Girl_Ed Newsletter

June-August Issue

Celebrating The African Child
There are new things everywhere, in our city, our country, Africa and indeed the world. We bring you a sneak pick of the events that make meaning to us or those that FAWEU has participated in. In this issue we list the newly elected board, find out who is who. One of the board members, Bridget Akurut shares her story; it is an inspiring one, you will enjoy reading it.

FAWEU has also been taking part in a number of advocacy activities. We recently celebrated the Day of the African Child that is focused on addressing children issues in the continent. We were also honored to participate at the 27th AU summit in Kigali to forge the way forward in matters to do with education.

Our efficiency and transparency in delivery of services in Uganda also won us an accolade, find out which one in this issue. We also have a few briefs from the day to day running of departments at the Secretariat.

I use this opportunity to appreciate the members of FAWEU that are fully paid up and encourage those that have arrears to kindly clear to enable expedition of the organisation’s many assignments. We shall remain to all our members and volunteers for everything they do in their different capacities.

By Irene Kiiza
Editor & Publicity Committee Chair

We hereby congratulate her Excellency Janet Kastaha Museveni for being appointed the Minister of Education by President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni during the February 2016 cabinet reshuffle.

H.E Janet Katasha Museveni
First Lady, Minister of Education

The first lady and Minister of Education was previously serving as Karamija Affair Minister and MP for Ruhaama County.

Her new assignment thus makes her our new patron. FAWEU pledges allegiance to the ministry as we go about the duty of ensuring that girls are empowered through access to quality education.

Message from Board Chairperson

Dear FAWEU members, it is with profound joy that I write this note as chairperson of the bon fide 2016-2019 Board of directors.

FAWEU has come a long way and is still going strong. I am proud to be associated with the organisation and especially now that I was recently mandated to steer its governance.

The board is grateful to the entire membership, our partners, our kind donors and the staff at the secretariat for the individual effort they have and continue to put into FAWEU activities to ensure smooth running of the organization. I particularly thank those who have been with us since its inception in 1997.

I am optimistic that things can only get better as we continue in our role of offering education for girls who would have otherwise not afforded to be in school. FAWEU’s achievements so far, give me hope that more girls and women can be better if shown how to improve themselves; and which better tool can one think of apart from education.

I personally know a number of our beneficiaries that would never have become what they are today if it were not for the support they received from FAWEU. It is here that I want to retaliate our call on members to consistently renew their membership and also encourage those that have not joined to do so, as it is without doubt quite a noble cause.

Those who can sponsor even a single girl accomplish her education in anyway, are quite valuable to us and I cannot over emphasize the need to have more on board.

I hope our tenure will add value to FAWEU in terms of growth and fresh ideas.

Thanking you for the moral, advisory, financial and material support.
On 16th and 30th June 2016 FAWEU joined the rest of the continent in celebrating the Day of the African Child (DAC), a day set aside to champion the rights and privileges entitled to children across Africa.

FAWEU engaged communities, mass media and the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) at both national and district level in celebrating DAC under the domesticated theme “Protecting Children Rights: A call to action”.

With regards to the Children Rights theme, we sort to increase awareness on the detrimental repercussions of violence towards children’s cognitive and emotional development and strengthen the capacity of duty bearers, rights holders to be able to contribute to a violent free school environment in line with the existing MOES national guidelines on Reporting, Tracking, Referral and Response (RTRR) to Violence against Children in Schools (VACiS).

Moreover in all a NBS television media interview held on 16th June 2016 FAWEU Programmes Coordinator Ms. Dorothy Muhumurein a news segment dubbed ‘Plight of the African child in Uganda’ called for children access to age specific information for prevention of violence.

FAWEU also used the celebrated advocacy activity to publicize its 2016 Baseline survey on VACiS in Kasese, Ntoroko and Bundibugyo districts, Western Uganda during its district DAC event on 30th June 2016 at Boma grounds, in Kasese District. A fact sheet and infomercial of the survey was circulated and broadcasted to the gathering.

The Day of the African Child (DAC) is commemorated every year on 16 June by Member States of the African Union (AU), continental Human Rights Organizations, NGOs, and Civil Society Organizations, communities among others. This occasion is firstly a commemoration of the 1976 uprising in Soweto, when a protest by school children in South Africa against apartheid–inspired education resulted in the public killing of these unarmed young protesters by police officials.

The DAC further presents an opportunity to focus on the work of all actors committed to the rights of children on the continent, to consolidate their efforts in addressing the obstacles for realizing these rights.

On 23rd of June 2016, FAWEU was awarded the prestigious Quality Assurance Advanced Certificate, an accolade associated with good governance and proficiency in delivery of services among Non-governmental Organizations in Uganda. This was after top officials from NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM) Council led by Dr. Winnie Tarinyebwa, the Vice-Chairperson of the National QuAM Council carried out a successful vetting process on the 17th of May 2016 at the organization’s Bukoto offices.

The process involved examination of the organization’s guiding documents, policies, regulations and procedures and their applicability to the actual institutional practice. Furthermore, applying for the QuAM certification process is a sign of openness and transparency of the management and affairs of FAWEU.

The NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism (QuAM) is a self-assessment initiative developed by NGOs and for NGOs. It aims to enhance the credibility and effectiveness of NGOs and contribute to the overall improvement in the public legitimacy of the sector.
Despite significant progress in achieving primary education and gender equality in primary school enrollment, secondary schools remain scarce, are mostly in central towns and urban areas, and enroll fewer girls than boys and too few poor and disadvantaged children. Clear evidence shows that a quality secondary school education is measurably associated with positive effects on health, well-being, and productivity. Moreover, many children are leaving primary school without basic literacy and numeracy, and those who do make it to secondary school are often unprepared for the higher levels of learning required. Work and livelihood in developing countries is also changing from a focus on widespread subsistence agriculture and small-scale industrial sector work to a far more complex mix of formal and informal economic activities. This makes targeting and calibrating the scale-up of secondary education even more challenging, and many questions surrounding accessibility, quality, and relevance remain unanswered. In Uganda, the biggest disparity can be seen between the poorest and the richest children. Nearly 30% of female youth of secondary school age are out of school compared to 21% of male youth of the same age.

It is against this backdrop that partnerships such as the Partnership to Strengthen Innovation and Practice in Secondary Education (PSIPSE) have emerged to facilitate access to education and increase innovation in the secondary school education system in Africa. PSIPSE is ideally a funder collaborative that seeks to increase secondary education access and improve learning outcomes for marginalized populations. To fulfill this goal, the partnership supports the development and testing of innovative models to address barriers to participation and achievement in secondary education, facilitates the scale-up of effective interventions through systematic change in its target countries, and promotes efforts to expand the evidence base.

FAWEU as a guarantee of the partnership in East Africa took part in a PSIPSE three-day workshop from 21st-23rd July 2016 held in Addis Ababa, Tanzania. The workshop was aimed at building partnerships and networks with key stakeholders in secondary education; sharing the success and lessons learned from implementing PSIPSE projects in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, the DRC, and Malawi and exploring opportunities for collaboration in these projects. From the deliberations, it emerged that Poverty is the key problem in Africa and most interventions are donor driven with specific directions, this has left out a comprehensive approach to the problems in Africa, which targets livelihoods, social norms and local structure interventions and accountability. That Education policies are largely on paper and sporadic in nature and not institutionalized. Some of the policies are so contradicting. That Girls in secondary schools are 100% more likely to get pregnant again when they re-enter school among other issues.
On 9th of July 2016 FAWE joined African women leaders, Civil Societies Organisations and governments for the 27th African Union High Level Panel (AU HLP) on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment (GEWE) in Kigali Rwanda to stock take on the contributions of the Maputo Protocol on Women’s Rights in Achieving Gender Equality in Africa. Hosted by her Excellency African Union Chair Dlamini Nkozosana-Zuma the HLP leveraged on the theme “African Year on Human’s Rights with a particular focus on the Rights of Women” while critically assessing the implementation of human rights and generating ideas and strategies to achieve greater execution of commitments by AU Member States.

FAWE as one of distinguished Pan African NGO in matters to do with Gender Equality and Education was represented by its Regional Executive Director Hendrina Doroba in one of the HLP sessions dubbed ‘Gender Equality and Education.’ In her capacity, Doroba pitched for the AU states adoption of a gender responsive learning environment in schools and Higher education and establishment of information management systems to boost access and retention of children education across Africa.

The women fora also developed recommendations to end child marriage in Africa that has so far seen 75% of children marry before the age of 15. In fact the 2012 World Bank report also outlines that of the 75% only 5% are boys hence the greatest percentage of the vice falling on the girls shoulders.

The Maputo protocol guarantees comprehensive rights to women including the right to take part in the political process, to social and political equality with men, improved autonomy in their reproductive health decisions, and an end to female genital mutilation. As the name suggests, it was adopted by the African Union in the form of a protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights in Maputo, Mozambique on 11th July 2003.

Of the 53 member countries in the African Union, the heads of states of 46 countries signed the protocol, and as of July 2010, 28 of those countries had ratified and deposited the protocol.

Today, of the 54 African countries, 37 have ratified the Maputo protocol (Uganda Included) and only 5 countries have submitted their accountability reports.

On the sidelines of the AU summit, Women leaders also held the 28th Gender Is My Agenda Campaign (GIMAC) consultative meeting on 10th-11th July 2016 in Kigali Rwanda to deliberate on the African Union milestone in achieving the Gender Parity principle. GIMAC met under the theme ‘implementing women rights in Africa; If not now when?’ In this forum, FAWE Uganda and FAWE Rwanda presented recommendations on the thematic area of creating safe learning environment in schools. In particular the two National Chapters pitched on nurturing of positive attitudes and perceptions to the rights of women and girls including coming up with positive alternative strategies and actions for fostering discipline, learning, growth and development among children. That AU states further adopt re-entry policies and models for pregnant girls and teenage mothers especially in war conflict zones. That teachers who act as a medium between gender friendly curricula and children receive prior training and skills on gender responsive pedagogy to enable them to effectively address to gender issues among boys and girls in school.

Lastly, the two also recommended a reorientation process for Africa education systems and training system to meet the knowledge, competencies, skills, innovation and creativity required to nurture African core values and promote sustainability.

The event also culminated in the launch of The Solemn Declaration Index, as an advocacy tool among Civil Society Organizations and governments to assess performance of AU member states in committing to the fulfillment of the 2004 Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa and ultimately the 2003 Maputo Protocol.

GIMAC also honored Rwanda’s President Paul Kagame and reigning AU chair Dr. Dlamini Zuma for their tireless efforts in realizing gender parity in Africa.

FAWE is a member of the 14 member GIMAC steering committee that is tasked with the coordination of the fora’s activities in the continent.
2016-2019 Board of Directors

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Perseverance and focus sailed me through Life

By Akurut Bridget

As I grew up, there came a time when I thought life had lost meaning. It was full of no hope, misery and despair. The situation showed no hope for attaining education to the level I desired. I became a child of sympathy that whoever saw a little potential in me would contribute as least as they could, while some showed pity upon me but exhibited no concern.

After my father’s death in my Primary 7 vacation, there was a vacuum left as to who would take up responsibility for paying my school fees but there was no one willing to do that. When I joined Senior 1, my aunty contributed for the beginning but withdrew along the way. So I had to change school for the next term which became hard for me to concentrate as I was always in and out of school due to non-payment of school fees. This meant that I had limited time to do class work which partly affected my performance. But after enduring the hardships, I tried all I could to perform well given the little time I had in school. I was able to finish my Senior 4 and Senior 6.

When I wanted to join university, I had given up because I lost hope. That was the time I came to know about FAWEU. I applied for a scholarship to FAWEU to pursue my university education, which I received under Beautiful World Canada Foundation. I was so happy and with disbelief for having got the opportunity to further my education. While at campus I did my best to maintain the scholarship package so that I am not discontinued. Am so grateful that I successfully completed my university degree for which I graduated with a Bachelors of Arts in Ethics and Human rights.

I have over time developed the spirit of entrepreneurship. During campus holidays, I would join my aunt in brewing wine which she sold in the neighborhood and surrounding towns.

This is a business I have taken up seriously after graduation. Since inception in 2013, the small enterprise has profited sales up to five million Ugandan shillings as of end of May 2016.

Aside from brewing wine, I do freelance research activities for government and private bodies. In October 2015 I participated in a research on Human Rights impact on oil production in Uganda. This experience has sharpened my research skills on the ground.

I am currently serving as Board representative for all Alumni and beneficiaries at FAWEU, which to me is very big achievement. In this journey of life, I have learnt that there are so many lessons to learn from every experience you go through but perseverance and focus will enable you reach your destination. To this, I pledge to support other vulnerable girls achieve their dreams.

Bereavement

We conhole with the family and friends of FAWEU Finance and Administration Manager Ms. Florence Nabende and, FAWE’s Senior Programmes Coordinating Officer and former FAWEU National Coordinator (2007-2012) Ms. Martha Muhwezi following the demise of their beloved Martha the Late Victoria Biteremo on… The late madam Biteremo joined the Lord after a short illness in July. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

Farewell

Two of FAWEU staff Ms. Juliet Kimelho and Mr. CholaKunda will be leaving the secretariat on the 12th of August 2016. The two have since August 2015 served in the capacities of Communication and Advocacy Officer and Resource mobilization Officer under the ongoing FAWE-FK Exchange Programme. Their departure marks the end of round one of the three- year exchange programme targeting five FAWE chapters i.e Uganda, Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and Tanzania. FAWEU wishes them all the best in their endeavors.

MSC Competition comes to a close

The first of its kind most significant change story competition came to a close on 7th July with the awarding of participants from Senegal, Zimbabwe and Sierra Leone clinching the coveted top three positions. Agnes Kenneh from Sierra Leone, Chiedza Child Care Center from Zimbabwe and Fatounata Cisse from Senegal were announced the first, second and third position winners respectively. Uganda alongside five African countries namely Mali, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Zambia and Zimbabwe took part in the exercise. The FAWE-ADEA led initiative guided by the search for innovations which have greatly contributed to advance girls’ participation at secondary education level in Africa. The exercise run from 17th November 2015-7th July 2016.

Bridget at her wine brewing center in Namugongo
We congratulate Board Member and Representative for individuals Maureen Tweyongyere for being shortlisted to participate in the Cohort 9 Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) training programme in Nairobi Kenya. Ms. Tweyongyere successfully completed the first phase of the programme in July and is expected to commence her final phase in September 2016.

“I must say that it has been such an unforgettable leadership experience and I would like to urge all young leaders to participate. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to FAWEU secretariat for bringing this opportunity to our attention, special thanks to the entire YALI team, the YALI partners and US President Barack Obama whom inspires participants and i,” reflects Ms. Tweyongyere.

The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) was launched by US President Barack Obama in the year 2014 as a signature effort to prepare the next generation of African Leaders. YALI trainings are fully sponsored and target all Africans between the age of 18 and 35 that have exhibited commitment in leading the transformation of the African continent.

Tweyongyere encourages FAWEU membership to venture into these transforming activities.

“Application for this training programme is open and can be accessed through their website. Once you apply for this programme, you are subjected to a series of interviews and upon excelling; you are then notified by the secretariat.”

In Pictures

FAWEU and Plan Uganda staff at a Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) workshop in Kampala.

Round one FAWE-FK Norway Exchange Programme participants Juliet Kimotho (Communication and Advocacy Officer) and Chola Kunda (Resource and Mobilization Officer).