FOWODE has for the past 25 years been at the helm of advocating for women’s rights to participate in leadership and decision-making and for equitable distribution of resources through gender responsive budgeting. We continue to be a pacesetter in promoting gender equality and women’s leadership in Uganda.

Our work with women in politics which spans 25 years has seen us grow the numbers of women leaders at both national and local level that are confidently advocating for gender responsive legislation that prioritizes the needs of women. To date, we have trained over 20,000 women who have influenced passing of gender related laws at national level and by-laws and ordinances at the local government level, increased budget allocation to education and health services, advocated for increased numbers of women in strategic positions at national and local level and increased women's participation in government programmes.
FOWODE broke new ground in 1998 when she pioneered Gender Budgeting in Uganda. Our greatest achievement has been the adoption of gender budgeting by government through the inclusion of a requirement for a Certificate of Gender and Equity in the Public Finance and Management Act (PFMA 2015).

As we commemorate our 25th year of existence, FOWODE will continue to offer a platform for women's learning, networking, sharing experiences and championing women's leadership in all decision making spheres.

When FOWODE commenced convening 'Topowa' and 'Ekyoto' fireplace village discussions and conversations, a one Nankoma Harriet never expected to win the support of men in rallying other men to support women vying for political seats in Bukedi region. She never for a minute ever expected that men in her community would appreciate women as capable leaders! For a long time, she had endured deeply ingrained patriarchal stereotypes associated with women's leadership and the idea of men's seats. The community meetings provided a platform for her to express her issues with electoral processes and an opportunity to propose actions in favour of citizens, especially women.

Harriet has now also taken on the leadership of the Rural Democracy Ride (RDR), a civic community mobilization initiative put in place by FOWODE in partnership with Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development Uganda (CIDD-UG). She utilizes the initiative to encourage citizens to engage in democratic and electoral processes, advocate for a gender agenda and popularize her political program as she interfaces with other seasoned leaders in her community.

"The meetings challenged us to be vocal and hold all leaders and Electoral Commission (EC) officials accountable to us. When FOWODE came back to undertake the 2nd round of civic awareness meetings in my village, all the group members unanimously selected me as the lead community mobiliser on electoral processes. This role has aided me to gain popularity and more confidence in community work thus propelling me to vie for the position of Chairperson LCIII, Kibuku Town Council, a seat that has never been occupied by any woman."

Harriet Nankoma during mobilization
Men Espousing Gender Equality and Positive Masculinities

“I had always had a misconception about educating girls and so, I never paid school fees for any of my 3 daughters. I thought that I would earn more from their bride price upon getting married. I demanded that my daughters help their mother in the garden while their brother went to school. The 1st outreach I had with male champions really opened my eyes. They talked about girls’ rights and emphasized the importance of education, giving examples of Madam Winnie Byanyima and Madam Kadaga. This year, I have taken back all my daughters back to school,” shared Byamubakama Amos from Rubaya Sub County, Kabale District.

“In October 2018, we attended a training with Mr. Ambrose Onoria, in which he urged us to share family responsibilities and household chores with our wives. I specifically remember him challenging us to start cooking and helping our wives in the garden and see whether our testicles would fall off. I tried it and nothing about my manhood has changed. I still get the respect that I used to get, only that it is now spiced with love. Naturally, my sons now also equally share all chores with their sisters. I call upon fellow men to emulate me!” Kalema David testified as he undertook a community outreach in Kalagala, Luweero District.

Data Driven Advocacy

With funding from UKAID, FOWODE in partnership with Femnet are implementing a Data Driven Advocacy project which aims at strengthening and supporting policy advocacy on gender equality issues. These include gender-responsive budgeting at sub-county level and increasing women’s political participation, advocating for more gender responsive government plans, budgets and policies, and engaging women in legislating for gender equality. FOWODE conducted a Training of Trainers for community advocates in order to ensure that, the women groups know how to use data to advocate for policy changes and gender-responsive budgeting.

“My highlight from the training is learning how to use gender disaggregated data to advocate for Gender equality. Women are playing a bigger role, that isn’t being noticed, they are being left out of the budgeting process,” Jackline Mbonabyenky Masindi District.
Women and Leadership

Akera Jackline, a female Councillor for Oding Parish in Unyama SubCounty, Gulu District used to think that leadership at the district level was only reserved for the highly educated rich men who controlled most of the wealth in the community. However, after attending numerous ‘topowa’ discussions she was awakened to the fact that she can also contest for these positions and offer leadership to her community.

“I now have the courage and confidence and will contest as my area LCV Councillor in the forthcoming general elections so that another woman can take up my current position. I have started laying and burning bricks to help me raise money for my nomination and campaigns. I plan to have raised about UGX 3 million by that time.”

FOWODE Peer facilitator Defends Her Land Rights

The old adage, “Charity begins at home,” was brought to life by Skitter Nanteza, a trained WEPE peer & LADs facilitator based in Luweero District. Armed with trainings on leadership and women’s rights, Nanteza single-handedly defended her family land from her conniving relatives and fraudsters.

“In January this year, a group of young men attacked and cut down my entire banana and coffee plantations in the dead of the night. The group later pelted stones at my house while declaring all sorts of profanities. Prior to the attack, I had received several threats from distant relatives who had connived with businessmen, some local leaders and police demanding that I should vacate my family land because they wanted to sell it. They had forged agreements and land titles. Unbeknownst to them, I had all original land ownership documents, well updated and under safe custody which helped me to protect my land.

The TOT on leadership I had attended the previous year came in handy, especially the session on women’s rights in which the facilitator, Madam Georgio Tumwesigye, urged us to always ensure that we have proper registration and documentation of assets. That training granted me self-confidence and courage and I was able to call top police officials in Luweero and the media (NBS) which came to my rescue. 4 of the people who vandalized my crops and plantation were arrested and later released on Police bond though they keep reporting to court, pending prosecution. It’s not yet over, but I am really happy that I set a great example, especially for the women’s groups that I train!”

Skitter Nanteza
FOWODE's participated in the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development held in Victoria falls, Zimbabwe hosted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in collaboration with the African Union Commission, the African Development Bank and the United Nations System as the sixth session of the Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development.

The objective of the meeting themed “2020–2030: a decade to deliver a transformed and prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063” was to review progress, share experiences and lessons learned, and build a consensus on recommendations in the form of key messages to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

During the meeting, FOWODE shared her experience regarding achievements and challenges of women in Politics and Agenda 2030 and with reference on evidence based on FOWODE’s study reports like Violence Against Women in Elections, Reality Check and Women on Direct seats.

FOWODE continues to identify platforms and fora which enhance on her work to meaningfully deliver on women's equality agenda. FOWODE attended a stakeholders' meeting which gave more insight and contribution to her work on civic education and advocacy for women's meaningful engagement in political and democratic processes.

The meeting was to generate consensus on a common unifying narrative on Uganda’s electoral process with a perspicuous focus on the 2021 general elections and to identify the key critical areas where civil society sector needs to play a role.

This meeting took note that there was limited time available to the 2021 General Elections and therefore through this meeting, FOWODE among other CSOs recommitted themselves to working collectively to achieve results in the following identified critical areas in the 2020/2021 general elections.

Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development

Stakeholders meeting on Uganda’s Electoral Process
Tell Us about yourself
My name is Rose Namagembe and I have worked at FOWODE for the past 12 years. I joined FOWODE as a cleaner. When I came for the interview, I remember being asked if I would be able to manage the role and I reassured the hiring manager that I would adequately handle the tasks. Of course, the first days were not easy but I was diligent in my job, and that caught the attention of my supervisors.

Any Challenges?
When I was offered the job, I was very happy but at the time I was struggling with an asthmatic child. Whenever the child got an attack I would be called away from work but I am glad that my employers where always understanding.

From a Cleaner to a Welfare Officer!
Whenever the previous chef would go on leave, I was always on standby and fill in for him and eventually started gaining experience. In January 2015, I was called in by management and was promoted to the position, in turn getting more pay. I was a bit skeptical about my new responsibilities but right now, I am confident in myself and my abilities.

What have lessons have you learnt over the last 12 years?
For the past 12 years, I have learnt how to deal with people and the varying personalities.

On 19 January, 2020 we lost a staff member, Alex Tibenderana who was the Field Officer for Luweero District.

He passed on in fatal accident in Luwero district when the vehicle he was traveling in was knocked by a speeding bus.

He was laid to rest at his ancestral home in Bunyangu district where FOWODE staff joined friends and family to send him off to his final resting place on 20th January 2020

Alex, we celebrate you May you continue to rest in Peace.