

GWEN NEWS

The Newsletter for Grassroots Women's Empowerment Network

December 2018

SMALL PROJECT, BIG GAINS

How the EAGWEN program re-awakened Uganda's usually insensitive media



A journalist seeks the opinion of Dora Nabukeera. The EAGWEN program has positively impacted on journalists' attitude towards persons with disabilities (PWDs).

Future of Uganda's only women focused radio in the balance ...P4

By UMWA Staff

Some big NGOs in Uganda may call it pocket change, but the little over USD 300,000 spread over four years to build the capacity of grassroots women under the EAGWEN program is still counting gains. Of the 450 targeted women in Luweero District by Year Two, 380 had started participating in parish development consultations including budgeting processes. The targeted women were also accessing and managing village saving and loans, while the three partner organizations increasingly became reference service points for grassroots persons. EAGWEN constitutes of Maganjo Farmers' Associa-

tion, MAFA, COWA CVTS and Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA). The program was supported by FOKUS through the Norwegian Women Family Association, NWF.

The four-year project responded to the low participation of grassroots women in claiming their political and economic rights. It was therefore thought that by enhancing the knowledge of the target grassroots women in economic and utilization of related services; increase their knowledge in legal and other carefully selected thematic areas, this would contribute to further claiming their political and economic rights.

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Land ownership key to achieving economic justice ...P14

GWEN Opinion Lessons learnt, yearning for more

The Four Year collaboration between the EAGWEN partners and the Norwegian Family Association, NWF with support from FOKUS comes to an end this December. Big gains registered: hundreds of grassroots women and men now in charge of their lives, but also influence government programs and policies, at least at the lower government level. In particular, women living with disabilities, WWDs, in the program area are fearlessly expressing their views and impacting media programming.

The first symposium on Media and Disability held in Uganda one of the unintended project results, is highly linked to the EAGWEN program. Lessons have also been learnt and strong recommendations made as mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter. The point for this opinion however is what it means to work in a partnership like EAGWEN. Despite the common denominator of being grassroots based, each of the partner organisations was different and emphasized a specific thematic area.

What seemed to be a difficult collaboration at the beginning, we all ended up asking for more by the fourth year. Yes we noted individual weaknesses, but all of us said, we benefitted from working in a partnership because each brought a different strength or even a challenge that motivated us to sort out the issue, learned and then continued to move as a team. I guess this is the reason to work in a partnership; build on each other's strength to achieve a common goal. Our common goal has and still is: women in the program area claim/actualize their political and economic rights. We shall each continue doing what we do best but riding on the lessons learnt and achievements from the partnership. But at the same time allowing for such similar opportunities.

Our thoughts to NWF and FOKUS:

Thank you for agreeing to move with us on this journey. We may have faltered in some ways but it wasn't intentional. We also trust that you picked a lesson or two, the fact that EAGWEN was your first attempt for partners to work in a program-like structure.

Our faults should not entirely be used against EAGWEN but to strengthen your zeal in facilitating collaborations like these. And when there's another chance, as EAGWEN we have just consolidated ourselves, we shall be ready to roll again, only this time with more determination.

Alluta Continua! And Takk skal du ha!

How the EAGWEN program turned around Uganda's insensitive media



Catherine Apalat,
Programs Director,
Mama FM

From Page 1

In particular, the project singled out women with disabilities, and enhanced their knowledge in political and economic rights. The project further built their skills in effective utilization of media as it was acknowledged that with such skills, one can voice his/her concerns strategically and be heard by millions.

But the project would not be complete if the journalists were not specifically sensitized on disability rights mainstreaming. By the end of the four years, hundreds of the target beneficiaries were counting gains.

A Mrs. Kironde who before the project was a simple farmer, had turned into an Instructor, because her farm had turned into a 'model' farm where tens of people would come for technical advice. Five of the eleven women who had contested for elective office, had won the seats, and already influencing budget allocation, at least at the parish level. As a result, feeder roads were constructed within the program area cutting costs for farmers as they would now spend less hours on the road to transport their produce. Services at the health centres had also improved especially for reproductive health services.

WWDs had a field day on Mama FM. The planned 192 one-hour radio shows on the women's radio, had almost doubled not only in number; but also in the length of the slot. This was due to the assertiveness WWDs who demanded for more. They were not yet contented with the now 2-hour slot, but they also started appearing on the so-called mainstream programs including those hitherto men dominated. The disability mainstreaming concept, soon caught like wild fire; quickly spreading to the mainstream media.

Catherine Apalat, Programs Director, Mama FM says:

"Most of us used to look at PWDs as stupid, weaklings. But not anymore, all of us here treat PWDs with respect. Every presenter sees it his/her duty to help out. Management also invested in deconstructing and reconstruction of the UMWA facility to ease mobility for persons living with disabilities. The toilet was affected; a ramp and a friendlier walkway at the UMWA premises constructed.

The Disability Rights Fund, DRF office in Kampala was convinced of the major interest the EAGWEN media component had put into the issue. The EAGWEN staff were invited at least five occasions to facilitate sessions on disability mainstreaming in the media.

Disability People's Organizations, DPOs later organized consultative meetings with one of the EAGWEN partners. A Caucus on Media and Disability was formed – later organizing the first ever Symposium on Media and Disability in Uganda, September 2018. The EAGWEN partner radio station, Mama FM, was publically recognized for its special interest and practice in promoting the rights and concerns of the persons with disabilities. Mama FM's Radio Presenter in charge of the slot, also walked away with an Achiever's Award.

The ripple effect the EAGWEN media component has had on the mainstream media is also evidenced on how 92 journalists have formed a WhatsApp Group to share news tips on promoting WWDs, a thing that was very rare before the EAGWEN project.



Grace Mazirwe, Mama
FM technician.



Dr. Patricia Litho,
Chairperson UMWA.

Future of Uganda's only women focused radio in balance

By UMWA Team

101.7 Mama FM, a model radio station for the women's empowerment and gender equality faces a bleak future. Its chances of survival in the first eight months of 2019 are highly tested. As 2018 closes, there is no earmarked funds to the station even after paying chunks of money for its annual frequency fees. This comes at a critical time when even most of its hard and software facilities have to be replaced after operating for over 18 years.

Dr. Patricia Litho, UMWA Chairperson says: "The situation is dire. We need all the support that can be gotten. We have all the years operated on a skeleton budget with only one or two people getting a salary, the rest being volunteers or internship students".

101.7 Mama FM, the first women founded and managed radio station in Africa, received its initial support from NORAD and FOKUS through the Norwegian Council for Africa, NCA (2000) and has since had at least an eighth of its operational budget from them. The Norwegian Women and Family Association, NWF, took over the coordination role formerly done by NCA, in 2011 until this year when there are indications that the support will stop this year.

101.7 Mama FM, was founded on the spirit of sisterhood similar to that of Radio Orakle in Norway where almost all the staff there, are volunteers, and to a big extent, women.

Besides support from Norway, Mama FM has over the years received support from the Ford Foundation, OXFAM, DANIDA, UNESCO, Stem van Afrika, and the World Association for Christian Communication, WACC. But all of it invested in capacity building of its volunteer staff and a bit on the microphones and recorders. Radio Robin Hood from Finland,

also supported the station that has provided for the years, mentorship services in media content development and management, to hundreds of women and men in Uganda. These have since joined commercial media, government or international corporations.

UMWA Executive Director, Margaret Sentamu says: "The most urgent support is needed towards operational costs for example, electricity, although we have also started to aggressively fundraise for solar power – because the grid source cannot be sustainable. Currently we pay an equivalent of USD 800 a month for electricity. And yet with solar power, you would need a one-time investment of about USD 35,000. It is unfortunate that the leadership of Mama FM had envisaged to run the station on a voluntary basis like what happens in Radio Orakle. Yet the Uganda Government unlike that of Norway, does not provide welfare allowances to adults who are not gainfully employed although they would be providing a community service.

The circumstances in Uganda are very different because whether young or adult, one must eke for a living. So it becomes difficult for Mama FM to heavily depend on unpaid services of those who join Mama FM as internship students or volunteers".

Sentamu continues: "I am glad that the 2019 – 2021 Strategic Plan of the Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA, the mother organization for Mama FM, has a deliberate focus on the growth of the station, later on becoming a fully sustaining institution".

For now, Catherine Apalat, the Mama FM Programs Director, emphasizes the urgent support that is required, pointing out that, "By and large, the leadership of Mama FM and any person who has worked as a volunteer

for the station's delivery should be applauded because we know that several radio stations or business in Uganda cannot survive its first birthday. But Mama FM is 18 years plus. And moreover, largely dependant on the commitment of management and the staff. It is difficult to find similar ventures surviving this long".

Grace Mazirwe, Mama FM Technician, says: "We know that radio stations or training stations abroad annually dispose off the hardware which they can channel to Mama FM! Senior citizens all over the world who would wish to assist in any way including providing sharing knowledge and equipping skills to the young Ugandan women, and men, are most welcome".

Over the years, Mama FM has provided the alternative platform not only to the women, but also for men who feel marginalized or live in disadvantaged situations. The 2017 Audience Survey surprisingly revealed that apart from at least 3 out of 100 people living in Greater Kampala, listen to Mama FM. But that Mama FM was best known for programs that target marginalized groups such as persons living with disabilities.

Uganda has over 250 radio stations in operation, but only Mama FM applies the principle of equal participation, thanks to its adherence to policies that promote gender equality and social justice.

For any kind of support to bail out the women focused radio, please contact:
Telephones: 0393113848 / 0772469363
Email: info@umwamamafm.co.ug / umwa@infocom.co.ug Website: www.umwamamafm.co.ug Facebook: www.facebook.com/ugumwa Twitter: @UMWAandMamaFM

EAGWEN partners to fight on despite impending financial cut

By UMWA Team

Perhaps the main "take-away" from the EAGWEN September partnership meeting, was to "re-think" "re-strategize", "rebrand", if we are to thrive in the changing donor landscape. All the participants agreed that it is no longer business as usual because so much has changed. New ideologies, new trends, new issues and new problems as well as new thinking have emerged.

Addressing the over 20 participants at the 2-day conference in September, the Deputy Director, Foundation for Human Rights Initiative, FHRI said: "It is important for NGOs or other institutions including our government, to start doing things differently. We are no longer in a comfort zone. We must rethink, we must re-strategize. "Organizations should also rethink the word 'Donor'. It is so outdated and castigates the poor culture of dependence on foreign support".

The leadership of the NGOs should come up with new innovative ways of fundraising and relating. The grassroots who largely benefit from the donor funds should be involved in the fundraising efforts. Their voices must be heard. Millennials should be targeted because quite a number of them are heavily loaded with resources and believe in promoting social justice causes like the one EAGWEN stands for. But they don't know how to spend these resources, because they are young, and some are naive and too busy.

Sheila Muwanga, who has worked in the NGO world for the past 15/18 years said: "EAGWEN has a lot of potential if the partners collectively fundraise, keep valuing donors, and in-build sustainability measures at the stage of project design", adding, "good programs fail to sustain the achieved results because the designers never allocated resources to those measures, but were quick to start implementing".

Elliot Orizaarwa, Director, Women and Girl Child Development Association (WEDGA) prompted EAGWEN into understanding the importance of undertaking donor intelligence. "Today, any outward looking



Betty Adong, Deputy Director, COWA



Elliot Orizaarwa, Director WEDGA.



Sheila Muwanga, NGO guru.

non-state actor knows that most of the Western world countries are most concentrated in solving issues related with refugees at home; and therefore spend most of their funds on this. But also NGOs whose strategic objective including the welfare and protection of refugees here in the region should be ready for hard work. Because most of the UN and donor money now is going into this. There is quite a lot EAGWEN can do to address some of the issues related to the refugee crisis in Uganda or in the region".

Reflecting on the presentations, the EAGWEN partners agreed that indeed, we must be more strategic. "We must ensure, for example, that our project proposals are in line with international obligations such as the SDGs; or the country's development plans", points out **Dorothy Nanyonga, UMWA Treasurer.**

Betty Adong, the Deputy Principal of COWA said: "It is also important not to take the donors for granted. I remember how COWA first became a Friend of NWF way back in 2005. Mama Anna formerly working in Uganda may have sounded "crude" with us at the beginning but she wished us well, she wanted us to work harder and faster. And think fast. Now we are counting years of partnership with NWF, because we listened".

Valuing donors' money and staying modest were noted by Margaret Sentamu who said, she would never forget her first visit to Norway in 1996. "I entered the offices of our partners then, Norwegian Council for Africa, NCA, but was 'shocked' to find ordinary classroom desks in this office. These are the people who spend days and nights fundraising for us but live a modest life. And for us, who receive their money, tend to spend lavishly. The Norwegian experience had an everlasting impact on my perspective to life".

Abu Mubiru, Director of MAFA, also agreed with the colleagues but pointed out that it is also important to celebrate and appreciate the milestones that EAGWEN and

similar organizations have made with the minimum resources that have been availed. Other organizations receive a hundred times more than EAGWEN receives, but do little and yet they are quick to publicize that little through various forms of media because they have the experts in that area. He said, "It is not healthy for us to be so hard on ourselves like we have done nothing".

It was noted that it was important and urgent to document the story of EAGWEN. How did it begin? The processes, gains, challenges, successes, etc. It is important to blow our own trumpet like others do!

The conference is an annual event supported under the EAGWEN partnership with the Norwegian Women and Family Association, NWF and FOKUS. It brings together members of the Network, partners from Norway and representatives from the beneficiaries to share, re-learn, and re-strategize.

This year's theme was: "**Public-Private Partnerships: The Non Profit Sector in the Equation**". The theme was carefully chosen as the year, 2018 concludes financial support from FOKUS through NWF, to EAGWEN. The importance of the theme was to explore ways of how EAGWEN can tap into opportunities offered by the Private Sector. But also how the EAGWEN partners who have worked as a Program for at least six years, can explore ways of advancing their work.

Speakers of the Day also included the Women's Wing from DFCU Bank, who encouraged EAGWEN to strategize and benefit from the Banking sector.

Representatives from NWF encouraged EAGWEN to keep believing in themselves, and collectively fundraise. Anne Marit, Head Women's Committee said: "I'm glad that EAGWEN partners have pledged to take their institution to another level. We shall help you where we can".

Founder of COWA CVTS likened to Archangel Raphael

By Emecu Miriam

The Provincial Delegate, Lourdel House Kampala of the Missionaries of Africa, has equated the work of the founder of COWA CVTS with Archangel Raphael. He proclaimed this during a two-in-one ceremony (September) to celebrate the Institution's Silver Jubilee, and to mark its 21st Graduation where 48 students took home, Certificates of Excellency.

The celebration marked 25 years of fruitful years of youth empowerment through vocational skills training with the theme "25 years of purposeful youth empowerment for quality livelihood". Rev. Fr. Oswald Mallya the Provincial Delegate who presided over the ceremony said:

"In the book of Tobit (5:4-8), it is God who sent Archangel Raphael to rescue and free Tobias out of his afflictions which were caused by the fallen angel. The Archangel Raphael accompanied the young man Tobias to Media where he recovered the silver (Tobit 5:1-10) of his father and guided him to catch the fish that had wanted to swallow his feet. Some parts of this fish became the cure of his father's blindness. It is fascinating to see how Archangel Raphael guided Tobias to catch the fish. Archangel Raphael, told Tobias 'catch the fish do not let it go' and the young man, 'mastered the fish and pulled it out into the bank himself' (Tobit 6:2-6). Archangel Raphael did not catch the fish for Tobias, but he guided him, and encouraged him to do it himself!

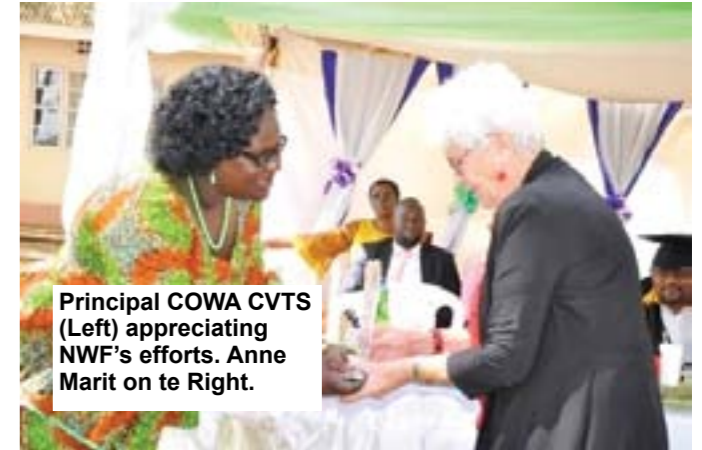
I can compare what Archangel Raphael did with what the founder of this institution, Fr.

Steve Collins and the tutors have done to the graduates of this school. With the encouragement of tutors, and skills passed on to them, many young people who have passed through this institution have done great things for themselves and others. We pray that God may continue to send more angels and archangels to guide, accompany, equip and encourage young people to find employment for themselves!". Fr. Oswald Mallya, Provincial Delegate, Uganda Sector noted.

Romana Bilak Francesca, Principal COWA CVTS said: "Today we are proud to give Him all the glory, honour and praises as He deserves. God uses man to do His will and he used Rev. Fr. Steve Collins of the Missionaries of Africa to start this school and bring hope to the orphans and other vulnerable children in this country and beyond.

As we celebrate the 25th Anniversary of the School's existence, we are also ushering in 48 youth into the world of work. The Theme: "25 Years of Purposeful Youth Empowerment for quality livelihood" reminds us of the founder's aim in starting this vocational school, to make a change in the lives of the most vulnerable, marginalized and orphaned children and youth in the society. His Motto was "TAKE HEART", to give them hope that not all is lost because they are still alive and must live their lives fully by exploiting their potential maximally through the acquired skills.

Looking 25 years back, we cherish the success stories of change in the lives of our 1,297 Graduates. According to the July 2018 Tracer Studies Report, 74%



Principal COWA CVTS (Left) appreciating NWF's efforts. Anne Marit on the Right.



Rev. Fr. Oswald Mallya center celebrating mass during the silver jubilee celebration.

of the Alumni are either gainfully employed or are self-employed making a big contribution to the youth unemployment in this country".

COWA started small and kept on growing over the years. One of the clergy of the Catholic Church who was very much concerned in giving hope to HIV/AIDS victims and the affected family members was Rev. Fr. Steve Collins. He developed an idea of helping such people. It was an empowerment to them with vocational skills of Tailor-

ing and Cookery which helped in keeping them busy, reducing on their worries and encouraged economic empowerment of working to get some money to meet their daily needs with the skills acquired. The idea was born in 1992 as COWA CVTS. Since then the vocational skills expanded to include Tailoring, Cookery, Pastry, Catering and Hotel Management, Computer Applications, Hair Dressing and Beauty, Basket weaving, Sweater Knitting and Surface Designing.



A section of graduands during the graduation ceremony.



COWA trainees entertaining guests during the silver jubilee celebration.

How simple water tanks can improve school performance



Awareness on WASH-water hygiene and sanitation and Monde primary school harvesting tank.



She says, "The coming of MAFA with harvesting tanks to collect and store water was a miracle to our school. At least now I can save some energy and time for class work. My performance has now improved because we no longer move long journeys to collect water. We instead utilize that time to concentrate in class. I owe my academic progress to MAFA and its supporting organizations. Now that I have attained my Primary Leaving Certificate I know am on my way to achieving my dream. At home I showed my parents how water harvesting is done. My parents are now saving money to buy a tank".

that begin at 8 am. But then, at school she and other colleagues have to first collect water for school use. So they walk another mile before she gets back to catch up with school. But before long, the bell rings.

"At this point I'm so tired, in fact dozing, sometimes lunch may not even be there. Afternoon classes set in, and at 4 pm, I have to go home, walk the 2 miles again – but before I retire to bed, I have to fetch water, again for home use, do some gardening, and carry out more home errands. The arrival of the water harvesting tanks at our school was therefore relieving to me and others".

By Angella Nakato

Nakijoba looks 14 years old. Just completed her Primary Leaving Exams, and is excited about the next stage of school, Secondary level! She and over 400,000 such girls and boys will enter secondary schools across the country, at least by February 2019.

But Nakijoba represents millions of young girls especially those living in rural Uganda. They wake up as early as 4 / 5 Am to do domestic work including walking miles in search of water for family use. They then set off for school at 6 am, on foot, to be ready for class

For communities to adopt alternative energy sources



These life changing energy saving stoves could relieve many women of their daily burdens.

- Take into consideration the appropriate gender dimensions of access to alternative energy sources to reduce dependence on wood fuel by training women on how to construct energy saving stoves and making briquettes.
- Conduct capacity building programs for men and women to integrate sustainable management of natural resources in their daily lives.
- Harmonize agricultural and food security by recognizing and strengthening the role of women in the agricultural sector
- Encourage increased agricultural productivity by supporting effective agricultural markets and agro processing.
- Develop alternative sources of food production taking into consideration the role of traditional knowledge of men and women in the different communities within the community.

As compiled by the MAFA team.

How the EAGWEN program impacted its implementers

By UMWA Staff

The EAGWEN program which started in 2015 brought a smile not only to the vulnerable groups that participated in it but also the people who executed it.

The program brought together different organizations that were engaged in activities related to vocational training, agriculture, media and human rights. These included outreach activities to the grassroots communities in form of awareness raising and skills building sessions, credit and savings, agriculture, agro processing and food security and environmentally friendly energy consumption, through vocational training programmes targeting self-reliance and economic empowerment, rights awareness on legal, sexual and reproductive health rights and services, among others.

The project also had a unique target: Women With Disabilities (WWDs) whose knowledge and skills were built in public speaking and assertiveness including using media as an advocacy tool. Journalists working with the project radio, Mama FM, were trained in disability mainstreaming, in addition to how they can reduce or eliminate biases they have for long held against persons with disabilities.

The EAGWEN partners include: Maganjo Farmers Association



Abu Mubiru, Programs Director, MAFA

(MAFA), Companionship of Works Association – Centenary Vocational Training School (COWA-CVTS), and Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA).

But apart from the thousands of women who benefitted during the program lifespan, the project implementers too were left happy and felt transformed.

Abu Mubiru, Programs Director, MAFA:

What really touched me most and I almost cried was the day when I encountered a family with many young children and helpless looking adults, but with nothing to eat! My contributions have largely been time and technical advice on how such



Margaret Sentamu, Executive Director, UMWA also the lead organisation.

families can improve productivity. I feel a huge sense of self-worth when these people refer to us as 'basawo' (health workers) or 'basomesa' (teachers) because we contributed to transforming their lives. Some even go as far as giving us presents! This touches me a lot.

In terms of management, I had limited knowledge in program management when we started this project, but now I'm keen on monitoring even the smallest amount of penny. As a result of this program, I'm now undergoing financial management training. It is a two-week course at Uganda Management Institute. I enrolled after being motivated by the roles I had to play in the Management of the EAGWEN Program.

I can say that now I am a better planner, a great mobilizer, and manager. The Program has enabled me to interact with people who are better than me in management, and I have learnt from them. I have made friends. And picked skills in pushing an agenda, and sustaining a productive argument.

Margaret Sentamu, Executive Director, UMWA:

The EAGWEN program has made me become more assertive, a hard nut to crack. I have become a better manager and have come to appreciate that although we are all doing a lot of work, we pursue different paths and apply different energies. Therefore, I have become more patient and reflective. As a Lead Organization, there were moments when we had to push, and push others. But not with bad intentions. We

were chasing deadlines and quality work.

Working on disability issues and interacting with those having an impairment of some sort, everyday has impacted me greatly. I feel I'm now more deliberate in what I do because I know we are different. Marginalizing or excluding somebody hurts. Facilitating sessions on Gender; and Disability Mainstreaming in the media have made me, I think a better person. I'd be the first person to raise an issue of marginalization if I feel there is one. Working with the media on issues of exclusion, and together finding ways of writing or presenting media stories on those themes, make me feel, really great. I felt privileged to present papers on Media and Disability Mainstreaming at two International Forums, thanks to our association with the Disability People's Organisations, DPOs, network in Uganda.

It has also been through the association with EAGWEN that UMWA / Mama FM was publically recognized for spearheading the disability rights agenda in the media. It was the first Symposium on Media and Disability ever held in Uganda, where one of our Presenters walked away with an Award.

But the trouble with most of the work we do – is that we work but spend less time to at least, or even in-build and implement sustainability measures. This Program was heavy in terms of the scope, and activities, but heavily under-resourced. It is also important to celebrate ourselves, and hope for the best. It would be gratifying to have an Exit Plan, and also document the processes of this Program for future reference. The gains and strategies from this Project are worthy replicating!



Barclays Bank staff addressing COWA trainees on interviewing techniques and job attributes.

What the EAGWEN program meant to its implementers

Francesca Romana Bilak:

"I sincerely appreciate the EAGWEN partnership especially that component of building the capacity of our staff and trainees – who would later transfer the learnt knowledge to the wider public.

Disability mainstreaming has been very key in this partnership. After appreciating the goal for this policy, COWA was quick to adopt it, now ensuring that those students living with disabilities are sensitively handled, including giving them more time during class or examination time.

I have since then started looking at things in a more broader perspective, appreciating that we are made, think and contribute differently. I have really appreciated the

strength and the efficiency our Lead Organization brought to the Network, ever demanding for prompt communication, reports and accountability. But I have also learnt to become a bit patient.

What I'd do differently? I would advocate more to invest in sustaining this project by ensuring that, such plans are part and parcel of the project design, and ensure that they are also well resourced. Additionally, I'd urge for collective fundraising, and advocate for more funding for this project, because it was not only unique, but the visible results were indeed too huge for the financial resources involved".



Francesca Romana Bilak, COWA Principal.



My attitude about PWDs has changed greatly

Laila Ndagire, Presenter, Mama FM:

"We have had over five years trying to mainstream disability issues in Mama FM programming and other UMWA activities. One thing I discovered is that they are being looked at with pity. My attitude has greatly changed. I no longer assume that they need help here or there. At the Front Desk, I first seek their consent, if they wish to be wheeled to the studio or not. As a Program Presenter of an Entertainment Program on Mama FM, I deliberately look out for talent among the persons living with disabilities, play their music, and host them as guests on the station. In addition, I have since then stopped addressing them by nicknames. I also encourage those I interact with to stop labeling them".

I NOW EXPRESS MYSELF BETTER

Okello Billy Francis:

"I can now express myself and write reports and articles, better. My continued participation in contributing to the GWEN Newsletter, won me an opportunity to write articles in another Newsletter. People there, admired and liked my articles in the GWEN News.

I have gained self-esteem which has also won me several assignments within and out of my work station. I now manage events at COWA, in addition to my core duties of training. I'm also the Operations Manager of the Youth Empowerment activities at the Sharing Youth Centre. I can now speak with more confidence, clarity, and can sustain an argument, a thing I was not able to do before this partnership. Our continued interaction with UMWA has made me become an eloquent speaker, and debater on the media especially radio shows.

MAFA motivated me to start a commercial farming business. This is a small project, but with support from my uncle. I'm sure it will materialize soon. I have come to appreciate the work of other organizations in the fight for gender equality. In addition, I have "developed a heart for humanity". In every situation I aim at changing the lives of those that are more disadvantaged than me. And I'm happy I have managed to change lives of quite a number of young and vulnerable people.



I have also appreciated the importance of listening to other people's stories. That way I'm able to appreciate their points of view. The program has enabled me to reflect on my own life; and how to approach a completely new environment. UMWA and MAFA have different ways of looking at things. So I had to sit back and learn how to cope".

Catherine Apalat, Programs Director, Mama FM:

"The biggest impact of the EAGWEN Program on my life is attitude change. Initially I could not readily associate with persons with disabilities. Could not even touch them. But now our minds have changed about Women With Disabilities, WWDs. I am amazed at how they are so clever –

before we thought they are stupid, not able, not capable – just weaklings!

I now know – I should not over-say sorry or over-help them because they hate to be treated as weaklings. My affection towards them has increased – It is now more of an attitude issue at UMWA than policy to treat PWDs with equal dignity.

For example, it is not only the Program Person in charge of the radio show on

Persons With Disabilities, (PWDs) to lead them into the studio – But everybody. Now I say – May I help you! At the family level, I had to consistently remind a cousin against marginalizing her child who was born with a disability.

She now treats all her children equally. This is away from when she would not buy good clothes for this child or even throw her behind the gate".



WWDs at a training at UMWA/MAMA FM resource centre.



Patrick Senoga, the lead Producer, Disability not Inability program on Mama FM. He was publically recognised for his and the station's commitment to disability mainstreaming. "The program motivated me to persue a course in Rehabilitation, now in my second year at Kyambogo University.

The program enhanced my capacity in keeping books of account

Judith Aripo, MAFA Financial Officer:

"The partnership has greatly contributed to my better understanding how to keep the books of accounts. Thanks to the two training sessions organized by the UMWA Fi-

nance person. But also the monitoring visits by the Norwegian officials who would find time to check our accounting procedures and systems. And once a gap was found, I would personally take responsibility but later pledge and correct the gap".



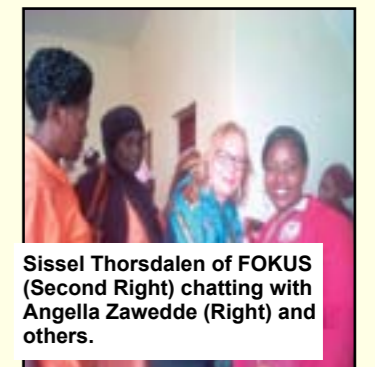
A beneficiary of MAFA's legal rights training in Luweero inspects her piece of land.

It has been four years of continuous learning

Angella Zawedde, Program Officer, MAFA:

"The four years have not been in vain. The project beneficiaries should be counting a lot of gains. Personally, the capacity building sessions organized for staff or Network members, have impacted me.

"My four years with MAFA is filled with a lot of learning and re-learning. I have gained knowledge and skills in team building, program design and implementation as well as mobilizing the right target beneficiaries of the project. It has been a hard task, but with persistence, and continued interaction with partner organizations on how they are dealing with similar challenges, I can't complain. I have met wonderful mentors from this partnership. I have learnt so much from them, and have been my strongest encouragement to push on with the struggle. Seeing these mentors, so strong, and calling a spade a spade, but with respect and dignity, I shall forever be grateful for working with them.



Sissel Thorsdalen of FOKUS (Second Right) chatting with Angella Zawedde (Right) and others.

Working with communities can be challenging but the training in community mobilization and group dynamics, has helped me to deal with the challenges. My lowest moment was to be denied a visa to participate in the CSW in New York in 2017, because I had no "experience" in traveling! My highest moment, is seeing visible transformation from a person I found so lacking in development, but when MAFA made an intervention, he/she is all up happy, energetic and productive!"

EAGWEN: Beautiful program, some challenges

By UMWA Staff

Mary Nalugwa (27), a resident of Teguzzanvuma village in Luweero Sub County was chased away from her marital home by a husband who felt threatened! With her two children aged four and seven, Nalugwa now lives at her mother's home in the nearby village in Luweero district.

"The husband felt threatened by his wife's empowerment when she started a lucrative waragi (local gin) business after advice from MAFA," Angella Zawedde, Program officer for the organization says.

As the EAGWEN program comes to an end, Nalugwa's experience together with many other risks and challenges had come to characterize a program that gave so much in the way of transforming the lives of the vulnerable.

This program was implemented by three organizations, Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA) who tried to mainstream disability rights in the media, COWA engaged the youths by offering them training in catering, bricklaying, tailoring and other vocational skills while MAFA tackled especially income generation.

"But this 'attack' on the status quo brought many challenges. At one time, the calf which we gave to one woman in Luweero almost died from strangulation because the husband, who did not treat it as his own, refused to attend to it while the woman was away. When we asked him why he did such a thing, he

said that MAFA gave calves to women only", Zawedde narrates, adding another man in Bamu-nanika sub County sold the pigs that were given to his wife reasoning that once his wife gets empowered economically, she would no longer respect him.

Abu Mubiru, The Program Manager for MAFA says that the EAGWEN program faced challenges both from within and outside his organization. "There has been much labor turn-over, the many workers we recruit and train for the program soon quit because they had expected to get a living wage which we can't afford," he says.

He says that when the program had just started in 2015, many women in Luweero could not attend the trainings because of too much politicking. Some politicians also attempted to hijack the program for their own selfish interests. At one time a local politician offered MAFA office space and later tried to use this to solicit support from the women.

As the program winds up, sustenance has become a profound issue, the MAFA office in Luweero and a few others are now closed, and the future of Mama FM, is already in balance. But many good things have remained, for example, some women can now own land or the husbands have 'allowed' them to use it freely.

The project has also strengthened the civil society, Luweero women are now involved in the budget process and activism.

Billy Francis Okello, the COWA program officer la-



EAGWEN projects have been deliberate to target persons with disabilities.

ments that the government's attempt to 'fight' a rising youth politician by starting short term projects for youths, nearly impaired the COWA skilling program.

"The youth at some point abandoned our program in favour of the so called presidential youth initiative, which unfortunately produced half-baked graduates," he said.

Margaret Sentamu, UMWA Director says some of the learnings are, the importance of resourcing follow-up activities, and spending time to do a baseline survey. She says, "Applying a Rights Based approach at all times and investing in sustainability measures can turn around a bad situation."



Anne Marit (NWF) interacts with one of the MAFA beneficiaries in Luweero



Gorret Kakaire: I started a women's group. I'm now an eloquent speaker thanks to the EAGWEN program.

UMWA to launch gender resources

By UMWA Team

Besides the anxieties over the future existence of Mama FM, Uganda Media Women's Association, UMWA has in the last part of the year, directed its efforts in producing important documents that will contribute to gender mainstreaming in Uganda's media, which will also make it a little easier for especially women leaders to utilize the media without being bashed unnecessarily.

It is expected that by December, UMWA would have made

final touches on five documents including:

- Together We Can Communicate Equality and Fairness in the Media: A Training Guide.
- Women in Leadership Enhance Capacity in Media Engagement: A Training Guide.
- Use of the Mass Media - Tips for Women Politicians.
- Gender Guidelines for the Media: Tips for Practicing Journalists.

The 18-month Project which began in April 2018, is supported by the Democratic Governance Facility, DGF.



Connie Osoru, coordinator of the project.



Clothilda Babirekere, project officer.

Clothilda Babirekere, a Project Officer (Gender) says: "We may have been very ambitious when designing this project, but the literature, and the guides we have generated will go a long way in impacting the media. Adding, the other exciting innovation is a Course Unit we have developed on Gender and Media. We hope that the Department of Higher Education will welcome it, and encourage Media Training institutions to integrate it within their curriculum". Babirekere however notes that the Project will however have to invest in an intensive Training of Trainers program to generate a pool of Instructors / Coaches who would then deliver what seems to be an interesting Course Unit set to transform journalism in Uganda.

Connie Osoru, Program Coordinator for the Project: Media for Gender Equality and Social Justice: Leaving No One Behind says: "The documents are seen as an important step to engender the media in Uganda. We hope that this project is extended for another three years, because impacting attitudes and perceptions take long. So far the project is receiving positive response and triggering off excitement and further debate on gender and media, not only within the media related institutions (Media houses and Training institutions) but also within the Department of Higher Education, and the Curriculum Development Centre, and the general public as well".



'Speaking on radio enhances women's confidence'

By MAFA Team

Luweero District presents very unique examples in Uganda. Apart from being the focal district from where the present Government waged war to come to power, 33 years ago, its infrastructure especially schools or hospitals remain really wanting.

Says a District Councillor: "Although we would have expected the Government to repair the roads, and built schools to compensate for what was destroyed during the war, nothing much has been done. But not all, is lost. Despite all that could have happened, women in Luweero, have attained one thing. They have become

outspoken. They can argue out their case, without fear or favour. According to the Ministry of Gender, women in Luweero District constitute 43% of the positions in the Lower Government.

MAFA, on their part, through their program, have raised the women's bar by facilitating them to speak out more professionally, engage on policy issues, and present their issues on the media". Says Abu Mubiru, Director of MAFA, "We appreciate Mama FM for availing space to the Luweero women. Speaking on Radio builds their confidence. People in the community also respect them because they hear them articulate issues on the radio".



Women Councillors participate in the Radio show at Mama FM.

Study on safety of female journalists in Uganda released

‘They are more prone to online harassment and cyber stalking’

By UMWA Team

Uganda Media Women’s Association (UMWA), in association with Media Focus on Africa (MFA), with support from UNESCO, has released a study report: *“Online and Offline Violence, Abuses, and Related Safety Risks encountered by Female Journalists in Uganda”*.

Done in October – November, the study was informed by the global drive to enable further understanding of the safety and security issues that confront journalists working in the media across the world. John B. Mayiga, UNESCO Program Officer, Nairobi Office, notes: “While there is need to address the general challenges facing media workers and journalists around the country, a focus on attacks specifically directed at women journalists is important given that many of these occur because of the gender issues involved”.

Moreover, the representation of women in the media both in terms of employment and coverage in Uganda have been previously found to reinforce the ideals of a patriarchal society and the domination by men that have traditionally characterized the Ugandan society.

While the overall objective of the Study was to establish the extent and nature of safety violations, risks and abuses faced by female journalists in Uganda, specifically, the Study Sought to, among others: To establish the type of safety and security risks or abuses faced by female journalists in Uganda; Establish whether female journalists face specific gender related safety risks and violations; Find out how female journalists in Uganda handle their personal safety in both online and offline work environment; To explore female journalists’ perspectives of safety and security policies in their media houses; and To explore ways of harnessing the safety and security of female journalists in Uganda.

Data collection was majorly through focus group discussions, and self-administered questionnaires. At least 40 female journalists representing 25 media houses were physically interfaced with.

The Study reveals:

Although most media houses have written policies to protect journalists, these are rarely implemented much less recognizing specific risks faced by female employees.

Dr. Aisha Nakiwala, a Co-Investigator in the study, pointed out the following as part



Part of the female journalists team that participated in the study.

of the safety risks / threats female journalists face:- cyber stalking; obscene remarks; unwanted sexual advances; sending sexually evocative pictures; attempted rape; sexually explicit jokes; and inappropriate touching of one’s body, among others.

The survey further revealed that about 60% female journalists are not monitored by their superiors while in the field. But noted that 47% of the respondents did not respond to this question implying the degree of importance female journalists attach to safety monitoring while in the field. Furthermore, the study found out that although some media organizations provide their employees with medical insurance, only the senior staff accessed such benefits, and not the junior, freelancers, or interns.

Equipment: Only 16% of the respondents noted that they are given “appropriate” equipment when reporting in risky areas. However, it was discovered that even in media outlets where safety gadgets are available, only staff reporters are allowed access.

Training in Safety and Security: Most female journalists in Uganda (68.8%) have not

been offered any safety training by their employers while only 31.3% of the respondents said that their organizations had organized at least one such training.

Online Harassment: 31.3% of the respondents said they had been harassed online despite the focus group discussions revealing that many female respondents were ‘ignorant’ about online harassment meaning that some of them may have answered in the negative mainly because they did not know what constitutes harassment.

Awareness about Online Digital Protection Laws: The study revealed that 84.3% of the respondents are ignorant of online digital protection laws and guidelines. However, it is important to note that even those that claimed to be aware had a rough idea of contextualizing the said laws.

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Joan Akello, Power FM journalist facilitating at one of the sessions



Josephine Mutesi, Mama FM journalist.

Are micro revolving loans a good idea?

MAFA Team

There is no doubt that micro financial resources will continue to transform the lives of especially those living in rural Uganda. But this will happen only if such projects are well targeted, monitored, but most important of all, the target beneficiaries are first trained in the micro finance loaning services: Finance Officer, Aripo Judith says. “MAFA’s such programs have been able to register success because the interest rates are as low as 2.5%; and we focus on the impact to mitigate risks to enable farmers pay their loans”.

Aripo continues, “The success also depends on the project implementers, emphasis on creating stronger partnerships, share existing knowledge and best practices to deliver more impactful small holder-focused products”.

According to Aripo, MAFA has been able to register substantive success in this area due to the four points above the reason they are urging the Government of Uganda to replicate such targeted projects, in other parts of the country.



Mr. Musamba Tony invested his loan in leasing a one acre piece of land to increase his pineapple production.



Mrs. Ssegawa invested her UGX 400,000 shillings loan in mushroom growing.



Specioza sold snacks; and food crops like maize, beans to care for the family needs and met weekly payment of her loan.



UMWA urged to develop safety program to address gender specific issues in the media

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The study makes the following Recommendations:

- **Media Schools** – to prioritize training in safety for journalists including orientation sessions on digital safety.

- **Media Houses** – to embrace gender sensitive safety policies for journalists, which must be explained to journalists and their supervisors for easy enforcement.

- **Media managers** – should also provide appropriate safety gear to the field reporters. Such gear may include helmets, protective vests and jackets, protective spectacles, face shields, and safety gloves among others. Media managers should also provide their employees with medical insurance including the freelance reporters. This is emphasized because the findings of this study revealed that even in the few stations

where medical insurance is provided, it covers only full-time or senior staff members.

- **Associations / Unions of Journalists** – should aggressively promote the safety of journalists. With Media Gender Focused Organizations like Uganda Media Women’s Association, UMWA – considering to develop a fully-fledged program on the safety and security of female journalists.

- **Government** – should uncompromisingly enforce laws that are aimed at ensuring the safety of workers at the workplace; the State law enforcement institutions – must not promote impunity against journalists but instead should facilitate the growth of a vibrant and transparent law processes that ensure the safety of journalists.

- **International Organizations like UNESCO, UN Human Rights** – should work with the State and Non-State Actors to monitor and implement interventions in line

with the international requirements.

Commenting on the accuracy of the results, Mr. Daniel Kaweesi, Program Officer, UNESCO, Kampala, said, in the absence of data on such a topic, in Uganda, interested parties are encouraged to do further research to either affirm or disapprove! He says: “This is the first study on this important thematic area. We applaud UMWA and urge them to develop a Program on the safety and security of female journalists”.

The UN Human Rights Country Representative, Mr. Robert Kotchani pledged continued support to UMWA, especially in the area of human rights. He said he was glad that UMWA was nominate to sit on the Governing Committee of the Women’s Rights Defenders whose work begins early 2019.



After a session on legal rights and land, the women are ready to share the message within their communities.



Land ownership still key to achieving economic justice

By MAFA Team

Although land is a vital resource, women own only 14% of the registered land (Uganda Gender Policy, 2007a). As such; innovation through increased production is hindered by lack of control over land. Culture and custom continue to support the transmission of land to men, as women's inheritance rights to

land are tenuous and at the mercy of their male relatives. Section 39 of the Land Act as amended in 2004 provides for spousal consent in relation to disposal of family land but this has limited protection for women's land rights and has a weak implementation framework.

In Luweero, MAFA found out that there still exists persisting land ownership challenges faced

by women especially those in polygamous, or informal relations. Such issues lead to family conflicts and land disputes. Women still live with the old systems that put girls and women at a disadvantage. To address this, MAFA has this year conducted legal awareness and advocacy campaigns that has led to some of the women owning land.

Angella Nakato, MAFA Program Officer says: "Our program this year has largely concentrated on providing knowledge to the women. So they can access

the land. We have however, included components of mitigating gender based violence; and also enabled them to speak with government representatives at the lower level. We have been able to do this through conducting community dialogues where both the officials and the women engaged on several issues. HIV/AIDS is still a factor. So we continued to emphasize on the importance of prevention and how to continue being productive in case you have the virus".

Barclays presents interview techniques to COWA trainees

By Okello Francis

Barclays Bank officials came back, again! Not to recruit clients for their bank but to give back to society. This is the second time they do it at COWA CVTS. Soft skills sharing was top on the agenda. And the topic was *presentation at the interview and writing a better CV*.

Anna Nabukeera, First Year Catering and Hospitality student who participated in the activity shares her experience.

"I learnt to deal with fear, which normally presents at such times. I learnt to stay calm, speak out loudly and deal specifically with questions that the panel would be asking. I learnt that personal presentation is key. The dress code is paramount. That I need to stay modest but smart. Keeping my nails short and clean, and not to wear not so loud a perfume. I learnt that at no cost should I ever engage negatively with a



Nabukeera Anna (Left) in an interview session drama skit (1).

member of the Interview Panel because these are the people who would decide your fate. Also learnt that even when I don't get that job opportunity, I should never take it personally.

I related the experience I got from the training, with what I had seen before. For example, there is this young man who we encountered at the workplace

where I do some part-time work when he had come looking for a job but he was casually dressed, in sandals and in a vest-like shirt.

He faked the accent, and I knew automatically that he would not get the job. Another scenario involved my sister. She was negatively treated by a panelist, and denied a job at one of the hospitals in Kampala. She

took it lightly, but one day my sister came to face this rather unkind person at another hospital, where she had gone to look for a service. My sister treated her well which prompted the former to apologize for her bad deeds. I learnt that life is a cycle. We need to stay professional and friendly.

I also learnt to write a better CV, but not to crowd it with unnecessary information. I urge fellow youth to cease any opportunity to learn. Today every system is changing. Application for jobs and selection of successful candidates is changing: job interviews are done online sometimes you have to do video conferencing. Because of this we should be in position to easily adapt to the new changes. We should therefore seek for new knowledge to keep up to date.

Why character and attitude most sought for attributes

By Okello Francis

Reliability, the right attitude, and self-drive are now the key factors, most employers emphasize when recruiting staff. But the three are rare to find especially if parents neglected their children at an early age because these attributes are normally developed at the formative age. At COWA, trainees are helped to develop such character. And many of them are promising leaders.

Because of the nature of jobs that the trainees do after their course they are further trained in various ways like how to become more reliable and responsible. For instance in the kitchen gardening and mushroom growing projects introduced this year, students are increasingly showing interest in being leaders. And they have since been relied on by their instructors to manage the projects. The students willingly irrigate the sack gardens, harvest, sell the crops and present the records to their teachers whether the transactions took place when the instructors are off duty.

Arinaitwe Brenda: "When I was introduced to the school project I felt concerned that if the crops we planted were not taken care of they would wither so I decided to invest time in



Aol Mary (Left) and Arinaitwe Brenda pose with their harvest in the kitchen gardening project.

watering them during the dry season; weeding, harvesting and selling the harvest. My dream is to see the fruits of our labour".

Aol Mary is in charge of the kitchen gardening project at the school. She says she enjoys doing her work with minimum supervision. She says: "Once I am entrusted to do something, I do my best to accomplish the task".

"With time I found myself doing things without being told. I now feel responsible because I take care of the crops, harvest,

sell and present records to my teacher even if transactions take place over the weekend when she is off duty", Nakalema Vivian, another student says.

In the catering department the students are trained to be in charge of snacks production and the canteen project in promotion of their entrepreneurship skills. They therefore buy ingredients, prepare the snacks, sell; and present records of production and the daily sales to their instructor. They are also very much

relied on when it comes to food and beverage production and service when it comes to providing catering services for parties and workshops.

Nakakeeto Viola, Instructor of Hair Dressing and Beauty and Miriam Emecu, Training Manager concur: "Growing a responsible character largely depends on how a child was brought up. Parents are responsible for the future of their children".

COWA CVTs revises curriculum, adds French

By Okello Francis

COWA CVTS curriculum has been revised with addition of the French language, the Principal of COWA CVTS, Romana Bilak Francesca announced. The trainees pursuing certificates in Catering and Hospitality will be the first lot at COWA to be examined in this new course unit. She said that this was done to upgrade the standards at the school and give better job employment opportunities to the graduates. She added that, this year, COWA CVTS applied for a centre number with Uganda Business Technical Examination Board (UBTEB), an examining body from the Ministry of Education Science, Technology and Sports. UBTEB examines competence of trainees in vocational training institutions and polytechnics for their final accreditation to join the job market.

Romana adds: "The embracement of the East African Community spirit means that speaking many languages is very key to thrive in the job market as people from any of these countries can work in any of the six member states.



COWA students acting a conversation in French.

Speaking languages such as English, French and Kiswahili in addition to the local languages can be an asset for favourable job competition. Of recent Chinese has been introduced in some schools. The hotel industry and migration service points such as airports or border points are other areas where personnel with knowledge of both local and international languages can be a big asset".

According to Mr. Agaba Wycliffe the French language instructor at COWA CVTS, the impact of the French people in the world of cuisine has

stood for ages. Several references are made to the beauty and popularity of food culture in the French society. French is very important to the food industry because many recipes are adopted from the French.

"The value of learning an extra language is very visible. This is a life skill that will go on with students in their lives. The clientele as well, could increase if one knows how to speak their language. When you speak to someone in their mother tongue, you speak to their soul! Knowledge of this language is very paramount to all and sundry in the restaurant business. As we strive to make the world practical for our learners, exposure to such life skills is one way to create an everlasting impact on the lives of our students", Agaba Wycliffe says.

Nirere Bless, the Guild President and a student of Catering and Hospitality and one of the pioneer students of French language class shares: "I have come to realize that French is an interesting language. Together with English, this will give me an opportunity of interacting with more people especially at public places."

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WWDs in a session on political and economic empowerment at the UMWA training centre.



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