Women Shattering the Glass Ceiling: Experiences from the 2016 Elections in Uganda
Women Shattering the Glass Ceiling: Experiences from the 2016 Elections in Uganda

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)
Kampala, Uganda
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In a special way, FOWODE would like to thank Patricia Munabi Babiha the Executive Director, Juliet Nakato Odoi the Director of Programmes, Elizabeth Ampairwe the Women and Leadership Programme Manager for the critical input invested in this report. Last but not least, we acknowledge Georgia Tumwesigye, the Women and Leadership Programme Officer for the logistical support.

We are hopeful all of these efforts will be rewarded when we begin to see an upward trend of women contesting on Open Seats.
### List of Acronyms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AWDF</td>
<td>African Women’s Development Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DP</td>
<td>Democratic Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>Electoral Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOC</td>
<td>Equal Opportunities Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FDC</td>
<td>Forum for Democratic Change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOWODE</td>
<td>Forum for Women in Democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDLOA</td>
<td>International Development Law Organisation Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCIII</td>
<td>Local Council Three</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCs</td>
<td>Local Councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCV</td>
<td>Local Council Five</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLHUD</td>
<td>Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MP</td>
<td>Member of Parliament</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRA</td>
<td>National Resistance Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NRM</td>
<td>National Resistance Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SACCOs</td>
<td>Savings and Credit Cooperatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULGA</td>
<td>Uganda Local Government Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPC</td>
<td>Uganda People’s Congress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Aid for International Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UWONET</td>
<td>Uganda Women’s Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VSLA</td>
<td>Village Savings and Loans Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDG</td>
<td>Women Democracy Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WDN</td>
<td>Women Democracy Network</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
"Women Shattering the Glass Ceiling" documents experiences of women on Open Seats in Parliament as well as local councils in Uganda. The study was motivated by the persistently low numbers of women on direct seats, and the myths around these seats regarded as male spaces as opposed to Affirmative Action seats. It sought to establish women’s motivation to contest for Open Seats, the challenges they encounter and the strategies they draw upon to negotiate political resistance. The study also documents strategic actions that can promote an increase of women on Open Seats in the future.

In order to capture the rich, varied and complex experiences of women, the study adopted qualitative interviewing and narrative analysis. Overall, the study covered a total of twenty-two (22) participants. These included eight female legislators, two female LCV chairpersons, one male LCV chairperson, eight female LCIII chairpersons as well as three female LCV councillors on open seats. The study imperative was informed by FOWODE’s conviction that if women are empowered to participate at various levels, it will, in turn, have a composite effect on legislation and resource allocation in the country.

The study noted divergent and pronounced myths and perceptions about open seats. These perceptions include open seats as ekifo ky’abasajja (men’s space) as opposed to how open seats are defined in the constitution of Uganda as a space for women and men alike. Article 78 (1) spells out that “Parliament shall consist of members directly elected to represent constituencies; one-woman representative for every district” and other members to represent social interest groups such as the army, youth, workers, persons with disabilities and other groups as Parliament may determine. While the article does not limit women to the district reserved seat, conversations in Uganda’s political discourse quickly constituted the woman district representative seat as a “women’s seat;” consequently perceiving the directly elected constituency seat (open seat) as the ‘other’ space that men are sanctioned to vie for.

The report reveals that the idea of reserved seats vis-à-vis Open Seats as polarised political spaces has been deeply entrenched in communities’ everyday ways of perceiving and doing politics. In almost all the interviews conducted, women who dared challenge this binary narrative reported the political resistance they faced, and the constraints women face to access diverse opportunities towards political leadership. The study noted increasing support for women to contest for Open Seats. These opportunities include women’s rights organisations under the auspices of Women Democracy Group (WDG) building capacities of women local councilors to vie for open seats. The report also highlights a significant number of women on open seats who were motivated by their previous experience on Affirmative Action seats. For them, reserved seats for women acted as an entry point and a launchpad to open seats. In other cases, it is documented that “although a number of those who stood on open seats lost, there is a shifting discourse from, not only, looking at ‘how many’ women were contesting for direct seats, to exploring the potential of women demystifying direct seats as ‘male seats.’ Beyond measuring the success in terms of winners and losers, women’s interest in vying for Open Seats was a success in itself in as far as it showcased a wide range of powerful strategies that women candidates drew upon in order to navigate around patriarchal political structures and electoral processes.

The study confirmed the enormous blockages that women on Open Seats face, with reasonings around culture, religion and traditional gender division of labour given as the most important to resist women’s candidature. However, it was revealing to understand how women drew on the same structures of oppression (culture, religion and historical discourses) to frame strategies that allowed them to negotiate the resistances they met. A lot remains to be done for women to have equal opportunities with men to run for Open Seats. This study points out ways to negotiate obstacles and to promote the notion that Open Seats are equally accessible to women and men.
CHAPTER 1.0
1.0 INTRODUCTION

FOWODE is a national non-partisan organisation established in 1995 with a vision of a “just and fair society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision making processes.” To-date, FOWODE offers a platform for women’s learning, networking, sharing experiences and championing women’s leadership in all decision-making spheres. In a bid to contribute to her core mandate, FOWODE updated her groundbreaking research titled “Reality Check” that was published in 2014. Evidence from the study and other related researches such as “Unmasking Violence Against Women in Elections” revealed that women’s meaningful participation in politics in Uganda is still low due to a number of factors including the high levels of patriarchal manifestations in the private and public spheres, commercialization of politics and the volatile political processes. Although Affirmative Action has enabled women reach the critical mass in politics, it has also created a glass ceiling, with many communities viewing Open Seats as a preserve for men.

1.1 The framing of Affirmative Action and the emergence of Open Seats

Affirmative Action was born out of the women’s struggle through their active engagement in the guerrilla war of the 1980s and its aftermath. The policy was later institutionalized in the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and its Article 32 (1) states: Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, the State shall take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender, age, disability or any other reason created by history, tradition or custom, for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them.

The Constitution further provides for women representation in local government in article 180 (1) (b), stipulating that “one-third of the membership of each local government council shall be reserved for women.” Further reservations for women’s political representation are noted in article 78 (1), that “Parliament shall consist of members directly elected to represent constituencies; one woman representative for every district; such numbers of representatives of the army, youth, workers, persons with disabilities and other groups as Parliament may determine…” (Republic of Uganda, 1995). In effect, women were afforded reserved seats in form of a woman district representative in Parliament and one-third representation at the national level and in local councils, while they can also vie for directly elected seats to represent constituencies. These multiple avenues were aimed at redressing imbalances (women’s inadequate access to public political leadership) created by history, tradition or custom.

1.2 Women in Parliament

Institutionalised measures in form of affirmative action have registered a significant increase in the numbers of women in Uganda’s politics both in Local Governments and in the national legislature. Table 1 below demonstrates how women representation in Parliament increased to 139 (33%) by 2016 from 1996.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>No. Districts</th>
<th>Assembly</th>
<th>AA</th>
<th>Open seat</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Total Women</th>
<th>Total MPs</th>
<th>%Women</th>
<th>%Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>NRC</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>CA</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>286</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>82.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>75.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>319</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>Parliament</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Madanda (2017:117)
After a series of by-elections that followed the 2016 general elections, women constituted 34.9% of Uganda’s legislature by 2019 (IPU, 2019). According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union Report of 2019 (as shown in the extract), Uganda is ranked 32nd out of the 191 states, posting 160 females of the 459 legislators.

1.3 Limited numbers of women on open seats

Uganda has attained a critical mass of women in political representation as indicated in the table above. However, women who contest for open seats remain marginal. According to the findings of this report, there are only 20 female legislators who were directly elected to represent open seat constituencies in the 10th Parliament as of the year 2019. These make only 4.6% of the entire 10th Parliament. At the local council level, there are only three (3), female district chairpersons, out of the 126 districts. The female LC5 chairpersons are from Kanungu, Kole, and Kumi districts. According to the 2018 Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) report, only 0.01% of women are serving as Local Council III Chairpersons/Division Mayors countrywide.

Table 2: Female legislators on Open seats in the 10th Parliament (2016-2021)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name, Political Affiliation and Constituency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lucy Achiro Otim, (Independent); Pader, Arul North County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Betty Amoding Ongom (UPC); Oyam, Oyam County-South</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anite Evelyn (NRM); Koboko, Koboko Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Syda Bbumba Namirembe (NRM); Nakaseke, Nakaseke North County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Veronica Birungi Nanyondo (NRM); Kalangala, Kyamuswa County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Ruth Katukabe (NRM), Bukomansimbi, Bukomansimbi North County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Naome Kibaaju (NRM); Sheema, Sheema North County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Amelia Anne Kijumbadde (NRM); Mpigi, Mawokota county North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Margaret Muhanga Mugisa (NRM); Kabarole, Burahya County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Florence Namayanja (DP); Masaka, Bukoto County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Betty Nambooze (DP); Mukono, Mukono Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Persis Princess Namuganza (Independent); Namutamba, Bukano County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Annet Nyakecho (Independent); Tororo, Tororo North County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Robina Rwakoojo Robin (NRM); Gomba, Gamba West County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Rosemary Tumusime Bikoaka (NRM); Wakiso, Entebbe Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Paula Mary Kebrungi Turyahikayo (NRM), Rukungiri, Rubabo County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Rehema Watongola Tiwue (NRM); Kamuli, Kamui Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Beatrice Anywar Atim (Independent); Kitgum, Kitgum Municipality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Rose Mutonyi Masaaba (NRM); Manafwa, Bubulo County West</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Compiled from https://www.parliament.go.ug/find-an-mp

1.4 Reviewing the effects of the Affirmative Action Policy

Several studies have documented how women entered into male-dominated politics in the late 1980s (Tamale, 1999; Goetz, 2002; Ahikire, 2007; Mwiine, 2018). Anne Marie Goetz (2002) alerts us on the ways in which women activists negotiated for women’s political representation through Affirmative Action Policy. Uganda’s model of affirmative action drew on the liberal feminist notion of ‘inclusion’ and took the form of reserved seats for women in the national legislature and on the Local Councils, offering women political representation in a separate and protected arena of women-only competition (Mwiine, 2018: 23)

In a recent study “Inclusion and Exclusion: The case of Gender Equality in 2016 General Elections”, Madanda (2017: 173) attributes the marginality of women on Open Seats to the exclusionary practices in politics which conceptualise power as limited in supply. That is, that once one person has more, the other invariably has less. Such a limited notion of power, especially between women and men as political actors, accounts for women’s marginality on Open Seats.
A critical reflection on Affirmative Action Policy

Affirmative action has been critiqued particularly for how it was framed in its inception and the compromises stemming from the politics of mobilization (Ahikire, 2007: 14). Additionally, there have been concerns "about the ghettoizing effect of reserved seats and the danger that women as a group may be treated as a vote bank for the ruling party on whose patronage they rely. This perception has deepened from the mid-2000s onwards through the government's incessant creation of electoral districts; given that every additional district automatically creates a new post for a female MP, women have been constructed as a primary beneficiary of 'districtization'" (Ahikire & Mwine, 2019: 71).

Earlier, Tamale pointed out how affirmative action, once drawn upon as a lone policy, can achieve little without the support of other policies directed at reducing disparities in wealth, status, and power. Tamale agrees with other feminist scholars that affirmative action has the potential to "co-opt talented women and minorities into the ranks of business, professional, and political elites without challenging the fundamental structural characteristics of the political economy." More recently, Mwine (2018: 23) reiterated Affirmative Action policy's reproduction of men and women as political categories in opposition to each other. Uganda's model of affirmative action offered women political representation in a separate and protected arena of women-only competition. This framing consequently constituted reserved seats as the only spaces for women's engagement and open seats as "men's seats."

In effect, Affirmative Action has produced its own exclusive enclave and normalized it as a women's space, in opposition to men. This kind of polarity of Affirmative Action as the sanctioned space for women's political engagement and men as actors in directly elected seats is deeply embedded in the everyday political narratives and propaganda across all the communities we visited in the country.

Notably, this narrative of men and women's spaces for political engagement is rooted in the framing of affirmative action that quickly gained a local dialectal label – ekifo ky'abakalya, (women's space) which in effect presumed the open seat as ekifo ky'abasajja (men's space). As a parallel structure, the Affirmative Action Policy constrained competition between women and men, normalized mainstream politics as a male space consequently marginalizing women. Therefore, women who contest for Open Seats have a story to tell, pointing out issues that need to be addressed in the conversations on women and Open Seats in the future elections.

1.5 Rationale of the Study

Given the political dynamics that emerged out of the experiences of women's reserved seats, in particular, the polarity between Affirmative Action seats and directly elected seats, FOWODE undertook a country-wide study to document experiences of women leaders who dared to vie for open seats in Parliament, at LC5 and LC3 levels in Uganda. The study, which was supported by the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF), targeted women leaders in these positions in order to document their journeys to leadership. These narratives centre on personal experiences and highlight ways in which open seats have been constituted overtime in Uganda’s political discourse. Furthermore, the findings illustrate women's motivations to vie for open seats. The report also documents strategic maneuvers female politicians drew upon to negotiate resistance to their political choices and the implications these strategies have for women's political leadership in Uganda. The study particularly focused on developing appropriate advocacy strategies to increase the number of women on mainstream seats in Uganda. Insights from this study illuminate possibilities to contribute towards demystifying patriarchal myths that mainstream politics (Open Seats) is a male preserve and seek to motivate women to aspire for Open Seats at different political levels in the forthcoming general elections.

1.6 Study Objectives

The overall purpose of this study was to document the journeys of women leaders on Open Seats in Parliament and local councils in Uganda with the following objectives:

i) To highlight their motivations and the kind of issues they faced

ii) To examine the challenges encountered and mitigation strategies, women's victories and experiences as leaders in the positions they occupy.

iii) To draw up strategic actions towards increasing the numbers of women on Open Seats today and in the future.
1.7 Study Methodology

The study covered a total of 22 participants. These included 8 female legislators, two female LCV chairpersons, 1 male LCV chairperson, 8 female LCIII chairpersons as well as 3 female LCV councillors on open seats. Special focus was given to the female LCV councillors on the direct seats to understand how they mobilise for political support and whether there are possibilities where communities may be exclusively represented by women. In addition to women participants, the research team held conversations with a male LCV chairperson to explore ways in which men experience and relate with women who are elected on open seats.

Participants were selected purposively to cover a diversity of social identities among the women, namely; political party affiliation, religion, culture, and region. The focus on participants’ diverse identifications was intended to analyse ways in which these different contexts influence women’s motivations, political ambitions and consequent participation in political leadership.

Table 3: Sampled Districts, Constituencies and Sub-Counties/Divisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>MP Constituency</th>
<th>Sub-county/Division</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mityana</td>
<td>Mityana Municipality</td>
<td>Busimbi Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mubende</td>
<td>Not applicable (N/A)</td>
<td>Mubende District Local Council South Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buikwe</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Buikwe District Local Council Najjembe Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jinja</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Jinja District Local Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pallisa</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Agule Sub-County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kumi</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Kumi District Local Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dokolo</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Dokolo Town Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gulu</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Patiko Sub-County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kole</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>District Local Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oyam</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Otwal Sub-County, Oyam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arua</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Arua Hill Division</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rukungiri</td>
<td>Rubabo County</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pader</td>
<td>Arul North county</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kamuli</td>
<td>Kamuli Municipality</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nakaseke</td>
<td>Nakaseke North</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaberamaido</td>
<td>Kaberamaido County</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gomba</td>
<td>Gomba West</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheema</td>
<td>Sheema North</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Fieldwork, May-June, 2019
The study involved the following approaches:

a. **A desk review of the literature on gender**, political representation, and participation in Uganda. Particular attention was given to women in governance, decision making structures and processes to highlight contemporary debates and to map out trends in the numbers of women contesting for Open Seats and eventual winners in previous electoral processes.

**Qualitative interviewing and narrative analysis:** The study drew on narrative analysis as a qualitative method of enquiry and theory (Cortazzi, 2001: 384). In particular, this narrative approach focussed on how women MPs and councilors actively narrated their experiences in political processes. In the analysis, particular attention was paid to the ways in which women politicians related their stories, the emphases pointed out and the kinds of interpretations they gave to their experiences. This methodology enabled the research process to capture women’s investedness in political contests.

b. **Qualitative data analysis:** The narrated experiences were analysed focusing on the emerging insights from personal narratives, the meanings participants attach to their motivation to vie for seats dominated by men, notions attached to political propaganda especially those forms that derogate and infantilise women candidates and voters, and the lessons women draw from their everyday leadership experiences. The analysis also extracted key recommendations for future advocacy geared towards increasing the numbers of women on Open Seats in the national legislature and local councils.
CHAPTER 2.0
This section highlights the genesis of the concept of Open Seats and the impact it has had on women’s political fortunes. It explores how, despite perceptual blockages, some women have negotiated historical, cultural, religious and traditional impediments to contest for and win Open Seats. Women’s experiences are traced through conversations on common themes around the conceptualisation of Open Seats, motivations to vie for open seats, and experiences on these seats such as strategic negotiations around political resistance. The report also shares women’s reflections on the implications of winning an Open Seat and recommends actions to consolidate, sustain and increase women’s participation.

2.1 Perceptions around Open Seats

There are divergent, yet pronounced narratives in conversations with elected women leaders who represent geographical constituencies rather than seats reserved for women. Stories around Open Seats include “Open Seat as ekifo ky’abasajja” and Open Seats as a constitutional space for women and men alike. As earlier indicated, Open Seats are provided for in Article 78 (1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. The Article spells out that “Parliament shall consist of members directly elected to represent constituencies; one-woman representative for every district” and other members to represent social interest groups such as the army, youth, workers, persons with disabilities and other groups as Parliament may determine. Consequently, Open Seats and reserved seats – woman representative for districts – are listed along each other as avenues through which to access political leadership. While the article hardly limits women to the district reserved seat, conversations in Uganda’s political discourse quickly constituted the woman district representative seat as a “women’s seat,” consequently relegating directly elected constituency seat (Open Seats) as the ‘other’ space that men are sanctioned to vie for. The idea of reserved seats vis-à-vis Open Seats as polarised political spaces has been deeply entrenched in communities’ everyday ways of perceiving and doing politics. In almost all the interviews conducted, women who dared challenge this binary narrated the political resistance they faced, and how it constrains women’s diverse opportunities to access political leadership.

In a recent study, “Is the law working for her: Experiences and Perspectives of Women in Uganda’s 2016 general elections”, women’s rights organisations decry the blatant resistance that female contestants of Open Seats faced. In one of the cases, a female contestant was asked by the men; “You woman why don’t you go for your seat which is reserved for you and leave this seat because it is for men?” (UWONET, 2016: 41). These reminders, which stem from the ways in which reserved seats for women were conceived, remain a huge blockage enshrouded in ineffective electoral civic education on the availability of the Open Seats to men and women equally.

In an interview, Hon Achiro Lucy Otim, (Independent) the Aruu North Member of Parliament in Pader District, pointed out that educated and seasoned male politicians she contested with crafted and popularised a propaganda which reminded her that by vying for an Open Seat, she was “going to a wrong toilet, a men’s toilet!” In Kumi, Christine Apolot, an LCV Chairperson shared a similar experience during her campaigns. She narrated how, during the campaigns, voters condemned her for standing against men saying that “it is against the will of God for a woman to lead a man.” “Kumi will go against the will of God and the Bible, they chanted.”

In Buikwe District, the male LCV chairperson told us “people will say that women who contest for Open Seats are encroaching on the men’s seat: ‘Baba balumbye ekifo eky’abasajja.’” Moreover, he recalled that even women, especially those in their sixties and above often questioned women contestants of Open Seats, often asking “Why are you attacking men, yet we have our position here? Why don’t you respect men?” In such cases then the practice of women contesting for a direct seat is seen as an attack on the men, one that is conceived as unfeminine and disrespectful.

In Pallisa, Atuko Jane Frances, the LCIII chairperson of Agulie Sub-County, told us how her opponents argued that ‘A menstruating woman cannot be sent to sit on the men’s chair’. What if she contaminates it during her menstruation? If she wins, we should buy her a mat.” In this quite unfortunate political propaganda, Jane Frances and indeed other women who contest for Open Seats are depicted in derogatory ways as unfeminine and disrespectful.

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Women Shattering the Glass Ceiling

In Kamuli, Hon. Rehema Wetongola shares about how district Khadis resisted her attempt to address people in Mosques during her bid for Kamuli Municipality.

In Buikwe, Jinja, and Arua, districts that have a significant number of followers of the Islamic faith, participants talked of how women are not viewed as leaders.

Muslims do not often value female leadership. They argue that women cannot lead men, and this has been a problem for women. Even Christians who seem lenient in terms of women's rights and relationship with men, they too have not demonstrably promoted women in religious leadership (Male LCV Chairperson, Buikwe District).

In effect, women's energies are spent in negotiating these re-created patriarchies and proving their worth, before they can pursue their aspiration for Open Seats and political vitality.

2.2 Open Seats and the narrative of Women who win ‘men’s seats’

While the construction of Open Seats as men's seats may have limited a greater number of women from vying for these seats, there are a few women who have dared to challenge the myth. Many women interviewed in this study talked about how they competed with men and defeated them. This narrative was commonly characterised by women's expression of pride, esteem, and confidence, having "competed with" men who, in the history of Ugandan politics, have dominated pre- and post-independence political leadership. The reinvigorating and emphatic way this narrative is framed and told highlights the kind of success that women narrators associate it with. For some women, being able to dare and vie for a position that is often perceived as men's seat and winning is not only a demonstration of women's leadership potential but also a critical step towards challenging the myths around Open Seats as exclusive political spaces for male participation. In Buikwe, for example, there was an observable celebration of women on Open Seats. In our conversation with the LCV chairperson, Mathias Kigongo, he told us that there is one female LCV Councillor (on the direct seat) in the district and people in the community loosely refer to her as "a male councillor who is a woman." When we requested to talk to this popular female councilor who has earned herself a name from contesting with and defeating men on a direct seat, the district chairperson offered to give her a call, introduce us to her and requested for an interview appointment. In the telephone conversation, the chairperson said, “Hullo, (voice over), councillor omusajja, gyoli? Nakawanga, eyesimba nabasajja nabamegga!!” literally meaning a female councilor who dares to compete with men and wins them.

In Jinja, the deputy LCV chairperson also alerted us to a case where a female LCV Councillor on a direct seat would introduce herself as “half a man, half a woman”, often raising ambiguities around who she is in the audience. These, often humorous, descriptions of female councillors on Open Seats are more than just essential descriptive accounts of who these women are. Rather, they entail in-depth cultural constructions with meanings that speak broadly to the challenge that female councillors have mounted against the masculine political hegemony.

However, this narrative of “contesting against and defeating men” as opposed to “contesting for a direct seat” inadvertently constructs, reproduces and legitimises the myth that open seats are men’s seats. This is due to the fact that the narrative centres around women’s competition with men as the issue rather than the direct seat and the idea of representing both men and women’s interests in a given constituency. Additionally, the labels given to women on Open Seats, despite often enshrouded in humour, denigrate them (Mwiine, 2018). The women end up being belittled and constructed negatively in their communities as errant, deviant and not fit to be ‘women’ because of their ‘disrespect’ to men. Women also feel they have to take on a masculine identity in order to be accepted in the male-dominated politics. The narrative also has the potential to create differences amongst women as a social and political constituency, especially when women who hold Open Seats are described as extraordinary and their victory as unexpected while women on Affirmative Action seats are negated. Importantly, the labels such as ‘nakawanga’, ‘male councillor who is a woman’, ‘half man-half-woman’, may inadvertently reproduce and consequently legitimise open seats as spaces for men. In effect, the celebration of women on Open Seats as unexpected and extraordinary hardly frees the Open Seats of the masculine myths that entangle them.
2.3 Prospects for women contesting Open Seats: Reflections from 2016 general elections

In a study conducted in Kampala, Gulu, Yumbe, Kanungu, Masaka and Mbale districts, Women’s Democracy Group (WDG) (2016) identified subversive trends in narratives around women contesting for Open Seats. These trends were investigated through tracing women contestants on Open Seats at different political positions as well as soliciting electorate views on their readiness to vote for them. The report emphasized that “although a number of those who stood for Open Seats lost, there is a shifting discourse from, not only, looking at ‘how many’ women were contesting for direct seats to explore the potential of women demystifying direct seats as ‘male seats.’” Beyond measuring the success in terms of winners and losers, women’s interest in vying for Open Seats was a success in as far as it showcased a wide range of powerful strategies that women candidates drew upon in order to navigate around patriarchal political structures and electoral processes. One of the then female candidates noted, “For me, I know that whether I win or lose, in future there will be no questions of whether women can stand on open seats. People in Kanungu will not ask any other woman who follows me, why they are standing on a man’s seat. The only way to demystify the myth of women’s seats vis-à-vis men’s seats is to have as many women stand on competitive seats whether they lose or win.” (Women Democracy Group, 2016:14).

2.4 On the voters’ willingness to elect women on Open Seats

As earlier noted, the other aspect investigated by the Women’s Consortium on Democratic Governance during the 2016 general elections is the question of whether the public was ready for women political leaders on Open Seats. Through its survey, the research inquired from the communities in selected districts to understand whether “community members were ready to vote for women if they contested for positions of President, Member of Parliament, Local Council Five Chairperson and Local Council Three Chairperson” (Women Democracy Group, 2016: 16).

In terms of ranking, respondents felt it was better for women to contest as Members of Parliament, followed by LC V chairpersons, LCIII Chairperson and lastly as President. Voters’ willingness to vote women on MP and not LCIII and LC V is attributed to politics of the Affirmative Action Policy that has gradually given women an opportunity to demonstrate their leadership potential.

2.5 Tracing routes to open seats

Women participants pointed out different motivational factors in their journey to directly elected constituencies. Inspiration was drawn from personal reasons such as one’s level of education, parental guidance, and modeling; political timing, e.g. formation of new constituencies; gender trainings from women’s rights organisations such as FOWODE, UWONET, WDN, among others; as well as drawing from previous political experience.

2.6 Reserved seats as an entry point to mainstream politics

A significant number of women on Open Seats pointed to their previous political experiences as key motivators to contest for Open Seats. Some of the journeys of these women political leaders are illustrated in the table 4.

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2 Women’s Democracy Group is a consortium of women’s rights organisations working towards promoting women’s participation in politics. The group is composed of members such as FOWODE, Action for Development, Uganda Women’s Network and Women’s Democracy Network.
Table 4: Tracing the Journey of Female political leadership on open seats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of a political leader and her current position</th>
<th>Previous position</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hon. Rehema Wetongola MP Kamuli Municipality (2016-2021)</td>
<td>District Woman Councilor for 15 years. During the 3 terms, she served as Secretary for Works Committee, a period in which Kamuli district was ranked the 1st East African district with an improved road network.</td>
<td>First-time contestant on the direct seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Christine Apolot, LCV Chairperson, Kumi District (2016 – 2021)</td>
<td>Woman Councilor and Secretary for Social Services</td>
<td>First time to contest LCV seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Josephine Kasya, LCV Chairperson, Kanungu District</td>
<td>Secretary for Women at Resistance Council 3 in 1989. In 1998, she became woman councilor at LCIII and later unopposed female LCV chairperson of Kanungu in 2002-2006</td>
<td>Has held the LCV chair for the last 16 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Fridah Nabakooza, LCIII chairperson, Busimbi Division, Mityana District</td>
<td>Entered politics as a woman Councilor at LCIII in 2011. She was later appointed Vice Chairperson LCIII by the male chair.</td>
<td>Became acting LCIII chairperson after the passing on of the male chairperson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Beatrice Katsigazi LC III Chairperson, South Division, Mubende District (NRM)</td>
<td>Started as a Parish Councilor representing women at Bageza Sub County in 2001-2006. She was appointed a Vice-Chairperson.</td>
<td>Contested for Bageza LCIII chair and won in 2011-2016. In 2016, she contested in a new division and won</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Nezma Ocokuru (FDC), Division Mayor, Arua Hill Division</td>
<td>Formerly LCIII councilor representing women Arua Hill from 2011-2016. Appointed Vice-Chair</td>
<td>First time to contest for the division mayoral seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Edida Nabosi, LCV Councilor (direct seat), Deputy Speaker, Mubende District Council (NRM).</td>
<td>Formerly LCIII Councilor representing women of Kigando and Nalingola Parishes 2011-2016. Edida then decided to contest for the direct council seat in 2016.</td>
<td>First time to contest for a direct council seat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Oliver Nakate, LCV Councilor (direct seat), Kyubi Sub-County, Secretary for Production Committee, MubendeDistrict (NRM).</td>
<td>Oliver started politics as a Woman Parish Councilor in 1998 until 2011. Knowing that she had worked well on service delivery, she contested for a direct seat in 2016 and won</td>
<td>Contested and won on an open seat for three consecutive times.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The cases above highlight the ways in which Affirmative Action seats, especially in the local councils, enabled women to gain access into political structures and institutions where they had been historically excluded. Affirmative Action opened the gateway to wider opportunities for women’s participation in political leadership – exposure, networking, building confidence and esteem, getting experience in service delivery and framing a political agenda that speaks to women’s interests.

The idea of women gaining exposure and building grassroots networks for political support is not new. Ahikire (2007: 133) draws on the case of the rich profile of the then sole female LCV chairperson Kanungu district, to show how Josephine Kasya had risen to the prestigious District Chairperson position through experiences in local councils as a woman councillor. She argued that Kasya’s case demonstrated that “state feminism worked to break the glass ceiling.” Notably, women’s entry through Affirmative Action seats afforded them a great deal of political exposure, creating opportunities for most of them to be appointed vice-chairpersons or on committees. These assignments not only gave them the opportunity to deliver services to the people but also enabled them to build social and political capital, craft a social agenda and later drew upon these political resources to aspire for directly elected constituencies. Most women interviewed elaborated how their
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In Buikwe, Rosemary Namuyanja, LCV female seats, to compete with men for the same constituency these are male spaces. It also reaffirmed their ability right to contest for Open Seats despite the myth that women local councillors and reassured them of their and memorable FOWODE training often targeted Deputy Speaker, Mubende district. The cherished to stand for political office.

2.6.1 Building Capacities of Women Political Leaders in Local Governments

In all the interviews conducted, especially in Western, Central and Eastern parts of the country, participants recalled the role of FOWODE trainings as key motivation points in their political careers. In particular, they mentioned that capacity building on self-presentation as women in a male-dominated political sphere was highly beneficial, including topics like eye contact, dressing in ways that do not challenge the traditional norms (e.g. gomesi), how to support each other as women, scanning and understanding the political context and being able to speak to specific needs of the people. The training reportedly created awareness amongst women as political actors and citizens and re-affirmed their ability to stand for political office. “We were repeatedly encouraged to stand on open seats. They told us that women were as capable as men”, notes Edida, Deputy Speaker, Mubende district. The cherished and memorable FOWODE training often targeted women local councillors and reassured them of their right to contest for Open Seats despite the myth that these are male spaces. It also reaffirmed their ability to compete with men for the same constituency seats.

In Buikwe, Rosemary Namuyanja, LCV female councillor, Najjembe Division, pointed out that FOWODE helped her to frame her political campaign message and print campaign posters. The campaign message described her as “a woman with a vision” and consequently became the winning phrase for her campaign. In Mityana, Firidah Nabakooza, LCIII chairperson, noted:

Before I joined politics, we got training from FOWODE, women were trained for sure, all the women that had stood on all levels. We learnt how to dress in appropriate ways because you must interact with people. We were also trained on how to look at people mainly by confidently maintaining eye contact as we addressed them.

However, the motivational impact of training women in local councils was noted across the regions the research team visited.

Gender trainings by a number of women’s rights organisations left their footprint with those interviewed. For example, FOWODE’s impact on gender capacities enhancement was noted in Central Uganda, in areas of Mityana, Mubende, Jinja, Buikwe; Uganda Women’s Network (UWONET) and ActionAid were notably influential in areas of Pallisa, Kumi and Soroti. In West Nile, women participants highlighted Women Democracy Network (WDN) as very key in conducting gender awareness trainings and providing political support to women, which inspired them to contest for political offices. In Kumi, Christine Apolot elaborated on how she declared her interest to stand for LCV in a training workshop as follows:

When I was a district councillor, we attended a training workshop by ActionAid and UWONET. They challenged us to compete for Open Seats along with men. They always asked: Who amongst you is going for a directly elected position? Inspired by the trainings and encouragement to contest for Open Seats, I declared my intention, but people laughed. It was basically ActionAid and UWONET who enticed me (Christine Apolot, LCV Chair, Kumi District).

As indicated in the extract above, Christine made the bold move to vie for LCV chairperson position after a series of training by UWONET, ActionAid and Mifumi in Soroti district. These trainings raised her awareness of the women’s right to contest beyond Affirmative Action seats but also challenged women to exploit their leadership potential. Christine later argued that the effect of the capacity building was long-lasting, saying “when such kind of inspiration comes in towards election, it is not easy to change somebody’s mind”. In effect, she urged women’s rights organisations to re-activate such motivational trainings, if they are to impact the 2021 general elections. Most importantly, the presence of women organizations’ trainings in different regions (Central,
East and West Nile) speak to a common goal of women’s political empowerment and consequently enable spreading out resources and regional competences towards this common agenda.

2.6.2 Other motivational factors: family background, work experience and education

Women political leaders noted having been inspired by a number of factors to take interest in political offices, such as previous public service work experiences, personality, parenting, and educational background, the right political timing as well as women politicians as role models.

For example, Hon. Isala Veronica noted how she was motivated by her family background, especially being an heir to her late father’s estate and a leader of the Atek clan. She was also encouraged by her education, not only her training as a lawyer in an environment that encouraged competition amongst boys and girls, but also her legal profession and a wide array of work opportunities nationally, regionally and internationally made her feel prepared. At the national level, Veronica had worked with National Insurance Corporation and Uganda Human Rights Commission (UNHCR) as a Commissioner. At the regional level, she had worked in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, South Africa, and South Sudan. All these regional assignments were in the fields of legal work, gender, and conflict. At the international level, Veronica had worked at UNICEF, World Bank, USAID and International Development Law Organisation (IDLO). These work opportunities afforded her national and global exposure and strengthened her self-esteem to engage in competitive contexts.

Isala Veronica’s profile highlights personal growth, exposure to tasks demanding responsibility in diverse cultural and regional and international contexts and comprehensive knowledge of law-making processes. These forms of social, political and human capital were complemented by what she terms community acceptability to inspire her to contest in Kaberamaido County in 2016. Shortly before coming to Parliament, Isala was made the clan leader of one of the biggest clans in Teso, i.e. the Atek clan. Isala also exhibited knowledge of her constituency and existing political leadership gaps, the region’s experience of war and the consequent levels of poverty, poor infrastructure and unemployment and drew on these to frame what she termed as issue-based political agenda in Parliament. Drawing on these multiple forms of motivation, she contested with seasoned male politicians in the constituency and was able to win the direct seat on her first attempt.

In another revealing interview, Hon. Saida Namirembe Bbumba (NRM, Nakaseke North Constituency) a four-time winner of an open seat, told us how, having participated in Uganda’s National Liberation struggle of 1981-86, she felt empowered enough to contest for a non-affirmative action seat. She argued: “I thought that since I was already an empowered woman, I could try to challenge the men. I felt that I was empowered enough and inspired enough to try the general ticket to create more space for the women.”

This story alerts us to her source of motivation which is her personal involvement in the liberation war. She believes that the government’s focus on the gender question is the marker of her own empowerment which she drew upon to stand on what she terms as the “general ticket”. What we also found astounding in her story is her framing of the direct seat as the general ticket, which points to the openness of the seat for women and men alike and seems to consciously draw on a form of language that navigates clear of the dilemmas of ekifo ky’abasajja vis-à-vis ekifo ky’abakyolo. What Bbumba further alerts us to is the motive in her choice to contest on the general ticket. She explained that she stands not only because she felt capable to challenge men, but most importantly, to open opportunities for women who may have not been as empowered as she was. This motive – of creating multiple spaces for women to enter politics – is more emphasized in her repetitive statement “I felt that I was empowered enough and inspired enough to try the general ticket and I also wanted to create more space for the women; I wanted to create more space for the women.” It speaks to the dilemmas that feminist scholars such Sylvia Tamale have pointed out with regard to politics of affirmative action, e.g. the ways in which the Affirmative Action policy has been unfairly ‘used’ as a panacea (1999: 25), singled out space to transform traditionally patriarchal politics in Uganda.

2.7 The Campaign trail on open seats: Women’s experiences and lessons

Having shared what women political leaders pointed out as their motivations to contest for seats that have remained male-dominated for the last three decades (1989 – 2019), we reflect on women’s experiences during and after election campaigns. In these electoral and post-electoral phases, women highlight the kinds of opposition they faced when they declared their intentions to contest for direct constituencies and the kinds of strategies, they drew upon to successfully negotiate political resistance. The forms of political opposition and the strategies applied to negotiate them to capture the subtle detailed ways of how individual women creatively
demonstrated agency in countering both individual and structural discrimination.

2.7.1 Opposition to female contestants and the strategies to negotiate political resistance

As already noted, women who stand on Open Seats face resistance and must invest in creating a counter opposition strategy. This section shows the forms of opposition that women candidates faced and the strategies they used to negotiate obstructions to their candidature on Open Seats.

All cases explored in this study indicate that women who contested for Open Seats, encountered resistances in the electoral processes regardless whether they were suitable candidates. Women were questioned on why they left the reserved ‘woman seat’ to compete against men. In Aruu North County, for example, the electorate, who were mostly men, framed propaganda that “Lucy was going to the wrong toilet. She is going to the men’s toilet.” In Pallisa district, Agule Sub-County, Ms. Jane Frances Atuko, the LCIII chairperson was reminded that the LCIII chairpersonship was a men’s seat. They asked: “How can a woman be a head of security in the Sub-County? Will she leave her husband in bed to respond to emergencies in the night?” These and many other forms of denigrating propaganda were aimed at demonstrating how ‘inconceivable’ it was for women to contest against men.

Women’s direct competition with men and the prospects of joining Parliament along with the men prompted cultural-laden narratives of women as transgressing the expected social boundaries. Women were asked whether they will remain married and committed to their husbands once they joined politics. These kinds of expectations demanded from women higher moral standards than men and threatened to confine women using the argument of the institution of marriage.

A close look at the challenges that women noted in their campaign experiences indicates certain similarities and differences amongst women political leaders at national and local council levels. What stands out uniquely amongst female participants, is that the resistance experienced and how women negotiated these, were in some cases based on their age, previous work experience, and marital status. For instance, female, married, and relatively older candidates faced less resistance regarding their political credibility. Women in these cases would front their previous work experience to show how they are old enough, mature and ready to take on the political challenges unlike the unmarried or freshly married who had to prove whether they will maintain their marriages. Further, women in local councils found it relatively easy to enter into politics through reserved seats and draw on this experience to gradually move onto the Open Seats. There was not any notable case among the participants interviewed of a female Member of Parliament crossing from Woman District Representative to an open seat.

In terms of similarities, all the participants we talked to, for instance, referred to the resistance regarding the perception of Open Seats as a ‘closed’ space for men. Women who attempt to aspire for Open Seats are vehemently attacked for disrespecting men and are labeled as transgressive and unfeminine. In central Uganda, women contesting for Open Seats are often referred to as ‘nakawanga’ (a woman who dares men), a Luganda term that is derogatory to those women who dare compete with men. In most cases, derogation of women who came up to contest ‘with men’ often attacked their sexual identity, as most of them were labeled prostitutes, too young to manage men, or likely to contaminate men’s seat once they are in their menstrual periods.

Similarly, women in local councils and Parliament decried the increasing commercialization of politics. They pointed out the exorbitant costs required to fund different election cycles such as party primaries and general elections as well as voters who increasingly demand for money from candidates. The electoral campaign costs were noted as a big hindrance to women’s political aspirations.

Women also unanimously raised the issue of proving their moral aptness to voters in electoral and post-election political phases. Women, unlike men, are expected to prove beyond doubt, using religious, cultural, and traditional lenses, that they are morally suitable to be in public politics. Questions arose from voters (men and women alike) on whether a female candidate was ‘properly’ married, who their husbands are, their marriage status, whether they promise to remain with their husbands once they joined politics or whether their marital status will not hinder political openness and inclusiveness. These, which can be termed as ‘politics of morality’, are often played on women’s bodies, sexuality and demonstrate the expected gender role socialisation. Proving moral aptness in patriarchal and misogynistic cultures in some cases remained one of the biggest hurdles to women’s political aspirations. These demands are on one hand diversionary in as far as they keep women’s focus on articulating their moral worth rather than their political agenda. On the other hand, they infantilize and derogate women as agential political actors and act as subtle mechanisms of women’s control in modern democracies. For instance, females vowing before the electorate on whether they will remain ‘properly’ married and faithful to their
1. Ms Nesty Bagarukayo, Speaker Buhimba Sub County, Hoima District.
2. Ms Hamidah Kahunde, Female District Councilor and Deputy Speaker
   Mabira Town Council, Kyenjojo District.
3. Mr. Mathias Kigongo, LCV Chairperson, Buikwe District
4. Hon Lucy Achiro Atim, Aruu North County Member of Parliament
5. Hon. Paula Turyahikayo, Rubaabo County Member of Parliament
6. Hon. Rehema Wetongola, Kamuli Municipality Member of Parliament
7. Ms. Firidah Nabakooza, LC3 Chairperson, Busimbi Division, Mityana District.
8. Hon Syda Bbumba, Member of Parliament, Nakaseke North Constituency
10. Ms. Christine Apolot, LCV Chairperson, Kumi District.
11. Ms. Nezma Ocukuru, Arua Hill Division Mayor, Arua District.
husbands and remaining a ‘woman’ regardless of new political roles and status, speaks to re-invention of patriarchal heteronormative control of women in the public realm.

2.7.2 Resilient forms of patriarchy: A Case of ‘normalized’ sexism in Politics

Despite the enormous opportunities, these Open Seats offer in challenging patriarchy, these successes face contradictions that emanate from the complexity and the ever-changing character of patriarchy. This complexity tends to manifest through subtle forms of oppression. For example, even when women political leaders talk about empowering themselves to break the gendered discrimination, they only fall back into these in form of sexism, reported cases of harassment or repeated religious and traditional policing that constructs and reminds women politicians as transgressive.

In the process of research, there were notable cases of deep-seated everyday sexist practices that are often taken for granted, yet they produce and normalize women’s invisibility in political leadership. For instance, the idea that political heads are or ought to be men was eminent in women’s conversations. The thinking that LCIII and LCV chairperson positions, which are critical points of service delivery in the local government structures, have to be held by men is historically ingrained in communities’ view of political leadership. These kinds of headship and security-conscious positions (LCIII and LCV) are conceived through religious and cultural discourses as male roles. This kind of conception is also reiterated in the literature on feminism and political leadership. For instance, Mala Htun and S. Laurel Weldon (2010: 214) who write about governments and contexts in which they promote women’s rights, argue that “In some places, religious and cultural doctrines endorse female subordination not only in the family but also in work and education (and political settings)”.

Gendered communication is one area in which patriarchy has persisted even when the official discourse has embraced a more gender-inclusive communication for instance the use of chairperson in place of chairman. Years later, the conflation of political leaders as ‘chairmen’ persists. In Buikwe, a male LCV Chairperson recalls how a substantive female LCV chairperson in the Uganda Local Government Association for LCV meeting (ULGA) was asked which district chairman she represented. In Arua, Ocokuru Nezma told us how very many official letters that come to her office are often addressed to Mr. Nezma Ocokuru, adding, “People out there think and expect that I am a man.” These kinds of sexist behaviours are reiterated in the way most LCIII and LCV chairpersons’ offices are labelled “chairman’s office.” In Busimbi Division, Mityana District, Ms. Nabakooza Firdah, Division Chairperson hosted us in her office for an interview. Her office is explicitly labelled “Chairman’s office.” In Kumi, LCV Chairperson told us how she had not yet changed the label – “LCV Chairman – on her desk while in Arua Hill Division, the female LCIII chairperson’s office had two labels – a seemingly old “Chairman’s Office” and a new one reading “chairperson’s office”.

While these practices can easily be dismissed as minor linguistic errors that can be resolved through replacement of sexist terms with non-sexist ones, these examples speak broadly to the deep-seated values that go beyond the mere male-centered labels. They highlight deeply entrenched masculine values that regulate who can be conceived as a political leader in these (Direct Seat) offices. It is also notable that while feminist activism has inspired linguistic reforms that sought to innovatively replace sexist language with gender-neutral terms like “chairman” with “chair” or “Chairperson”, deep-seated inequalities are hardly transformed by what feminist linguists have termed as mere “linguistic hygiene” (Speer, 2005). These require challenging social discourses that naturalise and perpetuate oppressive understandings of gender and gender role behaviour (Speer, 2005: 1). These everyday forms of sexism contribute to the whole and need to be consciously challenged. This is because these everyday forms of sexist language and communications construct gender inequalities that become “deeply entrenched in our common-sense views about the world and become regarded as normative and expectable” (Speer, 2005: 1). That women elected in direct constituencies occupy offices labeled ‘chairman’ without complaint, points to how these forms of androcentrism have been normalized in the everyday politics of Uganda.

The normalization of sexism is also reflected in the information systems and electoral management. During the research process, there are lists of political leaders the research team accessed from websites of different actors e.g. the Electoral Commission and Parliament of Uganda. These lists were inadequately sex-disaggregated. For instance, all the result lists for sub-county/town/municipal division chairpersons for 2016 general elections were not disaggregated by sex, making it difficult to know how many of these elected leaders are male or female. Additionally, the LCV chairpersons’ list which was sex-disaggregated, categorized all the district leaders as males, including the 3 female district chairpersons.

That all the three female LCV chairpersons - Ms.
Women Shattering the Glass Ceiling

Participants noted: ‘What you want is...

ii) ‘Naming’ and voice: ‘What you want is...

2.7.3 Women negotiating traditional and cultural resistance to contest for Open Seats

There are enormous blockages that women encounter on the campaign trail as well as when they occupy Open Seats. In addition to the challenges already mentioned, it has been noted how women draw on the same structures of oppression (culture, religion and historical discourses) to frame strategies to negotiate resistances they met. These experiences of women’s exercise of agency are demonstrated in two cases below:

Hon. Aciro Lucy responds to the electorate’s propaganda that as a woman contesting an open seat, she was going to a wrong toilet, a men’s toilet. The proponents of this argument went ahead to urge voters to shun women who ‘disrespected’ men by seeking to compete against them on Open Seats. Lucy’s opponents drew on a derogatory propaganda enshrined in symbolism of men’s toilets vis-à-vis women’s toilets to represent a binary between open seats and reserved seats. What stands out strongly is the negative labeling and demonization of women who dared to exercise their constitutional right of contesting for open seats. The idea that Hon Lucy was going to the wrong toilet compelled her to respond to this patriarchal chauvinism in the same symbolic currency. She deconstructs this polarized and derogatory propaganda with a similar derogatory enquiry from the men – “If you already know that I am in the wrong toilet, why are you insisting on knocking; why do you want to see your naked mother?”

Aciro consciously situates her response to the ‘toilet propaganda’ in the Acholi culture which holds in high esteem, the image of a mother whose nakedness is perceived as an abomination and something that must not be exposed publicly. By appealing to cultural motherhood, Lucy managed to position herself in a more powerful and responsible stature than her male political opponents. This posturing enabled her to diffuse the masculine derogatory propaganda intended to limit women expanding constitutional horizons of political participation.

In the second case, the study documented experiences of Ms. Ocokuru Nezma, the Division Mayor of Arua Hill Division, in Arua Municipality, Arua District. Nezma is the only female LCIII chairperson in Arua District. She is not only an opposition politician but also presides over a culturally and religiously diverse urban constituency. According to the district website, 55.2% of Arua Municipality residents are Muslims, 23.4% are Catholics, 19.4% are Anglicans, and other religious organisations share a small percentage. Arua district, in particular the municipality, is also characterised by a high ethnic diversity made up of Lugbara, Kakwa, and Madi. Ocokuru talked about how she negotiated these socio-political, cultural, religious and gendered diversities to vie for and win Arua Hill Division mayoral seat. In effect, Ocokuru’s candidature for the Arua Hill Division and consequent political engagement was a product of intersecting religious, political, cultural and sexual identities. As a daughter of a Muslim Hajji, an Anglican mother and with a catholic husband, each of these social identities contributed towards her political support.

Overall, key strategies that women candidates on Open Seats have drawn upon as narrative to resistance include (but are not limited to) the following:

i) Okulimba (Lying) Vis-à-vis Okulimbulula (Undoing the lies): Participants noted that political campaigns are dominated by strategies that include framing false narratives intended to provoke women contestants. They argued that this play plays more on dominant images of women as emotional and are thus intended to press women to lose their cool on the podium. Consequently, women frequently talked about conscious ways of undoing the lies being told about them by their opponents. In effect, while women might have been framed, they too did not helplessly give in to the lies orchestrated against them. Rather, they drew on their agency to kulimbulula (undo the lies) through ignoring them or objectively clarifying their positions. These counter strategies highlight women’s agency that challenges simple binary notions of men as objective powerful political actors and women as emotional, weak and subordinate.

ii) ‘Naming’ and voice: ‘What you want is...
to be named publicly that so and so is standing', said one leader. Participants argued that naming one’s intention boldly at social gatherings such as parties, burial ceremonies, and religious gatherings gives women contestants on Open Seats public visibility and enables conversations around their candidature to begin in communities’ way before the Electoral Commission sanctions campaigns. Consequently, the women followed up such publicity by house-to-house meetings that mobilise and consolidate their political support.

**Building grassroots networks:** This was identified repeatedly as a strategic move towards recruiting but also sustaining political support in communities. In an interview with Hon. Turyahikayo Kebrungi Paula (NRM), MP Rubabo County in Rukungiri District; she attributes her success to her previous campaign experience as she mobilised support for President Yoweri Museveni in 2001. “During these campaigns, I developed a coordination framework. I had a group of village coordinators and campaign agents. All through 2001-2006, I remained in contact with the campaign teams and coordinators. I was on the ground with the voters who later urged me to represent them. I had established a network and felt confident enough to give it a try.” It is such grassroots networks that enabled her to contest and win the same direct seat since 2006.

**Staying in touch with constituencies:** In an interview Hon. Rehema Watongola points out that men, unlike women, find it difficult to return to and keep in touch with their constituents after the election. Hon. Rehema noted:

For the male legislators, they feel they should first satisfy themselves in terms of having good houses in Kampala, also enjoying life. In their first two years, they have bigger personal ambitions. They want to travel to Canada, the US, the UK. And when the weekend comes, they will say, ‘Aah, we are tired; we have been serving the nation, we need to rest and enjoy life.’ But for us women, it is different. You say, ‘Let me go back to the constituency.’ If there are burials, you sympathize with them.

While it cannot be generalized that women legislators are more compassionate and caring about their constituencies than their male counterparts, it is important to ask, what makes Hon. Watongola’s observation conceivable? In a political context where marriage remains a strong social factor in mobilising women’s political capital and in the context of patriarchal controls in marriage, women may find themselves more likely to return to their home constituencies.

### 2.8 Winning an Open Seat: Implications for gender-equitable politics

In this study, a central question that emerged from the stories narrated by women politicians relates to *What implications follow from women contesting and winning constituency seats?* Does the consistent marginal representation of women on Open Seats (4% in 2018) and the resilient patriarchal propaganda of open seats as male spaces mean that women face a hopeless situation and that these institutional norms and rules can never be changed?
Figure 2: Women’s representation on Affirmative Action and Direct Seats over the years

The study aims to gather the lessons which can be drawn for the subversive narratives the women related? The women’s stories are termed subversive given the transgressive character they carry regarding challenging historical, cultural and traditional norms that hinder the path to women’s political leadership. In their analysis of the resilient character of patriarchy in Ugandan politics, Ahikire and Tamale noted the amenable character of patriarchal institutions. Ahikire (2007: 128) talks about the unbending patriarchal power in which she conceptualizes continued political subordination of women as a social category in local governments. Tamale (1999: 26), on the other hand argues that “even as most aspects of the patriarchal character of national politics remain intact, that character is amenable to change.” Thus, policies such as affirmative action (and decentralization) provide the space for women’s entry into politics and a potential for change. It is this window of opportunity that we draw upon to understand what women’s experience of vying for directly elected constituency leaders offers to us in terms of challenging patriarchal political structures and processes in Uganda.

Figure 3: Women on Open Seats create opportunities for others in various ways
Key implications on the politics of Uganda when women occupy direct seats:

1. The myth that Open Seats are male spaces is challenged because there are women who have consistently won these seats. In effect, irrespective that only a few have achieved this, women’s victories offer an opportunity to challenge very deep-seated unwritten, informal institutions – rules, norms and values that conceive political leadership as a masculine virtue.

2. Through its transformative potential, women winning direct seats creates a new norm. The new norm is that women can contest these seats and win. In the cases of a 4-time winner such as Hon. Saida Bumba, in Nakaseke County North, Nakaseke district, or Josephine Kasya who has held the Kanungu District chairperson seat since 2001, it has become normal that women have a right to contest for these seats.

3. Open Seats provide a space for women to have numbers in the political arena in as far as it offers an alternative space for women to enter politics. Beyond affirmative action, women can and do join politics through the Open Seats.

4. Women who have won direct seats can serve as mentors and role models to other women who would like to do the same. Winning Open Seats has been repeatedly referred to as a way of undoing restrictive political propaganda. Women talked of how, whenever they were faced with resistance from voters about the direct seat as a men’s seat, they referred to Hon. Salaam Musumba (former Kamuli district LCV Chairperson), Josephine Kasya, Hon. Winnie Byanyima, Hon. Saida Bumba and many others as women occupying or who occupied Open Seats in the past.

2.9 Strategies for increasing the number of women contestants on open seats

Drawing from the diverse experiences, different mechanisms and actors can be drawn to ensure that women vie for Open Seats and represent their constituencies. Through the ways suggested by the women’s movement, individual women politicians as well as the general public can sustainably confront and transform patriarchal myths on the Open Seats and the male-dominated character of public politics. These suggestions include the following:

2.9.1 Promote sustainable participation of women on Open Seats

In almost all the interviews conducted, the study noted that women leaders on direct seats are not only rarely compared to their male counterparts on the same seats, but they also construct and represent themselves as daring, given the pervasive political resistances they encounter. At the same time, women politicians complained of being isolated in this rather tedious journey of contesting with powerful and privileged men on the direct seats. In order to address women’s individual frustrations and isolation, participants recommended a development of strategic partnerships amongst women’s rights organisations to promote sustainable participation of women on Open Seats.

In particular, women participants called on Forum for Women in Democracy to co-ordinate the formation of a Forum for Women on Open Seats. Accordingly, the forum would bring together women’s rights organisations working on gender and politics & enable them to combine financial resources, technical expertise and knowledge, and experience of working in different regions of Uganda. With the support of women’s rights organisations (FOWODE, UWONET, ACFODE, Women Democracy Network, etc) women contestants on these seats could become more visible and have a platform to challenge the myth of these seats as men’s spaces. The forum would enable women political leaders on Open Seats to regularly meet, share their experiences and mentor one another. The presence of a coherent umbrella of women on Open Seats across the country could demonstrate women’s potential and ability to represent men and women on direct seats and in addition spur a continuous conversation on how to increase the numbers on Open Seats.
2.9.2 Create a public narrative on women’s constitutional right to contest for Open Seats

Across all the regions in Uganda, the idea of Open Seats as ‘men’s seats’ needs to be debunked. Most participants noted that male politicians ‘use’ the myths on direct seats as men’s seats in comparison to reserved seats for women to limit women’s contest on Open Seats. They argued that the narratives tend to thrive on the voters’ ignorance of the women’s constitutional right to contest on Affirmative Action seats as well as Open Seats. It was also highlighted in the study that women’s participation on Open Seats has not been constituted as an issue that requires national attention. It has been left to individual women to challenge misconceptions that surround Open Seats. In effect, the participants recommended the following actions:

a. FOWODE and partner organisations to strategically shift the advocacy to the communities and sensitize them about women’s potential to contest on the direct seats.

b. Conduct continuous documentation & publicizing of testimonies of female trailblazers on the Open Seats, i.e. sharing stories of women who have contested, whether they have won or lost, to challenge the myths of these seats as men’s spaces.

c. Strategic promotion of women’s participation on Open Seats as a specific gender agenda in electoral processes. This can be done through building alliances amongst women organisations and the Electoral Commission (EC) to provide gender-aware civic education (e.g. developing gender-sensitive campaign messages) and popularizing women on Open Seats as an electoral issue.

2.9.3 Identify and support women to stand for Open Seats & invest in quality

Participants highlighted their interface with women’s organisations under the umbrella Women Democracy Group (WDG) as a key inspiration to contest for Open Seats.

In Kumi for instance, Ms. Christine Apolot, the LCV chairperson elaborately shared ways in which she was challenged, through trainings by UWONET, to contest for the district leadership. In West Nile, Uganda Women Democracy Network inspired Ms. Ocokuru Nezma, to contest for the mayoral seat in Arua Hill Division, which she won. Experiences of FOWODE trainings and inspiring women to contest for Open Seats as their constitutional right are noted in parts of western, central and eastern Uganda. In Buikwe district, for example, Ms. Rosemary Namuyanja, Direct Councilor Najjembe Division, recalled how FOWODE trained her, and supported her to have posters and brochures for her campaigns, craft a vision for her campaigns and make her story appear in the newspapers. These forms of support attested to what women organisations along with candidates’ political parties can do to inspire women to contest for Open Seats. Notably, participants suggested the following actions to support women candidates:

a. Women’s rights organisations and political parties should identify and support women to stand for Open Seats. Financial support could be given in form of printing posters, crafting campaign messages and money to facilitate female candidates travel to all the villages and communicate to voters.

b. Train, consolidate and sustain numbers of women on Open Seats. Women’s rights organisations involved in promoting women’s participation in politics were urged to identify key training areas for female candidates, both at national and local governments across the country. The trainings should focus on encouraging and re-affirming women’s candidature because the resistances they face continue even in the post-election phases.

2.9.4 Advocacy for and on Open Seats

The study participants called for a nationwide advocacy campaign with the following aims: 1) Dispel the myth that affirmative action is a favour to women 1) Challenge the notion that Open Seats are reserved for men

To achieve this, the participants called for:

a. The Parliament of Uganda to provide conceptual clarity on the labeling, mandate, and modalities of electing women on the Affirmative Action seats.

b. FOWODE and other women’s rights Organisations to partner with Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) to demand from Parliament a review and update on women-specific political representation to ensure that there is no perpetuation of inequality based on sex.
3.0 Conclusion

In Uganda a low numbers of female politicians have come out to contest for Open Seats both at the national and local council levels. As a consequence, there is only a limited number of female politicians who hold these positions. Participating in an election, especially as a female candidate, on an Open Seat is an intense political activity. It is even a direct form of political resistance when women who largely reside in the margins of political decision-making processes confront this marginalisation. The report reiterated previous studies on how women's political legitimacy, especially when they stand for similar positions with men, “tends to be defined primarily on the basis of personal and private realms” (UWONET, 2016). These complexities are exemplified in the detailed stories women narrated about their motivations and experiences of vying for Open Seats. Importantly, the report highlights ways in which women spent a great deal of their time on the campaign trail justifying their choices of the electorate, particularly on how they were worthy political candidates beyond the reserved seats. Their direct confrontation with underlying discourses such as culture, religion, historical experiences surfaces especially when women candidates are pressed to prove their moral aptness to stand against men for political offices.

In effect, each open seat won by a woman serves as a milestone to carry a transformative agenda by challenging history, religion, tradition, and custom. The traditional underlying discourses or structures conceive political leadership in communities as the role and responsibility of men need to be challenged to free the path for equal participation of women in decision making.
### Annex 1: Strategic actions and Interventions

*Action Matrix showing Key Actors, Strategic Actions and Specific Interventions to Increase the Numbers of Women on open seats*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key actors</th>
<th>Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Specific Interventions</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **1** Women’s Organisations & other CSO actors including Academia | Develop gender-responsive strategic partnerships amongst women’s rights organisations to promote a narrative around women on Open Seats | • Form a Forum for Women on open seats. Accordingly, the forum would:  
   (i) Bring together women’s rights organisations working on gender and politics & enable them combine financial resources, technical expertise and knowledge & experience of working in different regions of Uganda (FOWODE, UWONET, ACFODE, Women Democracy Network, etc) to promote a strong & clear public narrative on the constitutionality of women contesting for open seats.  
   (ii) Continuous documentation & publicizing of testimonies of female trailblazers on the Open Seats, i.e. women who have contested (winners and losers) to challenge the myths of these seats as men’s spaces  
   (iii) Create visibility spaces for women on Open Seats – contestants & winners  
   (iv) Enable women politicians regularly meet, share experiences and mentor one another. Provide a set of role models to other women who aspire for open seats. |
| | Strategic selling of the gender agenda in electoral processes | • Partner with the Electoral Commission to promote gender aware civic education (e.g. developing gender-sensitive campaign messages)  
   • Conduct regular studies to produce concrete evidence on the performance of electoral management bodies and political parties on gender-sensitive civic education  
   • Hold EC and political parties accountable on the implementation of their gender strategies and the constitutional provisions on women’s political participation  
   • Collectively structure, implement and monitor a common women’s agenda for gender-inclusive elections  
   • Identify and support women to stand for Open Seats & invest in quality. Financial support could be in form of printing posters, crafting campaign messages and money to fuel the car and enable women contestants to visit the villages and communicate to voters. |
| | Train, Consolidate and sustain numbers of women on Open Seats | • Identify key training areas for female candidates both at national level and in local governments.  
   (i) The trainings should focus on encouraging and reassuring women that their decision was the right one because the resistances they face continue even in the post-election phases.  
   (ii) Organise regional exchange visits of women on Open Seats to encourage women in other constituencies. |
## Women Shattering the Glass Ceiling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key actors</th>
<th>Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Specific Interventions</th>
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</table>
|            | Promote Sustained Women’s public visibility. Visibility is one of the key methods women politicians used to break into the male dominated politics | • Encourage women to make themselves visible through keeping in touch with the communities (women and youth groups e.g. VSLA, SACCOs, farmer groups), attending community events (parties, burials, religious gatherings) and boldly announce their motive to stand on Open Seats.  
• Develop a media campaign programme to promote women’s candidature on Open Seats.  
• Advocate for reserved seats as an entry point and an avenue for publicity – to perform, deliver, build public confidence and esteem as well as amass political capital necessary to challenge male-dominated norms and beliefs about women’s political abilities. |
|            | Continuous sensitization to address cultural & religious norms and practices that are drawn upon to resist women’s political leadership in general and against women contesting in particular | • Research and document changing religious and cultural beliefs about women’s political leadership  
• Partner with religious and cultural leaders to promote women’s participation in community economic and political engagements. |

| 2 | Uganda Electoral Commission | Integrate gender in the electoral management systems | • Conduct wide consultations with key stakeholders in electoral processes to map out the status of women’s participation in elections on both reserved and Open Seats.  
• Carry out sex and gender disaggregation of information generated by the Electoral Commission to establish the sex composition of candidates, elected leaders, election managers, and gendered challenges in electoral processes.  
• Train and build capacities of election managers on approaches to integrate gender in electoral processes.  
• Design a Gender aware Civic Education Programme and sensitize the public on the rationale for women-specific political representation and the constitutionality of Open Seats.  
• Partner with civil society organisations to develop gender-sensitive campaign materials.  
• Carry out regular civic education activities to raise women’s and men’s awareness on their right to contest for Open Seats.  
• Integrate civic and rights education programmes in the education system. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key actors</th>
<th>Strategic Actions</th>
<th>Specific Interventions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parliament of Uganda</td>
<td>Provide conceptual clarity on the labeling, mandate, and modalities of</td>
<td>• Regularly review and update provisions on women’s specific political representation to ensure that there is no perpetuation of inequality on the basis of sex.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>electing women on the Affirmative Action seats</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Parties</td>
<td>Provide a platform for conversation and action on women and Open Seats</td>
<td>• Party women’s leagues should make demands on their respective parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Political parties to declare electoral code &amp; concrete actions for the nomination of women on Open Seats.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.1 References


### 3.2 Appendices

#### Appendix 1: List of Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Name of the respondent</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Date of interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Ms. Fridah Nabakooza, Chairperson LCI, Busimbi Division, Mityana District (NRM)</td>
<td>Mityana</td>
<td>10th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ms. Oliver Nakate, LCV Councillor (Direct Seat) Secretary for Production Committee, Mubende District (NRM)</td>
<td>Mubende</td>
<td>10th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ms. Edida Nabosi, LCV Councillor (Direct Seat), Deputy Speaker, Mubende District Council (NRM)</td>
<td>Mubende</td>
<td>10th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ms. Beatrice Katsigazi LCIII Chairperson, South Division, Mubende District (NRM)</td>
<td>Mubende</td>
<td>10th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mr. Mathia Kigongo, LCV Chairperson Buikwe District (NRM)</td>
<td>Buikwe</td>
<td>15th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Ms. Rosemary Namuyanja, LCV Female Councillor, Najjembe Division, Buikwe District (NRM)</td>
<td>Buikwe</td>
<td>15th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ms. Florence Asiyo, Deputy Chairperson LCV, Jinja District (NRM)</td>
<td>Jinja</td>
<td>15th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ms. Janes Frances Atuko, LCIII Chairperson, Agule Sub-County, Pallisa District (Independent)</td>
<td>Pallisa</td>
<td>16th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Ms. Christine Apolot, LCV Chairperson, Kumi District (NRM)</td>
<td>Kumi</td>
<td>16th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Ms. Rose Akello Erem, LCIII Chairperson/ Mayor, Dokolo Town Council</td>
<td>Dokolo</td>
<td>15th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Ms. Margaret Arach Komakech, LCIII Chairperson, Patiko Sub County, Gulu</td>
<td>Gulu</td>
<td>16th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Ms. Betty Akoli Nam, LCV Chairperson, Kole District</td>
<td>Kole</td>
<td>17th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Ms. Semmy Akello, LCIII Chairperson, Otwal Sub-County, Oyam</td>
<td>Oyam</td>
<td>18th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Ms. Nezma Ocokuru (FDC), Division Mayor, Arua Hill Division</td>
<td>Arua</td>
<td>3rd June, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Women Parliamentarians on open seats</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Hon. Paula Kebirungi Turyahikayo (NRM), Rubabo County, Rukungiri District.</td>
<td>Rukungiri</td>
<td>21st May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Hon. Betty Bamukwasa Muzanira (FDC), District Woman Representative, Rukungiri.</td>
<td>Rukungiri</td>
<td>21st May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Hon. Lucy Achiro Otim, Aruu North County, Pader District. Hon. Lucy is the Shadow Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development.</td>
<td>Pader</td>
<td>22nd May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Hon. Syda Namirembe Bbumba, (NRM), Nakaseke North Constituency, Nakaseke District</td>
<td>Nakaseke</td>
<td>25th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Hon. Veronica Isala Iragu Bichetero (NRM), Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido District.</td>
<td>Kaberamaido</td>
<td>28th May, 2019</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 2: Interview Guide

Introduction

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) is conducting a study to document stories of women political leaders i.e. LCIII and LCV Chairpersons as well as Women MPs on open seats. The study aims to explore women's motivations and ambitions in vying for these positions and their leadership experiences and to come up with possible advocacy strategies to increase the numbers of women on mainstream seats in Uganda. The research team – Prof. Josephine Ahikire, Dr. Amon Ashaba Mwiine, Ms. Harriet Pamara, Ms. Mollen Nyiraneza and Mr. Muwonge Deo – would like to request permission to learn from you. The experiences shared will enable FOWODE to come up with appropriate advocacy strategies to increase the numbers of women on mainstream seats in Uganda.

Information about the Participants

a. Names, position, marital status.
b. How long have you been in this elective position?
c. Are there any other women you know, who are in this position? (LCIII/V/Woman MP?)

Motivations and experience in elective leadership

i. What led to them vying for these seats and what kind of issues were they advancing?
ii. What strategies did they draw upon to contest for this position?
   a. Strategies to mobilise support at the family, community and state level
   b. Strategies to negotiate resistance
iii. What was your experience during the campaigns?
   a. Challenges encountered, negotiations?
   b. Opportunities to compete and frame gender equitable agendas?
   iv. What key issues does your leadership promote?
   v. How do these issues advance the women’s agenda?
   vi. What is your experience of holding this position in a male dominated political sphere?
   vii. What lessons do you draw from your experience of the campaigns and serving in a position that is male dominated country wide?
   viii. In your view, what can be done to increase the number of women on Open Seats?
ix. Do you look forward to contest again?