That COVID 19 escalated adolescent girls’ vulnerability to gender based violence.

"Things feel chaotic and, at the same time there’s still a sense of possibility and hope”

This quote motivated our team amidst 2020 COVID19 pandemic challenges.
The secret of change is in your ability to adapt, influence but stay focused.

“The secret of change is to focus all your energy, not on the fighting the old, but on building the new”

On behalf of Action for Youth Development Uganda (ACOYDE), I wish to thank you for staying safe amidst the COVID19 Pandemic. I would like to start by wishing you and your families better health and safety in these difficult times. I would also like to express my profound gratitude to all essential providers, our staff members, partners who are serving so selflessly on the front lines amidst this health crisis.

2020 was a remarkable year that made us re-think our strategic interventions, it was the cruelest year of all times as humanity continued and still continues to face one of its darkest global pandemic. Covid-19 caused tragic losses of life; increase in gender based violence, climate change pandemic was hiked, livelihoods affected especially for the girl child and women, people lost employments and others lost businesses and thus turning our world upside down as billions of people and economies got affected. In our survey carried out in one of our district of operations, businesses were shattered down completely for young women and their children continue to go hungry with no single meal per day, more numbers of girls returning to school has drastically reduced and this will affect the development of communities which are already affected. This is a serious crisis like no other.

Despite this crisis ACOYDE continued to reach out to the girls through the peer to peer learning approach amidst the pandemic, as a way of facilitating the girls to continue with their learning amidst Covid19 pandemic. Our relationship with our partners was strengthened and we reached out to more new partners to ensure we work together towards making life better for the communities and our efforts were also doubled towards accelerating approaches to end child marriages and teenage pregnancies in Uganda.
As we anticipate the worst economic downturn to affect the young people, there will be depression that calls for collective action for everyone. While there is tremendous uncertainty around the globe forecast. I therefore recommend the following amongst many recommendations, continuous observation of essential containment measures and prioritizing health spending on young people in hard to reach communities. There is no healthy economy without healthy population. Ministry of education to keep girls learning despite their challenges because this happened due to the pandemic challenges not their own making. The government should introduce the plan for recovery to reduce the risks of irreversible economic scarring through policy plan in order to stabilize the economy within the SMEs and women who belong to low income communities, in all priority areas, with limited resources will need more financial support than before.

The development partners, community and international well-wishers must create a working partnership and as well step up efforts to help the most vulnerable communities by providing increased funding as well as service relief and recovery thereby creating space for spending on urgent health needs and mitigating the economic impact of the crisis.

Lastly I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate our secretariat for working so hard amidst the COVID19 pandemic, our board members and partners for continuing to make our work more visible. Thank you so much for your resilience.

The reality is that anyone’s fight against the virus is everyone’s fight. More than ever, we need global solidarity, a common resolve, and coordinated international efforts for all. Kaa Salama!! Pamoja tunaweza!!

Ms. Deborah Auma

Board Chairperson
2020 marked another amazing but challenging year for ACOYDE. We continued to make our mark on promoting gender equality strides amidst the COVID19 pandemic. Our impactful activities, programmes was because of our amazing staff, partners and the incredible stakeholders that we work with in areas of our jurisdiction thus enabled us to further build and nurture the adolescents and youth voice, to break the ceiling by being bold amidst COVID19. Our impact in 2020 was impressive but also challenging since we doubled our efforts. It was a critical moment for us to build solidarity and create unity across the board to ensure that citizens are aware of their rights and have the confidence and capacity to meaningfully engage in promoting gender equality, health for all social economic and climate justice.

2020 was a year to remember globally, due to COVID19 pandemic outbreak, this pandemic led to the global world total lockdown of countries, businesses and schools. On 21st March 2020 the Government of Uganda was forced to lockdown in order to respond rapidly and implement a series of measures and develop national guidelines to prevent and respond to the spread of COVID-19, like Closure of schools and other high concentration points, Freeze of public and private transport, Outlawing all mass gathering events, including for worship, overnight curfew, a nationwide lockdown. This situation led to increased Gender based violence (GBV) cases and as well raised a lot of concerns on how to keep learners safe, secure and also progressing with their studies. Unfortunately, by May reports started coming in of teenage girls who had fallen prey to sex predators resulting into abnormal rates of teenage pregnancies, child marriages and other forms of sexual violence in all districts across the country, this triggered our efforts of activism amidst COVID19 lockdown. The fact that words like new normal, quarantine, social distancing, became part of our everyday vocabulary says enough of 2020. In the quest to beat a pandemic, inequalities became visible, unfortunate social events have come to the fore, and
people around the world showed hope and support as allies of neighbors supporting each other. Our activism and advocacy work being lined to girls and women had to be carried out online and ensure girls and boys continue learning amidst the COVID19 pandemic and create awareness on COVID19 to secure safe space for adolescent girls and young women. Have carried out Radio talk shows, online Name and shame campaign in order to retain the prices of the goods at a normal price. Influencing the local leaders to budget and plan for girls and women who cannot afford MHS materials during and post COVID19 pandemic. Our work on tracking the food relief and donations that were provided by different international agencies, individuals and also the government allocation of the resources that were provided by the government of Uganda by ensuring it reached its beneficiaries. We managed to organize webinars, attended and participated in over 40 online webinars as presenters, facilitators and participant on issues related to gender based violence and risk health related issues, youth and women participation in leadership, governance and democracy processes. Through making the new normal and scientific approach, implementation, reaching out to communities. You all know that COVID-19 over dominated the government and donor priorities for the immediate future, the impact of COVID-19 across the world and the implications for all areas of life. ACOYDE and Girls Not Brides has used these platforms to call for governments and donors to direct flexible funding and support to civil society organizations working with girls and their communities during this crisis to ensure girls are safe in the community. Despite the COVID19 pandemic challenge caused to grassroots work and health of young people,, and on business of young women ACOYDE used all opportunities available to continuously advocate for the girls rights, women rights and as well partnered and collaborated with more organizations to the keep adolescents girls and boys safe in the community. Thanks to our partners that provided us with airtime on a National TV to talk about effects of climate change and young women on access of sexual reproductive health services amidst COVID19 especially young women this helped us to reach more numbers without being strained.

In a special way I take this opportunity to thank our board members, staff members, volunteers, interns, for working hard and ensuring ACOYDE stays relevant to the community. We will continue to count on the commitment and support of all stakeholders as we walk this journey!! vitória é certa!! Mungu akubariki!!

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

Ms. Caroline Owashaba
Team Leader
About

ACTION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UGANDA (ACOYDE)

Action for Youth Development Uganda (ACOYDE) is a youth-focused organization in Uganda, established to provide a platform for empowerment of children, young Women and Youth in the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights, Social and climate justice and entrepreneurship and Governance and development processes in Uganda. ACOYDE is governed according to its Constitution, Articles and Memorandum of Association. ACOYDE has over the years implemented a number of projects involving the youth economic strengthening programs, gender equality, environmental conservation and biodiversity programs, sexual reproductive and health rights for the youth, especially the adolescents and young women and men. ACOYDE is ratified to work in every part of Uganda but has been operating in Western Districts of Uganda since its inception. Our model of work is empowering young people to advocate for their needs through active youth participation, civic education, entrepreneurship, gender and leadership among other issues facing the young people in Uganda.

What drives us

OUR VISION
is “A vibrant, healthy and productive youth generation”.

OUR MISSION
Is to empower, promote social justice and gender equality, Governance and Democracy entrepreneurship, leadership in Uganda among adolescents, youth and young women through advocacy, networking and capacity building.

OUR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
is to reshape, redirect and uphold the values of social transformative leadership and promote holistic youth empowerment programming developed and implemented by young people through advocacy, training, capacity building, networking and research.

OUR CORE VALUES
Transparency, Active participation, openness, hard work, integrity, creativity and innovation.
Our Objectives

To identify and implement strategies to increase youth participation in governance and democratic processes in all spheres of decision making through capacity building and trainings.

To equip adolescent girls with leadership skills and provide opportunities for them to gain more confidence.

To create safer spaces for adolescent girls and young women through training and mentoring, through contributing to reduced gender based violence in the community.

To provide SRHR health information, conduct Menstruation, sanitation and hygiene and disseminate information on HIV Prevention and maternal health among the youth in Uganda.

To promote economic justice and fair treatment of young people through advocacy, entrepreneurship training and financial literacy knowledge provision among the youth.

To promote Environment and Bio diversity conservation through awareness creation and promotion of green based technologies through climate smart agricultural school clubs.

To develop and enhance meaningful youth partnerships, collaborations and networks for sustainable development.

OUR PROGRAMME AREAS

LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE
ACOYDE envisions a world where empowered young women and men can work together to address gender inequalities and promote transformational leadership and development for a just fair society. The program seeks to increase the number of young women in leadership positions (decision making positions), both political and public participation without discrimination.

SEXUAL REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS (SRHR):
Young women and men learn more about Sexual Reproductive & Rights, HIV/AIDS and life skills training, gender and health budget advocacy and as well provision of menstruation, sanitation and hygiene education talk shows for the girl child.

Economic empowermnet for sustainable livelihoods
Women face unprecedented challenges to their livelihoods, their identities, their institutions, and their sense of place in the evolving global village. The aim of this program is to strengthen the livelihoods base of women. Through hands on training, career choice, guidance and counseling, promoting creativity and innovations, partnerships through CHACHA social Action Project using community available resources.

OUR APPROACH
ACOYDE focuses on children, women and youth free access to information in its programming. We use innovative learning experience for grassroots, pre-urban and urban ideas/approaches to design a friendlier, flexible, engaging programs
that can easily connect young people around the world to one another especially in the communities we implement in.

We use face-to-face, remote learning though it has been disorganized, challenged by COVID19 impact. It is grassroots based and owned through the use of peer to peer and change agents approach. Our programs are interactive, we use the local engagement to global connection approach, use of Social Media, pictures, setup and photo both approaches, use of community Club Meetings, physical and Virtual events, story sharing through local media articles and blog posts, charity/community services, taking action in international advocacy days, online fundraising.

REACH & IMPACT

From villages in rural communities of Uganda to the National level: ACOYDE works with its partners and stakeholders both at the grassroots and national levels and across the borders in East Africa and at regional levels to ensure that tasks are accomplished and more young people are reached very well through synergies, alliances, networks. The results of programs in the last year had direct results on citizens, families, children, youth and young women. Our programs include families enrolling their daughters in schools, girls and boys advocating for themselves, parents deciding against arranged child marriages, teachers changing their methods to better support girls, and boys joining clubs to help end gender discrimination. Community mentors mentoring young people, economic empowerment and enhanced value addition skills for social and economic development.
Check out the results of the corruption survey on the impact of girls and young women in business amidst COVID19 on website www.actionyouthdev.org and what has been done, interventions, recommendations. ACOYDE conducted a survey on the food relief and donations offered by the district partners, government and well-wishers in Rubiriz District.

- Keeping (adolescents) girls learning amidst COVID19 pandemic and closure of schools, the shifting attitudes, changing mindsets, hand craft skilling, life skills training by peer educators and change agents plus the social media engagements impressions. We reached out to 600 girls and boys.
- 40+ articles and webinars organized and published by ACOYDE and its partners
- Girls, boys and partners in top media impact score from Participant Media in the districts
- Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance with support from Lottery international we managed to reach out to girls in Isingiro and other refuge settlement communities in western Uganda.
- ACOYDE managed to reach out to more than 2,500,000M people through radio and TV programs throughout western region Uganda, reaching 200,0000 households in communities where electricity and television are rare luxuries with the support of community journalists.
- ACOYDE fundraised online and was able to distribute drama uniforms for the village adolescent drama clubs, distributed food relief, material support for new born babies to 45 adolescent girls who were affected by COVID19, distributed food, beddings and clothes to over 100 girls and women.
- ACOYDE managed to translate the International women’s day 2020 and 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence (GBV) content into the community two local languages Runyankole and Luganda.
- ACOYDE trained 8 community journalists to help inform the public about COVID19 SOPs and distribution of food relief in communities. The follow up helped ACOYDE and staekeholders to reach the beneficiaries.
- ACOYDE in partnership with Girls Not brides held the first partners meeting for organizations working towards ending child marriages in western Uganda. We managed to have over 30 organizations in July 2020 in Mbarara to talk about ending child marriages acceleration progress project and set interventions in the region to reach more girls in need.
- We trained 24 peer educators who trained more 480 change agents and alot has been done at the community level. Many social action projects have been started, the behavior/ attitude changed.
- ACOYDE trained and equipped youth and women with banana value chain project skills in extraction, weavery, dyeing, use of handloom in Sheema and Mbarara District through CHACHA a banana value chain project.
- ACOYDE reached 160 adolescents girls, 10 youth leaders, 8 religious leaders, and district stakeholders during the girl summit held in Mbarara district and over 300 citizens through the 16 days of activism in Mbarara District and western Uganda through media channels.
A HEALTHY LIVING FOR A HEALTHY YOUNG GENERATION:

Action for youth Development Uganda (ACOYDE) in partnership with Uganda youth Network (UYONET) with support from Amplify Change delivered a 2 year project entitled “A healthy Living for A Healthy Young Generation” in Rubirizi District. This project aimed at contributing to a healthy youth population, free from violence and empowered in an inclusive society that promotes state accountability. The activities purposes were mainly to conduct community campaigns against violation of Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), provide Partner support supervision to District level structures; peer educators, Develop and disseminate of SRH and Rights related IEC, Capacity building in SRH access advancement for adolescent girls and boys, young women and youth, Facilitate partners to participate in district Covid19 task force meetings to voice out Adolescent Girls, Youth and Women rising needs to address GBV challenges as a key priority. This was an idea aimed at reducing the GBV rates in the community and as well among adolescents and young people in the community, strengthen youth participation and influence governance decisions at local and national level in order to increase the youth advocacy and engagement in governance that is consistently based and strategically selected and impactful to the society, more importantly to the young people.

- With the closure of schools, more girls have gone through psychological mental health associated problems and also others have experienced sexual based violence (SGBV) in families and communities because there is limited linkage to the service providers and as well lockdown made it more challenging for these girls since there was no mobility completely at all.

- The activities targeted young people of 13 to 24 years in the community, parents, guardians and teachers district stakeholders, peer educators, change agents and District advocacy Network members. It was noted from the Rubirizi District Police officer and Office of the commission investigative office that many girls and parents do not report cases of GBV to police or government authorities for fear of threats and intimidations.
Girl Talk is a transformative leadership program targeting adolescent girls in both schools and out of schools. It’s a mutually beneficial community initiative in which young women and girls learn about transformative leadership. This project equips girls with leadership skills, innovative approaches, entrepreneurship, menstruation and sanitation management trainings and as well provide opportunities for them to gain more confidence when taking on leadership positions at a younger age. It also provides an opportunity to young women and girls to come together in safe environments to share hope, grace, support, love, and experiences. As a result of being involved in Girl Talk, young women connect to learn, get inspired in their purpose in decision making.

Through radio talk shows, Peer educators and change agents in the community cascade information to the grassroots to educate, sensitize parents, children and religious leaders amidst COVID19 in Rubirizi and neighboring districts.
The National Girls Summit 2020

Girls Not Brides Uganda in partnership with Action for Youth Development Uganda and the Hunger project, organized the Western Uganda Girls Summit that focused on collective efforts on addressing the impact of COVID19 on the girl child under the theme “Securing Uganda’s Future: Enhancing Collective Action to End Child Marriage in the face of COVID19”. The 16 Days of Activism unites organizations and individuals across the world in raising awareness, strengthening networks and developing effective strategies to prevent violence and promote women and girls’ rights. It is an intensive time when women, girls, children organizations against violence widely engage in local, national and international awareness campaign and policy advocacy against violence against women and girls. This brought together different stakeholders to renew commitments and design actions aimed at Ending Gender Based Violence including; Harmful Traditional Practices of Child marriage and Teenage Pregnancies. As we celebrated 2020 16 days of activism under the theme “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, Collect!”

The 3rd National Girl E-Summit

that happened brought together 60 delegates and over 300 in 5 districts directly and reached over 4 million through television live broadcast and other online platforms. These included Adolescent Girls, boys and young women, Ministry officials, UN agencies, Donor community, District leaders, Members of Parliaments, Religious, cultural and traditional Leaders, youth, School administrators, and Civil Society representatives to reflect on the progress made in ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy by the government, partners and other stakeholders after the first and Second National Girl summits.

Through organizing this summit, ACOYDE, The Hunger Project and Girls Not Brides Uganda and partners achieved the following: we were able to Create a platform for the most vulnerable girls to speak out on issues affecting them during this Pandemic. 2) Able to create awareness and agency on violence against the girl child among families, communities and law enforcement agencies to catalyze positive attitude and behavior that fosters peace and positive relationships during this pandemic. 3) We were able to publicly condemn and call on various stakeholders to desist from all forms of violence against the girl child especially ending all forms of sexual violence including child marriage.
Increased awareness and appreciation of the fundamental role in protecting the rights of the girl child among different communities. 2) Strengthened commitment from different institutions and stakeholders towards upholding the rights of girls especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. 3) Families and communities influenced to adopt more positive behavior and attitude towards the protection of the girl child. 4) Girls ‘call to action on ending child marriage amplified among parents, communities and duty bearers.

Young people and citizens were sensitized on the Gender based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), behavior and attitudes in the community. Among adolescent girls and boys in Mbarara District on ways on how to work together to reduce GBV and access SRH services in communities. The information on available safer spaces was also provided to the public through the community dialogue and media houses that helped us to reach more numbers outside the dialogue room.

ACOYDE and its partners were able to create awareness on Gender based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and as well encourage different stakeholder organizations to advocate for the girl child amidst COVID19 pandemic in a new a coalition through girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance and District youth advocacy network (DANs). Awareness on child marriages, teenage pregnancies and GBV and COVID19 done by ACOYDE team, police, the adolescent girls through story sharing on radio’s and spot messages.

Raised awareness on child marriages, schools closure ad re-opening and its impacts on the livelihoods on girls and young women in the community.

There was massive commemoration and sensitization of the public about 16 days of activism which included the following: 25th International Day of Violence against Women, November 26. The National Girl Summit Uganda, November 29 International of human rights defenders, December 1 World Aids, December 3, International Day of the Disabled persons, December 5, International Volunteer day for economic and social development. It helped have the listener’s interventions online to be shared with the wider audience.
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The female student of Mbarara University reciting a poem about the phenomenal woman ACOYDE and its partners were able to create awareness on Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) and as well encourage different stakeholder organizations to advocate for the girl child amidst COVID19 pandemic in a new a coalition through Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance and District youth advocacy network (DANs).

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The 16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was started by activists at the inaugural Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and continues to be coordinated each year by the Center for Women's Global Leadership. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The UN System's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence activities, from 25 November to 10 December, took place under our 2020 global theme: “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, and Collect!”

The community dialogue contributed to elimination of gender based discrimination and violence in communities and public spaces against girls and women for a free society that promotes state accountability through physical and virtual interaction during and after the dialogue.

ACOYDE with support from CIVICUS carried out several activities that included community dialogues, community outreaches and community awareness drives to create awareness and civic education during the 16 days of activism among stakeholders, girls, women and development partners in the community. That later led to sustainable and immediate solutions to the current challenges that have been as a result of COVID19 pandemic in the communities.

CHACHA SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

With support from United States Development Fund (USDAF) Africa women Entrepreneurs (AWE) Action for Youth Development Uganda (ACOYDE) enrolled 150 Youth and 57 young women to be trained and equipped with banana fibre value addition and extraction skills which which would help them to earn a living. The youth and young women were both trained in the banana fibre extraction process to Sales/marketing Strategic planning for reaching new customers and marketing products and services. In order to ensure that the product attracts the market, good packaging and branding is one of the activities that took seriously for handmade products. This was realised through use of Emails, Social Media, Print and visual media platforms.

We created and sensitized local communities on banana fiber extraction and application of handmade products, which included how to source raw materials, Producing handmade products, Production of Yarn and Spinning and identification of locally available materials in communities’ mapped and profiled for future reference. The project provided skills to youth and young women through creation, training, and building their capacities to produce eco-friendly and biodegradable products” in order to earn a living for their families both at local community level. The project improved the livelihoods of the members of community at a household level leading to community sustainable development.

The project had positive impact on communities and citizens socially, economically and environmentally because of the nature of all its products that are eco-friendly and biodegradable to the environment. It contributed to the reduction in carbon emissions by adding value to banana products including production of carbonised charcoal briquettes will support the environmental initiatives of ‘Go Green campaign and realisation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
Commemorating 16 days of activism against GBV

The 16 Days of Activism against Gender based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day. It was started by activists at the inaugural Women’s Global Leadership Institute in 1991 and continues to be coordinated each year by the Center for Women’s Global Leadership. It is used as an organizing strategy by individuals and organizations around the world to call for the prevention and elimination of violence against women and girls. The UN System’s 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence activities, from 25 November to 10 December, took place under our 2020 global theme: “Orange the World: Fund, Respond, Prevent, and Collect!”

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The community dialogue contributed to elimination of gender based discrimination and violence in communities and public spaces against girls and women for a free society that promotes state accountability through physical and virtual interaction during and after the dialogue.
There is need for policy consultation from the grassroots so as to bridge the existing policy gap, citing that everyone is a victim of gender-based violence either directly or indirectly, giving example of schools being closed due to Covid-19 which has led to many girls becoming pregnant yet there is no policy protecting these girls.

Monitoring and evaluation of the progress of the implementation of interventions and recommendations made in previous engagements about the same, citing that events and activities directed towards ending child marriage take place but the information is not shared with the public and it remains with only the people who were involved in the event.

Parents should empower their children as they raise them and this helps in setting standards for the girl child and hence cannot be taken for granted. That girls have to learn how to live within their means.

Over 20,000 adolescent boys and girls including the most marginalized are knowledgeable on SRH rights, GBV protection and prevention in community.

We learnt from the spiritual leaders, bringing together religious leaders in the dialogue helped us. We had the Catholic heads, the Muslim community and Pentecostal church leaders. Of which most of their leaders were following online conversation. Over 3000 followers were following and benefiting from the conversation indirectly and directly. As a way of enhancing awareness about child marriage a press conference was held and information shared with journalists from several media houses namely; New Vision Newspaper, Monitor Newspaper, TV West, Radio West, Uganda Radio Network, Bukedde TV and Crooze FM radio. During the plenary Discussion on Preventing and responding to child marriage multi-partner experiences amidst COVID-19 pandemic.

Hon. Balaam the speaker for Mbarara district local government went on to explain the different types of gender-based violence that has affected people during the lockdown with an emphasize on the boy child who seem to have been forgotten by different circumstances. He said we have emotional, psychological, sexual, physical and economic violence, but he gets shocked when people insist on physical and sexual violence. That many people are currently dyeing of poverty than COVID19 due to loss of their jobs. Women who were pregnant some lost their babies during the mobility from one place to another and other women. It was also noted during the community dialogue how violence against women has drastically increased with incidences of violence against women and girls across the country with 3,280 cases reported to police before 30th March and 28th April. Besides cases of violence against children were reported. That some of these acts are culminated in the loss of lives which we believe is attributed to insensitive COVID19 mitigation measures by government.

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Guild Speaker, Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Mpirwe Ronald in his remarks during the planery session: he said the:
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Anti-Corruption Project - Leveraging On Women And Youth Capacities In Private Sector To Fight Against Corruption In Uganda.

Action for youth Development Uganda (ACOYDE) in partnership with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) with the objective of promoting the implementation of UNCAC and its review mechanism; The was implemented within the four months titled “Leveraging on the women and Youth capacities n private sector to fight against corruption in Uganda”

With COVID-19 outbreak first reported in the People’s Republic of China in late 2019 was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization. Uganda immediately went into a lockdown on 21st march 2020 which forced the Government of Uganda to respond rapidly by implementing a series of measures and developing national guidelines to prevent and respond to the spread of COVID-19.

Due to the above impact the government of Uganda created a national task force to manage the situation at all district and national levels, Also came up with a fundraising team at the national level and also through the office of the prime minister (OPM) 50.6B UGX was allocated to the OPM to provide relief to citizens who depended on casual or daily wage to provide food and sustain their families during the lockdown. On the same note we have also noted the government of Uganda allocated COVID19 response fund to the Task forces and also many well-wishers have donated a lot food and cash to the respectful districts including Rubirizi district however this food we are not sure whether it has reached the targeted beneficiaries and as well if the funds allocated have been used effectively. It’s also noted that Members of parliament of Uganda allocated 10B UGX to themselves each taking 20M UGX instead of allocating more to the health sector, this shows the unfairness of the current corruption within the system. Therefore this project was aimed at creating awareness on corruption, making leaders of the task forces accountable, tracking and monitoring the progress of the donations and also help to provide a comprehensive report to the district departments through the use of community journalists and young people in private sector using social media. This project has helped to mobilize young and youth to address the urgent need to fight against corruption and impunity in the communities as a sustainable path to a prosperous and peaceful Uganda.
The small businesses experienced largest effects of the risk associated with covid 19 compared to big businesses?

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THE TEAM
RAISING VOICES AMIDST COVID-19

NAMULI GLORIA
Community Journalist

OWASHABA CAROLINE
Team Leader Acoyde

BEINOMUGISHA
FREDERICK DOUGLAS
Community Journalist

KANYIGANA JOSHUA
Community Journalist

NEEMA THOMAS
MORE
Community Journalist

AINEMBABAZI
SHEILA
Community Journalist

ARINAITWE
HEDWIG
Community Journalist

ABENITWE SHEILA
Community Journalist

TWINAMATSIKO NICHOLAS
Community Journalist
ACTIVITIES

Capacity building in SRH access advancement

1. Partner support supervision to District level structures; peer educators and District Advocacy Networks.
2. Partnership support supervision to District level structures; peer educators and District Advocacy Networks.
3. Radio Talk shows: Conduct community campaigns against violation of SRHR.

Advocacy for SRH access among young people

4. Facilitating partners to participate in district Covid19 task force meetings to voice out Adolescent Girls, Youth and Women rising needs to address GBV challenges as a key priority.
5. Supporting District Advocacy Networks (DANs) to undertake local advocacy initiatives.

1. Conduct community dialogue meetings on Gender relations and adolescent girl’s rights with district stakeholders and partners.
2. Conduct a community flash mob to create awareness on 25 years of Beijing platform for Action and Generation equality.
3. Community outreach on Gender based violence and discrimination against women and girls.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Despite the impact of COVID19 on the social economic and wellbeing of different individuals, we achieved a lot, as we doubled our efforts towards working and transforming the lives of young people amidst COVID19.
2. Increased access to health services and youth friendly services as a result of evidence based youth advocacy to promote SRHR; as well as increased responsiveness of duty bearers towards youth demands on improving SRHR.
3. Delivered community led sessions in the community on SRHR and COVID19, with the peer Educator, role models for out of school youth.
We conducted radio talk shows on teenage pregnancies, child marriages and GBV and created awareness on child marriages, teenage pregnancies and GBV and COVID19 through public awareness campaigns against violation of SRH and GBV rights conducted. District youth advocacy networks actively engaged in participatory advocacy campaigns.

Created massive awareness on Gender Based Violence and Sexual reproductive health and Rights (SRHR) among adolescent girls and boys in Mbarara District on ways on how to work together to reduce GBV and access SRH services in communities. The information on available safer spaces was also provided to the public through the community dialogue and media houses that helped us to reach more numbers outside the dialogue room.

Over 20,000 Adolescent boys and girls including the most marginalized are knowledgeable on SRH rights, GBV protection and prevention in community. We were able to have a collective voice and commitment form signed by all district stakeholders including the district officials, government stakeholders, religious leaders, youth, adolescent girls and boys and young women.

ACOYDE managed to provide information on COVID19 to adolescents girls and boys and also provided COVID19 relief to teenage mothers who became pregnant due to COVID19. ACOYDE trained and facilities community journalists that helped to reach more numbers in the community about COVID19 effects and information on accessing information and other community services.

We educated young women and youth on issues of anti-corruption through online usage. The district management helped to develop policy recommendations for implementations and other stakeholders. The social media platforms were created, accountability on the donated items to the district and national task was done through online social media.
Youth and Women were selected to work together to fight against corruption in private sector and government on the provision of weekly accountability of the donations from the community, private sector and NGO’s on generated social media platforms. Modification of the already existing YGB app which included Rubirizi local government to feature for budget tracking and social accountability

Increased engagement of all sectors and CSO’s and stakeholders including religious leaders, faith movements, youth groups and media houses in advocating for SRHR and ending GBV work in a more coalition and alliance way.

The Impactful Story

The young girls living with Disability as well representing young people suffering from the spina Bifida. This is a birth defect that affects the spinal cord in young babies at birth, where they are unable to control their stool and waste. This is a problem that is not common to most parents and because of the cultural and social norms from a specific sub tribe; if one gives birth to a PWD baby it is regarded as a curse which brings in discrimination among women and their children leading to violence and child neglect by parents (fathers). Beautiful shared her story from birth to now and how the workshop helped her to create more awareness about this defect to parents, the public and all participants, who were also able to cascade the information to other members through different channels of communication. She appreciated the fact she was invited and shared her experience of how discrimination cuts across all PWDS, more in girls and women depending on one priority need and wants for example how some of the PWDs are unable to access education and internship opportunities and if attained, they are always subjected to higher tuition and fees. Through the dialogue, she was also able to know where to seek help in case of any challenges because of the different district officials who were able to describe their roles to the participants. This would help mitigate the problem of gender based violence among the PWD’s who are usually abused because they are unable protect themselves due to the different disabilities. Beautiful’s story was not only a touching story, but also a turning point for people living with disabilities to always open up on issues related to...
GBV which is a very effective way to improve on their self-esteem. Through sensitization of the community about Spina Bifida, more safer spaces will be created for the young girls and boys living with it and thus will not be regarded any longer as a curse by certain sub tribes which will be a way of combating the issue of discrimination among PWDs and thus build up their potential.

She was also encouraged to advise her peers to start up small projects so as to be able to secure some money for some of their needs such as diapers, medication and also to improve on their ways of living because their disability is not their inability.

**SUCCESES**

ACOYDE in partnership with The Hunger Project, Girls Not Brides and Mbarara District Local Government managed to organize the first ever Regional Girls summit in Mbarara District.

ACOYDE managed to organize the first regional stakeholders meeting on accelerating ending child marriages in Western in Uganda at Kash Hotel in Mbarara District in July 2020.

Developed Guidelines and Collaborative consortium working towards ending corruption through the survey that was carried out on COVID19 relief survey on women and youth for Rubirizi District

ACOYDE managed to modify the Youth Go Budget mobile to include Rubirizi district government public expenditure.

There has been learning more about organizations and sharing of information about ending child marriages in Uganda through the Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance (GNBU).

There has been more information and knowledge shared through GNBU and learning about organization advocating for gender equality issues such as ending child marriage and violence against women, and girls at the grass roots and global level.

A lot of collaborations has been done which has so far provided platforms for adolescent’s girls, DANs, stakeholders to explore and work together towards ending GBV in communities.

The change agents have been a miracle in providing sufficient knowledge, support and awareness about SRHR and GBV in the Community.

There has been high-level focus on child marriage, but civil society needs to maintain pressure on governments to keep it on the agenda. The issue was raised by governments, multilateral organizations and civil society across a cause for concern and as a significant barrier to girls’ fully enjoying their rights. This has provided us with critical opportunity to show decision-makers the importance of focusing on adolescent girls and acting on gender equality and child marriage.

Gender equality has become the key area focus for the global community during this year of 2020 and COVID19 pandemic because it’s of effects on the girl’s child. This has highly led to high-level event on gender equality and gender-based violence as part of the Generation Equality process for 2020.

Through National Youth advocacy Platform (NYAP) we were able to develop the policy brief on GBV and awareness about SRHR and GBV in the communities.

Through the Forum for education NGOS (FENU) membership, we were able to develop a joint statement on the continuous of education for teenage girls who became pregnant during covid19 lockdown and this helped to pressurize government and consider re-opening of schools.

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LEARNINGS:

Alliances and Networks as a big weapon to ending child marriages in Uganda: Through Girls Not Brides Uganda we were able to advocate at local, national and international levels and work with decision-makers and a quiet a number of NGOs towards the needed policy changes towards ending child marriage and ensuring gender equality.

We learnt that; working with like-minded organizations like Youth advocacy network, District Advocacy networks, National Youth advocacy Platforms (NYAP), Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance (GBNU), CIVICUS, Gender and women advocacy group, Equality Now, we were able to lobby, influence the Government of Uganda towards amplifying our voices and increasing our impact with decision-makers both at local, national and global level.

UNINTENDED PROJECT OUTCOMES:

Through the Forum for education NGOS (FENU) membership, we were able to develop a joint statement on the continuous of education for teenage girls who became pregnant during covid19 lockdown and this helped to pressurize government and consider re-opening of schools.

Through National Youth advocacy Platform (NYAP) we were able to develop the policy brief on education and girls during COVID19 pandemic to the policy makers for the consideration.

The overwhelming reach by the peer educators led sessions and need for the non-targeted communities helped us to reach a wider audience and the continued support system from the government, police, and district COVID19 task forces.

Many girls were rescued by the District Advocacy Network Members (DANS) and Peer Educators (PE) to continue learning amidst covid19 lockdown.

Girls have been returned to vocational training like tailoring through a community partnership.

CHALLENGES/RECOMMENDATION:

From April – September, 2020, the country faced a tuff reality of 21,000 cases of violence against children, (The Independent, 29th September, 2020), majority of which are teenage pregnancies.

This state of affairs if not pro-actively managed is going to undermine the gains of Primary and secondary completion rates, which are already limping. It’s important to note that at individual levels of every child and family/household that manages to get their child to this milestone (P.7, S.4, S.6) it’s really a big achievement, for it’s such a long journey.

It is therefore very important that as a country, we employ extra efforts to retain these teenage candidate girls in school so that they complete their final exams. It’s definitely cheaper than the cost of catching up that we shall have to do.
DID YOU KNOW?

The Hunger was feared to affect more Ugandans than the virus during the lockdown.

Hunger and Hunger-related diseases kill many people everyday more than the toll of other diseases.

Gender Parity Retrogression: The other unfortunate reality that we are headed for is retrogression of the gender parity gains, over the next couple of years, which consequently also pulls down economic development, health (increased Infant mortality, morbidity and maternal mortality). The Gender parity Index at primary (P5-P7) favors females more compared to their male counterparts who are in a better state than the females at secondary (S.1-S.6). (Youth Monograph Report, 2017).
COVID-19 escalated adolescent girls’ vulnerability to gender based violence.

Women Entrepreneurs bear brunt of unpaid work including child care, household duties, and elder care, all of which have become more challenging during the crisis with child care, schools and other services closed down.
COVID 19 AND ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES ON YOUNG GIRLS AND WOMEN
The COVID19 pandemic has reversed progress made in increasing girls equitable access to education, but also has led to increased incidents of pregnancy and early/ forced marriage. Pregnant girls and adolescent mothers do not tend to go back to school due to stigma, childcare, economic considerations and the status of laws, policies, and practices that block their access to education.

The pandemic created challenges towards accessing menstrual hygiene products and sexual and reproductive health services which will exacerbate girls existing reproductive health risks (e.g. pregnancy and childbirth complications which is one of the leading causes of death among girls aged 15-19 years old). There may also be an impact on survivors of sexual violence being able to access clinical management of rape services.

The tight restrictions on movement and assembly being a common response of many governments attempting to stem COVID-19 in Uganda, it limited support services and general information on the virus are being delivered through remote/phone and virtual modalities. Girls being unconnected on mobile phones for adolescent girls in low-income settings were quite high. The closer monitoring of adolescent girls by abusers in a context of confinement was more challenging for some girls to use a phone or the internet even if they owned or had access. It is therefore important that services designed to target adolescent girls and protect them from perpetuators

Cognizant of the past experience with the government policy of re-entry for pregnant girls after delivery, individual schools have hardly been committed to its implementation. As noted by the Commissioner Basic Education, “We have all been in unprecedented times and we need to take that into account.” There is ardent need for the school administrators and teachers to act differently this time round.

We recommend that government implements strategies to monitor the enforcement of this directive by schools. As education stakeholders, we are willing to support this process so that we all achieve the intended objective which holistically benefits the country at large.

It is very evident that COVID19 policies have not been very responsive to the needs of Ugandan especially the young people and women especially at the grassroots and in business. There is little evidence that suggests gender analysis to be applied in the pandemic interventions which may explain who women have been disproportionately impacted.

*Refer to the survey results and*
The shutting down of public and private transport, closing of airspace and national borders. This negatively affected impacted the entire population of Uganda but women bore brunt of the COVID19 preventive measures. The majority of these women live from hand to mouth and the closure of their businesses and workplaces left them destitute with little savings that had depleted in a matter of days. Distributing food in some areas of Kampala and Wakiso and small cities across the country did not add much value, the government had little to offer to vulnerable communities by way of policies to mitigate the situation.

Women rely on savings and credit Cooperative (SACCOs) village saving groups and money leaders for financial bailouts but with COVID19 all this came to the stand still survey report. The conversation about provision of relief to those with active loans which cannot be serviced due to lack of incomes. Failure to service the loans might lead to loss of property and destitution. The lack of clear bailout modalities for the informal sector is likely to be critical setback for women’s empowerment and gender equality with attendant effects on the rights of children.

COVID19 has had issues on many expectant mother and postpartum mothers in Uganda negatively impacting on the achievements of the goal 4 and 5 of sustainable development goals. Experts have warned that single minded focus on COVID19 by government is likely to do more harm than good as major killer diseases like malaria, HIV/AIDS and TB in a matter of days, School closures to contain the spread of COVID19 pandemic have impacted almost 92% of the world's student population. In Sub Saharan Africa, Uganda in particular the negative consequences of the confinement on health and wellbeing are heightened. COVID19 has not only interrupted the delivery of education, but it has also massively affected the provision of comprehensive civic education and businesses of young people. Effects of COVID19 have removed young people from these institutions, opportunities to engage in serious discussions.

Acknowledging that all individuals are right holders with entitlements to a dignified life, universal health care and universal social protection access, among others. We are all vulnerable to shocks, risks poverty, disability and vulnerability and as such, we all require the support of each other at a key moments across our lifecycles.
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RECOMMENDATIONS

Women leaders in parliament of Uganda and district local government need to make their voices heard on the impacts of COVID-19 on women, men and children and make concrete proposals to address the plight of vulnerable groups like women and youth.

The government should reign on security forces from misusing their mandates to violate citizens’ rights. The government through security organs should hold accountable perpetrators.

The government to ensure task forces have a representation of women, youth and persons with disabilities.

The government should set up a relief fund for businesses in informal sector especially women to ensure that they withstand the pandemic.

There is a need to Mainstream Inclusive Design and Universal Mobility for all program and projects that are focusing on the community development in order not leave anyone behind in development.

The policy development should be strong enough with the focus on policy development. Wheelchairs easy mobility for the disabled individuals when it comes to participation, moving to tables where coffee, pastries and fruit are always served during the break and lunch time. At the same time blind, deaf and people with cognitive impairments, among other disabilities should be planned for very well during the conferences on these specific venues.

SUSTAINABILITY

The livelihood projects stated will help to sustain the young people financially, emotionally and keep them active for the future benefits. Skills in sanitary pad making

Establishment of Mbarara District advocacy Network and Rubirizi District Youth Networks. The creation of DANs in Mbarara District has helped to create a district Partnership to End Child Marriage. This network will build collaborative linkages between district partners & other stakeholders working to End Child Marriage in Western Uganda, expanding and attracting new organizations to the membership of district youth network and to meet with organizations working to transform the lives of girls and young women and also support the development and dissemination of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage in Uganda in a more local manner.

The trained peer educators and Change agents to continue sensitizing communities on GBV and SRHR services.

Capacities of youth structures at different levels were developed to advocate, campaign and demand state accountability, on implementation and reporting on national and international instruments on GBV and Youth SRH&R access and resource mobilization in a more a collective way.

Evelyn Kyomugisha Maridadi, coordinator of MIFUMI project in Mbarara, Said she is always available to provide psycho-social support, give advice to girls and linking them to places where they can get help from as away of creating collective partnership in the district.
Child Marriage survivor, Nasasira Judith a beneficiary of Her Choice Program from Rubindi sub county, Mbarara Epicenter shared her story on how she was raped by someone who pretended to be a friend and tried to reassure her when she lost her dad, little did she know that he had other interests. By then she was in S.4, became pregnant and the perpetrator hide her until she was able to give birth amidst tough conditions that she was subjected to. She later opened up to her mother and uncle who advised and welcomed her back home. When she had of Her Choice program, she joined it and has benefitted a lot from it. She has been able to go back to school and is now a qualified grade III teacher and she is still upgrading.

Nasasira advise to the parents, children, religious leaders as follows;
Parents should be friendly and close to their children and advise them correctly so that they do not get into undesirable situations.
Those that have had bad experiences in life should learn from that and never to repeat the same mistakes.
Youth should know that even when parents punish them, it does not mean that their parents do not love them but they simply want their children to know and learn from their mistake.
Parents should learn to forgive their children for sometimes they get into certain situations unknowingly and unintentionally. Young people to have friends but have and know the limit of the friendship. When girls are empowered they make the right decisions.
We learnt that forums like community dialogues with different stakeholders encourage them a lot. It’s through sharing that she was able to learn, unlearn and relearn. She has gained confidence, momentum and love for one another.

2) Impactful story: ACOYDE through partners engaged all the stakeholders through community initiatives and participation of DANs meeting to demand accountabilities and as well report on issues affecting the girl child through the Beijing+ platforms, generation equality and as well advocate for the opening of schools in Uganda.

3) Impactful story: ACOYDE through partners engaged all the stakeholders through community initiatives and participation of DANs meeting to demand accountabilities and as well report on issues affecting the girl child through the Beijing+ platforms, generation equality and as well advocate for the opening of schools in Uganda. The DANS are actively engaged in tracking COVID19 food relief and donations at the district level and as well creating awareness through self-community awareness campaigns. The COVID19 food relief and donation tracking campaign using community journalists kicked started online.
4) Impactful story: The strategy of using adolescent girls and boys was appreciated in the community that boys were able to share their experiences through music, dance and drama which gave an insight into the issue of Gender Based Violence to the community members.

5) Impactful story: Brenda who shared her story of how she has been living with HIV/AIDS. Even though she has faced many challenges, she has been able to take care of her two kids since she was abandoned by her husband because he claimed not to be able to go on with PREP. This took a toll on her psychological, mental health but through counselling and guidance, she was able to stand up for what she believes in. Brenda carries out different projects such as knitting, tailoring and also involve her other peers which has helped her secure money to support her family.

She also encouraged every participant to try in their own capacities to create safer spaces for people living with HIV/AIDS because it is not anyone’s fault that they are either born with it or acquired it through different forms for example through sexual harassment. This will help to build their self-esteem and a feeling of belonging and thus unleash their potential.

The moral message of this is that people living with HIV/AIDS should not give up on their dreams because they have so much potential and to also seek guidance and counselling so as not be affected mentally and emotionally.

Impactful story:

Chloe an adolescent girl from a specific community school also shared her experience during the COVID19 pandemic. She said, had learnt so many skills from her mother such as knitting, baking, crocheting and also kept on giving attention to her academics while at home. This has helped her utilize her time well and not engage any activities that would lead to many different forms of sexual harassment.
From Chloe’s story, it shows that everyone should try and carry out productive activities which will help keep them busy, improve on their knowledge capacity and also earn a living. It also teaches us that parents should play an important role especially in teaching their kids different productive skills.

Impactful story: Different categories of successful individuals especially the youth who have grown up from these communities were brought on board to share their experiences since they were better examples of role models to the youth which gave them hope that they could also be like them if they worked hard and not give up on their dreams. It was an open talk between the team and the members of the community and this inspired the community members to share their personal experiences such as;

**The priority areas for the next phase for improvement?**

There is need to focus more on emotional and psychological torture in the community; this creates trauma among young people and nothing has been done since its invisible. The government of Uganda should focus on training sub county social psychologists councilors to handle emotional and psychological affected individuals by Gender Based Violence.

The priority should focus on creating awareness among adolescent girls and boys and train them on SRHR and GBV issues and accessibility in order to cascade further information to the grassroots for further reach and sustainability purposes.

The information, education and communication materials should be translated in all local languages and media houses to have open discussions in the local languages for wider reach audience. And as well outsource the materials for the PWDs with reasons of leaving No one behind in the meaningful engagements in the community for sustainable development.

Uganda being a signatory of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Uganda has committed gradually retrofit public spaces to make them more accessible for people with disabilities however there is need for more effective implementation of the policy.

**CASES STUDIES BY ACOYDE**

Action for Youth development Uganda (ACOYDE) is reaching school classrooms and communities in Western Uganda and also focuses on policy engagements and budget advocacy at both local and national level. The team has been very passionate and creative in ensuring peer educators and change agents reach more numbers amidst COVID19. ACOYDE has continued to organize workshops, trainings and community dialogues both virtually and physically to help young people learn and experience, hear directly from leaders, parents and explore their lesson plans, and get to know more about community engagement tools.
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My Experience and Contribution to the Community during 16 Days and Girls Summit 2020

As a student I attended so many talks/conferences but I’ve never been in a conference as an official/ moderator attendee but 16 days of Activism against gender based violence organized by Action for youth development gave me the very first platform which was so interesting as it made me discover the my potential beyond being an academic.

I did raise awareness at the local level regarding violence against girls/ women where I did Inform the attendees that it’s everyone’s responsibility to ensure that we have a gender based violence free Nation and more so called upon fellow men to know that women are a potential group that can contribute to development fundamentally empowered and inclusively engaged.
Before the girls summit, Beautiful didn’t have space to share her problems and concerns about young people suffering from Spina Bifida in Mbarara. She was grateful to find out that many people are experiencing different challenges which affect their daily activities and health. She is grateful to have found an organization that deals with youth issues and considering young people living with disabilities. The alliance created has helped her to access information and other opportunities than before. she has been inspired and motivated to create more awareness in the community as our girl child ambassador.
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The district Chief administrative officer Mbarara District Local Government appreciating Action for Youth development Uganda for partnering with Mbarara District Local Government to host the National Girls summit 2020 and also working with the district and its stakeholders to create a awareness against Gender Based Violence (GBV). Creation of the District Advocacy Network in Mbarara District. He pledged to support girls and women who are undergoing GBV and those seeking to acquire support from the district revolving funds.
THE TEAM LEADER,
ACTION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UGANDA.
RE: APPRECIATION LETTER.

On behalf of the beneficiaries of Action for Youth Development Uganda, I kindly write this letter of appreciation to your office first for having thought of a project and thinking about us to be part and partial of Action for Youth Development Uganda beneficiaries.

Action for Youth Development Uganda has helped us to learn how we can use our environment to survive and also improve on environment than destroying it. Initially, everyone knew that a banana stem was only used for mulching and later becoming manure for our plantations which was a long process for one to benefit from this banana stem, but currently Action For Youth Development Uganda has taught us a new approach on how one can benefit from a banana stem immediately after removing/cutting off the banana for eating.

Whereby we have learnt that one can extract it to get fibres and use those fibres to make; table mats, door mats and carpets which are immediate source of income. We have also learnt that after extraction, the extraction residues are also dried and used to make charcoal briquettes. This will help to improve our ways of living as per SDGs “Fighting poverty” in Uganda and also improve the environment since one will use his or her banana stem to make a table mat, carpet, door mat instead of attacking swamps to get charcoal since there are fibre extraction residues for making charcoal.

Skills acquired;
- Extraction of fibre
- Making of weaving frames
- Weaving of table mats, door mats, carpets plus bags from fibre
- Making of Lamp holders and caps from banana fibre residues
- Environmental improvement and management skills

We hope that the above skills learnt will help us so much to improve our lives and help our environment. However we request that Action for Youth Development Uganda continues to help other local communities to eradicate poverty in Uganda and improve, maintain and promote environment in the Pearl of Africa “Uganda”. We once again appreciate you and pray for your day to day activities Long Live Uganda, Long Live Action For Youth Development Uganda.

Yours kindly,

........................................
BIRYOMUMAISHO DUNCAN DAN,
On behalf of the ChaCha Beneficiaries, Biharwe Mbarara.

DUNCAN CHACHA
Beneficiary
MS. EVELYN MUHEEBWA OF UGANDA POLICE FROM THE FAMILY AND CHILDREN PROTECTION UNIT.

Explaining how they have been overwhelmed by the numbers of children being brought to the station and as well those thrown away in the hospitals. Cases of GBV that have been reported in 2020 have never been hard off. She thank ACOYDE for providing space with Uganda police were they can come and interact with the public on issues of children protection and family life.
My participation in the activism and women’s month as a young activist for women and the girl child was an opportune engagement, my vigour to advocate for equality and equity (SDG 5) revamped having realized that so many elder people actively participated in the cause, be it individuals or organizations led by elders, a nugget of information, what has been and being done in their communities which empowered me highly and I believe at one point I will make a positive impact.

Furthermore, I embraced the reality that all women are strong, visionary but all they need is empowerment and perhaps knowledge, however from the dialogue carried out, more positive talks are still needed and mentorship are still needed to change the way some women perceive themselves and the female gender, above all, there is need to build up a knowledgeable informed boy child in accordance with gender whilst we shall work in vain. Above all, I have a great conviction that the networks I built out of the activism we shall work amicably for a better cause.
16 DAYS OF ACTIVISM AGAINST GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE;
A PERSONAL REFLECTION.

A multidisciplinary model remains a mainstay approach to bring down the devastating vice in human beings, gender-based violence. The 2020’s 16 days of activism provided a platform from which I came to know the magnitude of violence against women. It was heart-breaking listening to the people with testimonies on how they were affected and how they narrowly escaped the devastating outcomes of the violence.

Of course, it is obvious that such few individuals represent the bigger part of the population who do not have a chance to speak out their grievances. Outreaches to the communities gave a clear picture of what goes on exactly to the people within their niches, it is actually physically evident on ground that COVID-19 has exacerbated the gender-based violence especially against the women and young girls. We got the first-hand information of children who had been impregnated in their fragile teen ages before they completed their studies, women who have been stopped from working by their husbands and young girls who were married off by parents or guardians to get bride price among many more touching stories.

As a passionate women’s rights and gender equality advocate, my participation in the event motivated me to make personal and collective contribution towards reducing these vices. I have met fellow youth under MUST PEER PROJECT to empower them to always speak out whenever they encounter challenges and to also encourage colleagues who may be facing similar challenges. We have incorporated the information in our packages for weekly outreaches under the same project and extended our scope of coverage to reach to non-student members of the community around Mbarara University of Science and Technology including the residents of Kashanyarazi, Katete, Kiswahili and Kakyeka. We were able to present some of the issues to the stakeholders like Police especially during the cerebration of International women’s day 2021.

ARINAITWE INNOCENT;
5TH YEAR MEDICAL STUDENT AT MBARARA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY,
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IAM ATURINDA HELLEN

A graduate from Mbarara University of science and technology acquired a bachelor of science in planning and community development. I did my internship from Action for Youth Development. My internship experience at ACOYDE was memorable, extinguished amazing, and mostly a learning one that enabled me to learn a lot about a girl child and how to build a community where girl children are treasured and also given a chance and a platform the same as for the boys. This created a deep love for bringing justice and equality and equity between the boys and girls, men and women too. It was a learning experience where I got to go to different communities and schools educating girls and boys on the menstrual hygiene and sexuality which was great listening to the thoughts of young people. I got to interact with different people where I made different friends where some have become family. This was brought by the oneness and harmony between the people in Action for youth development organization.

Thank you Action for Youth Development, Uganda - the experience was so enriching.

Last year I was selected to participate in a project that aimed at leveraging on Women and Youth capacities in private sector to fight against corruption in Uganda as a community journalist volunteer. The project came in handy with the infamous COVID 19 pandemic where we witnessed a great new crop of corruption from the same people citizens entrust good leadership and direction. And while young women in business were largely affected, it was precious to learn the sacrifice of young women entrepreneurs serving to balance between work and family.

This project introduced me to a social media connection through engagements. Learning and unlearning from a very informed community. Conclusively, and once again thanks to Ms. Caroline and Ms. Sheila that directly supervised me, the zoom engagements and trainings were really so educational.

Next time, the same.

CHEERIO
Angie Treasure Amutuhaire is a student of Bachelor of Pharmacy at Mbarara University of Science and technology (MUST), a child Sexual Assault activist and Mental Health advocate: She recited the Phenomenal Woman poem during western Uganda Girls Summit held in Mbarara District headquarters to inspire girls and women: This poem is originally composed by MAYA ANGELOU

Pretty women wonder where my secret lies. 
I’m not cute or built to suit a fashion model’s size 
But when I start to tell them, 
They think I’m telling lies. I say, 
It’s in the reach of my arms, 
The span of my hips, 
The stride of my step, 
The curl of my lips. 
I’m a woman Phenomenally. 
Phenomenal woman, 
That’s me.

I walk into a room 
Just as cool as you please, 
And to a man, 
The fellows stand or 
Fall down on their knees. 
Then they swarm around me, 
A hive of honey bees. I say, 
It’s the fire in my eyes, 
And the flash of my teeth, 
The swing in my waist, 
And the joy in my feet. 
I’m a woman Phenomenally. 
Phenomenal woman, 
That’s me.

Men themselves have wondered 
What they see in me. 
They try so much 
But they can’t touch 
My inner mystery. 
When I try to show them, 
They say they still can’t see. I say, 
It’s in the arch of my back, 
The sun of my smile, 
The ride of my breasts, 
The grace of my style. I’m a woman Phenomenally. 
Phenomenal woman, 
That’s me.

Now you understand 
Just why my head’s not bowed. 
I don’t shout or jump about 
Or have to talk real loud. When you see me passing, 
It ought to make you proud. I say, 
It’s in the click of my heels, 
The bend of my hair, 
The palm of my hand, 
The need for my care. ‘Cause I’m a woman Phenomenally. 
Phenomenal woman, 
That’s my mother and all your mothers 
My grandmother and your grandmothers 
My great greats and your great greats 
All you great women and me.
OUR PARTNERS

Action for Youth Development Uganda (ACOYDE) hosts the Girls Not Brides Uganda Alliance western region: This is the Ugandan Partnership to End Child Marriage. The Western Uganda chapter was created amongst others to build collaborative linkages between GNBU partners & other stakeholders working to End Child Marriage in Western Uganda, expanding and attracting new organizations to the membership of GNBU in Western Uganda and to meet with organizations working to transform the lives of girls and young women and also support the development and dissemination of the National Strategy to End Child Marriage In Uganda in a more local manner.

In solidarity with

The Generation Equality Forum is a global gathering for gender equality, convened by UN Women and co-chaired by France and Mexico, with the close partnership of civil society. The Forum is a global public conversation for urgent action and accountability for gender equality. It seeks to celebrate the power of women’s rights activism, feminist solidarity and youth leadership to achieve transformative change.
The gathering presents a vital opportunity to chart the way forward and to accelerate the implementation pace of the gender equality commitments made in Beijing in 1995. The Forum is enabling feminist agenda setting and the launch of Action Coalitions that have concrete measurable targets and funding for gender equality for the upcoming five years.

GAGE is the largest study on adolescent, following 20 girls and boys in developing countries to understand what works to enhance adolescent’s capabilities and empowerment.

**GAGE**

**Generation Equality**

Generation Equality presents an opportunity to build momentum and commitment with and for adolescent girls and young people to shape the feminist future we want to see as a result of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action. The Adolescent Girls Investment Plan (AGIP) in collaboration with grassroots civil society networks and girl-led and youth-led organizations has been actively engaged in supporting UN Women, Member States, and Action Coalition leaders to implement commitments and to ensure the safe and meaningful participation of adolescent girls and girl- and youth-led organizations in the Action Coalitions and broader GE process and its accountability structures.

**The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action?** The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BPfA) is one of the milestones in international women’s rights. In 1995, 30,000 activists from around the globe streamed into Beijing for the 4th World Conference on Women. The outcome of the conference was the BPfA, the most progressive blueprint ever for advancing women’s rights. Every 5 years a review process takes place, and for the 25th anniversary, activists are pushing for more concrete action and commitments by governments for an acceleration of implementation and
more inclusive processes for systemic change. You can find the 1995 legal text of BPfA here. After a series of civil society consultations at regional Beijing+25 review meetings, the themes of the Action Coalitions were announced as below:

- Gender-Based Violence
- Economic Justice and Rights
- Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
- Feminist Action for Climate Justice
- Technology and Innovation for Gender Equality
- Feminist Movements and Leadership

**NGO CSW/NY** facilitates a platform for the voices and leadership of feminists and women’s rights organizations globally who lobby for their inclusion in the UN deliberations in pursuit of gender equality. NGO/CSW envisions a world without sexism, sexual violence, or discrimination against women and girls, where economic, political, and social policies encourage their empowerment and wellbeing. NGO CSW/NY believes that an effective, broad-based feminist and women’s movement for social transformation must be committed to elimination of racism.

**IWPG** is a non-profit organization registered with the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family in the Republic of Korea, listed in the United Nations Department of Global Communications (UN DGC), and has also gained ‘Special Consultative Status’ from the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).

IWPG mission is: to enjoy a happy and safe life, and everyone has the right to pursue happiness. However, human rights and lives are threatened by dispute, conflict, and war. IWPG aims to create a world where all families around the world are happy with the sublime maternal love, sacrifice, and spirit of service. IWPG works to protect children from war with a motherly heart to pass peace as a legacy for future generations, and many women relate to this. IWPG is drawing voluntary participation for the realization of peace from high-level leaders to NGOs and individuals around the world.
**IWPG Peace Education** is a process that makes known why 3.8 billion women should be united as one, and what women may do, which it helps all women world-wide learn and practice the spirit of peace. This practical peace education allows people to realize that peace from oneself can be extended to the home, society, nation, and the whole world will grow with women around the world as peace leaders.

**NOTICE FOR CONSIDERATION**

Remedies for sexual harassment shall be those prescribed under the civil or criminal laws. Unfortunately, the Standing Orders do not take into consideration underlying gender dimensions such as reproductive roles that hinder the promotion of female public servants. The Medium and Small Enterprise (MSME) Policy (2015) which guides this sector states gender equity, inclusiveness and environmentally friendly business for sustainable development as one of its objectives and prescribes interventions to achieve this goal. Furthermore, the Investment Code (1991) provides favorable conditions for investments, among others by the establishment of the Uganda Investment Authority but does not make any provisions to support the entry and participation of women in the investment sector. Refer to the survey on our website.

**FOR ADOLESCENTS**

We need to use Girl educational tools to encourage students to think about important political, cultural, economic, geographical and gender issues. Let’s engage them in meaningful conversations about their roles as global citizens and their responsibilities to their own communities in order to build resilient communities and transformative leaders.

**CONCLUSIONS**

We’ve learned how to raise our hands, as simple as that may seem. The confidence instilled in us inside the classroom, community, homes, work, among our peers and beyond is sometimes easy to overlook. Of course we feel free to speak our minds, to slice through a lecture with our open palms, actively grasping at new information. But the fact that we are so comfortable doing so, that its alternative actually seems strange, is really telling. This confidence is not the norm, especially among girls of our age. Stone Ridge imparts the deep understanding that mistake and confusion are part of learning process that only begins when we take the first step, when we choose to reach out and reach up. Together we can create change in our communities lets be guards and protectors of our neighbors in order to thrive.
“To all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful, and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams.”

Hillary Clinton

I raise up my voice—not so that I can shout, but so that those without a voice can be heard. ... We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back.

Malala Yousafzai

“I’m tough, ambitious, and I know exactly what I want. If that makes me a bitch, okay.”

Madonna

“It took me quite a long time to develop a voice, and now that I have it, I am not going to be silent.”

Madeleine Albright

I love to see a young girl go out and grab the world by the lapels. Life’s a bitch. You’ve got to go out and kick ass.

Maya Angelou
Quotes of Change Corner

"To all the little girls who are watching this, never doubt that you are valuable and powerful, and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams."

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Maya Angelou

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Ms. Hellen Aturinda, Community and Mobilization officer
Fredrick Beinemugisha, Community and communication
PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Aspire to inspire before we expire
ACTION FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT UGANDA 2020