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Launch of Higher Education Access Program (HEAP) Phase II



FAWE Uganda-, Regional Secretariat-, National Council for Higher Education, Ministry of Education and Sports-, Mastercard Foundation Uganda-, Ministry of Gender, Labor, Social and Development leadership and other invited guests at the Phase II Launch.

On 12 April 2024, Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) Uganda launched Phase II of the Higher Education Access Program (HEAP) at the Sheraton Hotel in Kampala. The launch event brought together key stakeholders, including partner learning institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development (MoGLSD). Additionally, delegates from seven FAWE Country Chapters—Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Rwanda, and Uganda were present, along with members of the FAWE Africa Regional Secretariat, the Mastercard Foundation (Uganda), the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), and FAWE Uganda's HEAP alumni.

The event was officiated by Hon. Dr. John Chrysostom Musingo, who was represented by Commissioner Timothy Ssejjoba. During the launch, FAWE Uganda Executive Director Susan Opok Tumusiime highlighted the significance of this expanded partnership with the Mastercard Foundation, emphasizing its potential to build on the successes of the previous phase, which supported 334 young individuals from marginalized communities.

The new phase aims to empower over 1,800 young people across Uganda, with a focus on those with disabilities and from refugee backgrounds, facilitating their transition into tertiary education and subsequent employment opportunities.

At the launch event, Prof. Mary Okwakol, the Executive Director of the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), delivered the keynote address. Dr. Christine Oryema, FAWE Uganda Board Chairperson, and Martha Muhwezi, the Executive Director of FAWE Africa, also shared background and milestones on the Mastercard Foundation/FAWE education program. Prof. Mary Okwakol emphasized the importance of the Higher Education Access Certificate (HEAC), a bridging program that provides a pathway to university education for those who do not meet the minimum entry requirements. She urged the government to consider allocating specific scholarship slots for HEAC students, highlighting its critical role in expanding access to higher education for disadvantaged youth.

FAWE Uganda Calls for Applications for 2024/2025 Bursary Program



FAWE Uganda staff conducting community sensitization for the Higher Education Access Program call for bursary applications for the academic year 2024/2025.

In June 2024, FAWE Uganda called for applications for the FAWE/Mastercard Foundation Bursary Program for the 2024/2025 academic year. This bursary program, part of Phase II of the Higher Education Access Program (HEAP), specifically targeted individuals with disabilities, refugees, and youth facing significant social and economic barriers to educational opportunities, all aged between 15 and 25 years. The program aimed to support these underrepresented groups in accessing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) or university education, with implementation set to occur across Uganda's Eastern, Central, Northern, and Western regions.

For the 2024/2025 academic year, 500 bursaries were offered, with 200 allocated for TVET and 300 dedicated to the Higher Education Access Certificate (HEAC) Program. This initiative represented a significant step towards bridging the educational gap for youth from marginalized communities.

As part of the FAWE Uganda/Mastercard Foundation Bursary Program for the 2024/2025 academic year, a National Scholarships and Bursary Selection Committee was formed to ensure fairness and transparency in the selection process. This committee brought together representatives from key stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MoGLSD), the Refugee Law Project, and the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU).

Additionally, the committee featured members from the FAWE Uganda Alumni Association and select FAWE Uganda staff, pooling their collective expertise to guarantee that the most deserving and academically talented individuals, especially those from marginalized communities, were selected.

SHARE Project Transforming Menstrual Hygiene in Uganda



LCV Chairman & Deputy RDC (all lifting sewing machines respectively) hand over MHM materials donated by FAWE Uganda, to officials of Adjumani schools on 15th April 2024.

Sexual Health and Reproductive Education (SHARE) is a five-year project (2021-2026) aimed at promoting gender equality and health-related human rights for the most marginalized, particularly adolescent girls and young women (AGYW). In Uganda, SHARE focuses on Adjumani and Buyende districts. One of the key initiatives under SHARE is to improve menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in 15 schools, aiming to enhance performance and retention rates among girls.

To achieve this, SHARE provided materials for making reusable sanitary pads. This initiative aims to empower health clubs in schools to address menstruation-related issues that hinder girls' education. The project also provided 15 sewing machines and various MHM materials to the targeted schools, including baby cotton, mackintosh, flannel, needles, design pins, press buttons, sewing thread, hand needles, machine needles, scissors, tape measures, manila cards, and machine oil.

Stakeholder engagement was crucial for the successful implementation of this initiative. A meeting was held to hand over the MHM materials to district leadership, involving key stakeholders such as LCV, DRDC, DCAO, ADHO, SEC Health, and school representatives. These stakeholders witnessed the handover and supported the distribution process.

To ensure the effective use of the materials, a professional tailor was hired to assist health club members in assembling and timing the sewing machines. This support was essential to make sure the machines were in a usable state for the learners.

The distribution covered eight schools in Adjumani, including Alere SS, Adjumani SS, Biyaya SS, Dzaipi SS, Lewa SS, Ofua Seed SS, Maaji Seed SS, and Mungula SS. These schools are located in the sub-counties of Pachara, Ciforo, Adjumani Town Council, Dzaipi, Pakele, Ofua, Ukusijoni, and Itirikwa. In total, 240 learners (144 female and 96 male) from eight health clubs benefited, with 30 members per club, alongside 16 club patrons and 18 stakeholders.

Conclusively, the four-day activity was successfully executed. District stakeholders, including the LCV chairman, RDC, DHO-MCH, DEO, and DCDO, witnessed the handover of MHM materials to the district education department and participated in flagging off the project team for distribution. This initiative is a substantial step in enhancing menstrual hygiene management, promoting gender equality, and improving educational retention for adolescent girls in the region.

FAWE Uganda Promotes Positive Parenting and School Re-entry



Child Rights Club members led by Kabugho Lydia Asinjya a learner from Mulongoti Primary School presenting a petition during the interface meeting between duty bearers and children to promote positive parenting and re-entry into school at the sub-county headquarters at the central division, Kasese Municipality.

This quarter, FAWE Uganda achieved significant progress by conducting behavioural change dialogues in 60 schools across various sub-counties. These meetings involved local leaders, children, parents, guardians, politicians, cultural and religious figures, school officials, and technocrats.

A total of 515 participants (187 female, 328 male) engaged in discussions to promote positive parenting and support the re-entry of child mothers and pregnant girls into school. These dialogues aimed to create a supportive environment for children's education and well-being.

Students from 15 project schools presented petitions to duty bearers, emphasizing the need for positive parenting and educational re-entry for child mothers and pregnant girls. These petitions aimed to ensure sustainable actions are taken to address these critical

issues.

Additionally, duty bearers developed 15 action plans at the sub-county level to track progress in addressing violence against children. These plans provide a framework for monitoring and implementing measures to protect and support children.

FAWE Uganda remains dedicated to fostering positive behavioural change and supporting vulnerable children. These interface meetings build a collaborative approach to addressing educational barriers and promoting a safe, nurturing environment for all children. We will continue tracking progress and working closely with stakeholders to ensure every child has the opportunity to thrive in a supportive educational setting.

FAWE Uganda Empowers Communities with VSLA Toolkits



Kule Micheal the District volunteer Ntoroko standing in the center demonstrating to the members of Makondo skillful parenting VSLA of Rwebisengo Sub County on the minimum and Maximum share capital during the monitoring and support supervision on the 13th May 2024.

In an exciting development this quarter, FAWE Uganda through her Violence Against Children in Schools (VACiS) project successfully procured and distributed 30 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) toolkits to new parenting groups. The aim is to enhance financial literacy and stability among community members, especially in 30 sub-counties, by equipping them with essential tools for managing savings and loan activities.

The VACiS project focuses on providing these toolkits to groups in Kasese, Bundibugyo, and Ntoroko districts. By offering these resources, we empower the groups to conduct VSLA activities effectively and securely. The distribution took place in June 2024, marking a significant milestone in our ongoing efforts to support community-led financial initiatives.

This project represents a significant step towards preventing violence against children by improving the economic standing of families through the VSLA methodology. By using the VSLA toolkits, these groups can conduct transactions efficiently and ensure the safety of their savings.

This initiative not only promotes economic growth but also fosters a culture of saving and responsible financial management.

The distribution of the 30 VSLA toolkits involved active participation from FAWE Uganda staff, local community leaders, and the recipients themselves. Each toolkit, carefully designed to meet the needs of the groups, includes items such as cash boxes, record-keeping materials, and security features to safeguard the money collected.

FAWE Uganda's dedication to empowering communities through practical support and education continues to drive her mission forward. By providing these toolkits, we aim to build stronger, more financially stable communities, ensuring a brighter future for all members involved.

This quarter's achievements highlight our commitment to making a tangible impact on the ground. As we move forward, we remain dedicated to supporting initiatives that promote financial literacy, economic growth, and community development across Uganda.

FAWE Uganda Redefines Fatherhood with REAL Fathers Project



Q&A session by FAWE Uganda Project Assistant, Erisa Nyakahuma (standing in center) during the pre-test meeting of Kobo Collect tools in Isingiro District.

With generous support from the LEGO Foundation, facilitated by the Impact and Innovation Development Centre (IIDC), FAWE Uganda secured funding for the REAL Fathers project. Operating in Isingiro, Ibanda, Mbarara, and Rubirizi districts. This project aims to combat violence that hinders children's development and learning, which often results in low self-esteem and emotional distress among young parents.

The project, aptly titled "Catalyzing Responsible, Engaged, and Loving Fathers (REAL) Across Uganda for Early Learning and Play," promotes positive child development by transforming cultures of violence through the Responsible, Engaged, and Loving (REAL) Fathers program. This community-led, evidence-based mentoring program targets fathers aged 16-25 with children aged 0-3 years, teaching them positive parenting and nonviolent discipline techniques.

The project's primary goal is to improve children's education, health, and well-being while fostering safe, harmonious family relationships. In its first year, the project spans 23 sub-counties and 93 parishes across the four districts. Key stakeholders include religious and cultural leaders, district political and technical departments, community structures like Village Health Teams (VHTs), parasocial workers, and Local Council Chairpersons.

Here are the activities and progress highlights:

Renewing and Signing Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with Project Districts: FAWE Uganda successfully signed four MOUs with Mbarara, Isingiro, Ibanda, and Rubirizi districts, reinforcing

collaboration with district local governments.

Orientation Meetings with Leaders from Four Operational Districts: From 3rd -6th April 2024, 110 district stakeholders (36 female, 74 male) attended inception meetings to raise awareness about the REAL Fathers Project. Held at district headquarters, these meetings resulted in leaders pledging support for community mobilization during the enrolment of young fathers, spouses, and mentors. Notably, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Mbarara recommended prioritizing REAL Fathers graduates for government economic empowerment programs to mitigate financial hardships that lead to violence.

Community Introductory Meetings: Between 8th and 24th April 609 leaders (218 female, 391 male) participated in community meetings to introduce the REAL Fathers project. These meetings, held at Sub-county, Town Council, and Parish halls, achieved acceptance and buy-in from all sub-counties and town councils. FAWE Uganda obtained 23 introductory letters from Sub-county and Town Council leaders, aiding mobilization and enrolment efforts.

Identifying and Enrolling Eligible Young Fathers: By 7th June 2024, the project identified 2,148 young fathers and 1,151 mentors, with the enrolment process ongoing.

The REAL Fathers project promises to create a positive impact on young fathers, their families, and communities, ensuring a brighter, violence-free future for their children.



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