

1 BACHGROUND;

Karamoja Women Umbrella (KAWUO) is a regional women's network that was formed in 2007 to build and promote the local women's participation in peace, building conflict transformation and security, GBV, HIV/AIDS prevention, Governance and Leadership, Women health and reproductive rights, Women Economic Empowerment and Livelihoods, Art, Culture and Sports through Lobby and Advocacy, capacity building, networking and partnership in order to achieve sustainable development

Vision

“An Empowered, Dignified and Informed Women of Karamoja in sustainable Development

Mission

To empower and promote the participation of indigenous Women of Karamoja in sustainable development through, lobby and advocacy, capacity building, networking and partnership.

OUR WORK ON GBV

KAWUO with funding from Global fund through The Aids Support Organization (TASO) implemented Gender Based Violence activities in Moroto District. The program focuses on GBV and HIV/AIDS prevention and response through awareness creation.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES;

- Orientation of the SASA! Activists and Male Action Group (MAG)
- Sensitizations of communities, local leaders, Karacunas, women, and men on the GBV Prevention and response.
- Conduct community dialogue involving the elders, women, youth and men
- Facilitate music, dance, drama and games activities as a means to prevent Gender based Violence.
- Sensitization of primary schools on GBV and HIV/AIDS prevention and response.
- Feedback sessions meeting with the Male Action Groups (MAG) and SASA! Activists.
- Support monthly GBV Coordination meetings at the district

ACHIEVEMENT;

A total of 25 members were oriented on their roles and responsibilities that is 10 SASA! Activist and 10 Male Action Groups, 1 community development officer, 2 Parish Chiefs

of Lotirir and Loputuk of Nadunget Sub County and 2 staffs of KAWUO since they were already trained on Gender based violence concepts using the SASA! Methodology used for addressing the

link between Violence against women and girls (VAWG) and HIV/AIDSs using the multiple strategies which include Local activism, media and advocacy, communication material and training understanding that Violence against women does not occur in Isolation but within families, communities and societies.



Ground photo taken during orientation of the Male Action Ground the Male Action Ground (MAG) and SASA of Lotiri and Loputuk parishes Nadunget s/c Moroto district

1,427 community members were sensitized; KAWUO carried out various sensitizations for the grass root women, local leaders, youth, and men in difference villages and parishes of Nadunget sub county Moroto District on the root causes of GBV for example negative cultures and practices in the Karimojong communities that hinder women's participation in decision making and political processes like early and forced marriages, rape, widow inheritance, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) practices among others and also creates awareness on the existence of laws that prohibit traditional and customary practices that are harmful like



Community sensitization in Lokwakwa village/Loputuk parish Nadunget s/c

1231 community members dialogued on the motion that says “culture is the root cause of GBV in Karamoja communities” discuss? KAWUO carried out various community dialogues for the grass root women, elders, local leaders, youth, and men in difference villages and parishes of Nadunget sub county Moroto District to discuss culture as a major cause of GBV in Karamoja .This resulted into the breaking of the silence about GBV being a private matter. Women have realized that there are Organizations and institutions that provide protection thus they don’t have to suffer or die in silence because of negative cultural practices like FGM, widow inheritance, early and forced marriages. More women now know the referral pathway to report cases and speak out without fearing what their community says about culture.



One the group after the Community dialogue in Nachuka village/ Lotiri parish

KAWUO Supported monthly GBV Coordination meetings at the district. The purpose of the meetings was to track progress made towards preventing and responding Gender Based Violence ,challenges faced in implementation of the interventions and map the partners in the district for easy tracking of the activities this will improve information sharing, joint planning and resource mobilization, and use of participation referral and monitoring.



Deputy CAO of Moroto District articulating issues of GBV Prevention and Response during the GBV coordination meeting organized by KAWUO with financial support from **Global Fund** through **The Aids Support Organization (TASO)**, Photo courtesy of KAWUO

Lessons learnt;

- Social norms and power in balance between men and women is a route cause of GBV. According to the community understanding of roles and responsibilities are segregated according to the sex. most of the activities at home is done by women for example cooking, building, looking for food etc. all these attributed to gender based violence in the society hence awareness creation needs to be done and build the capacity of local leaders to able to prevent and respond Gender Based Violence.
- Male involvement in the campaign against GBV breaks the attitudes and beliefs that men have ultimate power, witnessed by the SASA! Activists and Male Action group who pledged to carry outreaches through Music Dance and Drama in order to prevent Gender Based Violence, thus cultural and traditional norms should never be ignored for the success of any intervention
- Engaging in community dialogues that facilitate critical reflection on bad cultural norms, practices & GBV reaps more benefits than if the community is lectured on why they should stop the practices, which are usually part of their cultural identity.
- Negative cultures like FGM, widow inheritance, custom marriage. According to our interactions with the community culture still a major cause of violence against women and girls in Karamoja as far as culture is concern. Evidenced by one of the elder in the names of Lochap Nakorita said that ‘it’s the duty of every woman to do every work in a home because we pay them” meaning violence against women in Karamoja remains a big problem.
- The mind set of Karamoja communities is still negative towards change in terms of cultural rigidities in taking girls to school claiming that they would become prostitutes and also the turn up of girls in most of the primary schools is very low as a result of forced and child marriage.

Recommendations for future interventions;

- Focus on changing attitudes and mindsets of communities through Continuous sensitization and dialogues to prevent GBV, cultural institutions should be put in place by-laws.
- Translation of the available policies and law governing GBV into the local language for example the Domestic Violence Act 2010,
- Increasing male engagement in the prevention and response processes including the elders since they are the custodian of culture and power in Karamoja.

- Building of strong referral pathways among partners with timely feedback on services offered to the referred clients.
- Partners should continue to work with local governments to build the Capacity of existing local structures (e.g. the sub-county and Parish Development Committees) and service providers for addressing GBV by expanding the coverage of training provided to those institutions.
- Refresher trainings should be emphasized so as to equip MAG and SASA Activist and the general community more skills and knowledge on how to manage cases concerning GBV prevention and response.

OUR WORK ON WOMEN'S VOICE AND INFLUENCE IN LEADERSHIP;

KAWUO with funding from Dan Church Aid (DCA) through The Uganda Women Network (UWONET) implemented a project entitled to sustain women's voice and influence in leadership for gender equality and equity. The program focuses on enhancing capacity and skills of Moroto district women councilors to influence gender responsive decision making in the district local council.

MAJOR ACTIVITIES;

- Induction and mentorship of the women leaders in their roles and responsibilities.
- Support in Formation of the women district caucuses in the district with the unified gender agenda to promote women's rights and gender equality.
- Imparting women councilor with knowledge on gender and leadership skills
- Participate in gender forums like women's day and 16 days of activism against Violence against women and girls

ACHIEVEMENTS;

Increased participation of women leaders in relevant policy and decision making. KAWUO in partnership with UWONET with funding from Dan Church Aid (DCA) conducted several trainings on public speaking, advocacy and lobbying skills to enhance their participation in the council meetings and through these trainings much as been realized as below;

- Advocated for vulnerable women who are HIV/AIDs positive, disable, victims of GBV to benefit from government programme like Uganda Women Entrepreneurship programme

to empower women economically and this to be included in the next financial year budget 2018 -2019.

- Advocated that the implementing partners support to Education sector is consistent for example supporting the schools in food distribution. this came into lime light as result of low school enrolment for example in Rupa primary schools as a result of reduction of food ration by World Food Programme, and this helped to curb low enrolment in the school and in that the school population increased during third term of 2017
- Councilors also advocated that outreaches are done and VHTs are attached to Looi mining Centre in Moroto District, Looi mining site is located in Rupa sub county , Moroto district , the site has attracted Artisanal Small Scale Miner which include the men and women together with children which has resulted to child labor , poor working condition in terms of community safety, health and environment , so the councilors advocated for the office of District Health Officer to attach the VHTs to the Mining site to sensitize the community on health related issues and also emphasis on go back to school campaign to reduce child labor in the site and now the training of the VHT will be done 2018
- They also advocated for OBULAM and RHITES to take film shows to looi mining site in order to sensitize them on HIV and GBV prevention, alcoholism, and child labor and child buse to reduce the children in the mining sites.
- Women councilors also after the trainings from each of the caucuses were promoted into additional leadership positions in council for example speaker-(Adero Rose) has been elected as the chair person under women council Moroto district, vice chairperson(Akot Christine)-elected as c/p Karamoja events Association .
- Women councilors influenced the passing of education ordnance in Moroto district this is geared to increase girls enrolment in schools ,the ordnance compels parents to priorities the education and welfare of the girls child at school

16 days of Activism against Gender Violence is an international campaign observed by the United Nations Member states from 25th November to 10th December annually since 1991. These dates were chosen to coincide with the International Day for the elimination of violence against Women which is observed on November 25th and the International Human Rights Day which is observed on December 10th. The symbolism of this is to emphasize that violence against women is a violation of women's rights and the 16 Days Campaign is observed by actors in Government, Civil Society, Local communities and Development Partners to organise and speak out for increased attention to the prevalence and occurrence of Gender Based Violence and to call for action to prevent GBV and respond appropriately to incidence of GBV. It aims at raising awareness, influencing behaviour change and securing high level political commitment to end gender based violence. It's against that background that 27 women councilors of Moroto supported were by KAWUO Participated in the 16 days of activism during the launch, sharing the issues affected by women of Moroto District



Community dialogue meetings were conducted in Rupa and Nadunget Sub County where 315 community members attended. This was done to discuss how the social cultural behavior is exposing women into violence and women in contracting HIV/AIDS among them include;

Widow inheritance: is one of the cultural practice among the Karimojong community that once the women has been married it means the dowry has been paid so in case of the death of the husband she remains the property of that family which can be any other within the clan and this phenomenon has exposed many women into violence.

Polygamy: in a believe that having more than one woman is prestige yet the man cannot fend for the whole family later compels the women in hard labor like ferrying charcoal and fire wood from villages to town for sales they can complement the house demand.

Alcoholism: the brewing of local brew (kuwete) in the community and transportation of alcohol from neighboring districts to Karamoja has fueled violence against women and girls in the community as a result of over drinking which exposes them into sexual desire

