FAWEU beneficiaries secure university admission

A teenage mother’s pursuit for education

FAWEU calls for support in girls involvement in STEM
In this issue, we look at three key areas of Higher Education; Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) with a focus on economically disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, especially girls. As UNICEF put it in their publication, A Post 2015 Fit For Children, “There is no better investment than investment in our children – through development finance, humanitarian finance, climate finance, and domestic finance.

Whether in education, nutrition, water and sanitation, health care or social protection, sufficient money must be allocated to deliver results for the children and families in greatest need. Special attention must be paid to removing barriers that currently prevent girls from accessing basic services, or impede their development. This is not only a moral and strategic imperative, it is a practical one: Growing evidence shows that investing in the most disadvantaged children contributes to sustained growth and the stability of societies and nations”.

FAWEU joins the rest of the world as we go in to the global agenda 2013 over the next 15 years from 2015. We look to working with all of you to continue investment and action in touching lives in Uganda mainly and ensuring that every programme beneficiary girls and boys alike have a life of dignity with none being left behind.

Christine Semambo Sempewa
Editor

40 FAWEU Beneficiaries secure university admission

A total of 40 FAWEU secondary school beneficiaries from Karamoja district have secured admission in major public and private universities in Uganda.

Out of the forty, 30 were admitted in two private universities namely; Uganda Martyrs’ University (UMU) Nkozi and Uganda Christian University (UCU) Mukono. The remaining 10 secured direct admissions to major public universities including: Makerere University, Makerere University Business School, Kyambogo University, Busitema University and Gulu University.

The students are long-term beneficiaries of the joint FAWEU-Irish Aid scholarship programme that has supported girls and boys under the Secondary Scholarship Programme since 2005.

In 2011, the programme took on its first cohort of 11 university students under the Higher Education Programme, with the number steadily increasing reaching 40 in the 2015/16 academic year. Under the current intake of the Higher Education Scholarship Programme that targets university education, the 30 students attending private universities will benefit from a comprehensive scholarship package that includes tuition and related fees, accommodation, meals and upkeep, scholastic materials support as well as a stipend for basic personal needs. The other 10 students are fully sponsored by the government but get support by way of scholastic materials and a stipend to provide for his widowed mother and siblings. The same sentiments are shared by one Akullo Concy, who will be studying Bachelor’s of Arts in Education at Nkozi University.

“After my university studies I want to go back in Karamoja and teach my younger sisters and brothers. This is the kind of continuity I want for my people,” noted Akullo.

The FAWEU-Irish Aid Higher Education Programme is aimed at sponsoring students from needy backgrounds and marginalized areas to access education from secondary level to university level.

FAWEU is grateful to the Embassy of Ireland for this life changing programme which no doubt contributes towards the realization of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which sets out to, Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote life-long learning opportunities for all.

Christine Semambo Sempewa
Editor
A teenage mother’s pursuit for Education

The phrase ‘Education is the most powerful which we can use to change the world’ goes down in history as the one of the most inspirational quotes in the world. Coined by a man of great wisdom, the late Nelson Mandela, many will beg to agree that indeed education has highly contributed to the world we live in today.

According to the National Girls’ Education Strategy (2015-2019), despite a host of successes in promoting girls education, there are persistent challenges at entry, participation and education outcomes. However, against all odds, there are, girls, who through education have managed to surmount restrictive walls some of which are deeply rooted in tradition and culture. That most girls in schools today have curved their education path through a spirit of determination to secure a better future is beyond reasonable doubt. Despite facing daunting challenges like early pregnancies, poverty, social prejudice among others, girls such as Lydia Ageyo are a living testimony of success bourn on the wheels of resilience.

Lydia, a 19 year old mother of one is one of the out of school girls that FAWEU Uganda has managed to support for a second year in a row under the Adolescent Sexual Reproductive Health Programme that supports girls to fulfill their rights to delay sexual debut and avoid early marriages and child-bearing. Lydia hails from Mbulamuti a small village in Kamuli district in Eastern Uganda. It took the caring arm of the school’s administrators’ and teachers’ to convince Lydia to resume studies at the school. As part of their action to advocate for retention and re-entry of child-mothers in school, FAWEU came in to support this economically challenged teenage-mother with a scholarship.

Despite the fact that Lydia is now relieved that she has resumed studies, she faces bullying by her schoolmates who view her as too old for senior secondary. However, this has not broken her. “This kind of bashing does not put me down; I am wiser now and know what I came to do in school. If they want to continue saying terrible things about me I do not care, God is with me.” This courageous girl has managed to talk five other young mothers into resuming school. Of the five, one has joined her school and others intend to join different schools. Cases such as Lydia’s are not new in the school. According to Senior teacher’ and FAWEU’s Sexual Reproductive Health (S.R.H) club patron and teacher at the school Ms Peruth Mukyala, some adolescents have given birth to as many as seven children and have still gathered courage to continue with their studies. “We have reported cases of out of school girls with 3-7 children and still gather the courage to continue from where they left,” says Ms Mukyala.

In fact, Lydia has formed a young mothers’ network in the school that supports each other psychologically. Like Lydia, this group of girls is undeterred and determined to achieve their dreams. As a young mother and champion, she also uses the lessons taught in the SRH club to educate her network and fellow students to abstain from sexual activities in order to complete school.

Though retention and re-entry of pregnant girls in to school remains a subject for deep discussion and input by various stakeholders, FAWEU hails the efforts of the Government and other stakeholders towards ensuring that girls who get pregnant while in school have their right to education realized.

FAWU calls for support in girls’ involvement in STEM

FAWU’s Executive Director, Christine Senambo Sempbewa was among the prolific speakers at the Let Girls Lead High Profile meeting held on 15th September 2015 at Hotel Africana that saw adolescent girls of ages 10-19 strongly advocate for their human rights and access to education. Among the issues brought out in the meeting is the urgent need for Government and civil society players to ensure that education is compulsory and accessible to all girls in Uganda, an end to sexual harassment in schools, prevention of teenage pregnancy and reintegration of teenage mothers, girls involvement in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields and ultimate termination of child marriage.

While echoing the girls’ sentiments, the Executive Director of FAWEU called for innovation in teaching methodologies and learning practices executed in STEM subjects in schools. She added, “it is through innovation that we can stimulate the interests of girls to venture into science based career fields.”

Since 2012, FAWEU in partnership with Intel has championed STEM competitions among secondary schools with a greater aim of stimulating girls’ interest in researching more about science and developing their interest in science based careers. In addition, the project has enabled girls develop a stronger relationship between what is learnt in class and the applications of these concepts to real life situations.

The Executive Director pointed out that in 2013, Christine Nalwoga, who was by then a student at Kitante Hill School had with her colleagues come up with the innovation of a de-worming pill made from pawpaw seeds. The pill name papayazole had generated national and international excitement with the Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development (PIBID) offering to refine the pill. She however decried the lack of funding to take such innovations further and called upon well wishers to support such STEM innovations.

Christine Nalwoga demonstrating how the de-worming pill is prepared
IN PICTURES
FAWE’s Adolescent Sexual Reproduction Health (A.S.R.H) Education programme-
Monitoring Visit, Kamuli District

Kamuli Progressive S.R.H club member John Tasiwuka expounds on club activities

Children from Nawandyo primary school pose outside their classrooms

S.R.H Club members from ST. Paul’s Mbulamuti perform a Busoga choral verse sensitizing students on education

FAWEU’and FAWERS’ staff meet FAWEU’s Nawanyago College beneficiaries

Busitema University S.R.H club members share a light moment with FAWEU staff along the shores of River Nile

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Enhancing Girls’ and Women’s Education for development