High Court Justice Susan Okalany has called for building, strengthening and galvanizing of women's collective power for a just and sustainable world for all noting that the change women want comes from the movements they build.

She emphasized that mentorship is critical if women are to consolidate and sustain the gains of the women's movement. She observed that if it was not for FOWODE, a contributor in building the women's movement in Uganda, she would not know her rights.

While giving her keynote address, at the National Annual Solidarity Forum for Women in the Public Sector, Justice Okalany said that the women's movement should be rejuvenated through alliance-building with diverse constituencies and galvanizing networks. She noted that due to the women's movements, women's rights have become more visible.

The Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), Sylvia Ntambi Muweebwa said the majority of women remain stuck at lower-level positions in the public sector. She revealed that only 21.6% of women in the public sector enjoy the high positions (Permanent Secretaries and Commissioners among others), 33.3% middle level positions while 43% in lower positions.

Ntambi attributed this to the lack of nurturing of the young women in the public sector, on how they can rise to different positions. She added that with the majority of women occupying the lowest offices in the public sector, men continue to take lead in decision making.
The head of the Budget Monitoring and Accountability Unit at the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Margaret Kakande, cited reproduction which mostly restrains women's development and promotions in public service.

"Many can't balance reproduction and production which affects their performance. You must have a basic level of education at an early age. Many fail to get their master's degrees thus hindering them from being promoted while others fail due to lack of mentoring." - Margaret Kakande

FOWODE in partnership with the Women in Public Sector (WiPS) Consortium including Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), and Femme Forte with support from Robert Bosch Foundation (RBF) has been implementing a project titled, “Amplifying Women's Voice and Agency in the Public Sector”. The project aims at harnessing the power of women in the public sector to enable them champion public policy making and implementation processes for the transformation of women's lives in Uganda.

Women Can Become Leaders Even Without Money

After Christine Adeke attending the FOWODE Women's empowerment and Leadership training, she was inspired to join politics and serve her community. Before the training, Christine believed that politics was only meant for those who have money and although she always had dreams of being a leader, she thought that there was no way she could make it without resources.

“Through the training that we received in June this year, I learnt a number of things like running a winning campaign. I also learnt that women can also become leaders with or without money. My husband has also been supportive! He was the one who picked for me the nomination forms and he has even invested in my campaign. At least now I know that nothing can stop me from reaching for my dream.” - Christine Adeke

As a result of the trainings, Christine has been inspired to join the race for a political position, and she is aspiring to become a youth councilor in the 2021 elections. She hopes to use this position to empower the youth by using the little funds that are given to councilors to support the youth groups in her community. Having been a beneficiary of a FOWODE trained and supported group, she appreciates the importance of groups and how they boost development in a community.

In 2026, she hopes to cast her net wider and contest for the position of a parish councilor in order to have a bigger impact in the community. She confidently says that she sees herself becoming the next district Woman Member of Parliament in 2031.
Health service delivery has always been a problem. In Gulu District, women from Laban Village neighboring Pukony health center II preferred going to traditional birth attendants because the midwives at the facility did not give them assistance especially when it came to night deliveries. This was because the Health Center had no source of light.

Ajok Patricia, narrated how she almost lost her life while giving birth. She said that when she started experiencing labor pains, she went to Pukony Health center for assistance. However, the nurse on duty didn't make any attempt to help her because of the challenge of lighting especially during night deliveries. This left her no option but to go to another health center, unfortunately she didn't make it to the health center and delivered her twins on the way with assistance from the boda boda man who had carried her. Patricia's story is similar that those of many women in rural areas. Unfortunately, many do not live to tell their story.

Through our Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) monitoring visits with community members, a visit was made to Pukony health center on 17th December 2019 during which concerns about the lighting problem were raised. This was followed by a community dialogue during which duty bearers pledged to fix the problems presented by the community members. In a recent monitoring, we noted that the lighting system at Pukony had improved. Solar panels have been installed, and this greatly improved the service delivery at the maternity ward which was a nightmare for mothers.

In June 2020, under the Women's Empowerment and Leadership Project, we carried out a number of trainings in the 5 districts of Gulu, Luweero, Amuria, Kibuku and Rukungiri where the project is being implemented. The trainings were intended to enhance the knowledge of the women's groups we work with in Leadership and Entrepreneurship.

Masitulah Nanyonga, a member of Tukolebukozi Women's Group in Bububi was one of the women who benefited from this training. Her group was trained by Agali Awamu women's group Ntawawulwa in Luweero district.

For Masitulah, the training helped her get her voice. She had always had hopes of being a leader and strongly believes that its because of this that she was nominated as a youth sub county councilor for Zirobwe.

"These outreaches have built my inspiration to aspire for greater leadership positions. I have for long had leadership dreams which are now turning into a reality. This is because I can now address a big crowd, and I have the ability to develop a winning campaign message and strategy." - Masitulah Nanyonga
Asuk Sarah is one of the community members who benefited from the Leadership and Entrepreneurship training that were held in June 2020 in Amuria district. Through this training, Sarah says she learnt a lot about record keeping and how to maintain a business. Equipped with knowledge and skills, she was able to purchase a ground nut grinding machine for her community in Asamuk Sub County. The grinding machine has been beneficial to her personally as a source of income and her community, since its offering a service that they did not previously have. Sarah also picked interest in joining politics and will contest for a leadership position in the 2021 general elections.

The training gave me the fundamental knowledge that I needed in order to run a successful campaign. Using this knowledge, I was able to make it through the NRM primaries as a flag bearer for the Parish Councilor post. My opponents will not see what will hit them during the general elections. - Asuk Sarah

Male Champions of Change

As a man, it’s my role to make my home a model. Change begins with me. All women and men are equal as we are all human. Am contesting for LCIII chairperson Kalagala sub county but should any woman come out, and show interest in the position, I will step down. I also call upon other men to change their attitude and support women in leadership.”

- Henry Kimuli

More women on hearing the call to actively participate in leadership, have picked nomination forms and were nominated for various elective positions in the sub county.

" Jealous among men and women has been the biggest cause of the increase in GBV cases. It is natural for one to get jealous, but you just need to learn your partner’s character if you are to leave in harmony " Kakulu Robert shares with other men on the causes of GBV
Abifasi is thankful to FOWODE for equipping her and her group members with courage and knowledge in leadership and governance. She notes that she will contest with other women for the position of Sub County Woman Councillor for Pakanyi Sub County, Masindi District.

Tell us about your journey in FOWODE?
I joined FOWODE in 2018. I was inspired to join FOWODE after reading some publications on its website. There was a publication titled 'Silence is Deadly' that caught my attention because, it resonated with me. When I joined, I looked for that publication because it made sense to me, as there are many people out there who are dying in silence. Some don't know how to speak out, while others have been robbed of the chance to air out their grievances. Therefore, I was inspired to join such that I can help them speak up.

Tell us about your journey in FOWODE?
Of recent we have seen you are active on social media, what inspired this?
I am passionate about women's empowerment. Whenever I come across anything to do with women and girls' empowerment, I feel good. FOWODE's social media platforms post good content to do with gender equality and empowerment of women, so I feel that by sharing our work I am helping enhance FOWODE's visibility.

Tell us about your journey in FOWODE?
Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
I used to see myself as an auditor. I however now see myself using my experience in finance and accounts to help women in entrepreneurship. Currently I offer services to women who own small business enterprises and are having a hard time keeping their books of accounts.

Tell us about your journey in FOWODE?
What do you like most about FOWODE?
I like the simplicity of FOWODE. It is an organization that is purpose driven and result oriented. They have a mission and vision which guide them and I find that very inspiring.

Tell us about your journey in FOWODE?
How do you reconcile your Christian values with Feminism?
The Bible has a holistic approach on gender-equality. In the book of Genesis, we see gender-equality where God created a woman and a man. I know there are some misconceptions about how women are referred to in the Bible. However, the problem is that most people fail to understand the context through which some of these scriptures were written. It is therefore important that we understand the context.

Tell us about your journey in FOWODE?
Spotlight
One on One With Hellen Anyait
Tell us about yourself
My name is Hellen Anyait, a Finance Assistant with FOWODE. I am a happily married, born again Christian evangelist and a treasurer at my church. I am also an activist and feminist. My passion for feminism was inspired by my mother who was a social worker and an activist.

Tell us about yourself
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