during harvest season at the farm gate is equivalent to two bottles of tomato sauce, which are less than 300mls in size each
- The cost of a kilo of poorly handled mukene (silver fish) at the shores of lake Victoria is equivalent to the cost of less than 200 grams of supermarket grade packed mukene.
- Gorillos a favorite snack for school children is a byproduct of maize. A packet of 60 grams is equivalent to the cost of one kilo of maize at the farm gate
- A measure (mulengo) of four large mangoes sold at those roadside markets, costs UGS 2,000. The same mangoes can make three glasses of thick concentrated juice that will sell no less than UGS 7,500.

What the four scenarios point to is, not only wastage but the importance of value addition.

Broadly value addition refers to economically adding value to a product following a particular process in order to form characteristics that are more preferred in the market place.

From the examples above, it is very evident that with the continued “business as usual” little will be reaped from the months of effort put in growing the crops or rearing the animals.

Previous government efforts have concentrated on helping farmers to embrace new methods of production or adopting new products while leaving issues of value addition and marketing to players in the private sector.

Different approach

With the simplification of technology lately, not much is required to carry out basic value addition at the farm gate. Take the example about mukene (silver fish), which has been considered dirty

product, which is full of stones as a result of poor handling.

Today with simple technologies like rack mount drying, sorting and packing in clean bags, the improved product commands a premium. The same applies to the milk that goes to waste during the rainy season when the production peaks. Dairy farmers could come up with different products like cheese, Ghee and yoghurt that ensure no wastage but fetch a premium too.

Therefore concern should be turned towards facilitating local farmers address value addition as an integral component towards improving rural lives.

The Benefits of Value Addition

Value addition has some of the following benefits.

- Increased revenue. With every layer added to a produce, there is a percentage increase in the financial value hence increased incomes. For example, almost a 300% increase is realized between the price of maize at the farm and after milling.
- The marketing bill, which is the difference between farm gate value and retail value, is growing bigger by the day. The marketing bill consists of processing, marketing, transportation among others. It is a good idea if the producer could get a share of this, especially on the processing side
- Increased shelf life is a benefit any producer would want. The longer the product can stay without getting spoilt, the more the guarantee one has of a product selling at their preferred price. Milk hardly lasts over 24 hours but with boiling, it can last more days while with further processing into ghee, the same milk can last months.
- With value addition comes with increased bargaining power. Using the example of mukene,

lakeside processors who use racks ensure that the fish is free of contaminants. Thus they always set their own price while their counterparts using rudimentary ground drying tend to attract relatively low prices.

How to Achieve

- Training producers on better post-harvest handling of produce since it’s the start journey towards the market. E.g. Bananas with brown spots may not sell that much on the market as compared to those without.
 - Training on multiple alternatives of produce and conservation. E.g. bananas that are on the verge of rotting should not be thrown away as they are a raw material for kabalagala. Surplus tomatoes, jackfruit, pineapples for instance can be dried and stored for consumption later
 - Creating village teams of farmers that can combine their expertise and resources to collectively engage in a value addition exercise. In a scenario, where there is a community of banana farmers, they can use the extra bunches of bananas not sold; sun dry them and turn them into banana crisps.
 - Harnessing indigenous technologies for food processing that are already embedded in the local skillsets. They would merely improve on them to achieve what is otherwise being done primarily using “modern” technologies. A case in point is how ghee is produced in western Uganda.
- It is however important to note that as long as government leaves the bulk of work to individual NGOs / or the private sector players who may have different interests, Uganda as a county will not make the necessary strides in development. Government should for example, rejuvenate the work of the extension workers, facilitate them, and provide the necessary resources at a village

How students utilize the long holidays

By Okello Francis

Holidays is a time when students have more time with family members. But the question is, how best to utilize this period which may be two / three months. COWA students share how they will spend their

holidays fruitfully.

Sylvia Baada, Year One Student with Tailoring. She comes from Bana Kawoko village:- “I’m the eldest child at home, therefore, I have to take over the supervisory role when the farm workers also take leave for the long holidays. As children, we

therefore have to attend to the farm, including bush clearing, irrigation or mulching the garden and milking the cows or even selling or supplying milk to the dairy shops. We do this with love and anticipation that we get money for the work done, which we use to buy essentials for school

use, and personal needs”. Florence Amongin, Catering Student:- “When I am done with house chores including preparing breakfast,

How to utilise the long holiday period

From Page 13

I join my mum at a family shop to attend to customers. In the meantime I prepare some snacks for sale. As a catering student, this helps me to gain skills in packaging and marketing, but also get some money for personal needs”.

Justus Muhumuza, Tailoring Student:- “I always look forward to the holiday as it give me more time to practice agriculture with my uncle on his farm. I am like his second in command. Apart from working like any other employee, I also do some management including buying of inputs and even paying workers. I am glad that my uncle has gained a lot of trust in me, thanks to my long working years with him. I am also paid a ‘salary’ which I have used to purchase personal needs, including a laptop, mobile phone and a home theatre. But I also remember to save with a bank”.

Brenda Kirungi, Tailoring Student:- “Holidays are like any other class day, because I continue doing what I usually do after school. Selling mangoes. But in

addition, this time around, I will get into selling clothes, thanks to a friend who has agreed to share with me her stall. It is important for all youth to start business because it can be embarrassing to keep depending on parents even for small needs”.

Venny Nangendo, Catering Student:- “I got an opportunity to work in a hotel every weekend and during holidays. I do most of my work in the house keeping department and food and beverage service depending on where demand is highest. The work in the hotel keeps me very busy. This has helped me to stay away from peer pressure that would lead me into engaging in negative activities. I have so far acquired practical work experience apart from the classroom environment. I have learnt how to use some hotel equipment that I had only read about from school. I spend my salary / allowance on personal needs.

It is very important for every youth to do some kind of work to earn some money to meet personal needs. Despis-



Its important for students to continue reading during holidays.

ing work is very bad because, it inhibits someone’s potential. Any kind of work is important to do so long as one gets the opportunity to do it. It is from one job that one gets other opportunities. I therefore urge all youth to engage in any legally acceptable by the constitution of Uganda. The youth should have less time on social media as it can be counter productive”.

Grace Consolate Kibukaire, an Instructor says:- “It is very important to engage children in work during holidays. Parents need to assign the children domestic work but without depriving them of the leisure activities. Many children especially in urban areas are lazy because of too much television. Television can be dangerous to the young minds especially if watched too long, after all some of the programming these days is not developmental.

COWA trainees benefit from field activities

By Okello Francis

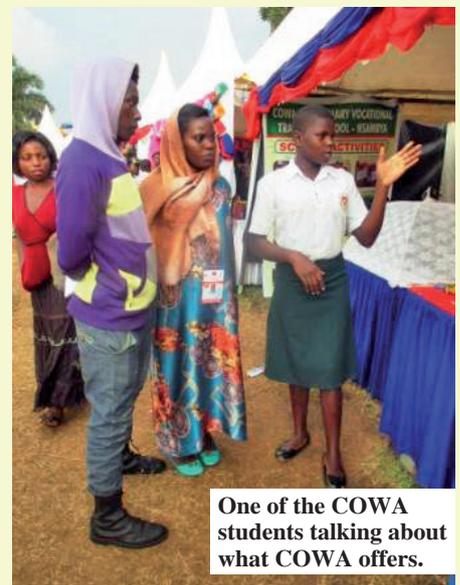
Classroom/school setting alone cannot empower trainees fully without relating to what they see in the society. Exposure to the social media like the internet and television programs and documentaries also help greatly in inspiring trainees to do more with the knowledge they acquire from school. Field activities are therefore of much importance to students to learn new things, develop new ideas.

It is against that background that COWA embarked on soft and practical skills training for students in such field activities to enable promote self-esteem, enhance communication skills and team work. One such opportunity in which COWA trainees have benefited from, was the 2016 educational expo, Wankulukuku Stadium in June when COWA exhibited its educational activities. The one week expo attracted hundreds of entrepreneurs and educational insti-

tutions. At the COWA stall vocational products, snacks making, garment cutting/making and craft making by trainees were exhibited. It was these products that the trainees had to exhibit their psycho / social and marketing skills. They in turns welcomed clients and explained the products and services offered by COWA.

At the end of the expo COWA emerged the best Vocational School which provides hands-on vocational skills to the youth and entrepreneurship. One of the trainees, Mirembe Natasha got an award of recognition towards her outstanding competence in customer care. She emerged the best presenter from all the vocational and secondary schools. Natashas says that the expo was of much benefit to her because she picked a lot of ideas including a healthy living and life management with productive activities. Mirembe narrates: “This was my first time ever to participate in such a big competition.

Turn to Page 15



One of the COWA students talking about what COWA offers.

Trainees benefit from field activities

From Page 14

Though I didn't become the winner, the competition helped me learn more customs of Buganda that I didn't know before. Visits to several stalls of secondary and vocational institutions and other small scale businesses gave me a lot of inspiration. Dancing competitions from schools exposed me to various talents. This has inspired me to train in creative dances. A woman drew my attention with bead work in which she makes products such as necklaces, bangles and rosaries out of paper. I got her phone contact and I am mobilizing friends so that with time we shall invite her to come and teach us the bead work so that we can start up a group business".

In a related move, COWA registered great success in Royal Suits Bugolobi where 4 of the catering trainees were taken for the internship program. Instead of three weeks of training they were allowed four due to discipline, hard work and willingness to learn.

Ronald Oryema, one of the trainees shares his experiences. "I have always admired how professional waiters and chefs execute

their duties so when I started the catering course my mind was filled with the desire to be better than the waiters and chefs I have seen. I gave my all to ensure that I get the best out of the internship. Worked with different departments! Tried with different food preparations; and ensured that the different supervisors take note of my work and for any mistake I'd make, they correct me. I'm so happy that the hotel management rated me as one of the best even among those hotel employees who had worked with the place for a long time. Now I dream of being a chef in a Five Star Hotel".

On the Bujagali Falls tour, COWA students also learnt a lot. From the field visit to Bujagali and source of the Nile a lot was seen from the display of products ranging from textiles, crafts and catering services. It was an important learning as it gave an impression to the trainees of how beneficial their courses are and how they can match the demand for them with components of the environment. An example is in any recreational place there is demand for foods and beverages, clothing, furniture and craft materials. The



COWA trainees displaying basket weaving techniques at Wankulukuku.

visit was also an indication to the trainees that there are many ways of creating businesses from what nature provides and when coupled with the skills learned in schools one can reap much from investing in such opportunities.

Umar Lujja says: "I visualized all I saw with tailoring. I realized that most of the colour combinations for our clothes are in relation to what nature provides. The beauty of exhibition/display of tailoring and

craft materials business at the source of the Nile made me believe that the different patterns of creativity on garments are imitated from nature and they have inspired me to improve creativity".

COWA is in partnership with many organizations to improve on soft skills of the trainees. And according to the Principal such skills facilitate the building of an all round trainee able to cope with work challenges.



Alice Nyachwo displays catering skills at Wankulukuku.

COWA'S 19th graduation ceremony excites trainees

By Okello Francis

COWA CVTS on 6th September 2016 held its 19th graduation ceremony in which 36 of its trainees who sat for their final examinations last year 2015 graduated in the fields of Catering and Hotel Management, Tailoring and Garment Cutting/Making and Hair Dressing and beautification. The graduation ceremony attracted several stakeholders including community members. The ceremony was preceded by a Holy Mass held at COWA; and guided by the theme "Beating The Odds With Sustainable Skills". The Mass celebrant – Rev. Fr. Joseph Ssemanda thanked the staff for equipping the youth with vocational skills required in the competitive job market. He thanked the graduands for their choice of acquiring vocational skills and advised them to be of value and work hard to earn their success. He assured them that with the skills attained: shrewdness, moral values and high

spirituality, they will be able to reach greater heights.

The Principal of COWA-CVTS, Miss Francesca Romana Bilak expressed her gratitude to COWA partners in particular the Norwegian Women and Family Association (NWF), FOKUS, International Service Volunteers Association (AVSI), ICEP through Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education (LGIHE) and Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT), Kampala Archdiocese in the leadership of His Grace Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga, the Missionaries of Africa for the gift of our founder, the late Fr. Steve Collins whom the Lord called on 23rd June 2016. She applauded the late Fr. Steve Collins and made an assurance that management and staff of COWA CVTS will continue with the legacy he has left. In her message the Principal passed on a strong message of encouragement.

Turn to Page 16

COWA'S 19th graduation

From Page 15

She said: "The theme chosen for this year's graduation is "Beating the Odds with Sustainable Skills". It has a twofold connotation: a strong belief that despite the vagaries of life the skills they have acquired will without doubt change their lives positively. The second connotation is that in life there are all sorts of odds to be overcome. We share in these sentiments and encourage the graduands to focus on their dreams with determination and perseverance in whatever business they will start. To the graduands, we congratulate you and wish you the very best in what the future holds for you. Keep what you have been taught, integrity, self-respect that leads to respect of others; hard work, commitment, being focused and perseverance in what you want to achieve and never give up. I share with you the sentiment of philosopher Henry David Thoreau who said, "the price of anything is the amount of life you exchange for it". Think about it and you won't count the cost of your sacrifice for a good quality life you have strived for".

The guest of honour was Kristin Hansen, Program Manager for NWF. She appreciated the staff and management for the work done for the trainees. She commended COWA for the training in gender, health, ethics and entrepreneurship among others as additional courses to the vocational subjects which have contributed in adding value in their education to make them very strong. Kristine also encouraged them to be proud of their education and to learn to utilise the knowledge to live their own life



Chief Guest, Kristin Hansen awards trainees their certificates.

Part of the celebrations was a fashion show and an exhibition, songs and drama, caused by continuing COWA students.

To Susan Akello, who exhibited her created dress and dancing attire during a folk song the activities of the graduation gave her much more opportunity to believe in herself and to believe that what she makes can be appreciated by people. She says: "I have always been inquisitive in coming up with a rare dress to be different from other tailors. This year I visited stalls of tailors in different exhibitions at the National theatre, Wankulukuku and other places where I saw various designs. I compared

those with those from fashion books and the internet. From these I was able to get more ideas to design my own dress. When I was selected to

be one of the exhibitors of own created dress I was overwhelmed. With consultation from my instructor I finally made a wonderful dress. During the fashion show I felt good and gained more confidence that I can also compete favourably with many tailors in the textiles industry. Now I love tailoring as a profession more than ever before".

Mariam Namudola made a speech on behalf of all the graduands of the day. She appreciated the great sacrifice the staff are making for the sake of the students. Was very thankful for the proactive courses that are offered at the Institute including the social / people skills and knowledge on life skills. She said because of COWA, she got a job only after three months after completing school, but even then, she has three slots to do every day: Waitress, Accountant, and a Chef. She urged for continued cooperation between leaders, management, students and parents to enable COWA realize her dream, for the benefit of the trainees.

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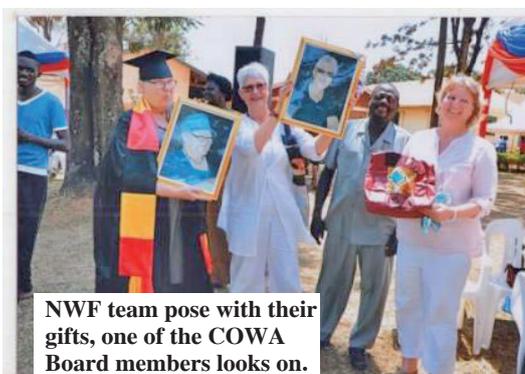
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NWF team pose with their gifts, one of the COWA Board members looks on.

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