

The theme for this year's Women's Day is "Urban and rural activists transforming the lives of women".

Stella Naigino sounded out a cross-section of elite women on how they can bring women on board and bridge gap between the urban and rural women

INCREASING MOBILISATION OF WOMEN IN THE COMMUNITIES

How to scale up emancipation

Maria Baryamujura, head Community-based Tourism
Women at the grassroot think that emancipation is for rich women. We need to come up with ideas on how to empower local women.

Charlotte Wesiigye, director Internal Network of Faith-based organisations fighting corruption
Mismanagement of funds for poor people is the root cause of why some people have been left behind.

Beatrice Isagayite, head of Association of Chartered Certified Accountants (ACCA)
Role models have paved the way for more women to join the accountancy profession. By simply removing the need for prior qualifications, we have created access to a profession that offers a rewarding career. The creation of the leaders of tomorrow is an on-going task for firms.



Empowering Women and Girls through Gender Mainstreaming: Makerere University's Gender Project Supported by the Embassy of Sweden

By Consolata Kabonesa

The project entitled "Enhancement of Gender Focused Research, Capacity Building of Women in Leadership and Gender Mainstreaming in Higher Education in Uganda" aims at enhancing gender knowledge, skills and providing technical support to the public institutions to address barriers that prevent female from progressing at the same level with male students. The five-year (2015-2020) project is supporting 5 postdoctoral fellows, 8 Ph.D. and 12 masters students. On this project the Makerere University Gender team trains staff from Mbarara University of Science and Technology, Gulu, Busitema, Kyambogo and Makerere Universities in collecting data that address issues of gender; teaching while considering women and men's needs and concerns; budgeting with men and women (staff and students, young and old), and persons with disabilities' concerns in mind. We also organise gender sensitisation workshops/meetings for students to enhance their understanding of gender as a way of promoting positive treatment of women in higher education and the community at large.

Achievements showing positive change:
Members of staff at different participating institutions have reported

- improved understanding of the concept of gender,
- applying the skills gained in teaching, and curriculum review and development,
- changed behaviour and attitudes towards gender in general particularly women and girls.

For example one person said:

"Personally, I had never considered some of the key issues like disability. Through this training I

now appreciate what they go through especially when accessing certain services and facilities. I also appreciated the usage of water and toilets by the different genders. The training enabled me understand the importance of these issues. Before this training I would just see water and toilet issues as normal without consideration of how their usage may differ for women and men" Female Staff Gulu University.

Another person said:

Before this training I used to think that though I am a computer technician most of the work such as blowing the computer was a male responsibility but now I do it. I do not stop only there I also do computer installation of programmes. There is no saying this is for a man or woman. In fact, many times I have been told that cleaning and blowing a computer is for men but I always tell them even a woman can do it". Female Staff, Gulu University.

Other activities of the project have included dialogues at Makerere University. The dialogues address current concerns and discuss solutions. The dialogue topics have focused on: affirmative action, family planning, women representation and political participation, gender based violence, socio-economic empowerment of women, property rights among others. The dialogues are attended by students, staff and the public.

Project contribution to empowerment of rural women and girls.

A large number of the students from the participating universities are from the rural areas. Therefore empowering them with gender knowledge builds their ability to recognize barriers that hinder women and girls from progressing. Armed with gender knowledge and skills they can also take care of their gender needs and support the community to promote women and girls' rights.



Gender identity week at Makerere University



Gulu students gender awareness workshop



Gender identity week at Makerere University



Gender and Equity Budgeting for Staff at Makerere University



Joyce Nangobi, Director Slum Women Initiative for Development
Activists need to go to the grassroot women, associate with them, discover their potential and empower them with skills. Once they are empowered financially, it will uplift their standing.



Lydia Nyesigomwe, director Parenting Uganda
We need to go back to the drawing board and find out what the emancipation programme entails, then see how much we have achieved and view the unmet need so that we work towards achieving it.



Florence Sanyu Wagaba, director Emen Nursery and Primary School
We need a national awareness where women in rural and urban areas are sensitised on the opportunities available and what they should do.



Vickie Hairwe, fashion designer
Women are still suffering at the hands of their husbands. Girls are being married off for wealth. There is need for activists to groom successors to carry on the mantle.



Sarah Nyende, director Adventist Women Ministry
I think women need to be educated both formally and informally so that they realise what they can do best, exploit it and empower themselves so that they do not depend on men to thrive.

Harriet Senfuma, motivational speaker
I think the awareness campaign should take a different direction where goals should be set to empower and benefit the grass root women so that they are uplifted and not left behind when it comes to development.