Emancipated and empowered, women in Amuria, Amuru and Napak districts celebrate their achievements in leadership and community transformation
The “Building and Amplifying women’s voices in Economic and Political Development Project”, implemented in Uganda and Kenya is one of the 34 projects under Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women. The Government of the Netherlands supported Diakonia in Uganda and FOWODE to actualize the project in Amuria, Amuru and Napak districts.

The FLOW project aim was to ensure that the implementation of poverty reduction programmes enables women to have a say in food security as well as empowering women to effectively contribute and exercise their right to participate in public policy and decision making.

Since 1995, Forum for Women in Democracy, (FOWODE) has been working towards one goal “a just and fair society where women and men equally participate in and benefit from decision making processes”. This requires persistence in promoting gender equality and women’s leadership in the country. We are convinced that only when women are empowered to participate at various political levels in the country, then the resulting policies, laws, plans and budgets will favour and strengthen the women’s empowerment process in Uganda. Towards this aim FOWODE serves as a platform for Ugandan women’s learning, networking, sharing experiences and advocacy for gender equity and equality in decision making processes.

FOWODE is currently implementing the Women and Leadership Programme which ensures women participate effectively in governance; and The Gender and Economic Policy Programme whose goal is to advocate for equitable benefits for both women and men from government economic policies and programmes.

Marginalised women specifically female household heads at the grassroots in Uganda were identified as the main beneficiaries for improving food security. These women reside in areas prone to chronic and episodic food shortages and malnutrition.

Women in leadership positions at various governance levels (local government and national level) were targeted for capacity strengthening to enable effective participation and contributions to public policy processes and involvement in decision making.
BUILDING A STRONG VALUE CHAIN
A PROBLEM SOLUTION APPROACH

1 LOW PRODUCTIVITY IN THE HOME GARDEN

PROBLEMS
Inadequate labour intensive farming methods and poor inputs (low quality seeds) leading to low volumes and poor quality crop
Limited post production skills coupled with poor access to extension services.
Less than optimal use of land and resources available
Lack of skills and knowledge for disaster preparedness

SOLUTION
"The learning visits further opened my eyes when I realized that there are areas that have more drought than my home place yet they realize more yields. I learnt of the "zai pit" (used to make manure) in the dry areas of Kenya. I also learnt to control bush burning, which is commonly done herein Napak, little knowing that we are wasting the soil moisture."
-Maruk Veronica, Napak district
"The sensitization meeting enabled me to grow crops and with the knowledge of enterprise mix I was able to also rear some animals and poultry. This year when many farmers were affected with the prolonged drought especially in the first season planting, I was the only farmer who was safe because from the animals I rear, I was able to buy other food stuffs, have a balanced diet and live a normal life together with my household members. This acted as an eye opener to other farmers to not focus on food crops alone but adopt mixed farming."
-Magdalena Onka, Amuru district

2 FOOD INSECURITY & MALNUTRITION

PROBLEMS
Lack of food security
Malnutrition

SOLUTION
"I didn't know that for one to be food secure you need to have enough food throughout the year. I didn't know the need of having a balanced diet and I thought it's only the rich who can afford having this diet. However, I learnt that even the local food that we have in the village can contribute to good health. Now I ensure that my children eat at least two meals a day and by doing this I now see the health of my children improving."
-Nakiru, Napak district
"My household has enough food both for consumption and sales and my household level of income has significantly improved. One meal a day is now something of the past as my household members have three meals a day moreover balanced diet including breakfast."
-Ayera Lilly, Amuru District

3 UNDERSTANDING MARKET BEHAVIOUR

PROBLEMS
Lack of market knowledge including storing for sale, value addition, bargaining, negotiation

SOLUTION
"I started attending FOWODE food security awareness meetings last year and since then I have been improving. This year I was able to grow millet, maize, beans and groundnuts for both domestic and commercial use. I am happy that the value chain training conducted in July 2014 came at the right time and I was able to utilize that knowledge to add value to my produce. In the market, my millet attracted buyers because of its quality."
-Longoli Joseph, Nakapelemen, Women Farmers Group
"I never knew the importance of considering the market price of cash crops before planting and the idea of re-investing much to the group after sale. Now that I know, I promise to use this knowledge for improved yields out of our collective farming."
-Longoli Joseph, Nakapelemen, Women Farmers Group
IN NUMBERS

2,223 people reached during sensitization and awareness meetings to improve the value chain

1,527 women participating in the agricultural value chain
882 farmers trained in agricultural value chains
71 households have 136 food reserves in form of granaries
150 farmers provided with quality seed

LEARNING AND EXCHANGE
4 exchange and learning visits for 60 model farmers held in 4 areas:
- Serere Agricultural Zonal Research institute, (60 farmers)
- Katende Harambe demonstration farm (40 farmers)
- JB international (20 farmers)
- Kenya, Anglican Development Services, GROOTS, Farming God’s Ways

ADVOCACY
4 women’s think tank meetings were held
2 Interaction meetings were held during the Farmers’ week and anti-corruption week
1 lobby meeting on the Youth Livelihood Programme held
1 post-budget dialogue held on the National Budget FY 2014/15
3 interface meetings held between women farmers and the duty bearers
3 community dialogues held by female farmers

TRANSFORMATIVE SKILL BUILDING FOR LEADERS
270 women legislators trained on leadership and management
10 actions for follow-up implemented
350 women trained on election processes, procedures and effective campaigning at the local and national level
1,401 (49% female, 51% male) young people trained and mentored in alternative and transformative leadership
4 leadership camps for mentoring young women conducted
2 lobby and advocacy activities undertaken i.e. meeting with the parliamentary committee on agriculture; budget listen for the reading of the National Budget 2014/15

WOMEN FARMER GROUPS
15 women groups were formed along the production value chains for different crops
19 more groups evolved from these to reach out to the larger community on food security
340 women are participating in women farmer groups

KNOWLEDGE SUPPORT AND SKILLS STRENGTHENING
3 Leadership Advisory Desks established in the 3 districts
3 policy analyses completed including Affirmative action policy, Bio-safety Biotechnology Bill and the Agricultural sector
60 model farmers trained in agricultural value chain and modern agricultural practices.
5 gender audits conducted including Agricultural sector FY 2013/14, Health sector FY 2013/14, Education Sector FY 2013/14, National Budget Speech FY 2013/14, National Budget Speech FY 2014/15

IMPROVED FACILITIES & TECHNOLOGY FOR VALUE ADDITION
9 model granaries built
3 milling machines provided
2 mushroom driers provided

EXTENSION SERVICES
246 women farmers have accessed agricultural extension services

COMMUNICATION FOR STRATEGIC BEHAVIOR CHANGE
6 radio talk shows and 600 radio spot messages on women’s leadership aired
Women think tank established for 50 members

BUILDING THE VALUE CHAIN

EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRENGTHENING

LEGISLATION
6 bye laws adopted in the 3 districts
RETURN ON EMPOWERMENT

STORIES OF SUCCESS

From the household to the halls of leadership, equipped women in Amuria, Amuru and Napak districts are re-writing their story

The project ensured that women are included in the development process by challenging undemocratic social, economic, cultural and political practices and structures that keep women and girls powerless and in poverty.

Women now have equal opportunity as men to own key economic assets such as land and access agricultural education and extension services tailored to their needs. Women were empowered to review and advocate for re-orientation of government programmes to ensure that the problems that constrain the role of women in food security and the fundamental right to food are addressed.

Becoming food secure

Magdalena Oneka, (left) was devastated when she lost her husband in 2011, leaving her with a house full of grandchildren. Home gardening did not yield sufficient food for the family or for the markets. After joining a women farmer group and attending training and exchange visits to Gulu, Mbale and Serere on how to improve garden output and maintain a food secure home, Magdalena began multiple cropping and bulk producing.

Previously Magalena would harvest two or three sacks of groundnuts; today, she harvests 12 sacks from one acre. Value addition to her produce through shelling and grinding has also boosted profits. The proud grandmother smiles most when she talks about how happy she is to be able pay her grandchildren's school fees.

Magdalena says she hopes to one day run for office to represent the elderly at the district level one day. "Women can now move up the social and financial ladder".

"Women can now move up the social and financial ladder"
-Magdalene Oneka
Prosperous prospects

As part of a women farmer group, Lilly Ayera, learnt the benefits of planting a variety of crops. Previously Lilly cultivated on a small acreage, today she plants on 3 acres and has also started rearing poultry, rabbits and goats.

Lilly also joined a savings group and as her harvests improved, so did her earnings and savings. With the savings and profits from the sale of rice, groundnuts, and millet, Lilly started building her dream house. She is now able to pay school fees, support her household, purchase seeds and livestock to expand her income.

“Now that the women farmers groups are knowledgeable and have increased production, they will be able to join cooperatives and position themselves to participate in government programs.”

Deogratius Ekosile, Amuria district fisheries officer

“Women have learnt to survive in our erratic environment, they now supplement our traditional food by planting vegetables around water sources and now they cope well with the weather pattern.”

Joseph Kinei sub county Chief, Lopeei, Napak district

“The woman who appeared on one printed poster has inspired so many of us women in the community; everyone runs to her home to see how her granaries are constructed and how she plants her crops.”

Betty Agono, Senior Assistant Secretary Kuju sub county, Amuria district highlights the importance of strategic and integrated behaviour promotion approaches

“As government, we recognize the best approach to food security is through groups on which the project has focused its intervention. Government has in plan to revive cooperative societies that’s why this group approach is timely.”

Joseph Osotto, RDC Amuria district

“Women in the project area have picked on something which is transforming society. The new agriculture policy, integrates a lot of women involvement in production. Already in Napak district, the newly formed fishing committee constitutes five women and six men.”

Francis Inagolet, Veterinary Officer, Napak district

“Women in Kuju were among the most vulnerable. However in 2013 we decided to tailor most programs to women since FOWODE had already trained women groups. As a district, we decided to have a compulsory 30% allocation of the CDD grants to the youth and women.”

Job Okiring, Community Development Officer, Kuju sub county, Amuria
Veronica Maruk (left) is one of the members of Atijoto Akolyako group which participated in an exchange learning and experience sharing facilitated through the project. The women’s group visited successful small holder farmers in Nairobi, Kenya and Serere in Uganda. It was a turning point.

“Before this training, we used to face a lot of hunger, we could not store food well and we did not know the planting seasons so well. We mainly planted maize and sorghum and ate all. In seasons of plenty, we could waste the food, make a lot of local brew mainly using the maize and sorghum.

I learnt how to build granaries, now I have one for sorghum, maize, and green vegetables. These trainings taught me the value of planting a variety of crops, so we now don’t lack food. I now plant mushrooms, groundnuts, Irish potatoes, onions and tomatoes.

After the trainings we were put in model groups and we have been able to train other community members on how to store food and proper planting techniques.”

Veronica harvests 10 sacks of sorghum every season; previously the most she had ever harvested were 2 sacks. The increase in earnings has helped her pay school fees including those of a child in a university in Kampala.
Farming with purpose

Most times Margaret Awasi and her six children ate ‘adakai’, the residue or dregs of a local millet brew as they barely tilled the land. When Margaret started participating in the project learning opportunities including the cross learning visit to Nairobi to see how peer farmers in similar circumstances were succeeding, Margaret determined to turn around her farming practices. She started growing onions, sunflower and pineapples.

The chicken she had been previously rearing free range were put in an enclosure for easy monitoring and control of their development for better results. It didn’t take long for Margaret to sell off some of her chicken and buy two pigs, that in turn to reproduced.

Margaret also learnt how to make charcoal saving stoves from the cross learning visit, which has helped save on cooking related expenses and is more efficient as Margaret can prepare more than one meal.

“We now have three meals a day, my children now eat emarat (beans) and vegetables from the kitchen garden. Our group is now registered with the subcounty, applied for development grants and is expecting a grant of about UGX 2,400,000”.

Margaret Awasi, Napak district
Most Significant Change for Women Leaders

**Towards inclusion**
In Amuru district, 3 women councillors took over secretary positions at the sub-counties due to ineffectiveness of men who were in those positions. The percentage of women on the executive committee increased by 30% from 2 (20%) to 5 women (50%) while that of men reduced from 8 (80%) to 5 (50%) bringing about a balanced representation of both men and women on the executive committee.

**New appointments:**
- Hon. Ajok Lilly councillor, Apwera parish appointed secretary for health and education
- Hon. Alwoch Concy, councillor, Toro Parish, appointed secretary for Finance, planning and general purpose
- Hon. Akwongo Filder, councillor Okung-gedi parish, appointed secretary for Gender Labour and Development
- Hon. Aol Rose, Secretary for People with Disabilities
- Hon. Aryemo Secretary for Youth
- Hon. Atii Joyce Milly, is the secretary for People with Disabilities (PWDs), Lamogi sub county
- Hon. Oroma Lilly is the secretary for Youth.

**Advocacy for results**

**Results**
- **School attendance bye law:** In 2012, an education bye law was passed resolving that parents whose children were found home during school time without good cause would be arrested for not less than 3 months or subjected to community work.
- **Food secure homes:** In mid 2013, the council passed a bye law on food security that encouraged residents to stock long lasting staple foods like cassava. Market oriented farmer groups were also enabled to access oxen through the Community Development Office (CDO).
- **Alcohol bye laws passed:** Prohibiting excessive alcohol consumption as the most available food types like millet, maize and sorghum were widely used to brew alcohol. With this prohibition, the availability of these crops has improved food security.
- **Budget approvals:** Lobbied for a budget of UGX500,000 to be set aside for sensitization activities, behaviour change campaigns and tracking of service delivery.

**Moving Forward:** The women councilors continue to work with the CDO to reach other sub counties to promote food security. Hon. Akot plans to work with women farmer groups to secure other development grants and purchase their own plot of land from their group savings to increase productivity.

"The district has realized a very big change in councilors’ presentation on leadership issues and lobbying for community needs with an informed point of view."

- Akiding Harriet, Deputy CAO Amuria
Enhanced women's engagement

“At first I thought this project was political but when we were invited for trainings such as the one on social accountability monitoring of government funds, this changed my perspective. Women councillors now raise their hands in council. Whenever I see a woman raise point of information, I know it’s FOWODE work. In Napak, female councillors now raise motions in council. We now have an independent women’s council.”

Lino Angella, Vice Chairperson Napak district

Aikidi Florence Councillor, Napak district

“I had a lot of fear, I could not talk in public and had challenges campaigning, I could hardly debate in council and moving motions was such a challenge. Since the leadership trainings, I have been able to move two motions in council. In our campaigns, for the first time, I was able to gather 32 community members in my bid to stand for L.C 5. I have a dream to move a step ahead in my political career. I was prepared by the trainings and exchange visits in Jinja with many participants from East Africa, in 2013.”

Atepo Richard, Speaker, Kuju sub county, Amuria district

As the sub county speaker Richard Atepo celebrates the increase in women councilor participation from 50% to almost 85%. He also observes that some women now raise better motions than some men.

Editu Paul

I am greatful FOWODE has given voice to women leaders and at household level. I recall in one budget meeting that was held, women councillors that were trained by FOWODE challenged the district to allocate more funds to women activities for they now know what to do in their roles. There is also improved social development- subcounty councillors are now aspiring for district council seats. The confidence exhibited by these women is promising which will contribute much to the communities they represent. Women farmers have acquired knowledge on value addition with the mills that were provided to them.
Honorable Ajedo Agnes, Councilor, Amuria district
“Before the leadership training, most of us women councilors would go, sit and wait for our allowances at the end of the session with minimal or no contribution which affected women needs in the community. But now, we know our roles, we are now in touch with the electorate, we hold meetings at the village level and get the pressing needs of the people.”

Influence for good

**Girl Child Education:** We formed a women council committee in 2013 which sensitizes mothers about girl child education as one of the first issue the committee is handling. We started the campaign for girl child education at Willa primary school and Amorong primary school sensitizing girl children about their rights.

**Law Enforcement:** As women councillors, we have moved a number of motions since our training; a motion was moved to allocate a police post to reduce on crime rate and it was provided in 2013.

**Good Schools:** We lobbied for completion of the toilets (pit latrine) in Akisim primary school in Kuju sub county which was successfully done, in the same school we lobbied for 50 new desks which were delivered.

**Health Services:** The councillors have also lobbied for more equipment in Alere health centre II and Amusus health centre III.

**Transport:** There was an active lobby to open access roads connecting Abwenyek via Willa Sub County to join Apeduru Sub County, this was passed and forwarded by the council now awaiting funds from the district.

**Domestic Violence:** The council also passed a bye law on domestic violence in June 2014 now awaiting district council approval.

Christine Okello, LC3 Woman representative, Amuria district

The gross mismanagement of resources and minimal service delivery was clear in Kuju sub county. By early 2014, Honorable Okello had successfully brought her case before the Teso Anti Corruption Coalition. As a result the entire technical team was restructured and culprits dismissed.

“It is unthinkable that any human being should work hard, till the land and have someone else make all the decisions regarding selling the harvest and using all the earnings. Yet many women in Kuju were forbidden from participating in the sale of their own harvests.”

A bye law to ensure women at household level participate in selling their harvest was passed in October 2014 as a result of the council’s lobbying and advocacy.
Promising Practices for Sustaining Change

Awareness Raising
Smiling Anna Grace Apoo (right), is a celebrated member of the Aminanaros women farmer group. She is a mother of six who used to share one meal a day with her family. At the FOWODE training on food security Anna realized that the food shortages at her home were the result of food being wasted due to the family’s dilapidated granary. The story started changing rapidly after the training.

Supporting action
Anna quickly constructed three other granaries to store her produce including groundnuts, millet, green gum, cow peas and simsim. Anna also planted a kitchen garden for vegetables to supplement their diet. Anna implemented the better planting methods on properly demarcated acreage. It was the largest acreage she had ever planted. Anna is now able to sell of her improved produce at better prices. Before the training, she earned an of average UGX50,000 per month in harvest sales; within one month of the training Anna had sold 5 sacks of cassava and earned UGX300,000.

Power in numbers
For Florence Ibiara the power in numbers is a real experience. By being a part of the Achanamara Women Farmers Group, and participating in collective saving helped her save up to UGX388,600. The women in the group also helped each other construct granaries to improve food security at their homes.

Peer exchange learning
Peer exchange visits equipped farmers with practical, workable skills to accelerate improvements in their farming practices. Farmers who visited areas such as in Kenya with more severe droughts than they had in their home locations, yet had better yields, left determined and equipped with new skills to improve productivity. For example the Kenyan farmers taught the groups how to use a Zai pit as an affordable and effective method to produce manure throughout the dry spells. The farmers also stopped the practice of burning up bushes before planting, to conserve moisture.

Anna and the other women who participated in an exchange visit at Namugongo learnt about charcoal saving stoves which they adopted for more efficient cooking and environmental protection.