If 2018 was your patient and you were tasked to read the vital signs monitor in the intensive care unit, would the readings give you a heart attack or perhaps would they fill you with hope that your patient would eventually make it? I don’t know about you, but there were times in 2018 when I forgot how to breathe especially when I turned on the television or I read the papers, and then of course there were moments I sighed and said, ‘there is no better time to be alive.’ As long as you are alive, then you have the power to do something to change the situation you cannot accept. The work we do at Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) is both humbling and yet very inspiring because it reminds us every day of the possibilities and the impact powerful women can have in society. The power of a woman is undeniable and it is about time, we took the driving seat and turned the wheel in the direction of promise.

I am always excited to see many women taking on leadership roles at the grassroots, district and national level which is in line with FOWODE’s mission ‘To promote gender equality in all areas of decision making’. On behalf of the Board of Directors, I take this opportunity to thank all those who have been part of the FOWODE journey since 1994 when we grew out of the Constituent Assembly Women’s Caucus which debated and passed the 1995 Ugandan Constitution. Since then, we have grown into an enviable women’s organisation whose work has made it possible for many other women to use their voices and take up their space at the decision making table.

The highlight of the year was the finalisation of our exciting new Strategic Plan 2019 – 2028, themed “Women Driving Change”. The plan whose goal is to foster governance that is women-centred, transformative and accountable puts us on a new trajectory and aims to consolidate our gains, extend our reach and magnify our impact. At the core of our strategy is our Voice, Power and Resources (VPR) strategic model aimed at strengthening and building the agency and empowerment of women in their sphere of influence. We will be counting on your support as we make our contribution to amplifying women’s voices in various spheres so that together we can leave a footprint in the fight for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Sustainability continues to be an issue that is plaguing many organisations. Donor dependence renders them vulnerable to shocks and makes the sustenance of results unattainable. As a Board, we made a commitment to our members to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. I am glad to report that this year we were able to buy land on which the FOWODE home will be situated. We believe that owning a home will enable us to comfortably continue to deal with the persisting and emerging challenges for women and to further build women’s voice and agency towards democratic and accountable leadership. We call on you to support our “Home project” when we embark on it.

As we count our gains, it is important to thank all those who have made this possible. Our partners, friends and the entire FOWODE team. As you read through this annual report, you will realise that there is nothing we have been able to achieve without great partnerships and the hard work of some really remarkable people. Through strategic partnerships and alliances, we have been able to grow and learn together picking best practices from one another. Our partners continue to provide us with a global advocacy platform to share our learnings and influence key decisions for the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality. We are aware that because of the shrinking civil society space, and the fragile political climate, our work demands more of us with more challenges and willingness to sacrifice. In the midst of such a context, it is easy to lose faith and drop the ball. This is why it is important that we don’t lose focus!!! We must remember that we are stronger together and therefore continue supporting each other, remembering our gains and how many more lives we need to touch. Together we are a force for change!

We will continue to count on you as we make our contribution to “Shaping the Future”. I welcome you to this edition of the 2018 Annual Report.
What a year 2018 was!!! For a very long time to come, 2018 will be the year characterised with many unsolved murders of women, the social media-mobile money tax, the controversial Local Council elections, massive violence and political injustice, the cringe worthy assassinations of various high profile individuals among many other things. All these were shockers that paralysed the nation. Did we recover? That is a question for us all. We must reflect and ponder upon where we are headed as a country.

The days were not all grim. As Forum for Women in Democracy, inspite of the porous political environment, we accomplished a lot that made us proud of our direction. We continued to advocate for inclusive and just governance that gives women voice, choice and power and providing thought leadership on gender responsive budgeting.

Through our capacity building work, more women are boldly pushing boundaries driven by the values of social justice and gender equality. Our work with women councillors, male champions, district officials and technocrats continues to yield results both at national and local level. More women are exhibiting interest in leadership positions and taking ownership of their journey to the top. The question of women in leadership positions, their quality and performance continues to be a priority for us.

Our conscientisation work is invaluable to our strategic direction because at the core, we seek to empower individuals especially women and communities to recognise their power to cause change by participating and seeking dialogue with their leaders. Our Village Budget Club model remains seminal in empowering communities to demand for better service delivery especially in areas that have been grossly ignored. Empowered communities have become a force for change because they have been able to take ownership of community interventions by using their voices to speak up and participate in leadership. This year alone, we reached more than 15,000 citizens. We continue to recognise the importance of shaping our work around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and have therefore been intentional in trickling information about the SDGs to our stakeholders in the districts in which we work as we make a contribution to ensuring that “No One is Left Behind”. As the coordination unit for the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs (UGCS), we have had the special opportunity of analysing the SDGs from a feminist perspective and advocating for the prioritisation of women and girls concerns at the highest level including the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the High Level Political Forum.

FOWODE is renowned for having broken new ground through our gender budget work in Uganda. We have over 20 years of advocacy footprints in the area of gender budgeting in Uganda that culminated into the first gender and equity certification process in the world. Annually, we assess the adherence of specific Government MDAs to the Public Finance and Management Act that requires the integration of gender and equity in plans and budgets. We vigorously analysed government plans and budgets from a gender and equity perspective assessing to what end policies were inclusive of the special needs of women, men, boys and girls.

We are excited to have finalised our new strategy ‘Women Driving Change”. The strategic plan brings new enthusiasm and momentum as it launches us into the future. Over the next 10 years, we will continue to set the pace as we contribute to shattering glass ceilings, breaking new ground, and enabling and driving change. We will continue to make ourselves part of the gender equation in the country and to provide thought leadership in the political and economic arenas. We remain steadfast in our commitment to ensuring that women are at the center of governance.

To the FOWODE team, you are amazing!!! Thank you for the work you do behind the scenes. You are the silent ground breakers and shakers, the strategy gate keepers and implementers punching away setbacks and clearing the path to a more promising future for women in this country. I thank our development partners who have trusted and walked the journey with us. We will continue to count on you. The tremendous support from the Board cannot go unmentioned….. you have steered the “ship” in the right direction. Because of your leadership, FOWODE continues to set the bar higher making it possible to lead from the front! More than ever, we continue to rely on you to set the pace. Together we are “Shaping the Future”.

Aluta Continua!!
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# LIST OF ACRONYMS

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OPERATING CONTEXT

External context

Volatile Political Environment

Although Non-government Organizations (NGOs) have played a large role in both the politics and the development of Uganda, there is an increasing tension in the relationship between NGOs and the Government of Uganda. The operating context for civil society is primarily affected by the discretionary application of the legislative framework, and restrictions of freedom of assembly through the use of extra-legal measures especially by the police. In recent years, the Ugandan government has been increasingly described as coercive and militaristic.

The ruling party has become increasingly insecure as opposition parties have made substantial gains in the general elections and bye-elections. This has raised government’s suspicion of NGOs, particularly those engaged in advocacy work, leading to unfortunate implications for NGOs including increased restriction and monitoring of organization’s activities in increasingly coercive ways. The period surrounding the amendment of the Constitution saw a brazen attack on NGOs that included closure of some NGOs, freezing of back accounts, confiscation of equipment, among others. Many a time, the law including the NGO Act and the Public Order Management Act, is used selectively to undermine the work of civil society and limit the space in which they operate. Overzealous duty bearers also use their offices to create fear, clamp down on activities often resulting into self-censorship among organizations. Reports of NGOs experiencing delayed registration and renewals and even being threatened with deregistration for administrative infractions are abound. We have had incidences where our activities were halted by duty bearers. This continued shrinking of space for engagement negates the very reason for being for NGOs and undermines their critical role in advocacy and monitoring role of government programs in the pursuance of effective service delivery.

LCI and II Elections

Uganda went to the polls to choose their Local Council One (LC1) and two (LC2) leadership. This was the second phase of elections for the country’s lowest administrative unit after the women council elections in the same year. The mode of voting was by lining behind candidates or their agents or portraits. The elections led to the filling of the following positions: Village Women Committees; Village Chairpersons; Village Executive Committees; Paris/Ward Women Committees; Parish/Ward Chairpersons; Parish/Ward Executive Committees; and Sub county/Town/Division Women Committees. While last year’s election was generally peaceful, it was marked by low voter turnout in many parts of the country. Election spot checks by Election observers at various polling stations established that most voters stayed away. The Electoral Commission (EC) had earlier also expressed concern that many women who had initially shown interest in the election were stepping down without giving reasons. The format of the LC1 elections was widely criticized. Many people argued that the method of making voters line up behind candidates discourages active participation of all citizens but more so the women. Indeed, during the elections for village women councils, some women admitted that lining up was cumbersome and they decided to stay away. Additionally, lining up can create friction between political aspirants and the rest of the community and that is very dangerous because it can be a source of conflict.

Concerns were raised about insufficient voter education as well as complaints from some sections of the Opposition that the EC was favouring the ruling party (NRM). They accused the EC of misleading women contesting on Opposition parties’ tickets on nomination procedures and some Opposition candidates being denied nominations to let NRM candidates go through unopposed.

Some Opposition leaders also claimed that wherever an Opposition candidate was nominated unopposed, another NRM candidate would be nominated by force. However, CSOs and other bodies continued to urge citizens especially the women to actively participate in the affairs and governance of their communities by choosing their leaders because it’s
through such participation that they are empowered to hold their leaders accountable and demand better services. As an organization that has been at the forefront of advocating for the increased numbers of women in decision making, we raised our voice about the mode of elections considering that it did not adhere to international standards that require secret ballot but also knowing the harm that could result for women as their freedom of choice would be hampered.

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**Emergence of People Power Political Movement**

The people power movement is a progressive movement of the young generation simply articulating a radical departure from traditional social, economic and political organisations providing consciousness on current economic, political and social challenges based on new and imaginative thinking. It is like a vote of no confidence to career politicians who have abandoned politics of promoting public interest. For the young generation which the initiator of this movement represents, it offers the promise of a renewal and new breath in the politics of our country freed from corruption, nepotism, patronage and dictatorship. The movement has succeeded in channeling the anger of a large section of the Ugandan population, especially the young people for a good cause. It has challenged the young people to use their demographic dividend to influence decision making in the affairs that affect them.

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**Tax Laws**

**Social Media tax**

In May 2018, Parliament passed into law the controversial Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill despite strong protests from critics as an attempt to stifle Internet freedom and online expression in the country. The law which took effect in July, 2018 requires users of over-the-top platforms (OTP) such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in Uganda to pay a mandatory daily levy of 200 Ugandan Shillings. The passage of the law was an enforcement of President’s warnings in the same year that he was going to tax social media usage as such platforms are used to promote “gossip” in the country. Many critics of the law said that the tax did not come in place to deliver a service but to control and deter people from expressing themselves especially on civic and political matters. The measure is to disable citizen mobilization and communication on matters of national importance. While the government argued that the new taxes on social media usage would generate revenue for the nation, many analysts still believe it was a systematic attempt of censoring numerous Ugandans who may not be able to afford the new daily levy. With the new regulation, Ugandans would spend about USD 1.5 a month in accessing these platforms. Thus, the law will instead further widen the digital gap that exists in Uganda.

Comparatively, Uganda is the only country that seems to have passed such a legislation which sets a negative precedent for other countries on the continent. CSOs reiterate the essential role of the Internet and social media platforms in advancing freedom of expression and participatory governance globally.

**Mobile Money Tax**

To meet the Uganda Shs. 16.2 trillion (US$ 4.3 billion) revenue target for the 2018/2019 fiscal year, the Government introduced a 1 percent tax on mobile money deposits, withdrawals, transfers and payments. The Excise Duty Act which came into force in July 2018, not only taxes the transaction fee, but also the transaction value. A section of Ugandan citizens responded to this by protesting in the streets of Kampala. However, before the Cabinet communicated a decision to limit the mobile money tax to withdrawals and to halve the tax to 0.05 percent of the transacted value, the negative effects of the new tax had already become apparent. What had been introduced as a tax-boosting measure, was endangering the existing tax base. According to a study conducted by the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) titled, “Understanding the Consequences
Creation of New Districts and Municipalities

In May 2018, Parliament passed into law the controversial Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill despite strong protests from critics as an attempt to stifle Internet freedom and online expression in the country. The law which took effect in July, 2018 requires users of over-the-top platforms (OTP) such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in Uganda to pay a mandatory daily levy of 200 Ugandan Shillings. The passage of the law was an enforcement of President’s warnings in the same year that he was going to tax social media usage as such platforms are used to promote “gossip” in the country. Many critics of the law said that the tax did not come in place to deliver a service but to control and deter people from expressing themselves especially on civic and political matters. The measure is to disable citizen mobilization and communication on matters of national importance. While the government argued that the new taxes on social media usage would generate revenue for the nation, many analysts still believe it was a systematic attempt of censoring numerous Ugandans who may not be able to afford the new daily levy. With the new regulation, Ugandans would spend about USD 1.5 a month in accessing these platforms. Thus, the law will instead further widen the digital gap that exists in Uganda.

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of Mobile Money Taxes in Uganda”, total transactions passing through the School Pay platform dropped to 80 percent in the first two weeks of July and plummeted from 300,000 to 50,000 transactions per month. School fees product innovations such as save-to-pay, loans and pocket money for students were all on hold.

Measures that were devised to collect more tax revenue were at risk of endangering potential tax collection in the coming years. People were resorting to insecure cash dealings which would lead to increased risks and the loss of the ability to track transactions. If anything, strong public sentiment and steep dips in transaction figures in July 2018 showed that mobile money had evolved into an indispensable tool of the trade for everyday Ugandans, especially lower-income people who otherwise would be socially and financially excluded. For women specifically, mobile money has been a safe way to store earnings and to promote financial and occupational goals for themselves. The introduction of the mobile money tax seems to have distorted this perspective. It remains to be seen how the tax will impact the digital financial service landscape currently served by telecoms and banks.
Our strategy 2019 - 2028: “Women Driving Change”

In 2017, we embarked on the development of a new strategic plan to set out the direction and establish priorities for the next 10 years. The journey to finalization of the new strategy in 2018 was both challenging and exciting. Our 2019 – 2028 strategy themed “Women Driving Change”, provides clarity, direction, and focus for the organization. At the core of our strategy is our Voice, Power and Resources (VPR) model for women’s agency and empowerment. We believe that this is critical in ensuring that citizens are aware of their rights and have the confidence and capacity to meaningfully engage in promoting gender equality.

The plan is built on a thorough analysis of the current environment, an interrogation of appropriate response to possible changes in the environment, an introspection of what is possible bearing in mind other actors, an envisioning of the future and a commitment to fostering governance that is women centered, transformative and accountable.

Strengthening Financial Systems

In 2017, we embarked on the development of a new strategic plan to set out the direction and establish priorities for the next 10 years. Strong financial management practices are critical to any organization that is keen on transparency and accountability and integral to the achievement of the organization’s mission in a sustainable way.

In the year under review, we strengthened our financial systems. We set up a stricter Control environment as the foundation for the internal control system to provide the discipline and structure as well as the direction that influences the overall quality of internal control. The control system is designed to prevent and detect errors in our daily activities and to create consistency in our processes and procedures.

The control environment includes the governance and management function of our organization. It focuses largely on the attitude, awareness and actions of those responsible for designing, implementing and monitoring internal controls. In setting up this control environment, management “sets the tone” of the entire organization, influencing the control-consciousness of its staff by promoting key values such as integrity, good morals, transparency, competence and dedication to good management practices. Management has provided a framework for discipline and structure with standard finance guidelines to follow.

For our Finance Management Information System to be effective, we strengthened our procedures, policies, and methodologies. Our accounting software package that pulls financial-related data from the accounting and database systems was strengthened. Additionally, we revised our Finance and Accounting Manual learning from emerging international and local best practice so as to further enhance our financial management.
STRATEGY 1: COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT
Citizens’ involvement in the service delivery chain is critical to ensuring that services are provided in the right quantities, quality and time. Through the Village Budget Club (VBC) model, citizens are empowered to demand for improved service delivery from the duty bearers. In 2018, a total of 820 gender accountability and service delivery monitoring exercises were conducted by the 940 (540 females, 376 males) VBC members in Amuru, Busia, Gulu, Hoima, Kabale, Kagadi, Kibuku, Kyenjonjo, Luweero, Lyantonde, Masindi, Mityana, and Wakiso in the Health and education Sectors. Providing citizens with information about service delivery shortfalls - along with information allowing them to compare local outcomes with national standards and with outcomes in other communities - puts them in a position to monitor and apply pressure on underperforming service providers. The monitoring exercises generated some striking results: waiting times at clinics fell, health staff absenteeism dropped, utilization increased, improved sanitation in schools, increased enrolment and retention in schools, increased budget allocations for emergency sanitary pads for girls in schools, reduced pupil absenteeism in schools, and improved accountability of UPE funds in by school heads. Generally, the results suggest that while community collective action was not a solution for improving all levels of public service delivery, it was quite effective in improving aspects of service delivery where community members had enforcement and monitoring capacity. Furthermore, the active engagement of women had important payoffs in improved service provision targeting the needs of women and young children.

Training Community Budget Advisors (CBAs) on SDGs

In order to enhance the knowledge of our local resource pool, 13 CBAs were trained on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The training was aimed at “strengthening the capacity of CBAs and Field officers on how to advocate and integrate gender and equity while linking it to the SDGs and budgets for their respective districts.” Most of the training content was based on “Voice to Action” which brings to the fore critical women’s demands across the 17 Goals that will strongly contribute to changing the situation of women in Uganda. In line with FOWODE’s work, emphasis was placed on the health and education sectors and the discussions centered on improving budget allocations for the women’s agenda through collective advocacy. The CBAs committed to localizing the SDGs by developing both individual and collective work plans. Following this capacity enhancement training, the CBAs have invested considerable effort in raising the general level of budget literacy in communities and building an active audience for budget work. They have provided specialized knowledge and skills, such as when the issues under discussion are technically complex for the community members.

Access to budget information is one of the major hurdles that civil society organizations face in their advocacy work. Community Budget Advisors have played a vital role in expanding, interpreting, and disseminating budget information to enable community members and other actors to conduct better analysis and advocacy. They have improved the quantity and quality of public information concerning the budget and SDGs, and often they are the dependable source of information on the budget’s impact on poor people. The CBAs have considerably expanded budget and SDGs literacy and engagement in the budget process. Armed with knowledge, skills, and drive to advocate, community members have created sufficient pressure on the duty bearers to make more gender responsive plans and budgets and to increase in allocations to areas that affect the women most.

Training VBCs in Gender Budget Monitoring and Service Delivery Tracking (GBMSDT)

Following their refresher training, the CBAs conducted refresher training for the Village Budget Club members in the districts of Kibuku, Napak, Kabale, Amuru, Busia, and Mityana. A total of 180 VBC members were retrained in gender budget monitoring and service delivery tracking. In Kibuku, Napak, and Kabale, the training focus was on the SDG targets, with particular emphasis on SDGs 3, 4 and 5. Some of the SDGs targets shared across the districts included; SDG 3 (Health) targets i.e. reducing global maternal mortality; and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health care services. The SDG 4 (Education) targets selected were: ensure all girls and boys complete quality primary and secondary education; ensure girls and boys access quality early childhood development; and all women and men access affordable and quality technical,
vocational and tertiary education.

Under SDG 5 (Gender Equality) targets, emphasis was drawn on ending all forms of discrimination; domestic violence amongst women and girls; ensuring full participation of women in all decision making processes; and undertaking reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources. In Amuru, the refresher trainings were informed by the need to reorient new and existing VBC members on the new budget cycle, developments in the legal and policy framework, and how taxation and expenditure by government affects women and men differently as a result of their diverse gender roles. Additionally, emphasis was placed on the need to integrate critical gender issues such as menstrual hygiene in schools, school enrolment, and retention and dropout rates of the girl child in the VBC routine monitoring exercises. While monitoring education and health infrastructure, VBC members were urged to look out for the budgets allocated, the actual expenditure and the gender specific impact these had on women, men, boys and girls.

The refresher trainings provided the VBC members with new skills and knowledge to further engage the duty bearers and/or service providers on the quality and quantity of services being provided. The training sharpened the VBC members’ vigilance in advocating for provision of health and education infrastructure and supplies for improved gender responsive service delivery.

Voices:

“We have been hearing about the SDGs but we did not have a good understanding of what they are and how they affect our lives. But now we do. We will look out to see how they are integrated in services provide,” -Bakahairwa, Buhara S/C VBC Chairperson.

“We have done a lot as VBCs and the community has started to acknowledge our mandate as citizens in tracking service delivery. But this is just the beginning. We shall not end until all citizens have understood their legal and constitutional mandate in tracking service delivery.” -Kulembera Halunah, VBC member, Mityana.

Gender Budget Monitoring and Service delivery tracking by the VBCs

In 2018, FOWODE continued to strengthen the capacity of Village Budget Club (VBC) members to monitor, document and analyze the performance of health and education services as a basis for accountability, quality improvement, advocacy, and policy activities.

Through the VBCs, 232 monitoring exercises were conducted in Amuria, Amuru, Busia, Gulu, Hoima, Kabale. Kagadi, Kibuku, Kyenjonjo, Luweero, Lyantonde, Masindi, Mityana, and Wakiso districts. The VBC members used their monitoring findings to engage the service providers to improve on the quality and quantity of service products they were providing to the citizens. Through such engagements, the Village Budget Clubs have achieved numerous successes. For example, monitors reported that patients in most community health centers were treated poorly and forced to bribe health centre officials and buy their own medicine (which is supposed to be free). The resulting intervention by district officials following interface meetings with them led to a change in work ethics by the health workers, and subsequent reports by community monitors present a much improved picture. Despite some initial resistance from district officials, monitoring committees generally report that they have established constructive relationships with local governments, enabling them to address a number of problems that were
Community members in Wakiso during their dialogue meeting

Community dialogues

Community dialogues offer a forum for citizens to discuss the issues affecting them and how they can participate in changing the status quo. It is FOWODE’s deliberate inclusive approach for citizens’ engagement on matters that touch their lives. In 2018, FOWODE supported a total of 168 community dialogues across the districts of operation reaching over 8000 citizens. Through these dialogues, communities generated priority health and education issues as identified from community service delivery gaps in a participatory manner. The dialogues provided fora for the unheard to be heard as well as promoted accountability and ownership of community interventions by the citizens.

Our evaluation showed that the community dialogues increased knowledge and improved attitudes by catalyzing discussions among community members on service delivery issues and monitoring of service delivery points compared to before the action. The dialogues provided community members with an opportunity for improved understanding and a more active involvement in their own development initiatives as part of service delivery improvement mechanism. Indeed, there is a demonstrated increase in community knowledge on health and education program interventions in communities. Overall, the meetings sparked critical thinking and open dialogue among community members and provided an opportunity for networking and essential practical and emotional support, leading to solidarity.

Interface meetings

FOWODE continued to support community interface meetings because they are crucial in good governance as disadvantaged citizens get the rare chance of meeting duty bearers and service providers to seek answers and clarifications on issues that affect them.

In 2018, FOWODE supported 139 community interface meetings across our districts of operation reaching over 8000 citizens. The meetings offered an opportunity for community members to engage with duty bearers on critical service delivery issues. Some of the issues discussed include shortage of water sources in schools, inadequate sanitation facilities in schools and health units, poor performance of pupils in schools, limited maternal services in health units, limited family planning services, and poor attitudes of health workers towards their patients. The meetings were attended by traditional and opinion leaders, health workers, school heads, Schools Management Committees, Sub county Local Council Chairpersons, District Councillors, Chief Administrative Officers, Resident District Commissioners, community members among others.
Community interface meetings have provided a strong social accountability mechanism that has empowered citizens to make government, local authorities and public office bearers responsive and committed to addressing the needs and demands of the people. They have bridged the gap between rights holders and duty bearers by providing opportunities through which citizens demand quality service provision and actively engage authorities at different levels to account for their actions and fulfil their responsibilities towards improving the welfare of communities. At the same time, duty bearers make commitments on when and how they will address some of the priority issues presented by the citizens. These accountability fora have contribute to enhanced accountability, transparency, and active citizenship. The challenge remains how to sustain them as local governments are unable to support them owing to their low resource base.

**Radio talkshows**

Media advocacy, particularly over the radio is a robust tool in promoting gender responsive governance and service delivery because of its ability to reach a wide audience. In 2018, FOWODE conducted 42 live talk shows in the districts of operation aimed at amplifying voice on critical service delivery issues in the districts and encouraging active citizenship for enhanced accountability and gender responsive budgeting. The radio programmes were widely accessible across broad geographic areas and hence created a multiplier effect beyond the target community, and allowed immediate responses on matters under discussion.

The talk shows provided opportunities for the population to demand for their rights and proved key in promoting public accountability and transparency in the public resource allocation processes by the national and local governments for improved service delivery. They improved grassroots’ understanding of democracy, accountability and transparency and this ensured that local citizens were well prepared and competent to actively engage their duty bearers. The programs filled the citizens’ feedback gaps through leaders themselves providing accountability on radio and citizens’ participating through call ins. Community members used radio programs to also report leaders who deliver poor services which in turn attracted intervention from other leaders.

**Raising Consciousness**

It is important to provide opportunities for the public to engage in the discussion about how to solve or address issues in the community. With a deeper understanding of the issues and how local governments are equipped to address them, citizens can provide ideas and useful feedback to help the evaluation of policy decisions and program performance. Activities like community fora for civic engagements give citizens a voice on local issues and provide assurance that the duty bearers are listening. This helps to build citizens’ trust in their local government service delivery.

**Civic Engagement Reach in 2018**

In the year under review, FOWODE supported a total of 155 civic education meetings reaching 15,705 citizens across the districts of operation.
The civic engagements promoted the active participation of citizens in their communities by enabling them to identify social challenges plaguing their communities and discuss means of addressing them. The engagements created civic mindedness among citizens who then saw themselves as members of a larger social fabric with a collective responsibility to shape their society for the better. Importantly, the civic education fora enhanced citizen's engagement on critical governance issues. The communities became vigilant to amplify their voice on emerging national governance issues that affect them. For instance, they debated the introduction of the mobile money tax and tax on SACCOs; increasing commodity prices; escalating fuel costs that caused inflation in the country; amendments to the Constitution and the Land Act, among others.

Considering our interest in enhanced women’s participation in and benefit from decision making, it was crucial for FOWODE to address the social and economic barriers that often prevent women from participating in civic engagements. We therefore ensured that civic engagements happened at convenient times but also that they took place where women normally organize. To further support the environment in which the women further their leadership we also trained both elected and non-elected government officials on gender mainstreaming including gender inclusion strategies.

Through active participation in civic engagement, women learnt critical skills such as advocacy, coalition building, consensus building, communication, networking, and organizational, which are key for leadership in their communities. Women were empowered through an increase in self-confidence, expansion of their professional and social networks, understanding of structural problems facing society especially issues that are of particular concern to women and vulnerable groups, and how to become effective agents of change.

Voices:

“The government should think twice always before imposing taxes on us. I now have to pay multiple taxes here in the village. When I’m taking the farm products to the market, I am supposed to pay tax; they charge me according to what they want and I pay, and I have never understood what that tax does. I don’t even ask. I got it like that. EMPOZA is always there, now why do they charge us to pay money for having money?” Omuhereza Kyarimpa, Kagadi sub-county, Kagadi district.

“Domestic violence has been so rampant in our area. But it seems our leaders have gone silent and they don’t care about us. As women, we were relieved in many ways with mobile money. You get some little money and send it on your mother’s phone to keep it. The man would never see you going to the bank to look for money and they have always been contented that in most cases women don’t have money, since most men deny financial freedom to their wives. The introduction of mobile money tax will automatically mean that no more saving by most women since the savings will be charged.” Tibikimpeda Alice, Bwikala S/C, Kagadi district.

Promoting Girls rights through Gender and Leadership Clubs (GLCs)

Gender and Leadership Clubs are increasingly becoming FOWODE’s popular approach to promoting adolescent girls’ wellbeing. The clubs help girls cope with the physical and emotional changes they experience during adolescence, and equip them with knowledge and skills to help them challenge discriminatory norms within their schools, homes and in the wider community. Typically, they aim to empower girls by giving them access to information about their rights (including their sexual and reproductive health). They also equip them with life skills, which build their self-confidence and help them to negotiate for their rights and voice their concerns. The approach aims to broaden girls’ horizons and encourage them to envisage and realize a better future.
Previously, GLCs were single-sex formations, enabling girls to meet, learn and discuss issues that affect their lives without the presence of boys, who might dominate discussions or make it harder for girls to reflect on gender inequalities. However, the 20 clubs formed in 2018 involved boys not only to enable their full participation in club activities but to foster gender equality and to promote them as male champions in a society where girls and boys equally participate. Out of the 600 pupils, there are 400 girls and 200 boys. The clubs are run by trained teachers. They work with a select group of girls and boys who are then expected to spread the messages to their peers. Key messages cover how to manage menstruation (including how to make sanitary pads) and anonymous reporting of sexual harassment by fellow pupils and teachers.

The club activities have resulted into an increased awareness of key gender issues affecting girls such as menstrual hygiene management, increased confidence of the girls, improved responsiveness by the school administration to identified gender issues; an improved learning environment and enhanced knowledge on leadership.

The Community Legal Advisor Model: A Mechanism for Conflict resolution

The Community Legal Advisors (CLAs) are a new addition to the resource people that support our work in the districts. The CLA model borrows from our successful Village Budget Club model. The CLAs are individuals from local communities who were selected and given training in basic legal skills for mediation, advocacy, advice-giving and statement-taking. They are change agents in their localities and deal with any emerging conflicts, issues of domestic violence, provide referrals, advise and help disputants negotiate local problems and do advocacy. In the year, we conducted three trainings for 70 Community Legal Advisors (CLAs) from the 3 districts of Kagadi, Kyenjojo and Hoima. The CLAs conducted community outreaches aimed at sensitizing communities on basic legal frameworks surrounding GBV and land related conflicts. Additionally, they offered day-to-day advice to community members on these issues. Twenty-eight (28) community outreaches were carried out by CLAs, supplemented by various follow up actions and visits to families, groups and communities, reaching 1,850 community members. Key emphasis was placed on sensitization of communities on land matters, as land related conflict is currently rampant in the 3 districts of operation due to activities and speculation surrounding oil exploration in the region. The awareness created by CLAs among community members has helped reduce reporting of minor cases of land related conflict and GBV, as some are resolved on the ground. The CLAs have also put in place a free reference and conflict resolution point for citizens who are now able to approach the CLAs, hold meetings and resolve land related conflict free of charge. This is a plus for community members who previously had to pay a fee to the LC1 leadership to host meetings for resolution of land related conflict. In Kagadi district for example, the probation officer reported that cases of GBV that were reported from the Sub Counties of our operation reduced from 259 to 183 between 2017 and the same period in 2018. The Community Development Officer in Hoima also attested to a reduction in the reporting of GBV cases, attributing it to the increased awareness among community members and the alternative dispute resolution mechanism implemented by the CLAs. The actions of the CLAs therefore, contributed to the mitigation of domestic violence and conflict and the promotion of women’s rights.
Voices:

“Before we started working on the GEAR project, there were several challenges of domestic violence and land and family sharing wrangles due to lack of wills in families. There was also ignorance and misuse of rights in our community. There was a case I intervened in where a widow got a misunderstanding and had refused to share land with her sister in-law. Her late husband had died at a young age but he had inherited land from their deceased parents. Together with the LC1 and community members, we shared the land among the widow and sister in-law peacefully and the misunderstanding was successfully resolved.” Rose Baguma, 55, Community Action, Mentor (CAM) 2 VBC/CLA

“I came for help when my husband was continuously selling land to the extent we were left with quarter an acre of land. We hadn’t known all those things of land rights, but FOWODE explained to my husband and me about our rights. They asked him to stop the process of selling the remaining piece of land before he was reported to the police. I am thankful because that land and our home were saved. We also know what to do if anything similar happens to us as a family.” Patience Nakato, Kagadi district.
STRATEGY 2: CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
Capacity enhancement remains critical to our work of building and nurturing women leaders and strategic engagements with male duty bearers as we advocate for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

**Enhancing the capacities of duty bearers and CSOs**

To further build capacity to influence gender responsive resource allocation, FOWODE trained 90 sub county councilors and technocrats in gender responsive budgeting (GRB). Councilors and technocrats were specifically targeted because the important roles each of them play in the budget process. The training was aimed at enhancing their appreciation of the role of GRB in economic growth and development and their capacity to mainstream gender in the planning and budgeting process. Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights continues to be a core part of our gender budget work as it is critical to women’s empowerment. Unless women are in control of their bodies and are able to make choices about their sexual and reproductive health, they cannot contribute effectively to development. Our core focus has been on the issue of family planning knowing that uptake of family planning is low and yet teenage pregnancy continues to plague the country with rates above the national average of 25% in some of our districts. In view of this, we enhanced the skills and knowledge of Members of Parliament and District Councilors in financing for family planning, so as to enable them scrutinize the Budget Framework Papers (BFPs), provide recommendations, and pass budgets that have adequate allocations towards Family Planning. For the District Councilors in Busia and Masindi districts, this training was conducted prior to the council sessions thus making it strategic. The training reached a total of 78 legislators.

To enhance capacities of Civil Society organizations (CSOs) in gender budget monitoring and service delivery tracking, a total of 33 members from nine CSOs in Luweero, Rukungiri, and Kibuku were trained in gender responsive budgeting. The training enhanced CSO’s ability to engage the duty bearers in the districts in macro-economic policy issues so as to realize gender and equity responsive service delivery.

**Engaging male change agents**

Gender balance in decision-making processes can only be achieved if men work side by side with women to share the responsibility in breaking harmful cultural norms and practices, as well as the institutional, structural and legal barriers that hinder women’s equal and influential participation in politics. Partnering with men is important in addressing issues that hinder women’s political engagement, including: structural barriers, unequal access to education, networks and resources; discriminatory institutional practices and laws that prevent women from being recruited, nominated for standing for office, or getting elected; violence, sexism and harassment against female candidates and female elected officials, and negative gender-based stereotypes perpetuated by the community.

In 2018, FOWODE continued to support the proactive work by male champions, as a necessary approach to establish an environment that promotes women’s political participation at all levels of decision-making.

Owing to the high levels of patriarchy in communities, men have proved to be good change agents once they have been brought on board. A total of 95 male champions were facilitated to reach out to 1,709 other men within their communities in Lyantonde, Busia, Masindi, Mityana, Wakiso, Kagadi, Kyenjonjo, and Hoima districts. They conducted 25 sessions that helped in enhancing the appreciation of more men within the communities about the importance of human rights in general and women’s rights in particular. In this way, we built a cadre of gender sensitive men who will contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights and continue to advance the gender agenda.
The male champions were powerful advocates in their communities and made a contribution to discussions on the importance of women’s participation in public life. In addition to meetings, they utilized the media to make targeted statements advocating for change, raising awareness on the lack of women’s representation and leadership in their communities, and their rights to participate in decision-making processes.

**Building capacity of women councilors for effective legislative engagement**

Providing targeted training to women who have assumed positions of leadership is one way of enabling more women to influence decision-making processes. However, while training support is important for women as they seek to strengthen their positions of power, all too often, once they have been elected, or have attained a position of leadership, women find that they are left to ‘fend for themselves’ in what can be a very hostile environment. In the FOWODE Women and Leadership Programme (WLP), as the first stage of ensuring women’s effective participation in their legislatures, emphasis is placed on preparing the elected women councilors for effective legislative engagement in their council. Once elected, many women councilors felt overwhelmed by and ill-equipped for the duties that they were now expected to undertake, often as a result of poor literacy skills, particularly when it came to working in English. In 2018, FOWODE conducted ELE trainings for 416 district and sub county women councilors to help them to be more effective in their roles. The trainings enhanced legislative capacities and knowledge of the women councilors in politics and transformational leadership. It is hoped that the councilors will effectively articulate and advocate for gender equality in their district policies, plans and budgets.

**Voices:**

“When we started our council business, the involvement of women in council debates and committee sittings was very low. But because of such trainings, the women have been empowered and they are now very active during debates in council. They challenge the men during debates. Previously, women could only second motions but currently, they are in position to raise motions and even debate.” **Acting Chairman, Busia District.**

“I have been empowered to speak and make decisions in council and not to wait for men to decide for us. Before this training, when I had just joined council, I could watch men debate, but I am now energized to engage in any debate while in council and committee meetings. I, therefore, thank FOWODE very much for organizing such a training to build our capacities.” **Aidah Omingo, Sub county councillor, Bulumbi – Busia.**

“I have realized that I have been a deputy speaker all along just by title, without knowing what I’m supposed to do and the key responsibilities of my office. Through this training, I’m now confident and aware of the duties that fall under the Deputy Speaker’s office.” **Hon. Resty, Mpumudde S/C, Lyantonde**
In the year, FOWODE trained a total of 125 councillors and district technocrats of Rukungiri, Napak, Kabale, Kibuku, and Gulu in order to build their capacities to effectively implement and oversee the localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for enhanced accountability to women and men. The training laid emphasis on the health and education sector priorities. The respective district council technical committees conceptualized the SDGs in line with their gender and equity issues which they had pledged to prioritize during the annual planning process. They also committed to aligning their district programmes and policies to the SDGs to reflect women and girls priorities. Following this training, it is expected that in the long run, district leaders especially the women will effectively articulate and advocate for gender equality in political and economic agendas.

**Voices:**

“This training has been so timely and relevant. All the 17 Sustainable Development Goals indeed speak to the Ugandan situation, Rukungiri district in particular. Unfortunately, little effort has previously been made to localize them as well as sensitize local government leaders and politicians to enable them effectively plan and budget for their achievement. Going forward, I pledge to keep engaging the district technical team to ensure that the key SDGs especially SDG 3 (Good Health and well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality) and SDG 13 (Climate Action) are given special attention in district plans and budgets.” **Hon. James Turyamubona, Speaker, Rukungiri District Council.**

“As a District, we have been implementing work around SDGs but because of limited awareness, some officials didn’t know. After this training therefore, we have realized that we have been doing some work around SDGs and we have also appreciated where we were failing mainly considering the SDGs 3 and so will improve accordingly.” **Vice Chairperson LCV, Kabale District.**
Mentoring for transformative leadership

In 2018, we continued with our effort of molding a cadre of transformative women leaders. We held our 22nd, 23rd and 24th training camps, reaching 120 young women. Our transformative leadership camps were intended to train young people to make or influence positive change and address inequality and inequity. The program was designed to foster transformative leadership by equipping young women with the knowledge, tools, capacity and motivation to make a difference in their communities. In the 3 camps, young women were trained to be creative visionaries, who care deeply about promoting a more equitable society and improving the lives of others. The camps enabled the young women to unlock their leadership capabilities, discover their leadership potential and broaden their horizons. The young women were equipped not only with leadership but also social and business entrepreneurship skills that would aide them to remain economically empowered. We are confident that our deliberate effort to replenish women’s leadership will benefit not only the young women, but will result into enhanced voice and action on ending violence against women, sexual and reproductive health rights, girl child education and the pursuit of a just and fair society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision making.

Voices:

Every time Sharon heard the word feminist she thought of radical rude women who went about ridiculing men and setting things on fire. To her surprise, Sharon learnt that she did not have to be a certain type of male or female, only the special type of person who cares that women are treated right and given equal opportunities in every area of their lives. This truth startled Sharon and was the beginning of her new passion for women’s rights and opportunities in the world. The lessons on conflict resolution, constitutionalism and entrepreneurship also prepared Sharon for her next project - the Dream Nature Mentorship – online project. Sharon Amany Bright, Assistant Lecturer, Lira University participant alumnae of the FOWODE leadership camp program.

Graduates of FOWODE 23rd Camp during the closing ceremony with the US Ambassador to Uganda, H.E. Deborah Ruth Malac

Graduates of FOWODE 22nd camp during the closing ceremony with Hon. Winnie Kizza
STRATEGY 3: POLICY ENGAGEMENT
FOWODE has made a tremendous contribution to the body of knowledge on gender, women’s leadership and budgeting. Our policy engagement is grounded in research as we know that for effective advocacy to happen one must have the requisite evidence to demonstrate the gaps that need to be filled.

Gender Assessment of the National Budget Framework Paper (NBFP) for FY 2018/19

In order to effectively engage the policy makers, FOWODE considers it important to conduct research which the organization then uses in her advocacy. During the year, the organization conducted a gender assessment of the National Budget Framework Paper covering six sectors of Agriculture; Education, Energy, Health, Trade; and Social development. The assessment reviewed the gender responsiveness of the NBFP in financial year (FY) 2014/15, before the enactment of the PFMA, and trends in the ensuing four FYs of 2015/16; 2016/17; 2017/18; and FY2018/19.

The assessment found out that the sector plans and budgets show some increasing sensitivity to gender and equity since the enactment of the PFMA. However, in some sectors the improvement is largely a response to equity issues and not necessarily gender concerns. In fact, the level of gender sensitivity seems to have been the same since FY 2014/15 among most sectors. In sectors where articulation of gender responsive interventions improved, like agriculture, there were no related performance indicators to ascertain real commitment. The fact that most sectors have continued to have gender neutral performance indicators shows the limited commitment to gender mainstreaming even after the enactment of the PFMA. The findings of this assessment were used in the strategic meetings with Members of Parliament to influence national budgeting processes to give due consideration to gender.

Study on implementation and adherence to the certificate of gender and equity

As an annual routine, FOWODE analyses government plans and budgets from a gender and equity perspective to assess the extent to which the policies respond to, and integrate the unique needs of women, men, boys and girls in the development agenda. In 2018, FOWODE scrutinized 3 districts’ (Amuru, Gulu and Masindi) and 3 sectors’ (Health, Education and Agriculture) Budget Framework Papers to assess their gender and equity responsiveness.

The extent to which the three districts had adhered in implementation to the gender commitments upon which their Certificates of Gender and Equity (CGE) were issued for the FY2017/18 and FY2018/19 was assessed and a trends analysis conducted, highlighting budgeting versus actual implementation on the plans and budgets for the three sectors from FY2015/16 to FY2018/19. The findings helped in establishing the trend in budgetary allocations towards Gender and Equity specific interventions in the three sectors mentioned above, and in the three districts. The information generated from the study will be used to engage policy makers to ensure that national resources are allocated in an equitable and sustainable manner.

Reality Check: Women in Leadership Positions in Uganda

Participation of women in leadership and decision-making structures and processes remains central to gender equality and activism. Accordingly, the empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women’s and girls’ social, economic and political status, is essential to the achievement of sustainable development. Women’s demand for equal participation in decision-making is not just about justice and democracy but a critical step towards challenging patriarchal forms of oppression that constrain women and girls’ participation in the public sphere. Without active participation of women and the incorporation of women’s perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the goals of gender equality and sustainable development cannot be achieved.

FOWODE has been at the forefront of advocating for an increased number of women in public decision making as a contribution to the just and fair society where women and men equally participate in decision making. We therefore felt it was imperative to build on a study that we conducted in 2014 that was aimed at establishing the status of women in selected
public institutions. The study dubbed Reality Check covered a total of 24 Ministries; 6 commissions, agencies, and authorities; 1 institution of parliament and courts of judicature; and 3 academic institutions. A glance at the top leadership of Uganda’s Executive, Judiciary and the Legislature reveals the institutionalized masculine norm in Uganda’s political leadership. Only 1 out of 7 (14%) persons heading the three arms of government is a woman, which was the same status in 2014. At the level of the deputies of heads of the Executive, Judiciary, and Legislature, women representation remains almost non-existent. This image of male-centered leadership is engrained and normalised in leadership cultures of other public and private institutions, as this report demonstrates. Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, the Speaker of Uganda Parliament, remains one of the most senior ranking women in the country. Her presence is a shining example of women in top leadership despite many forms of resistance they encounter along their leadership paths.
STRATEGY 4: INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Developing community-conservation committees
- Setting up by-laws
- Reporting disaster risks
- Planning for their communities
- Managing warning systems
Governance and Management

The Annual General Meeting, FOWODE’s apex governing body, held its regular annual meeting. Through the AGM, the Board provided accountability to the members on the achievements made over the year. Key to the discussions was the issue of sustainability and the need to reduce donor dependence. The members agreed to start a Savings and Credit Cooperative that can contribute to FOWODE’s sustainability while also economically empowering women. The Board made a commitment to the members to ensure the organisation’s sustainability and accordingly during the year, FOWODE acquired land to construct its home. A permanent home for FOWODE will not only ensure the organisation’s sustainability but will provide a women’s space for incubation, learning and engagement. Beyond the clear-cut advantages of ownership, a home will enable the organization think differently about its work and realign priorities as we become more rooted in the place we are located and laser focused on our mission.

During the year, the Board continued to provide strategic and policy direction to the Secretariat. Corporate governance has been at the core of the Board engagements and a lot of effort has been made to ensure an excellent internal policy environment that is regularly enhanced based on best practice, compliance with statutory obligations, and good risk management. The Board played its oversight role effectively, holding the management accountable to agreed goals and targets.

FOWODE’s top management, headed by the Executive Director, charged with the day-to-day implementation of the organisation’s activities continued to ensure alignment of work to the strategic plan, implementation of policy, fundraising to sustain the organisation, building of strategic partnerships and public relations.

Enhanced Policy Environment

FOWODE is a learning organization. As the organization continues to grow, attracts new partners and with the changing context, it becomes imperative to ensure a conducive policy environment and compliance with statutory and legal requirements. During the year, the Board reviewed some existing policies learning from best practice and to adapt them to the changing context. These included the Finance and Accounting Manual and the Human Resources and Administration Manual. The Board also embarked on discussions on new policies such as the Safeguarding Policy and the Gender and Human Rights Policy. We will continue to enhance our operating environment in line with our strategy and international best practice.

Human Resources

As an organization that values its human resources, FOWODE continued to create a conducive environment both through the capacity enhancement of the staff and the provision of the necessary tools to fulfill their roles. Staff underwent training in Project Planning and Management, Gender and Programming on Women’s Rights, NGO Compliance, and Gender and Equity Budgeting. Additionally, two organizational members participated in the national Gender and equity budgeting training of trainers that was aimed at building a cohort of national trainers as government rolls out Gender and Equity Budgeting.

In 2018, we also filled some vacant positions with competent personnel to ensure delivery on our targets. To supplement the human resource at the field level, five volunteers were recruited. The volunteers will help in reducing the work burden at the field office level.

Finalization of the Strategy

2018 saw us conclude the development of our ten year strategic plan themed “Women Driving Change.” Over the past 24 years, FOWODE has implemented four strategic plans. Reflecting on the past, we felt it imperative to develop an adaptive strategy that emphasizes learning and breaks free of static strategic plans. We therefore decided to develop a 10 year strategy. Our strategy is exciting and gives us momentum as we look into the future. It is built on the Voice, Power and Resources (VPR) strategic model for women’s agency and empowerment that involves mutually reinforcing approaches. We are confident that the strategy will drive the organization to an even higher level of growth as we strive to foster governance that is women-centred, transformative and accountable and that gives women voice, choice, and power.
STRATEGY 5: STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES
Leveraging multisectoral action and inclusive partnerships is at the core of how FOWODE delivers results on our overall mission of promoting gender equality in decision making processes. The partnerships that we build enable collective voice for advocacy and the amplification of the impact of our work. During the year, FOWODE partnered with a wide range of stakeholders including companies, foundations, government, development agencies, the academia and NGOs to deliver on its mission.

**Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)**

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a global convention that seeks to review the status of women based on commitments made by UN member States towards the advancement of women’s rights. The CSW provides a global advocacy platform for CSOs and other actors to influence key decisions for the promotion of women’s rights and gender equality. A team of 4 FOWODE staff participated in the 62nd session in New York in March 2018, under the global priority theme “Challenges and opportunities in achieving gender equality and empowerment of rural women and girls” drawn from Sustainable Development Goal (SDG5).

FOWODE, which coordinates the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs, took this as an opportunity to engage on critical issues affecting women and girls in Uganda through a side event themed “*My Body My Choice: Reproductive health rights for women’s economic empowerment.*” The side event sought to underscore the strong association between adolescent pregnancy and reduced schooling for rural girls, resulting into limited labour force participation, low incomes and low standards of living for women and their families. Focusing on rural Uganda, the causes and consequences of high adolescent pregnancy and high fertility rates were analyzed, followed by a discussion on effective strategies that have been implemented by FOWODE to promote sexual and reproductive health rights for women and girls, adolescent friendly reproductive health services and access to modern family planning methods. The session highlighted the link between enhanced awareness of sexual and reproductive health rights, women’s productivity and consequently, economic empowerment.

![FOWODE side event during the 62nd CSW, 2018](image)

**High level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development**

The HLPF (High Level Political Forum) is the main United Nations platform on sustainable development and it has a central role in the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the global level. The 2018 HLPF took place in New York under the theme, “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.” It convened different actors including civil Society Organizations, the academia and the media who jointly reviewed progress of implementation and held governments and other development partners accountable at the global level for their commitments to the Sustainable
Development Goals.
As the coordination unit for the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs (UGCS), FOWODE spearheaded the generation of a report that analysed the Goals under review from a feminist perspective to ensure that the priorities of women and girls are included in the HLPF. FOWODE also participated in preparatory meetings convened by the Uganda National NGO Forum in which the need to amplify women’s voices was further emphasized.

Riding on the UGCS’s strategic partnerships including Safer World, FEMNET and Global Call to Action Against Poverty (GCAP), FOWODE was given a platform on panel discussions to share Uganda’s SDGs localization story. In an event on SDG 16 themed “Bringing Words to Life: How are SDGs supporting peace, justice, and inclusion?” FOWODE highlighted Uganda’s peace policy frameworks and programmes including the National Transitional Justice draft policy, refugee Emergency response and UN-initiated Uganda National Peace Architecture Framework. FOWODE also shared the UGCS interventions on addressing inequalities including strengthened partnerships with grassroots CSOs to effectively demand for accountability.

Conference on the Fight for African Women Tax Justice

FOWODE participated in The Fight for African Women Tax Justice conference, convened by Public Services International (PSI) and its partners. The conference brought together women trade union leaders, activists and leaders of civil society organizations from across Africa. The conference sought to expand and consolidate the tax justice campaign in Africa by strengthening and empowering women advocates to contribute to the national and regional policy dialogue and the drive for change, particularly, on tax concerns for women. The conference centred around the international debate on the Illicit Financial Flows (IFFs); the relevance of tax policy and its impact on working women with particular emphasis on the international financial architecture vis a vis the rights of women; and how progressive tax policies can help achieve the SDGs and the UNCSW agreed conclusions. It also explored ways in which the tax justice campaign can be transformed into a women’s movement to foster international collaboration and solidarity for change.

It was noted that USD 50 billion (in 2015) to USD 100 billion (in 2017) lost through IFFs are a representation of unpaid care work of women; poor health facilities leading to high mortality rates; inadequate teachers in public schools; poor health infrastructure; poor wages and working conditions; lack of portable drinking water in communities; and poor budgetary allocation to education which potentially creates more inequality between girls and boys. Recommendations made included designing macro-economic policies and interventions that provide for women’s unpaid care work; setting up of a mechanism to track and report back to the African Union; and enactment of tax policies that consider women’s tax needs as far as the household is concerned, among others. The conference provided a greater insight to FOWODE especially at a time when the organisation is interested in exploring new areas that include taxation.
Summit on Gender Statistics

FOWODE participated in a gender statistics summit coded “innovation Summit on Gender Statistics to Monitor Achievement of the SDGs and 2030 Agenda for All”. The conference, which brought together data producers and users from across Africa, sought to advance the uptake of gender statistics for strengthened Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and monitoring and accountability for gender equality and women’s rights commitments across Africa. The conference provided an opportunity to take stock of progress made in the generation of gender data, as well as of emerging innovations that aim to provide solutions to existing gender data gaps. It also aimed at promoting collaboration in support of innovation in data production, with the view of promoting government buy-in and investment in innovations such as citizen generated data. Additionally, the conference sought to advance data use and data-driven advocacy by development stakeholders, for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as well as Agenda 2063. FOWODE being the host of the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs, benefitted immensely from the timely and relevant information on gender data and how to strengthen collaborations with Government especially in addressing issues of mistrust.

International conference on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

Recognizing the experience of our organization in advancing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Uganda, the Eduardo Mondlane University (Maputo), through the Centre of Studies and Coordination of Gender Issues in partnership with UN Women invited FOWODE to participate in an international conference on GRB themed, “Current stage challenges and way forward towards achievement of gender equality by 2030.” The engagement promoted sharing of experiences among countries in order to highlight the importance of the gender responsive planning and budgeting methodology in financing the implementation of national policies, laws and plans on gender equality. The conference provided a forum for reflecting on the role of Finance ministries, CSOs, and the Academia in gender mainstreaming in the planning and budgeting process. It discussed the results achieved, challenges faced, and strategies used to enable decision-makers pay adequate attention to the specific needs and strategic interests of women in public plans and budgets. FOWODE, having pioneered GRB in Uganda, shared her contribution to GRB in Uganda. Some of the lessons that were shared included importance of evidence for advocacy; engagement with broader processes such as national planning processes; strategic partnerships and alliances; building capacity of critical stakeholders; sustaining citizens engagement in budget discussions through building community structures; and collaboration with the government.

The conference provided another opportunity for FOWODE to promote gender responsive budgeting at the international level while demonstrating how GRB can contribute to accelerating the achievement of gender equality in the context of implementation of the SDGs.

Advancing Civic Space and democratic Accountability in a Shrinking Environment in East Africa

In recognition of an increasingly hostile civic space in the region, a conference was organized by Centre for Constitutional Governance (CCG),KIND Initiative, Action Aid Uganda, Chapter Four and Uganda National NGO forum bringing together regional and national civil society leaders, organizations and development partners to dialogue. FOWODE participated in the conference which drew out lessons from response strategies employed across the region examining their efficacy. The meeting was intentioned to contribute to shaping future civic engagements and safe guarding the space for CSOs in governance to operate. It offered space for learning and benchmarking strategic approaches that can be deployed to protect and expand civic space in the region. The leaders agreed on a minimum cooperation agenda for specific actions to be taken in the short and medium term to safe guard civic space in their respective countries and the region at large. An “Action Agenda” was framed for civil society to guide the regional actors in mid-term engagement on advancing civic space in East Africa.
Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Gender Index Technical Round Table in Berlin, Germany

The meeting was designed to review and refine the SDG Gender Index produced by Equal Measures 2030 ahead of its global release. The meeting examined the conceptual framework, coverage of issues within the Index, the methodology behind the index, as well as how the index findings should be presented and communicated to ensure maximum advocacy impact. The Roundtable was an important process for building global partnerships around gender and the SDGs. It sought to connect data and evidence on gender for advocacy and action in different countries. FOWODE, through the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs (UGCS), collects data and reports on the status of implementation of SDGs from a gender perspective. The meeting was thus a critical and strategic space for sharing common successes, challenges and strategies for strengthening reporting on gender in the SDGs.

The meeting sought to bring potential partners like FOWODE on the table as the Index is expanded beyond the initial six focus countries of Columbia, El Salvador, India, Indonesia, Kenya and Senegal where national partners helped shape the initial design of the index. The meeting allowed partners to reflect on their own work around gender and the SDGs and share good practices to make the “leave no one behind” focus of the Agenda 2030 a reality where women and girls in particular are well represented. Ways in which partners could build and strengthen the momentum for advocacy on gender in the SDGs were discussed. One of the key opportunities highlighted included the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in addition to regional meetings at the African Union (AU) and the High level Political Forum (HLPF).

The meeting was critical to FOWODE’s work as host of the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs which has to produce periodic reports on gender and SDG implementation in Uganda.

Civil Society Dialogue on Oil and Gas

FOWODE participated in a multi-stakeholder dialogue held in Uganda, under the Oil for Development programme, to discuss the oil and gas sector. The Oil for Development Program is Norwegian funded and offers assistance to developing countries in their efforts to manage petroleum resources in a sustainable manner. The meeting provided an opportunity for CSOs to bring to the attention of stakeholders the CSO perspectives on oil and gas exploration in Uganda. Key concerns noted included limited access to information, lack of involvement of local governments in discussions that affect their people, limited transparency and accountability and a lack of linkage between the oil and gas sector and other sectors.

The meeting provided insights for FOWODE considering that we will be venturing into the area of oil and gas in our new strategy. There is a clear indication that gender issues are not factored into plans or budgets in the oil and gas sector due to limited engagement on gender responsive planning and budgeting. This could be due to the fact that oil and gas is a relatively new sector characterized by limited knowledge and skills, not only for those engaged directly through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, but also other actors such as CSOs and the Academia. The meeting therefore set the course on which FOWODE will engage in the Oil and Gas sector in the next 10 years.
CSOs demand for Accountability for Maternal Deaths

Through our gender budget work, FOWODE has been advocating for improved resource allocation to the health sector so as to address some of the persistent glaring issues that affect the sector. In 2018, FOWODE joined activists from various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to express their anger and concern over the high mortality rates in Uganda. The anger was stirred by the death of a renowned news anchor who developed postpartum complications which could have been avoided, had it not been for the negligence from medical workers at International Hospital Kampala (IHK). Activists urged the government of Uganda to audit maternal deaths in hospitals and to focus on addressing key priorities such as provision of adequate human resource, infrastructure and essential medical supplies. They pointed out that rampant deaths of mothers due to pregnancy related complications are preventable if the national guidelines on prevention of maternal deaths were effectively implemented. There was also a call to action for medical practitioners to provide adequate maternal health care and treatment during pre and post-delivery. Thereafter, the demonstration raised further awareness to this vice that claims far too many mothers daily.

The major complications that account for 80% of all maternal deaths are hemorrhages 25%, infections 15%, pre-eclampsia and eclampsia 12%, unsafe abortion 13%, obstructed and/or prolonged labor 8%, and others causes associated with diseases such as malaria and HIV/AIDS 8% and yet if these named complications were well managed, there would not be such deaths.

COMMUNICATIONS

Enhanced visibility of our work

In 2018, FOWODE used digital platforms (websites, blogs and social media), print media, radio and drama to share information targeting specific audiences and stakeholders who share our vision and desire to participate in debate on issues of governance and democracy. Issues of most concern were in gender responsive budgeting, maternal health, access to quality education and enhancing women’s participation in leadership spaces. Through partnerships with different stakeholders in the civil society and the media we were able to organize events; dialogues and meetings to fuel the conversation around such issues. This led to the building of a strong brand among members, potential members, the news media, and the general public. It also provided the opportunity to share the work we do and to raise the organization’s profile.

Keep a girl in school Campaign

Intended to run for a year, Forum for Women in Democracy has been conducting a national media campaign dubbed, ‘Keep a girl in school.’ The campaign sprung up with the intention of bringing to centre stage the issue of the unsettling number of girls dropping out of school; specifically raising public awareness on the value of girl child education and most importantly as part of our advocacy to increase resource allocation towards menstrual health management in schools.

Research carried out under the Gender and Economic Justice (GEJ) program at FOWODE, increasingly highlighted that among other reasons, poor menstrual hygiene management was one of the most avoidable and yet most stated reason as to why girls eventually drop out of school. Women and girls in rural settings and in particular girls in schools suffer most from stigma, lack of services and facilities to help them cope with the physical and psychological pains they undergo during menstruation. Consequently, this leads to increased absenteeism, poor performance, school drop outs, teenage pregnancies and child marriages. According to the GEJ program, 3 in 5 girls miss school due to menstruation, they miss at least 11% of their school time. With gender responsive budgeting and a focus on practical strategies for coping with monthly periods, girls will be able to anchor their energy on attending classes and attaining good grades, a prerequisite to staying in school and eventually building them to become competent, value driven leaders.
Through radio, television and social media, the campaign is targeting community members, Ministry of Education technocrats and District Officials. Community members are encouraged to open dialogue on menstrual management, engage their leaders to budget for menstrual hygiene management and most importantly to participate in making reusable sanitary pads. Ministry of Education technocrats and District Officials are reminded to increase resource allocation towards menstrual health management, ensure every school with female pupils has a senior woman teacher, and provide menstrual hygiene products and water in schools.

Launch of “Silence is Deadly”

The “Silence is Deadly” was a campaign aimed at changing the public perspective on youth access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) information and services. The national campaign also encouraged the youth to speak out about the challenges they face thus breaking down barriers such as stigma towards SRHR. Following a successful national launch, Forum for Women in Democracy, alongside our partner, Reach A Hand Uganda (RAHU), launched Silence is Deadly in Busia, one of our districts of operation. The district launch was preceded by a community dialogue that discussed the issues that affect young people’s sexual reproductive health and emerging issues included peer pressure, poverty as well as cultural and religious norms.

The campaign amplified our SRHR efforts aimed at increasing young people’s access to comprehensive sexuality information and education, sexual and reproductive health services and menstrual hygiene management, as well as efforts that seek to affect positive legal, social and gender transformations for the realization of young people’s rights. It further cemented our efforts to obtain sustainable outcomes that adopt rights-based approaches to young people’s SRHR and establish positive approaches to youth sexuality.
Unite To Enforce Women Emancipation - Matembe

The former Member of the Pan African Parliament, Miria Matembe has tasked women leaders to come up together and unit if they want their rights to be respected and achieve gender equality.

BY Eric Kyuma

Daily Monitor

Have purpose for joining leadership, Matembe tells women

Saturday November 17 2018

The leadership training which took place between 11th to 17th of November was organized by Forum for Women in Democracy.

FOWODE trains new crop of ‘Matembes’, ‘Byanyima’s’

Women and girls in rural areas continue to face discrimination yet they contribute so much to African economies. Join our #TweetChat tomorrow (March 7th) as we discuss what it would really take to empower the women and girls living in rural areas.

#WomensDay
#WomensDay2018

What are your thoughts on the 2018/19 budget? Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs (UGCS) is bringing you an opportunity to get involved in the budget conversation on June 26th. See you there!

#UGBudget18

“Now that I have learned how to make reusable sanitary towels, I can’t wait to teach girls in my community how to make them because many school-going girls drop out of school due to inability to afford sanitary towels” Nabuza Margaret, Camp participant.

#FOWODECamp #YoungLeaders
Each year, Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) analyzes the National Budget Framework Paper (NBFP) to determine whether the concerns of women, poor and marginalized people are incorporated into the budget priorities. FOWODE also makes suggestions on how the budget can be gender sensitive to ensure that women are not left behind, as has usually been the case.

VBCs at Radio Karimojong in Napak district discussing girl-child education. It gave the VBCs an opportunity to discuss the issues affecting girls in school especially the high drop-out rates and poor performance of girls.

L-R: Phiona Mujuni, Florence Katunguka, Kabeho Albert and Collins Nyangaro (with headphones) during a radio talk show in Rukungiri. Some of the issues raised include; majority of Ugandans are youth, who should therefore be the prime beneficiaries of government programs; development is driven by quality education and good health.
LESSONS LEARNT

Working with women grassroots groups
Our experience over the year has shown that finding women in spaces in which they are already organized is more sustainable and contributes to a major injection of energy into the women’s rights movement building. Grassroots women have established a place for themselves in the women’s rights agenda. Issues originally considered sensitive like property ownership and control, and which had previously not been high on the agenda, are now a priority. It is, therefore, helping to shift grassroots women perceived role of vulnerable, victim and passive participants in development to empowered and effective leaders and agents of change in their communities.

Media is critical in promoting accountability
The presence of an active and independent media and civil society that are willing to use the information to hold leaders accountable and ask for reforms are key contributing factors in holding leaders accountable. The media acts as a voice of the local people and raises people’s issues to the government. The media provides information to the local people concerning the government programs through the use of radios, newspapers, internet, among others. Information brings power. People need to be informed so that they understand government programs. If there is no media, the government may perform badly without check or balance.

Link to the probability of sanction and punishment
Citizen-led initiatives are more likely to have an impact when the public sector is willing to support accountability initiatives, through a combination of top-down and bottom-up accountability approaches. Community monitoring interventions would work better if they could lead to sanctions and punishment and the probability of criminal action or social sanctions. Without the threat of effective sanctions, citizens’ mobilisation can be difficult to sustain over time. Mechanisms that have the potential to trigger strong sanctions against culprits are more likely to be effective.

Volunteers can influence and shape social norms and values
Volunteerism practiced at the local level enables people to learn new skills and deepen their understanding of their rights. It enables individuals to develop the abilities to engage and participate beyond the household or village; to monitor and track government commitments and spending; and to build groups to move beyond the local to the national and even the global level. It provides a real gateway into engaging more voices, supporting civil society initiatives and complementing government efforts to widen participation, strengthen accountability and draw out institutional responsiveness at all levels for sustainable development. For many women it can be an empowering approach, and for many previously excluded it can build their capacity.

Government programs aimed at service delivery can be successful only if communities are involved. Government does not have the resources and manpower to monitor all of its services. But communities, which are the end users of these services, can easily monitor them and inform their leaders when things are not going right. Experience has shown that interventions can be made to rectify situations before they get out of hand. The most reliable monitor is a community member.

CHALLENGES

Continued narrowing of space for engagement: The year started with the spillover effect of the contentious amendment of the Constitution, a move that many of the citizens in the country were not in agreement with. This discussion had an impact on the freedom of speech and association of the citizens. It also disrupted our work as some of our meetings were mistaken for political meetings by citizens.

Misconception of our work: Overzealous duty bearers continue to construe our work as political inspite of the existence of Memoranda of Understanding with the districts and intentional engagements with key duty bearers in the districts. Our officers are often intimidated and threatened with closure. We have had instances where our work was disrupted and activities could not take place inspite of providing requisite information prior to the activities. This speaks to the increasing mistrust and suspicion of NGOs by the government. Such instances lead to demotivation of our staff, wastage of resources and frustration of our efforts. We will continue to dialogue with duty bearers wherever we work to internalize who we are and what we do.
FOWODE Revenue in 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>Amount Contributed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>153,243,855.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>38,712,175.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Embassy</td>
<td>55,451,710.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>AWDF</td>
<td>468,528,520.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hivos</td>
<td>6,844,237.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>PPG</td>
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<td>EU</td>
<td>768,939,291.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>DGF</td>
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<td>FF</td>
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<td>RTI</td>
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<td>UNW</td>
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<td>WDG/DGF</td>
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<td>CR</td>
<td>598,023,930.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>AJWS</td>
<td>900,530,852.00</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
# EXPENDITURE PER STRATEGY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strategy</th>
<th>Capacity Development</th>
<th>Community Empowerment</th>
<th>Institutional Development</th>
<th>Policy Engagement</th>
<th>Strategic Partnerships and Alliances</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Expenditure</td>
<td>885,342,972</td>
<td>1,136,475,841</td>
<td>2,001,455,584</td>
<td>268,280,792</td>
<td>101,879,156</td>
<td>4,393,434,345</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Income Statement**

- **Revenue:**
  - Community Empowerment: 1,136,475,841
  - Institutional Development: 2,001,455,584
  - Policy Engagement: 268,280,792

- **Expenses:**
  - Capacity Development: 885,342,972
  - Strategic Partnerships and Alliances: 101,879,156

**Net Income:**

### Income

- Revenue: 4,393,434,345

### Expenses

- Expenses: 3,503,203,239

**Profit:**

- Profit: 890,231,106

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**Notes:**

- The above figures are for the year 2018.
- All amounts are in USD.
members of the board

Joyce N. Tamale
Chairperson

Lina Zedriga Waru Abuku
Vice Chairperson

Solome Mukisa
Treasurer

Tezira Jamwa
Member

Beth Juna Mwebaze
Member

Patricia Munabi Babiiha
Board Secretary
Field Officers and Assistants

- Felix Afayo: Day Guard
- Rose Namagembe: Welfare Officer
- Jackson Mugambwa: Driver
- David Eswapu: Office Assistant
- George Kato
- Fatuma Kyomuhangi
- Maureen Kyomuhendo
- Moses Kagwa
- Jomeo Richard
- Simon Jackson Okiror
- Tinner Areeba
- Collins Nyangaro
- Annet Namwaya
- Alex Tibenderana
- Brenda Aromorach
- Dorothy Kesiime
Aine Onan
Justus Abitekaniza
Patrick Rubangakene

Shaping the future