OCTOBER 2020

JOURNEY FROM THE MARGINS:

Feminist Movement Strengthening in Uganda



Womankind Worldwide

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Our Partners.

FARUG
Freedom And Roam Uganda

FOWODE
Shaping the future

MEMPROW

NAWOU

NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES OF UGANDA
NUWODU

Women's International Peace Centre
Amplifying Women's Voice and Power

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Image on cover: Speaker at the Uganda Feminist Forum.
PHOTO CREDIT: AKINA MAMA WA AFRIKA.

This paper was written by Piyumi Samaraweera with Natasha Horsfield. It is based on evidence and learning from an intersectional women's movement (WM) initiative delivered through collaboration in 2019 between six Uganda based women's rights organisations (WROs) and by Womankind Worldwide, within the project Women's Advocacy for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) through inclusive platforms in Uganda. This was supplemented by interviews and meetings between the authors and key project contacts from the six WROs: FARUG, FOWODE, MEMPROW, NAWOU, NUWODU and The Peace Centre.

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About Womankind Worldwide.

Womankind Worldwide (Womankind) is a global women's rights organisation (WRO) working with women's movements (WM) to transform the lives of women. Our vision is a world where the rights of all women are respected, valued and realised. We support WMs to strengthen and grow by carrying out diverse joint activities, including advocacy and communications work, women's rights programming, awareness raising, knowledge sharing, research, capacity development and fundraising. Our Theory of Change (ToC) purposefully focuses on the need for an intersectional approach and our partnerships across our focus countries reflect this.

About this learning paper.

This learning paper aims to share insights, analysis and reflection from our portfolio of work. It builds upon a body of learning to support women's rights and strengthening WMs. The paper aims to capture and collate some of the knowledge, learning and evidence around the focus and effectiveness of our support to movement strengthening with diverse WROs in Uganda. We also explore the effectiveness of collaborative working as the mechanism through which this initiative was delivered.

The content of the paper was strengthened by key informant interviews (KIIs) with core partner project staff whose voices and input have been fundamental in shaping our collective learning. Through this paper, we share new knowledge drawing from our feminist programme approaches to contribute to the evidence base on strengthening WMs. We hope the content of this paper offers encouragement on the nature and effectiveness of movement strengthening work, and that it provides some transferable learning for others, including learning from our mistakes. The paper is a contribution to learning for WROs and movements in the global south and those who support them.

List of Acronyms.

AWID	Association of Women in Development
CSO	Civil society organisation
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COMBATS	Community based action team
FARUG	Freedom and Roam Uganda
FOWODE	Forum for Women in Democracy
FSW	Female sex workers
ICTs	Information and communication technologies
KII	Key informant interview/s
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex +
MEMPROW	Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women
NAWOU	National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda
NGO	Non governmental organisation
NUWODU	National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SMUG	Sexual Minorities Uganda
SOGIE	Sexual orientation and gender identity and expression
ToC	Theory of Change
UFF	Uganda Feminist Forum
UGALEF	Uganda Lesbian Forum
UWAP	Uganda Women's Action Programme
VAWG	Violence against women and girls
WAVE	Women's Advocacy for Voice and Empowerment
WER	Women's economic rights
WHRD	Women human rights defender/s
WM	Women's movement/s
WRO	Women's rights organisation/s
WWD	Women with disabilities

Key Definitions.

Women's rights organisations: These are women-led organisations working to advance women's rights and gender justice.

Women's movements: These are broad social movements, led by women and their organisations, that campaign for women's rights and gender justice at national, regional and international levels. They include WROs and other actors, including activists, academics, journalists, lawyers and trade unionists.

Women human rights defenders (WHRDs): Women, including trans and non-binary people, who advocate for human rights.

Intersectionality: A term devised by law professor, Kimberlé Crenshaw, in the 1980s to describe the way that multiple systems of oppression interact in the lives of those with multiple marginalised identities. Intersectionality looks at the relationships between multiple marginalised identities and allows us to analyse social problems more thoroughly, shape more effective interventions, and promote more inclusive advocacy amongst communities.

Intersectional feminism: Feminism that accounts for all aspects of social and political identities (gender, race, class, sexuality, disability, etc.) and how related discriminations overlap (or "intersect").

Gender identity: How a person sees themselves – their internal sense and personal experience of gender. Only the individual can determine their own gender identity. Many people have a gender identity of a man or woman, but some people do not. People who do not identify as a man or a woman may identify as non-binary, both genders, neither gender, between genders, or not gendered at all.

Gender expression: How a person outwardly shows their gender identity. It includes physical expressions such as a person's clothing, hairstyle, makeup, and social expressions such as name and pronoun choice. Some examples of gender expression are masculine, feminine, and androgynous.

SOGIE: We acknowledge that there is no universally accepted umbrella term to capture the diversity of sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE), nor do Womankind partners use the same terminology as each other. Therefore in this report we will use the acronyms that our partner FARUG uses in the context of their project work, and lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+ (LBTQI+) at other times, with the intention of including everyone[1]. The divergent terms used by global SOGIE actors also reflects the continued challenges of the politics of identity, inclusion and exclusion which exists within the LBTQI+ spectrum.

Lesbian: A woman who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards women.

Gay: A man who has a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards men. Also a generic term for lesbian and gay sexuality - some women define themselves as gay rather than lesbian.

Bi: An umbrella term used to describe a romantic and/or sexual orientation towards more than one gender. Bi people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including, but not limited to, bisexual, pansexual, pan, queer, and some other non-monosexual and non-monoromantic identities.

Bisexual: A person who experiences sexual, romantic and/or physical attraction to more than one gender, not necessarily at the same time, in the same way, or to the same degree.

Trans: An umbrella term to describe people whose gender is not the same as, or does not sit comfortably with, the sex they were assigned at birth. Trans people may describe themselves using one or more of a wide variety of terms, including (but not limited to) transgender, transsexual, gender-queer (GQ), gender-fluid, non-binary, gender-variant, crossdresser, genderless, agender, nongender, third gender, bi-gender, trans man, trans woman, trans masculine, trans feminine and neutrois.

Transgender man: A term used to describe someone who is assigned female at birth but identifies and lives as a man. This may be shortened to trans man, or FTM, an abbreviation for female-to-male.

Transgender woman: A term used to describe someone who is assigned male at birth but identifies and lives as a woman. This may be shortened to trans woman, or MTF, an abbreviation for male-to-female.

Queer: A term which advocates breaking binary thinking and seeing both sexual orientation and gender identity as potentially fluid. Queer is a term used by those wanting to reject specific labels of romantic orientation, sexual orientation and/or gender identity. It can also be a way of rejecting the perceived norms of the LGBTI+ community (racism, sizeism, ableism etc). Although some LGBTI+ people view the word as a slur, it was reclaimed in the late 1980s by the queer community who have embraced it. It is also seen by some as a political statement and position, reflecting a diverse use of the term.

Intersex: A term used to describe a person who may have the biological attributes of both sexes or whose biological attributes do not fit with societal assumptions about what constitutes male or female. Intersex people may identify as male, female or non-binary.

Heteronormative: A set of lifestyle norms, practices, and institutions that promote binary alignment of biological sex, gender identity, and gender roles; assume heterosexuality as a fundamental and natural norm; and privilege monogamous, committed relationships and reproductive sex above all other sexual practices.

1. **See here for a robust glossary of related terms** https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/glossary-terms



PHOTO CREDIT: AKINA MAMA WA AFRIKA.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In this paper, Womankind draws on evidence and learning from Women's Advocacy for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) through inclusive platforms in Uganda. This was a 12 month pilot project conducted over the course of 2019 focused on strengthening the intersectional women's movement (WM) in Uganda via a collaboration of six women's rights organisations (WROs) to better understand the impact of Womankind's programmatic approach through project delivery and partnership, in line with our Theory of Change (ToC).

Womankind's strategic approach seeks to strengthen WMs in our focus countries by working in partnership with diverse WROs, the sites from which movements are built and supported. We recognise that progressive change for women happens when diverse and independent WMs have strength, resilience and collective power, as detailed in our strategy and ToC. Womankind's movement strengthening approach is based on our understanding that sustainable and transformative improvements in women's rights are achieved when there is a critical mass of actors acting collectively towards a common goal at local, regional and global levels. This also goes beyond advocacy and policy objectives, often achieved in formal spaces, to seeking change in informal spaces around beliefs, attitudes, values, cultural norms and practices.

The WAVE project was conducted in collaboration with six women's rights organisations (WROs):

- **Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG)**
- **Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)**
- **Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW)**
- **National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU)**
- **National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU)**
- **Women's International Peace Centre (The Peace Centre)**

WAVE supported the Ugandan WM to become more inclusive and effective by providing a diverse group of women, including the most marginalised, with opportunities and spaces for meaningful and equitable participation, leadership and influence.

Together with the six project partners, Womankind supported the development of the project with the intention of scale-up to a three year initiative following this 12 month pilot. The provision of flexible funding to Womankind was a critical component in enabling Womankind to pursue

Image on the left: Participant speaks at the Uganda Feminist Forum

a project of this nature, providing fewer limitations on scope to explore and adapt without the constraints of onerous donor reporting requirements. Whilst delivered within Womankind's standard project cycle management approach, the nature of the funding allowed us to demonstrate the organic nature of movement strengthening and varied approaches towards achieving this.

Overall, WAVE successfully:

> ***"Created inclusivity and provided diverse groups of women an opportunity and space to celebrate sisters' courage, risking life and limb in speaking out against injustices, but also provided an opportunity to examine our complicity, inadvertent or not, in keeping quiet when our voices could have made a difference."***
>
> **Suzan Nikinzi, The Peace Centre,**
> **M&E Officer & Programme lead on WAVE.**

As detailed in this paper, WAVE has resulted in greater understanding, acceptance and inclusion of marginalised constituents and their rights: particularly women with disabilities (WWD), lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+ (LBTQI+) women and younger women; and helped to strengthen the Ugandan WM to become more intersectional and intergenerational in the process. Of the six partners and their constituents, it is perhaps understandable and fitting that WWD and LBTQI+ women, who are amongst the most marginalised in society and often on the periphery of the WM, reported feeling the biggest changes through the project and collaboration, and have found allies in one another:

> ***"At the beginning NUWODU were isolated, but now we are integrated and working with other WRO."***
>
> **Betty Achana, NUWODU,**
> **Executive Secretary.**

> ***"Partner X will tell you [that before WAVE] "we didn't know what lesbians look like" and now they will say "why is FARUG not here"? Now every space I go to [I] look for someone from NUWODU – because I recognise that the barriers that WWD face are closest to the ones that LBQ women face."***
>
> **Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG,**
> **Director of Programmes and WAVE project lead**

WAVE also contributed to an enhanced understanding of the difference between a feminist approach, and a gendered approach, in programming and leadership among the participating organisations, their staff and their wider constituents. This was through deepening the abilities of women to carry out feminist analysis and lead with feminist values, and the integration of contextual feminist knowledge for advocacy. The project provided learning on collaborative working to help inform future movement strengthening initiatives. This has contributed to a strengthened Ugandan WM that project partners feel is now more inclusive and diverse as a result of the WAVE project.

Methodology.

In addition to project documentation and evidence as the basis for this paper, Womankind also explored a range of movement-focused questions. These included which strategies and approaches were used when working in collaboration (as opposed to strategies used in initiatives delivered by a single organisation) to strengthen the WM. Womankind engaged with key partner project staff through participatory interviews to gather and explore their views.

This learning paper has some limitations. It is not a comprehensive project document, listing the multiplicity of activities that each of the six partners implemented. Rather, it is a reflection of our collective judgement of the most impactful changes WAVE has facilitated that contribute to a stronger WM, and the strategies and enabling factors that have brought those about.

Partner insights on WAVE's impact for the women's movement (WM) in Uganda

The WAVE project partners have shared personal and organisational insights into some ways in which the Uganda WM has been strengthened through the project:

- The movement is more intersectional and intergenerational. WAVE has highlighted and contributed to increased awareness of the specific realities and experiences particularly of LBTQI+ women, and WWD. It has created a better understanding and built bridges between those constituencies and conservative religious groups and youth, as well as well-established feminists in the movement.
- Women have deepened capacity to carry out feminist analysis, both through the work done at a grassroots level as well as through the activities carried out in the urban centre of Kampala.
- More women can now lead with feminist values (including self-care). As a result of WAVE, relationships were made and deepened both at an institutional and individual level; and some women who were never really seen before became visible, and their stories woven into the wider story of the Uganda WM.
- Contextual feminist knowledge including women's economic rights and disability inclusion that can be used for advocacy on areas like the SDGs has been generated.
- The movement is also stronger through collaborative working and through the organic power and accountability sharing which guided their collective working.

INTRODUCTION

This paper documents how enhancing the voices of more marginalised women can contribute to strengthening and sustaining solidarity within and between all women's movements (WMs). The mainstream WM is often comprised of more visible, more urban based and longer-established, elite voices whether through individuals or the organisations they represent. In this way, often the mainstream WM tends to lead and determine the agenda for focus and action. The project work described in the following sections has connected actors and activists across movements and spaces, particularly helping to connect the lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+ (LBTQI+) movement, and the disability rights movement with that mainstream.

Setting the scene: the Uganda country context

A number of restrictive policies, such as The NGO Act (2016)[2] and The Public Order and Management Act (POMA) 2013[3] restrict NGO/WRO activity, and control the rights of citizens, limiting their ability to participate in civic space. This continues against the backdrop of recent constitutional change that allowed current president Yoweri Museveni, who has ruled for over 30 years, to run in 2021 for an unprecedented sixth term in office. As a result, the freedoms of expression, assembly and association continue to be violated in Uganda.[4] In October 2017 four well known NGOs were raided. In August 2018, The Peace Centre (formerly known as Isis-Wicce) had their electronic data and backups destroyed or stolen in a burglary that was never properly investigated. In 2019, FARUG was raided.

The CIVICUS Monitor offers a depiction of the state of civic space globally, with the disturbing developments in Uganda earning the country a rating of "repressed" which is one category above "closed," in a five-category rating system. In such a context, the environment for movement strengthening is threatened while the need for it is amplified. In parallel, there is the rise of the People Power Party (PPP), a youth centric popular political movement spearheaded by Ssentamu Robert Kyagulanyi (aka Bobby Wine), an elected independent MP known for his music career. While the PPP offers a popular and youthful opposition to Museveni, it is also creating more tension within

2. **Non Governmental Act 2016 available online at:** https://ulii.org/ug/legislation/act/2016/1/ **See also NGO Bill becomes law, Library Congress of Law, May 17, 2016 available online at:** https://www.loc.gov/law/foreign-news/article/uganda-non-governmental-organizations-bill-becomes-law/

3. **Public Order Management Act 2013. Available online at:** https://ulii.org/ug/legislation/act/2015/1-6 **See also Public Order Management Act: A cloud hovering over 2021 elections, Daily Monitor, February 9, 2020 Available online at:** https://www.monitor.co.ug/Magazines/PeoplePower/Public-Order-Management-Act-cloud-hovering-over-2021-elections/689844-5449890-rgl9fx/index.html

4. **CIVICUS (2020). Monitor Tracking Civic Space. Available online at:** https://monitor.civicus.org/country/uganda/

communities, exacerbated by the redrawing of district boundaries along ethnic lines, inhibiting democratic governance and resource allocation.[5]

A 2015 UNDP assessment of the state of gender equality in Uganda found that it had '*progressive laws [barring its stance on LGBTQI+ rights] and regulations but effective implementation is lagging.*'[6] As stated in Womankind's 2019 report, Making Visible:

> ***"Homophobia, though heavily fuelled by government officials and religious leaders, has continued to exist because of public ignorance, myths and misconceptions on issues pertaining to LBTQI+ persons."***[7]

High levels of violence against women and girls (VAWG) persist, alongside widespread patriarchal attitudes and harmful gender norms, which limit women's and girls' opportunities and voices, despite the existence of relevant laws and policies. Uganda has ratified key international and regional instruments that promote women's rights and gender equality, including The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979),[8] the Sustainable Development Goals, (SDGs),[9] the Maputo Protocol, and the East African Gender Equality and Development Act 2017.[10]

Uganda women's rights and movements

Uganda is home to some of the most diverse and progressive WMs in Africa that have achieved significant progress in the fight for women's rights over the last 30 years. The WMs in Uganda have become exemplary in Africa, and have led many advances in women's rights with multiple achievements from their roots in the post-independence period to the contemporary moment. This includes women's activism in colonial Uganda, women's agency in business and the economy, land rights, and women's role in conflict resolution.[11]

Uganda is also home to a range of feminist regional and Pan-African organisations, which have contributed to fostering progressive thinking in the movement and offer access to other spaces for advocacy and policy dialogue.

In 2008 the Ugandan WM developed its own Uganda Feminist Forum (UFF) bringing together women with a desire to push for a progressive feminist agenda.

However, since 2016, women's rights organisations (WROs) have operated in an increasingly problematic environment for their work, as outlined earlier in this section. This is compounded by challenges around funding and deliberate focus on gender mainstreaming rather than women's rights.[12]

Global context

This paper is written against the backdrop of the steady rise of nationalism and far right politics across the globe, leading to the roll back of hard won gains in women's rights. In addition, the COVID 19 global pandemic is having a disproportionate impact on women, while the recent revival of the Black Lives Matter movement is surfacing the unaddressed injustices of racist colonisation and its lasting impact.[13] This underscores the importance of intersectional approaches and solidarity, in which the presence of strong WMs is critical to advocate for and effect change.

5. Green, Elliott. (2008). Decentralisation and conflict in Uganda. Conflict, Security & Development. Available online at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/44146021_Decentralisation_and_conflict_in_Uganda

6. UNDP (2015). Uganda Country Gender Assignment. Available online at: https://www.undp.org/content/dam/uganda/docs/UNDPUg2016%20-UNDP%20Uganda%20-%20Country%20Gender%20Assessment.pdf

7. Womankind Worldwide (2019). Making visible The Lived Realities of LBTQI+ across Nepal, Uganda and Zimbabwe p. 14 Available online at https://www.womankind.org.uk/policy-and-campaigns/resources/making-visible

8. See https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx

9. See https://sdgs.un.org/goals

10. The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, better known as the Maputo Protocol, is an international human rights instrument established by the African Union that went into effect in 2005. See https://www.un.org/en/africa/osaa/pdf/au/protocol_rights_women_africa_2003.pdf

11. The Women's Movement in Uganda: History, Challenges and Prospects (2002) Edited by A.M. Tripp and J. C Kwesiga

12. See AWID (2004) Gender Mainstreaming: Can it Work for Women's Rights. Available online at: https://www.awid.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/spotlight_-_gender_mainstreaming_-_can_it_work_for_womens_rights.pdf

13. United Nations (2020) UN Secretary General's Policy Brief Impact of COVID 19 on women. Available online at https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/04/policy-brief-the-impact-of-covid-19-on-women

An intersectional approach to partnership and programmes

> *"I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own."*
>
> **Audre Lorde**

The term intersectionality was originally defined and popularised in 1989, by critical legal and race scholar Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw, to describe intersecting forms of discrimination, bias and violence against black women. Crenshaw's work focused initially on the experiences of black women in the criminal justice system, and how the intersection of their race, class, education, sexual orientation and gender, amongst other factors resulted in black women experiencing multiple, overlapping yet invisible barriers to dignity and equality.

Crenshaw sees intersectionality as a lens through which one understands the ways power is enjoyed on multiple fronts, how it reinforces privilege and maintains structural forms of oppression. Intersectional analysis aims to address the manner in which racism, patriarchy, class oppression, sexual discrimination, ableism and various other systems of discrimination, create inequalities that structure the relative positions of women. It takes account of historical, social and political contexts, and also recognises unique individual experiences resulting from the coming together of different types of identity. In an intersectional gender-analysis, one can see that patriarchy and power impact women in different and unique ways, depending on their age, race, disability, and sexual orientation, etc.

These multiple discriminations and hierarchies are also apparent within various social movements, including WMs.

While the term is over 30 years old, it has regained prominence and relevance in relation to more nuanced understanding of power, oppression and discrimination. The term intersectionality has become more widely understood, used, interpreted and applied beyond academia by civil society organisations and individuals, including LGBTQI+ people.[14] Womankind includes intersectional approaches in our Theory of Change (ToC) as one of seven key pillars for strengthening movements. *(See page 18.)*

> *"Deep intersectional organising and challenging intersecting systems of oppression like patriarchy and cis-heteronormativity is crucial to demonstrating solidarity and seeking transformation. We can no longer separate our struggles and this should be reflected in our strategies and demands which should intersect with various oppressions that feminists face."*
>
> **Valerie Bah and Felogene Anumo, Association of Women In Development (AWID)**

Hierarchical structures and systems that dominate patriarchal societies are often reproduced within national WMs. Consequently, many constituencies such as LBTQI+ persons, women with disabilities (WWD), younger women, and grassroots (i.e. rural/non-urban) women are not included as equals. As Womankind strives to dismantle those hierarchies and silos within our own organisation, together with partners and wider WMs, we recognise that we also need to be mindful of our own positional power as a Global North based organisation often seen as a donor. As a result, we strive to create and support opportunities for a cross section of national partners in our

14. Kimberlé Crenshaw on Intersectionality, More than Two Decades Later (2017). Available online at: https://www.law.columbia.edu/news/archive/kimberle-crenshaw-intersectionality-more-two-decades-later

focus countries to work together and bring their individual strengths to bear. Whilst we encourage collaboration between partners and other allies in our work, we are aware that this is not always desirable or appropriate and are guided by our partners in this.

The focus of this paper: Introducing the project

Deep feminist analysis underpins programmatic and policy work in Uganda, with a multitude of existing coalitions, and a variety of creative ideas and solutions being developed to overcome contextual barriers. The WM has been involved in the development of progressive programmatic approaches in the field of HIV and VAWG, such as the social norm changing model SASA! used predominantly with communities to engage them in dialogue around prevention of violence.[15]

The methodology of Stepping Stones was also developed in Uganda, to respond to decision making vulnerabilities around sexual behaviour of most women, men and young people, due to men's gendered patriarchal domination of women.[16] Womankind's engagement in Uganda had shown that its partners were open to collaborate and explore together, which flexible funding made possible through Women's Advocacy for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE).

The six partners involved in WAVE each have either a specific thematic area of focus, [for example, women's economic rights (WER), political participation and leadership], or a specific constituency to support [for example LBTQI+, women with disabilities (WWD), grassroots women]. In the design of the project, each partner had the opportunity, and space, to focus both narrowly on their own theme and/or constituency, as well as to look at ways of engaging across the collaboration to widen the footprint of their impact. Womankind made a purposeful decision to support the project through flexible funding that allowed all involved to follow an iterative and organic approach.
The overall aim of WAVE was to provide a diverse group of women, including the most marginalised, more opportunities, and spaces, for meaningful and equitable participation, leadership and influence in local to global advocacy mechanisms. This was alongside their own independent work as part of the project; convening and meeting in their own spaces too. The project partners agreed on four areas of change:

- **More women, including those from diverse backgrounds, to meaningfully and consistently participate in an inclusive, collective feminist space.**
- **Development of transformational and inclusive feminist leaders who actively engage with the most marginalised women with a solid understanding of feminist power analysis.**
- **The strengthening of an inclusive feminist approach and knowledge base in support of the pursuit of women's rights and gender equality.**
- **Advocacy efforts for policy change and legal reform at local, national and regional level, driven by WM actors working in collaboration.**

Importantly, some WAVE activities had a specific focus on:

- **Nurturing specific constituencies of women and their movements;**
- **Building their feminist consciousness to enable them to feel equipped to move from the periphery and meet the more mainstream women's rights actors in the centre of the movement, and;**
- **Bringing different constituents together.**

15. **SASA! Start Awareness Support Action (and is also Kiswhaili 'now'), an initiative to end violence against women See** http:/raisingvoices.org/sasa/
16. **See here for more information** https:/steppingstonesfeedback.org/about/

The Peace Centre was the lead partner for WAVE with responsibility for coordination and reporting, and implemented several activities within the project. The other five project partners delivered specific, and often multiple activities that spanned the four key aims of WAVE. The table below provides an overview of each of the four aims, and the activities led by each partner towards them.

	ACTIVITY	PARTNER	DESCRIPTION
1. More women, including those from diverse backgrounds, meaningfully and consistently participate in an inclusive, collective feminist space	District level dialogues (inception meetings) with local leaders and WWD	NUWODU	Bringing together 30 district level leaders from within two divisions in Kampala with 15 WWD so those leaders could better understand and mainstream issues faced by WWD within the WM and their own work.
	Feminist conference to re-think disability in relation to gender and sexuality	NUWODU	A feminist conference to re-think on gender, sexuality, disability and address negative stereotypes around these
	Uganda Lesbian Forum	FARUG	Two-day event bringing together 60 LBQ leaders and LBQ movement allies from across the country (both rural and urban) to create a collective political consciousness and develop a collective agenda for LBQ feminist organising in Uganda.
	Intergenerational feminist dialogues	MEMPROW	Platform to engage diverse voices in intergenerational feminist debates on prejudices, stereotypes and myths on masculinity and femininity.

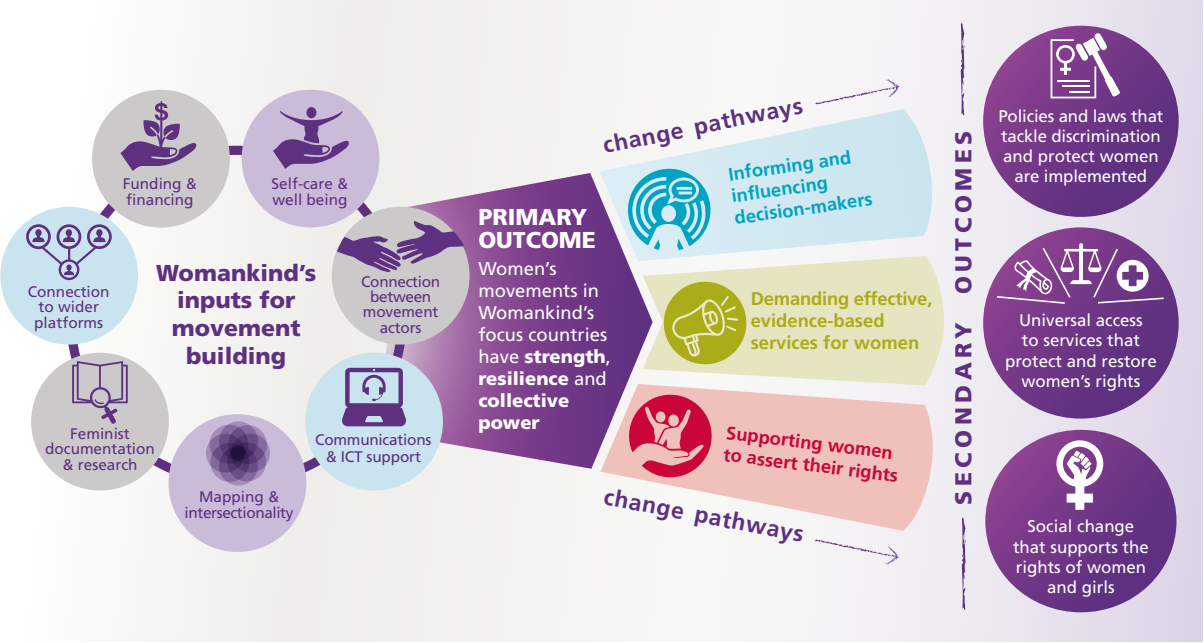
	ACTIVITY	PARTNER	DESCRIPTION
2. Development of transformational and inclusive feminist leaders who actively engage with the most marginalised women with a solid understanding of feminist power analysis	Bespoke curriculum and subsequent training on transformational leadership and wellness	The Peace Centre	A bespoke curriculum and training manual for transformational leadership and wellness developed, and used to train 104 women across four cohorts nationally. The curriculum and training reflected the needs of the WM to strengthen feminist leadership and address entrenched hierarchies, and had a context specific self-care approach to strengthen the resilience of individuals and safeguard the sustainability of the WM.
	Training of rural women in transformational leadership and feminist analysis	NAWOU	Training for 40 women from Community Based Action Teams (COMBATS), 20 from Gulu District and 20 from Luwero district, as community trainers in transformative feminist leadership and analysis. To equip these women with knowledge and skills to discover their power and how this can be used to advocate for a just and equal world. A training manual was also produced.
	Training of rural women on data collection and basic analysis of citizen generated data to inform advocacy	NAWOU	Training of the same 40 women (COMBATs), (20 per district) to collect and conduct basic analysis of citizen generated data for advocacy. This was to strengthen the availability of strategic information to support the monitoring of advocacy related information, and to influence better service delivery.
	Feminist Leadership training	MEMPROW	Feminist Leadership training for leaders from 10 different non-government youth-led, people with disabilities, sexual minority and faith based organisations/movements. Five days of training targeting two leaders from each institution. (This activity was supported by a bespoke training manual developed as a project adaptation and based on a needs assessment.)
	Ugandan Feminist Forum (UFF), biannual convening	The Peace Centre	*WAVE project funds contributed to this event and follow up; the event was supported by multiple donors. A key space through which to strengthen feminist leadership and pursue a progressive feminist agenda. In 2019 this forum purposefully created a space for greater inclusion of women of marginalised identities, through engaging and enabling attendance from LBTQI+ women, female sex workers (FSW) and women with disabilities (WWD).

	ACTIVITY	PARTNER	DESCRIPTION
3. Inclusive feminist approach and knowledge base further developed and strengthened in support of women's rights and gender equality	Radio talk shows on inclusion of WWD	NUWODU	To create awareness about sexuality, disability and gender by reaching more people in order to access information (Talk show conducted on Shine MCF FM with a reach of over 10,000).
	Media training sessions for gender sensitive feminist media reporting and coverage	MEMPROW	Training sessions delivered to 17 personnel from 10 different print and broadcasting media houses on gender sensitive media reporting, and providing spaces for feminists' engagement, to enable representatives of these powerful institutions to be better informed and aligned with feminist values and feminist reporting and coverage.
	Learning sessions for women leaders in advocacy at the grassroots	NAWOU	Two learning sessions for women leaders in advocacy at the grassroots to share their experiences and challenges, and learn from each other.

	ACTIVITY	PARTNER	DESCRIPTION
4. Advocacy efforts for policy change and legal reform at national and regional level, driven by WM actors working in concert.	Engagement of local governments in advocacy using evidence from citizen generated data	NAWOU	Following training, the women were supported to engage local governments in advocacy using the evidence from citizen generated data. Duty bearers were identified to whom the women then presented the citizen generated data and held influencing discussions. Recommendations were generated to support consistent follow up on service delivery.
	Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs (UGCS)	FOWODE	Four strategic meetings bringing together members of the Consortium to discuss, synthesise information, share progress and agree on key priorities for advocacy under the SDGs. Thematic working groups were formed for follow up meetings to strategize under each suggested SDG.
	National post-budget dialogue	FOWODE	Space for the most marginalised and most often 'left-behind' groups to deliberate on the national budget using a gender lens, and make recommendations for a more inclusive budget that reflects women's priorities. Attended by 100 participants including, WWD, feminists and representatives from WROs.
	Multi Media advocacy campaign #KeepAGirlInSchool	FOWODE	Campaign run on various social media platforms, key regional radio stations and TV, reaching nearly a million people, to increase government and community efforts to keep girls in school.

SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED

The Women's Advocacy for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) project aligned with key elements of the Womankind Theory of Change (ToC). This is a brief summary of initial learning with particular reference to Womankind's movement strengthening inputs (known as pillars). WAVE contributed to changes across six of the seven pillars, and to enhancing capacity for transformational leadership within the women's movement (WM).



Key changes that resulted from WAVE and the lessons learned are as below:

PILLAR 1

Women activists are supported and encouraged to understand the political importance of self-care and wellbeing

The work women's rights activists undertake almost inevitably places them at risk of a range of attacks including physical, psychological, personal, financial, sexual and online. Consistent exposure to attack and backlash takes its toll in multiple ways: physically, emotionally and psychologically, leading to high levels of women human rights defender (WHRD) burn out. Work around this pillar takes a range of forms including creating safe, nurturing spaces for rest and reflection, to mentoring groups within the movement for mutual support.

What did WAVE partners do and why?

There is limited understanding of self-care in the Ugandan WM, largely confined to programmes offering psychosocial support for women affected by the conflict and impacted by violence against women and girls (VAWG). As a result, several WAVE partners focused on the political importance of self-care and wellbeing in their project activities.

A bespoke training model and curriculum, *Harnessing Our Power With Soul; Bespoke Curriculum for Transformational Leadership and Wellness*[17], developed by The Peace Centre on transformational leadership and wellness, also included context specific feminist self-care to strengthen the resilience of individuals and sustain the WM. The training was called a Wellness Camp, designed to support activists to create time to relax and unwind from the stress of life, and to understand different ways to practice self-care, including time with family and friends, personal care such as a manicure/massage/salon visits, having an exercise routine, taking walks, reading for pleasure, and prayer etc.

The Wellness Camp enabled participants to discuss their health and wellness, and have deep conversations on wellbeing and self-care. The proposition that '*you cannot give from an empty cup*' was a re-awakening call for women activists to prioritise their health, to avoid burnout, and emphasised taking care of themselves as leaders in order to better serve the constituents of their work, and to ensure a happy life outside of work. Participants included WAVE partners and their constituents, and university student leaders, with deliberate focus on involving young women and those who are the most marginalised.

What did we learn?

WAVE increased women's rights organisations (WROs) and activists' appreciation for the importance of self-care and wellbeing in building their resilience and effectiveness, as well as the need to intentionally budget for this.

Partners found that the inclusion of self-care and wellbeing in their activities was not only healing, but also built a spirit of oneness and teamwork towards ending injustices against women and girls.

This included sisterhood and solidarity happening more naturally, important for strengthening movements to become more cohesive.

17. **Women's International Peace Centre (2019). Harnessing Our Power with Soul: Bespoke Curriculum for Transformational Leadership and Wellness. Available online at** https:/The Peace Centre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Bespoke-Curriculum-on-Transformational-Leadership-and-wellness-FINAL.pdf

> ***"Where women's activists think of themselves first to take care of their mind, bodies and souls, it's a great platform from which they can then reach out to others and to respond to the trauma they experience."***
>
> **Suzan Nikinzi, Peace Centre, M&E Officer and Programme lead on WAVE.**

All project partners showed commitment to the importance of self-care and wellbeing by creating space and time for WRO staff and others to reflect on, and increase, their understanding of its value and practice. This had an impact in terms of organisational requirements for staff to take part in activities during working hours, and staff making personal commitments to create time and space for their own personal wellness. Since The Peace Centre developed the curriculum, other WAVE partners and WROs beyond the WAVE project are also adopting this curriculum within their trainings. This has allowed The Peace Centre to reach out to new women's activists and individuals.

PILLAR 2:
Opportunities are provided to movement actors to connect with each other in safe spaces

WHRDs and WRO activists working on changing deeply entrenched societal norms can be targeted in their homes, in public and in their workplaces for the views they hold, as a way to intimidate them into stopping or changing their activities. Womankind therefore supports spaces for women to meet, support and create strategies to progress their work. There are also practical considerations for this; sometimes needing funds to hire an appropriate space to meet, or transport for women to enable them to participate.

What did WAVE partners do and why:

Through WAVE, partners provided a number of key opportunities to connect in safe spaces with peers, both within their own specific movements, and with their fellow project partners and other actors as part of the wider WM.

FARUG led the first ever Uganda Lesbian Forum (UGALEF) including the creation of a diverse organising committee of lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex+ (LBTQI+) women. The UGALEF created an opportunity for different generations of LBTQI+ women to document the herstory of the national LBTQI+ movement, and share their lived realities. In this safe space, they explored the extent of violence experienced by LBTQI+ women, including within intimate relationships and within families. FARUG deliberately led efforts to focus on intersectionality and cross-movement building in organising this space, by partnering with sex work leaders, and organisations to ensure that diversities across LBTQI+ women, including LBTQI+ sex workers and LBTQI+ with disabilities, were represented in both the UGALEF organising committee as well as at the Ugandan Feminist Forum (UFF) itself.

MEMPROW identified one of the major reasons for a weakening WM as being the generation rift in feminist ideology, and limited space for interaction between older and younger feminists. The feminist dialogue and leadership training, led by MEMPROW, convened feminists from different organisations to learn about intersectionality from each other, as well as feminist leadership, sexual orientations and gender identities. Participants had time and space to reflect on their daily experience of this, in work and private spaces, many

citing arbitrary economic policies like the gender pay gap, maternity leave, and the mistreatment of female domestic workers by their female employers.

The intergenerational dialogue also provided a safe space for participants to reflect on self-accountability and challenge their thinking, to respect difference and diversity, by providing listening space to hear from women of different identities including faith, sexuality and disability. MEMPROW used the input and learning from engaging different groups of marginalised women to strengthen broader conversations, influencing their work at national level, including discussions on accountability towards different minority women.

What did we learn?

There is a clear and stated need and desire for collective, immersive experiences where movements can be nourished and revived. FARUG reflected that the UGALEF provided a space for LBTQI+ women to reflect on progress to date, within their movement, and highlighted the significance of providing a separate space for LBTQI+ women to freely reflect together. The importance of these spaces is evidenced in the participants calling for the UGALEF to become an annual event. In a similar way, the UFF was also an opportunity to reflect on achievements and challenges for women in the movement, and the herstory of the Ugandan WM itself, as well as to explore and confront silencing factors and strategise for the way ahead.

Additionally, these opportunities to connect are key to changing attitudes of women in the WM towards each other and themselves. This includes recognising their own needs, their own capabilities, and feeling able to use these to support other women.

These spaces are further important for increasing feminist consciousness; effective in helping to explore contentious issues to develop greater understanding and respect for intersectional experiences. Creating a safe space for open discussion provided an important platform for engagement on myth busting related to diversity and difference. This stimulated greater understanding of diverse women's experiences, and subsequently had a ripple effect. It inspired the women to not only share the shifts in their mind sets, but also to create dialogue with others in their communities.

> ***"As a mother and a member of the mothers' union at my church, I am going to pick up on the conversations we have heard, and will ensure that we too start these conversations. Religious spaces are still very conservative and discriminatory and many women are unfairly treating children who do not fit in the boxes as we have learned."***
>
> **Rosmary Naggujja Mugerwa, participant of MEMPROW training**

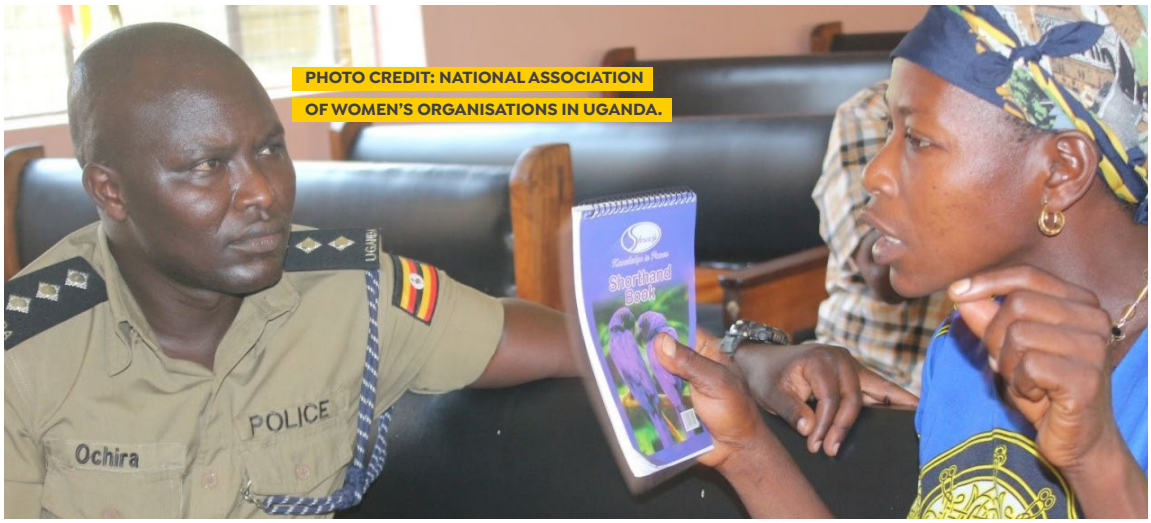


PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN UGANDA.

Image above: NAWOU engages with local government at a meeting in Gulu district Hall.

PILLAR 3:
Appropriate communications and Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) support is provided to facilitate network and alliance building and action

Activists are using ICTs to share the successes of their work as well as to amplify the previously excluded voices of women nationally, regionally and globally. In this way, they create and disseminate information on women's rights in various formats including through radio, YouTube, Facebook and film to inform and inspire action. The use of ICTs is an important factor in supporting rights agendas; enabling greater participation from women and other marginalised groups to shape their own narratives, tell their own stories, challenge emerging issues and organise. In recognition of this, Womankind supports WMs and feminist communicators in their use of ICTs.

What WAVE partners did and why?

A number of partners used ICTs in their key WAVE activities, some of which are described below.

In July 2019 FARUG delivered the first UGALEF where security planning and management was a priority. It is important to acknowledge that in the hostile, homophobic context that LBTQI+ people live and operate in Uganda, the state, and other homophobic actors, have weaponised digital surveillance. Therefore, it was critical to anticipate that challenge in the lead up to and during the convening, in order to ensure that the power of ICTs could still be optimised.

One organising committee member, selected because she works with the Defenders Protection Initiative, an organisation that offers practical and contextualised security and safety options for civil society, played a critical role in advising the committee on the security framework for the forum.

UGALEF's organising committee provided the forum media team with a digital security training to equip them on how to safely cover the UGALEF. The media team retained a low-key presence, were selective in their content and photography, to ensure that privacy and confidentiality was maintained, and did not use social media whilst the activity was underway.

As described under pillar 1 and in Table 1 above, NAWOU trained 40 grassroots women from Gulu and Luwero districts in transformational leadership and feminist analysis. Through these activities, NAWOU encouraged participating women to share and access information that is useful in their community work. This included one-on-one sessions on using apps on smart phones for documentation, and quick communication on key women's human rights issues. This information has since been shared on NAWOU platforms for other members to learn from.

From as early as February 2019, FOWODE used WAVE to build and deliver a national advocacy campaign using cost effective mass media channels such as radio, television, print media, and digital media, to increase government and community efforts to #KeepAGirlInSchool. The #KeepAGirlInSchool campaign aligned to the Uganda national budget cycle according to the Public Finance Management Act 2015. The messaging targeted community members, technocrats and policy makers involved in the planning and budgeting processes. The campaign ran in five different languages including; Luo (Acholi), Ateso, Runyoro Runyakitara, Luganda and English.

> *"I listened to an 'advert' on Radio West speaking to the importance of keeping the girl child in school by providing sanitary towels. As a result, the school has purchased some sanitary towels using the UPE grant! This means that girls don't have to miss school during their periods."*
>
> **Kabagambe Willy, Head teacher of Kabirago Primary School in Rubaya Sub County, Kabale District**

There remains a challenge to effectively measure the impact of using ICTs and media campaigns in advocacy to change laws and practice, yet it is clear that these activities contribute to change. There is anecdotal evidence that this #KeepAGirlInSchool campaign increased public discourse on the value of girl's education, and that it led to an increase in budgetary allocation for menstrual health management, particularly in some government schools. As a result, FOWODE and Womankind recognise the need for a holistic and consolidated monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) approach at the outset of the media campaign to support evidence and learning.

Throughout, WAVE partners supported each other as they delivered project activities, profiling and creating visibility for each other through social media tags and sharing resources.

What we learned?

ICTs can be a cost effective way of engaging masses, and raising collective consciousness on key women's rights issues, as FOWODE's media campaign did. However, there is a cost in terms of equipment and access to the internet, from smartphones to data bundles. The benefits of ICTs are clear, but are not without important considerations in terms of how and what to measure and track; both to understand and build on what works, as well as to evidence the value of ICT led activity in movement strengthening.

ICTs can be an equally powerful tool for surveillance, repression, evidence gathering by authoritarian states and punitive action, and can serve as weapons of gendered online violence.[18] FARUG demonstrated a considered and appropriate approach to ICTs and media engagement in the UGALEF and included an LBTQI+ digital expert on the organising committee.[19]

PILLAR 4.
Key actors in the WM are mapped and issues of intersectionality are raised, understood and addressed

All women living in patriarchal societies are impacted by gender inequality regardless of their class, education, location and nationality. However, many women face multiple additional forms of discrimination based on their identities, which intersect with gender. For example, women with disabilities (WWD) are discriminated against as women but also on their disability status, leading to double oppression. Womankind therefore seeks to support all WM actors to better understand that women are often impacted by patriarchy in multiple and intersecting ways, at all levels of society, including within WMs.

What did we do and why?

A key focus of WAVE's added value in the reinvigoration of the UFF was to support it to be more inclusive of women on the margins of the mainstream movement. This activity was led by The Peace Centre.

18. Womankind Worldwide (2018). Breaking the Silence: Ending online violence and abuse against women's rights activists. Available online at https://www.womankind.org.uk/docs/default-source/default-document-library/breaking-the-silence-policy-briefing.pdf?sfvrsn=0

19. LBT is the term used by Womankind's partner FARUG.

Of the 100+ women attending, there was representation from 15 LBTQI+ women, 3 WWD, and 15 female sex workers (FSW); as well as young and older feminists. Together they engaged in a series of conversations to interrogate and explore new ways of working, collectively reflect, heal and hold themselves as sisters in the movement. The inclusion of women from diverse groups was deliberate and actively pursued by the UFF working group. For example, few WWD had registered by the deadline, and so names of WWD were proposed to the working group and these women were then invited to the UFF. Space was also created specifically for LBTQI+ women to be actively engaged and visible in discussions.

> ***"We as FARUG and WAVE partners contributed to that – for the first time, the organising committee reached out to me to suggest people to be present and meaningfully engage and benefit from the forum. As FARUG we were able to convene a panel about SOGIE – very exciting – it was history made – the first time ever that a LBT org was convening anything at the UFF. In the history of the UFF – for us to be able to sit down and have a conversation about salience on sexual orientation."***
>
> **Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG, Director of Programmes and WAVE project lead**

Womankind's intersectional approach supported each partner's approach towards understanding and addressing issues of intersectionality, including the active inclusion of WWD. As NUWODU was included in the WAVE project, NAWOU reflected upon how they positively influenced their view of disability inclusion, and how to be more deliberate in their work and plans in this regard. In this way, NAWOU shared their view of how Womankind is helping to strengthen the theory and principles of feminism, within its partner organisations.

What did we learn?

The project provided a specific and safe space for LBTQI+ women within the project through UGALEF, and helped to increase their meaningful inclusion in the UFF, which provided a significant space for LBTQI+ women to be included and gain visibility within the mainstream WM. Following the success of the UGALEF, FARUG staff and the wider LBTQI+ movement were invited to convene a panel on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression (SOGIE) at the UFF. The organisers of the UFF listened to the needs of FARUG about creating a space where their voices would be amplified and heard by all the attendees, and ensured all participants weren't given a choice to attend an alternative session.



Image above: Participants exploring self-care at the transformational leadership training.



PHOTO CREDIT: FREEDOM AND ROAM UGANDA.

Image above: Participants at the Uganda Lesbian Forum in the plenary session.

> ***"My expectations were met, there was real visibility, presence and numbers for LBQ women. I take back a lot of love and sisterhood as well as accountability because our panel was supposed to be a break away but we insisted on it being in the plenary and the organisers listened. We had everyone participate in the conversation, emotional for me but a very fruitful and learning space...The session we organised...was supposed to be during a time when there were three clashing events and people would have to choose. We spoke to the organizer and said no, we have to have it as a plenary and not give people a choice to attend. There was disruption – tears and talking about us as imposing sexuality... Audience members were convincing others in the audience (i.e. it was not always the panel who had to do that.) There were relationships formed. Invitations we have got [as a result].The way we engaged [in] this process was different to before, diplomatic, this time it was not angry. We are going to come out of this space having educated people rather than fought with them. Creating a space safe enough for both sides to voice their concerns."***
>
> **Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG Director of Programmes and WAVE project lead**

In addition to strengthening sisterhood and accountability towards LBTQI+ women, the UFF followed the provisions of the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists, from the African Feminist Forum (AFF),[20] opening up space for diversity so WWD were included. Learning from intersectional experiences was significant, for those from the mainstream movement and marginalised groups alike.

> ***"I was used to attending meetings with fellow persons with disabilities but this time it was a different case and when I got here, I heard that there would be different groups of people and I was scared. During introductions... I heard people introduce themselves as witches, lesbians and sex workers and yet I had a negative attitude towards those people but with time... I counselled myself to listen to these people and understand their message because I had a different view. I've interacted with them and learnt a lot. I have changed my attitude towards them."***
>
> **Nalwoga Berna, NUWODU volunteer attending the UFF**

20. African Women's Development Fund (2007). Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists. Available online at https:/awdf.org/wp-content/uploads/AFF-Feminist-Charter-Digital-%C3%A2%C2%80%C2%93-English.pdf

> ***"Was the space inclusive? No, it wasn't inclusive on my side as a person with disability. When recruiting persons with disabilities into a space, we need to consider the different abilities and assistive devices that will be needed...They should consider the different disability needs when organising another space, PwDs must be included on a panel so that people know the different issues and assistive devices needed. The forum should also consider persons with disabilities and panellists/facilitators who are disability sensitive sharing issues on disability and I believe some of the participants were shocked to see us at the forum"***
>
> **Nalwoga Berna, NUWODU volunteer attending the UFF.**

There were challenges in terms of inclusivity and visibility for WWD, which despite concerted efforts did not go far enough in making the forum fully accessible. From the perspective of one participant with a disability, this included the lack of support persons, such as a sighted guides for those with visual impairments, the provision of accessible reading and learning materials (in Braille) for those with visual impairments, and other issues around physical accessibility. They also noted the absence of WWD as speakers in the panel discussions.

The significant challenge of budgeting appropriately to make it possible for WWD to meaningfully participate was also highlighted across the project.

Even as the project partner with the most expertise in working with WWD, NUWODU felt a perceived pressure to deliver value for money, and therefore did not adequately budget for the six activities they had originally planned to implement in a way that would have allowed for meaningful inclusion of WWD. A key learning for intersectional movement building is that emphasis needs to be placed on the value of inclusion from the outset of planning projects or initiatives, with recognition that achieving this will involve increased costs.

PILLAR 5
Feminist documentation and research form the core of umbrella initiatives to bring WROs together

Feminist documentation and research emphasises the lived realities of women, and enables the inclusion and recognition of issues that mainstream approaches often overlook. However, this work is often not considered to be equal with academic research, and it is a challenge to secure funding to document and evidence the extent and nature of discrimination against women. Womankind supports partners to develop and use feminist documentation and participatory research methods as part of the evidence base upon which they can advocate and influence allies, duty bearers, and the international community including donors.

What did WAVE partners do and why?

Through WAVE, partners co-developed documentation which contributed to the feminist knowledge base. Key examples of these are listed below:

- **Harnessing our Power with Soul: Bespoke Curriculum on transformational leadership and wellness**[21] – led by The Peace Centre
- **A feminist training module guide** – led by MEMPROW
- **Transformational leadership training guide for grassroots women** – led by NAWOU
- **Assessment document on data gathered by grassroots advocates** – led by NAWOU
- **Event reports from the UFF and UGALEF provide useful documentation on who was involved, what the results were, and why all of that is relevant to the WM.**

The reality is that while women's rights actors recognise the importance of documentation, it is rarely prioritised or adequately resourced, and is often done as additional unpaid, and undervalued labour, by feminist and women's rights activists with an interest in knowledge creation and production. Once documented, the WM is able to collectivise knowledge, share, curate and build on it. Otherwise, this information can remain hidden, or held by a few individuals, sometimes forgotten, and not acknowledged as the important contribution it is.

What did we learn?

The feminist training manual created by MEMPROW was not originally intended to be a core activity of WAVE but was a response to an emerging need, made possible through adaptive programming. The manual was created to help improve the quality and consistency of the planned trainings, and to support consistency in subsequent delivery. There is potential for other stakeholders to use the manual beyond the project.
The feminist training manual, like many WAVE project materials was created in a participatory manner, involving a cross-section of stakeholders from youth, religious and private sector organisations, to understand and meet the needs of those who are less involved in feminist debates. It shows us that while documentation should be planned for, and built into the resourcing plan, the specific focus should respond to emerging needs. This allows WROs to document what is needed at that moment, rather than what may have been planned for months or years prior, during proposal design stage.

NAWOU produced training materials targeting grassroots level women, and reinforced that effective documentation is key to effective advocacy in support of women's rights. For instance, during the implementation of the data collection training in Luwero, NAWOU documented weaknesses and gaps within the implementation of the government programme aimed at women's economic empowerment. Alongside the usual targets of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and local government actors, NAWOU also shared the information with WROs, to inform future programming.

The publication of the bespoke curriculum by The Peace Centre underscored the importance of making materials available in the public domain for others to use, and adapt within the WM and beyond. Before it was finalised, the curriculum was peer reviewed by WAVE partners, while staff from WAVE partners' were the first cohort of trainees providing feedback to strengthen the approach before it was finalised.
This reinforced shared ownership and encouraged onward dissemination and use.

21. Women's International Peace Centre (2019). Harnessing Our Power with Soul: Bespoke Curriculum for Transformational Leadership and Wellness. Available online at https:/The Peace Centre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Bespoke-Curriculum-on-Transformational-Leadership-and-wellness-FINAL.pdf

> ***Since we developed the curriculum for wellness and women's transformational leadership – biggest change is that women's organisations are adopting this curriculum within their trainings – [this] has allowed The Peace Centre to reach out to new women's activists.***
>
> **Suzan Nikinzi, Peace Centre, M&E Officer and Programme lead on WAVE**

The experience of WAVE partners in delivering activities focused on documentation and research has shown how it has informed organisational planning, information sharing and evidence based advocacy.

PILLAR 6

WM actors are given the opportunity to connect to wider platforms for movement building and learning

WHRDs are often not able to attend learning events outside of their contexts. It is becoming increasingly difficult for women activists to obtain visas to attend events in the Global North, which host other important forums. The reasons given for rejection appear to reflect a different standard applied to women applicants compared with men, with additional and sometimes discriminatory evidence requested. For example, women are often asked to provide proof of marriage and children, or of owning property, when men are not. This serves to limit and exclude women who do not reflect gender stereotypes of womanhood, and considers them to be less likely to return home because they are unmarried (to a man) or choose to be child free. Sometimes restrictions apply at a national level as well, though these are often connected to social capital (who you know) and costs associated with attending become prohibitive for women, particularly those who face multiple barriers. Womankind therefore supports partners to attend these spaces to enhance the potential for impact of their agendas beyond their contexts.

What partners did through WAVE and why?

A number of activities which have been described above across pillars 1-5 are relevant for this pillar as well, but the emphasis here is on the ability for women from different movements, and representing different agendas, to meet and connect in spaces and platforms which reach beyond those most known or familiar to them.

The WAVE project supported the UFF in 2019 alongside a number of other donors.[22] While this critical platform already existed, support through WAVE enabled better follow-up and focus on diverse representation (as detailed in pillar 4 learning), fulfilling its potential as a safe space for the WM. The 2019 UFF was a departure from previous ones because it actively created space for cross movement learning through organising a separate plenary learning session around Sexual Orientation Gender Identity and Expression (SOGIE).

MEMPROW conducted intergenerational dialogues (under pillar 2) which enabled actors and unlikely allies from other movements, including LBTQI+ women, and those from conservative religious

22. 2019 UFF was funded by the African Women Development Fund, (AWDF), Urgent Action Fund Africa, Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa, Womankind, Hivos and the UFF Working Group

backgrounds, to come together and openly discuss issues of prejudice, gender stereotypes and myths. The intention was to create a space that was safe but also challenging so there was room for learning. MEMPROW engaged nine staff members in a capacity building / refresher to enable them to deliver the project's activities. Staff were re-immersed in feminist ideology, feminist living, feminist economics, self-care and wellness, and solidarity. This critical activity enabled MEMPROW to deliver the intergenerational dialogues and manage delicate issues, including those of team dynamics, as well as participants' security. FOWODE's work through the Uganda Gender Consortium (UGC) made a significant contribution to strengthening women's meaningful participation in work towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and national budgeting processes.[23] As a result of WAVE, four new organisations, including those focused on disability, refugees and teens, which are some of the most marginalised constituencies, have joined the consortium, taking the count to 24 organisations. Two more have expressed interest, thereby widening the space for representation of often marginalised and excluded women.

> ***"There is fear in working with LGBTI communities – it keeps us on tenterhooks – always expecting something to happen (although it didn't). We put up security measures – mindful of engaging a small number at a time. This project also included people from religious institutions who also experience structural challenges which we helped demystify. [A] good opportunity for us but challenging given religious beliefs – always questioned how big the impacts would be in mind set change given those pre-existing beliefs."***
>
> **Lillian Nalwoga MEMPROW Programme Manager**

What we learned?

Some of the opportunities for cross movement building were purposefully created through the design of WAVE, and others came about organically as the six partners began to better understand each other, and their constituents, as the project progressed. Bringing together diverse groups with divergent opinions is important to influence attitudes and behaviour change, but those discussions must be well planned and skilfully moderated. With feminist facilitators, participants can appreciate the importance of questioning culture, traditions and beliefs that may promote and reinforce homophobic and broader patriarchal norms.

To create successful learning and sharing environments for movement building, it helps to engage participants who have a cross section of opinions and experiences, and provide a safe platform for equitable engagement on myth busting. In order to create that safety, it is important to consider limiting the number of participants and provide support staff with relevant (refresher) training.

The UFF example also shows us that even progressive spaces for movement strengthening sometimes need a gentle push to explore what may be perceived as controversial topics. The SOGIE session at the UFF was initially planned as a parallel event, which was optional. However, the LBTQI+ speakers realised that it was important to make it a plenary session where all participants would be present, and this was agreed by the organising committee.

23. For more details see FOWODE's project highlight on page 39–40



Image above: Participants engaging in stretching exercises for self-care at transformational leadership training.

Collaborative working

In addition to the learning explained in this section so far, Womankind has also reflected upon approaches to collaborative consortium work, as this was the way this intersectional movement strengthening initiative was delivered.

What Womankind did through WAVE and why?

From the outset, the WAVE project had a devolved structure of accountability, from the design process through to the agreement between partners and with Womankind. The Peace Centre was the lead partner, as well as implementing several activities within the project. This was partly as acknowledgement of their role in the movement, and their established track record in financial management, which was particularly important for this pilot; a new way of working in a six partner collaboration, for Womankind.

The lead role of The Peace Centre drew on their specific feminist approach and values; to support other partners and strengthen feminist principles in and through the delivery of the project. The agreement between the partners included quarterly reporting to The Peace Centre, who then consolidated the information in one report to send to Womankind. As is usual with Womankind supported initiatives, there was flexibility so that if there were delays or unforeseen events, reporting deadlines could be revised, and if there were challenges, they could be understood and resolved. This approach struck a necessary balance between providing structure for multiple partners, while also providing autonomy for them, which allowed them to shape and pace their work.

Womankind is constantly aware of the power dynamics of being located in the global north and in a funding or resourcing role to partners. Through our principles of partnership, Womankind defers to the lead partner, and others involved in the project, to define and determine what is most needed or desired within the agreed project scope. In our role as 'critical friend' we were able to support The Peace Centre's assessment that specific focus was required to develop and agree on a tailored response for all project partners. This strengthened their feminist consciousness, as there were differences in approaches that became more apparent at the outset of implementing activities. Womankind supported The Peace Centre's reading of the situation and concurred with their assessment that sharing and adopting a clear feminist approach was a priority in this

collective endeavour; we agreed that the 'how?' was more important than the 'what?' in movement strengthening.

As part of project inception, The Peace Centre led the creation of the WAVE steering committee. This included a lead from each partner organisation and met on a quarterly basis. The committee was an important coordination and alignment mechanism, including for information sharing, but faced some challenges due to staff changes and periodic capacity issues for project partners. Following the key informant interviews (KIIs), reflections have centred on learning, such as the need for the committee to engage more closely with each other through regular meetings to enable such learning. The KIIs also underscored the importance of a more defined and joint project monitoring and learning plan from the outset.

What did we learn?

The importance of role modelling feminist leadership has been a key factor in the success of the WAVE project. As WAVE project lead, the Executive Director of The Peace Centre, Helen Kezie-Nwoha, deliberately balanced the priorities and approaches of the other five partners, ensuring that all had space and independence, whilst working together within the confines of the project and with the power dynamic inherent in a project lead role.

> ***"We experienced a lot of growth for us as an organisation; we learned a lot from each other and also from the Centre; as the lead they have been so supportive; not just as an organisation; Helen is an amazing person. How good she is as a leader trickles down. Her politics is very inclusive – but there were different organisations – and none ever felt like we did not belong. I once gave them feedback about gender markers – that we can't just write F/M on documents, what about those who identify differently. They instantly changed that for every project – now every registration list has changed that."***
>
> **Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG, Director of Programmes and WAVE project lead**

Through the delivery of WAVE, and the project committee, along with feminist consciousness raising and strengthening, we have seen how transformational feminist leadership is an essential component of movement strengthening.

The project inception phase was focused on documentation of ways of working together in a multi-partner project, including common values and principles, agreed approaches, and roles and responsibilities. While these were agreed in writing, upon reflection, the project partners would have preferred an interactive session together to explore, discuss and identify

gaps and challenges from the outset. For example, an area that required more thought and consideration was the WAVE-specific Monitoring Evaluation and Learning (MEL) tools and mechanism, as well as the need for better planning and budgeting for inclusion of WWD in various partner activities, including that of NUWODU.

> ***"When people were budgeting the disability aspect was usually not considered – if you want to invite 10 WWD, depending on the nature and severity of the disability, cost of inclusion will be much higher. NUWODU also under budgeted for accessibility. This is not just an issue with WAVE but also a couple of other projects where this issue arose; it's a big consideration for the future."***
>
> **Betty Achana, NUWODU Executive Secretary**

Partners also reflected upon how they could have enhanced the external visibility of the collaboration together, and to further expand the scope of partner engagement beyond the project itself. This would have helped to strengthen and solidify cross-organisational working as a core element of movement strengthening based on an intersectional approach.



Image on right: Women in Luwero participating in NAWOU's experience sharing sessions.



PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN UGANDA.

Project Highlight: FARUG

This next section of the paper details partner specific highlights related to the Women's Advocacy for Voice and Empowerment (WAVE) project.

WAVE Highlight

Freedom and Roam Uganda (FARUG) was established in 2003 and is an organisation focused on the rights of lesbian, bisexual and queer (LBQ) diverse persons.[24] FARUG and Womankind are partners based on the shared aim of strengthening the women's movement (WM) with emphasis on voice and visibility of lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex+ (LBTQI+) diverse persons, and to support resilience and capacity for coordinated action. FARUG's role in the WAVE collaboration was to enable other WAVE partners to develop some much needed affinity with the LBTQI+ and sex worker movements in a particularly challenging national context, as explained earlier in this paper.

Setting the scene

In recent years, negative trends in the security and human rights situation for the LBTQI+ community in Uganda have largely been influenced by the Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA), which was tabled in 2013 and later annulled by the Supreme Court.[25] Despite the annulment, the homophobic climate of hostility and discrimination remains. The government has continued to devise camouflaged ways of oppressing the rights and freedoms of sexual minorities, using repressive clauses in other laws including the NGO Act (2015).

In this context, the complexity and risks involved for individuals and organisations focused on sexual orientation, gender identify and expression (SOGIE) are significantly higher. In October 2019, numerous press articles reported a plan by a section of Ugandan legislature to re-introduce the AHA, and in response there was an upsurge in anti-LGBTQI+ hate crimes. While the president issued a statement condemning the murders and violent attacks, assuring that there will be no re-tabling of any related bill, it is an issue that continues to require vigilant monitoring. Homophobia, though heavily fuelled by government officials, religious leaders, and the media, continues to exist because of public ignorance, myths and misconceptions about SOGIE. These misconceptions also exist for some within the WM, which is why FARUG's participation in the WAVE project was core to strengthening intersectional understanding and approaches.

24. LBQ is the term used by Womankind's partner FARUG
25. Anti Homosexuality Act (2013) Available online at: https://ulii.org/ug/legislation/act/2015/2014

WAVE KEY ACTIVITY:: Uganda Lesbian Forum (UGALEF) – strengthening the national LBQ movement

Although each WAVE partner delivered a number of activities, for the purpose of this paper we are drawing on one example within this project highlight section, to help underscore its role and impact.

In July 2019, FARUG organised the UGALEF which was the first of its kind in Uganda's LBTQI+ herstory. The two-day pioneering event in Kampala brought together 60 participants comprising LBTQI+ women, organisations, and activists and allies of the LBTQI+ movement from across the country,

> ***"To learn, unlearn and relearn, network and share experiences, concretise on the gains of the struggle, and work towards marching forward to strengthening Queer activism and life in Uganda."*** [26]

Built into the two days was the launch of a documentary and research report, "Lived realities of LBQ women in Uganda", which was attended by 80 people including UGALEF participants, funders and WAVE partners.

In addition to delivering UGALEF, FARUG's active participation within WAVE, and close engagement with The Peace Centre as project lead, was significant. This signalled a positive approach for other participating WROs, who perhaps for the first time, were in the same space, having conversations with a feminist WRO explicitly working on LBQ rights. This, in and of itself, was an achievement within the WAVE project to begin changing perceptions and assumptions with an integrated, intersectional approach.

As stated earlier, in such a challenging context, the UGALEF required careful and thoughtful planning. FARUG held board meetings to strategise for it, and agreed a volunteer organising committee of seven lesbian activists and leaders, who were selected based on their diverse expertise spanning communications and media, advocacy, financial management, and security and protection. The selection of committee members also focused on representation and service to the LBTQI+ community, and included academics, those representing the diaspora and LBTQI+ sex workers.

The need for and power of solidarity and collaboration

As FARUG had never organised an event of this scale before, they sought the support of feminist allies to secure a venue that would be willing to accept a level of risk, because of the focus of the event. These risks relate to the repressive national context, as explained earlier, ones that can affect business decisions for venues or other suppliers, and can serve to limit the range of available spaces for LBTQI+ persons to meet. The director of Akina Mama wa Africa (AMWF) reached out to a trusted hotel chosen to host the UGALEF and vouched for FARUG, who were open about the type of event being organised. It is clear that such support from feminist allies is instrumental in unlocking a logistical barrier that exists for LBTQI+ activists and organisations, one that many mainstream WROs would likely be unaware of.

26. FARUG (2019) Uganda Lesbian Forum Activity Report

> *Dr Sylvia Tamale, Dean of School of Law in Makarere University who is a feminist who has worked on the agenda of queer feminism and has been a longstanding supporter of the movement ... she is straight, she openly supports LBT women. [When] there was police interference she stood up for us; she said 'I dare you to enter, I dare you to touch me'; police are trying to clear their image of being human rights violators. The hotel told us we had till 10:00pm to leave, and by that time we had finished our business.*

Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG, Director Programmes, UGALEF Organiser and WAVE Project Lead

Even though security was a key issue for the UGALEF organising committee, a few hours before the end of the UGALEF, the police went to the hotel and demanded that it stop. However, a number of people stood up to the police, including the manager of the hotel, and this enabled the participants to have the time they needed to conclude the event.

> *We booked the hotel in the name of AMWF – sisterhood in action; we said to their director, 'these are queer people; if we are raided your organisation will be an accomplice'. [She] said 'if they raid you, you call me.' The [hotel] manager said 'I will play my part, you play your part; make sure participants don't loiter' –they closed off the entire floor and checked in on our safety.*
>
> *They treated us well because of their relationship with Akina Mama and now we have a relationship of our own; and we have used their space for our strategic plan work last week. The manager said 'you have your money, I have a hotel – let's do business.' To the police, [when they came for the raid], he said, 'I have been paid, these are clients; you can't disrespect my clients.' Creating a relationship with a hotel – you wouldn't expect it to be important – but it is!*

Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG, Director Programmes, UGALEF Organiser and WAVE Project Lead



Image above: FARUG launches research on LBTQ+ women's experiences at the Uganda Lesbian Forum.

FARUG staff also acknowledged the importance of the practical solidarity shown by other WAVE partners, who offered psychosocial support and attended the research launch during the UGALEF. Such a level of engagement and participation would not have been possible if the WAVE collaboration had not existed to strengthen the ties between them ahead of the UGALEF. Within the LBQTI+ movement itself there was a coming together.

> ***"I have never seen sisterhood and solidarity like UGALEF – women were saying 'I will pay for this woman to come to the UGALEF'; 'I will pay for my food'; SMUG [Sexual Minorities Uganda] chipped in; this was movement strengthening in motion!"***
>
> **Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG, Director Programmes, UGALEF Organiser and WAVE Project Lead**

The highly participatory convening, which platformed iconic LBTQI+ academics alongside civil rights activists, resulted in increasing solidarity within the LBTQI+ WM in Uganda. This was in addition to the links and solidarity expressed with the wider WM as noted above. There was rich hitherto unknown information about the movement's history that was shared in an open and safe space. The research launched by FARUG increased awareness of the lived realities of LBTQI+ women in Uganda, and the event strengthened partnerships and networking within and across the LBTQI+ movement. Among the participants, there is now a better understanding of feminism, the history and evolution of the LBTQI+ movement in Uganda, how to navigate the WM as a LBTQI+ woman, and greater insight into experiences of gender dynamics, SOGIE and queer activism. This has since been cascaded by participants to the wider LBTQI+ community.

Learning and next steps

The UGALEF underscored the importance and need for safe spaces and intergenerational dialogue in intersectional movement strengthening. The desire for a forum like UGALEF was a longstanding one within the LBTQI+ community, however it was not easy to prioritise and resource, given the competing demands for frontline services that are often seen as more tangible areas to support, particularly by donors. The success of the UGALEF makes clear that such safe spaces for sharing and learning are critical, and that they can actually be spaces for reflecting on progress and achievements to date, as well as for healing and replenishing the energy of those who participate.

> ***"Three consecutive leaders of FARUG were able to sit together, [including one who had fled the country in fear for her life] – and together, the herstory of the movement was pieced together in this amazing space – even FARUG staff had some gaps filled."***
>
> **UGALEF attendee and FARUG staff member**

Following UGALEF, there is evidence that the trans-community are now working on a similar project to the research documentation activity that FARUG led. There is an acknowledged need to record and document the herstory of the LBTQI+ movement in Uganda, and a strong call for the UGALEF to become an annual event. Another area which has been highlighted further by the UGALEF is the commitment to intersectional approaches within the WM, to change the dynamic of theLBQTI+ women remaining on the periphery and

experiencing discrimination from some within the sisterhood. One of the participants of UGALEF noted that

> ***"Lesbians join other people's social justice struggles but whenever there are LBQ issues, other groups shy away".***

FARUG's engagement in WAVE has created some meaningful change in this area and has started the process of greater inclusion and respect for diversity. This includes the work of the other five WAVE partners whose own approaches and attitudes are changing when engaging with issues around SOGIE. The aim beyond WAVE is for this to endure as women continue to share, strategise and collaborate to claim rights for all women.

Image below: Nancy Kachingwe, women's rights and public policy consultant, delivers keynote address at the Uganda Feminist Forum



PHOTO CREDIT: AKINA MAMA WA AFRIKA.

Project Highlight: FOWODE

WAVE Highlight

Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) is a national non-partisan women's rights organisation (WRO) which grew out of the 1994-1995 constitution-making process and advocacy, to increase the number of Ugandan women in politics and leadership. FOWODE is a platform for Ugandan women's learning, networking and advocacy for gender equality in decision making processes and macroeconomic policy. Since 1998 FOWODE has been at the forefront of efforts to establish gender responsive budgeting in Uganda. The focus of partnership between Womankind and FOWODE is to contribute to strengthening the women's movement (WM), emphasising women's participation and leadership at both personal and political levels, and to support resilience and capacity for coordinated action. FOWODE's role in the WAVE collaboration was to enable partners to engage with the gender and economic justice movement. Drawing upon FOWODE's leadership role in localising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), FOWODE provided a framework for local development policy and action for local and regional governments.

Setting the scene

In Uganda despite a longstanding WM, women's participation and organising remains limited in some sectors central to the achievement of the SDGs. These include trade and business, energy, the environment and climate change, and water and sanitation, which all have significant, disproportionate impacts on women. The reduced engagement of women in these sectors has hampered effective organising, including focus on the SDGs, which call for strengthened partnerships with key sectoral actors. For some time at the national level, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local government officials were largely absent from the SDG process, and organising did not include those at the grassroots. This meant that the SDGs were not adequately integrated in government initiatives, limiting the prospect of the SDGs being domesticated. FOWODE, through the Uganda Gender Consortium on SDGs (UGCS), are collectively steering strong and strategic engagement with various stakeholders to ensure that the gender targets in the SDGs are met, and that the goals speak to the majority of the women of Uganda, who have been left behind.

KEY ACTIVITY: Working together to localise the SDGs

Although each WAVE partner delivered a number of activities, for the purpose of this paper we are drawing on one example within this project highlight section to help underscore its role and impact. Through WAVE, FOWODE supported WM actors to work together to drive advocacy efforts for policy change and legal reform at national and regional levels, by enabling women's meaningful participation in processes around the SDGs. This included focus on

gender responsive budgeting. FOWODE also organised a national post-budget dialogue attracting over 100 participants, including women with disabilities (WWD), feminists and representatives from women's organisations. This aligns with FOWODE's strategic movement building approaches, including providing space for the most marginalised and most often 'left-behind' groups, to deliberate on the national budget using a gender lens, while making recommendations for a more inclusive budget that reflects women's priorities. Additionally, a multimedia advocacy campaign called *#KeepAGirlInSchool* linked to SDG 4 was run on various social media platforms, key regional radio stations and TV, reaching nearly one million people.[27] This campaign increased government and community efforts to keep girls in school, mostly through the revival and amendment of the Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) Act 2015.

As part of WAVE, FOWODE convened four UGCS meetings that brought together over 20 member organisations. The aim was to share progress updates, review the 2017 shadow report on the SDGs and devise a strategy for developing and validating the 2018 version. The consortium then agreed policy focus areas for action in working groups, according to organisational expertise and specialisms. Members of the UGCS agreed that emphasis was needed to strengthen engagement with the government to make progress on the SDGs. The thematic working groups identified specific clusters from the SDGs where they would effectively contribute information to generate the 2018 shadow report. UGCS consortium partners clearly appreciated the strategic working groups formed. One was quoted as saying,



> ***"The thematic groups will help refocus us and shape our advocacy better. This is because each partner is now exclusively focused on their area of expertise."***

The need for and power of solidarity and collaboration

The intersectional approach of the WAVE project supported FOWODE's approach within the UGCS to be more inclusive of issues such as disability inclusion. This is reflected in four new members joining the UGCS: Uganda National Action on Physical Disability (UNAPD), International Association of Women in Radio and TV (IAWRT), Refugee Law Project (RLP), and TEENS Uganda, widening the space for representation of often excluded and marginalised women.

Learning and next steps

As the convener of the UGCS, FOWODE's approach to coordination has enabled likeminded organisations to spearhead research and advocacy in their areas of expertise. This approach enables members to own and engage in work based on their experience and expertise.

FOWODE also observed that targeted engagement through the thematic working groups is a faster way of interesting new members, because they easily identify their niche as an entry point, especially youth organisations. FOWODE also learned the importance of constant engagement with the members; both to bring on board new members, as well as to provide a platform for analysing the progress made towards the localisation of the SDG agenda in Uganda. We know results from policy and advocacy engagement can best be seen over a period of time, and UGCS' work will need to continue, to deepen and broaden its impact, finding ways to engage more marginalised voices more consistently.

Image on left: FOWODE meeting a school that they have supported, including by supporting the purchase of period products for girls.

PHOTO CREDIT: FORUM FOR WOMEN IN DEMOCRACY.

27. SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Project Highlight: MEMPROW

WAVE Highlight

Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW) was established in 2008 with a feminist agenda to empower, mentor and give voice to girls and young women to take charge of their lives, and participate in leadership. MEMPROW provides spaces for young girls to learn from each other, and from women of older generations. Womankind's partnership with MEMPROW focuses on the strength of their work with young feminist leaders, the promotion of safe spaces, and intergenerational dialogue within the women's movement (WM). MEMPROW has a track record of openness and engagement with and for lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+ (LBTQI+) issues and rights.

Setting the scene

In Uganda, young women report feeling excluded from the WM, with the older generation of feminists that brought about change in the 1990s still taking centre stage. Young feminists feel they have less time and energy to dedicate to feminist work, and that paid roles in women's rights organisations (WROs) are difficult to obtain. They also express their desire for a progressive, collective strategy to withstand attacks, particularly because of religious beliefs, including those that are perpetuated by some other women in the movement.

MEMPROW's strength as a partner and their key contribution to WAVE centred on their approach to strengthening the WM by supporting resilience and capacity for coordinated action, through inter-generational and intersectional approaches. In particular, activities strengthening the voice and visibility of young women, and opening conversations around inclusion of LBTQI+ women and female sex workers (FSW). They did so through intergenerational dialogues and transformational feminist leadership training, which helped to challenge, and deconstruct, issues of power, prejudice and intersectionality.

KEY ACTIVITY: Safe spaces to challenge beliefs on power and inclusivity

Although each WAVE partner delivered a number of activities, for the purpose of this paper we are drawing on one example for each in this project highlight section to help underscore its role and impact. Through the process of engaging in consultations, led by The Peace Centre, that laid the groundwork for WAVE, MEMPROW developed the concept of intergenerational dialogues. These were informed by feedback from young women during needs assessment sessions with secondary school girls and young women in university. They indicated a need for a safe space where young and older women can share experiences, challenges, and possible solutions, particularly on SOGIE and violence.

The intergenerational dialogues opened discussions on prejudices, gender stereotypes and myths. Participants identified preconceived traits and appreciated the importance of challenging culture and religion.

> ***These dialogues have enabled us to have an open discussion, for people to understand us better. I am okay with people questioning my orientation as long as they ask to learn. I hope that participants will continue ensuring safety for sexual minority persons, so that more will be educated.***
>
> **Leila, intergenerational dialogues participant**

MEMPROW deliberately included feminist leadership in a number of activities, and developed a bespoke training manual with input from a diverse range of young women. Whilst originally not part of planned activities, developing the feminist training module guide was a crucial project adaptation. It was an essential step to improve the effectiveness of the delivery on feminist training and conversations, by outlining the processes and content that should be covered. It ensured that core issues such as feminist ideology, power, body, state and politics, and feminist economics were covered consistently and comprehensively. This built participants' agency and ability to engage and contribute meaningfully in a stronger movement.

MEMPROW then conducted the leadership training for a cohort of 20 leaders from 10 different youth-led, disability, sexual minority and faith based organisations. Participants were introduced to issues, including: feminism and feminist theory, feminist economics and living, ally-ship and sisterhood, using training facilitators well versed in participatory methods.
They created a safe space for tackling power analysis; where asking questions, debate and argument on contentious beliefs was encouraged. Participants felt safe to ask, others felt safe to express shock at new learning. The training mostly challenged their cultural and religious beliefs towards non-discrimination on the basis of sex and gender. This was found to be the most contentious for those with strict religious beliefs.

A session on feminist economics explored the origin and conventions of economic practices, and how these have perpetually undervalued women's contributions. Participants were able to reflect on their daily experience of this in their workplaces, and private spaces.

Participants reported having improved knowledge and understanding on transformational leadership, power and intersectionality. Participants shifted from being unaware of sexual minority rights at the start of the training, to identifying themselves as feminists, and embracing the rights of sexual minorities by the end.

> ***I never knew anything about those people ... this training has helped me understand that sexual minorities also have rights, while I may not support them publicly, I can no longer keep quiet about abuse of their rights***
>
> **Iraguha Jenifer, feminist leadership training participant**

Through talking and listening to each other's experiences, participants' views changed and they recognised by the end of the session that they do not have the right to define someone else's experiences.

This kind of feedback confirms MEMPROW's approach to achieve change evidenced by such acknowledged shifts in mind sets and attitudes.

> *"Personally, the training has been an upgrade of self-actualisation, understanding different people with different attitudes and emotions and reactions; how they perceive things differently. I have been empowered to understand myself before being judgmental to how people react/behave differently. I believe and look forward to a better leader in me."*
>
> **Senyondo Sarah, feminist leadership training participant**

The need for and power of solidarity and collaboration

The planning and delivery of trainings outside Kampala also meant MEMPROW were able to involve women from religious based organisations, minorities, and women and girls with disabilities.

> *"Because you haven't done it practically you may not think it is possible but after you do it once, you realise it is."*
>
> **Immaculate Mukasa, MEMPROW Executive Director**

WAVE was really about inclusion: about partnerships and collaboration between organisations to work as a movement and not in silos. From MEMPROW's perspective the project helped them to achieve working as a more diverse movement:

> *"It created the opportunity for us to bring women from diverse backgrounds (e.g. sexual minority groups) together with others for trainings and conversations on femininity and masculinity", and WAVE "Enabled many young women to really understand what feminism is all about – the trainings really demystified this and enabled them to engage, building this part of the feminist movement."*
>
> **Sarah Nakame, MEMPROW Programme manager and WAVE lead**

Learning

MEMPROW built on their experience of working with other organisations to engage participants in the WAVE project in the intergenerational dialogues and feminist trainings. MEMPROW's existing human rights approach also contributed to an inclusive approach to the project, with receptive and supportive staff who also acknowledged the importance of diversity, creating an environment that contributed to strong intersectional engagement in a safe space at MEMPROW.

MEMPROW were also bold in their willingness and ability to manage risk in order to work with more marginalised groups. Despite concerns about working with LBTQI+ communities in the Ugandan context, MEMPROW remained vigilant when inviting participants to the trainings, and made provision for additional safety and security considerations throughout. Their ability to find ways forward, to ensure the inclusion of marginalised groups, is a strong example of MEMPROW's commitment to the intersectional approach and values of the WAVE project in action, and as a mainstream WRO modelling feminist leadership on intersectionality for the WM more widely. Through this, and their intergenerational focus, MEMPROW significantly enriched the intersectional approach of the WAVE project overall.



PHOTO CREDIT: AKINA MAMA WA AFRIKA.

Project Highlight: NAWOU

WAVE Highlight

The National Association of Women's Organisations in Uganda (NAWOU) was formed in 1993 and is an umbrella organisation of women-founded and women-led organisations. It aims to bring together the women's movement (WM) to promote women's rights, and improve their social and economic status, through training in areas such as gender and human rights, economic rights, health, women and the environment, and leadership. NAWOU has nationwide membership and a strong grassroots presence, including through the Community Based Action Teams (COMBAT) model, in rural areas, to identify and train community resource persons to address violence against women and girls (VAWG). In addition to their involvement in the WAVE project, Womankind has supported NAWOU's work as a long-standing partner on combatting VAWG in two districts of Uganda through this community based approach, which is expanded as part of one of their activities within the WAVE project.

Setting the scene

Approximately 70% of the rural population in Uganda are women small holders or subsistence farmers, burdened with additional housekeeping and childcare responsibilities. Women at the grassroots in rural areas face fundamental barriers to political participation. This ranges from the inaccessibility of electoral registration, and challenges to reach polling stations, to exclusion from collective action, which tends to take place in cities and urban centres; marginalising their role in comparison to women who are regarded as being part of the elite. What emerges is a clear rural/urban divide within the women's rights agendas being developed and pursued, coupled with a lack of consultation. As grassroots women form a powerful constituency for change, this is a lost opportunity for the WM.

NAWOU's role as a partner in the collaboration was to support the meaningful inclusion of grassroots women and girls in rural areas in the WAVE project and WM more broadly.

NAWOU used their well-established COMBAT model to engage women in rural areas on transformational leadership and feminist analysis, and in gathering and using citizen generated data to inform advocacy with local government.

KEY ACTIVITY: Expanding the COMBAT model for transformational feminist leadership and citizen generated data and advocacy

Although each WAVE partner delivered a number of activities, for the purpose of this paper we are drawing on one example for each in this project highlight section to help underscore its role and impact. WAVE was designed to be inclusive of non-elite women at the grassroots, and in rural

Image on left:
Participant at Uganda Feminist Forum.

areas, through NAWOU's strong nationwide presence, alongside the experience of community engagement by two other WAVE partners, The Peace Centre, and FOWODE. During WAVE, NAWOU trained 40 women COMBATS across two districts (Gulu and Luwero) as community trainers in transformational leadership and feminist analysis, based on their established COMBAT model.[28] This was used in rural areas to identify and train community resource persons to address violence against women by supporting their engagement and participation in relevant spaces.

The training actively engaged with the most marginalised women to build a solid understanding of feminist power analysis, with a focus on being accountable and taking agency; enabling this group to model the kinds of leadership traits that will strengthen and broaden grassroots WMs. The training equipped a diverse group of women, including women with disabilities (WWD), young women, women leaders, and local government representatives. They gained knowledge of decision making spaces, and how to influence them, the skills to apply feminist principles, discover their power and capabilities to initiate change, as well as how these can be used to advocate for a just and equal world. This training applied a training-of-trainers approach, which has strengthened the COMBATs in cascading the impact of the training on to others, and in doing so to further strengthen the WM. As this adaptation to the work of Uganda Women's Action Programme (UWAP), a NAWOU member organisation, following the training shows:

> ***"I have revised my work plan on the programme targeting girls to include leadership, understanding gender roles and power analysis. I believe that it will enable the girls to become aware of their roles and potential to challenge inequality arising from male dominance."***
>
> **Aciro Scovia from UWAP**



PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WOMEN'S ORGANISATIONS IN UGANDA.

Image above: NAWOU Community Development Officer during an engagement meeting with local government duty bearers.

Through the conversations, women's attitudes towards participation in leadership and advocacy were influenced and they better recognised their own potential; the key to realising change. Following the sharing of their leadership stories, most of the women acknowledged/perceived their existing leadership abilities. Before this, many had not even considered themselves to be leaders, the session helped them to identify existing experiences and skills, as a strong foundation to further develop. Strengthened solidarity and sisterhood has emerged from the focus on accountability and agency, and a willingness to support one another.

As a result, the COMBATs started to contemplate the change they personally desire, the power that women hold, and how this can be used to challenge injustices to achieve gender equality. During the WAVE project, women increasingly used their power and voice to contest inequalities and unfair treatment within social and political systems and structures, in their local communities. This has included speaking out, with evidence, on issues affecting them, such as the burden of unpaid work and how this should be addressed.

Of particular note is the experience of WWD, some of whom have successfully influenced the local government by demanding equal participation to benefit from the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), to which they are entitled.[29] This government programme covers 112 of Uganda's districts and aims to improve access to financial services for women, and equip them with skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. However, lack of information and gaps in implementation, since the programme started in 2016, mean for many women, this has not been achieved. As one participant said,

> ***"I am the spark of change, a voice of the voiceless."***
>
> **Agnes Nakato, COMBAT training participant.**

A training manual was also produced as part of the training, and the COMBATs are working closely with the NAWOU Gulu and Luwero District Networks, to mobilise and train other women and stakeholders to overcome injustices within their communities.

In follow up training, the COMBATS identified pressing problems and weaknesses within service delivery in their communities that were affecting women negatively. They scored these issues according to their significance, and were guided using problem tree analysis to further understand and discuss these problems in terms of causes, effects, possible actions, and the desired change in addressing these. Women were equipped with methods for gathering community data and for analysing this data to influence better service delivery. Duty bearers were identified, including community leaders (clan, religious and political), Community Officers, women councillors, NGOs operating in the district, area MPs, and Uganda Women Entrepreneurship

Programme focal persons amongst others, to whom the women presented the consolidated citizen generated data and held influencing discussions. The presentations shared evidence-based data to hold duty bearers accountable, to improve service delivery and strengthen collective advocacy amongst duty bearers and citizens. During this process, community contribution towards addressing the issues at hand was recognised, and recommendations were generated to support consistent follow up on service delivery.

28. For more information on the COMBAT model see Womankind Worldwide (2014) Prevention is Possible: The role of women's rights organisations in ending violence against women and girls in Ethiopia, Ghana and Zambia. Available online at https://www.womankind.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/prevention-is-possible-1.pdf

29. The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) is an initiative by the Government of the Republic of Uganda to improve women's access to financial services, equip them with the skills for enterprise growth, value addition and marketing of their products and services. The women are availed with interest-free revolving credit to initiate or strengthen their enterprises.

The relationships that NAWOU have built with duty bearers over time, helped to ensure a good number of duty bearers were on board, and attended these meetings, along with religious leaders. As a result of the meetings, gradual change is being realised in service delivery by local government, police and other civil society players. For example, women in Luwero advocated that the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme be channelled directly to women beneficiaries' bank accounts, rather than to the district system, so that they have direct access to the funds allocated to them. This action was successful and resulted in the district becoming only a monitoring party, rather than an intermediary for the funds.

In addition to providing women with the skills and knowledge to collect data and analyse it in order to leverage this knowledge to influence service delivery; women's advocacy efforts and coordination were enhanced, bolstering their capacity to influence real change in policies and programmes within their communities. Women report that the data they collected informs planning and programming within the local structures, with support from district based duty bearers such as Community Development Officers, Police, Probation/Gender Officers, among others:

> ***"We are challenged to mobilise ourselves and involve Councillors to inform us about the existing programmes at the district since Councillors participate in district activities and are required to tap information and share it with the people they serve in community. This will make them seem relevant to the people they serve. We should remind Councillors of their role of sharing information with people and to spare some time the same way they do when looking for votes."***
>
> **Dauphine Nakaliisa, COMBAT training participant, Luwero District.**

Image below: Speaker at the Uganda Feminist Forum.



PHOTO CREDIT: AKINA MAMA WA AFRIKA.

As well as further bolstering women in their advocacy in this way, the citizen generated data training helped to strengthen collaboration between NAWOU and local government structures, linking women to their relevant duty bearers for longer-term support.

The need for and power of solidarity and collaboration

Through the WAVE project, NAWOU staff were supported in their approach to community engagement from other partners, The Peace Centre and FOWODE in particular. NAWOU has also noted the positive impact of participating in other WAVE activities, including feminist leadership and wellbeing trainings.

Most significant of all, WAVE promoted new research of issues affecting women in rural areas and for grassroots women in particular. NAWOU gathered a lot of credible data showing the dearth of municipal services for women, which was used in advocacy and action to demand access to these services. The knowledge acquired was not only used by NAWOU but was also shared with NAWOU members, to support collective advocacy including by grassroots women who attended the trainings.

The women NAWOU have worked with are popular figures, known in their communities with the capacity to mobilise many people and train them. These COMBATs are now working closely with the NAWOU Gulu and Luwero District Networks to mobilise and train other women, and stakeholders, to overcome injustices within their communities. The activities have strengthened the capacity of women leaders at many levels to address existing injustices in practical and collective ways. This is a reflection of the level of effective networking and influence of NAWOU, and ultimately builds a stronger foundation for the future of the WM, as one of NAWOU's staff pointed out:

> ***"We know that women's movements are built with strong leaders"***
>
> **Monica Nantume, NAWOU, Membership Officer and co-coordinator of WAVE.**

Learning

The use of participatory tools and feminist analysis has helped women to identify and name some of the injustices that limit their potential. The trainings offered safe spaces where women could share their concerns and apprehension about backlash, and repercussions of speaking out on issues, including criticism of local government structures. NAWOU provided support in their role as an established presence in the district, through accompaniment to women in rural areas, and engagement with the responsible duty bearers, encouraging women to establish closer rapport with local officials. The follow-up learning session among women leaders was also an effective way of motivating, inspiring and recognising women's efforts for change. NAWOU says such sessions will be replicated in other organisational programmes to foster feminist leadership among women. Through NAWOU's involvement in the project, diverse grassroots women have gained greater visibility and inclusion in the WAVE partnership and the Ugandan WM, as well as strengthened knowledge and evidence with which to demand change on issues affecting them.



PHOTO CREDIT: NATIONAL UNION OF WOMEN WITH DISABILITIES OF UGANDA.

Project Highlight: NUWODU

WAVE Highlight

The National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU) was formed in 1999 by a group of women and youth with disabilities and is a legally registered NGO and a membership organisation. NUWODU brings together women and girls with disabilities to have a stronger, unified voice to advocate for their rights. This includes achieving equal opportunities, to fight injustice and violence, and livelihoods support. The partnership between Womankind and NUWODU contributes to the shared aim of strengthening the women's movement (WM) and its awareness and understanding of disability including voice and visibility of women with disabilities (WWD), and to support resilience and capacity for coordinated action. Through NUWODU, the WAVE project was more inclusive with focus on disability rights for women, and gained some critical insights into some of the challenges of meaningful engagement experienced by WWD.

Setting the scene

WWD experience multiple forms of violence, including psychological, sexual, and physical violence, and the perpetrators of violence are often known to WWD, including partners and other family members; people on whom WWD are often dependent. In addition to this, WWD are often confined to the home, or live in institutional settings, which together with their dependency on others, makes reporting abuse and seeking justice very difficult. This is compounded by multiple layers of discrimination that interplay and impact their ability to claim their rights, and live free from violence and abuse. Although Article 21 of the Constitution of Uganda prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities, research by Human Rights Watch in 2010 highlighted how WWD in Uganda are particularly affected by sexual and gender-based violence. In the research, over one-third of the 64 women and girls interviewed said that they had experienced some form of sexual or physical abuse. None had been able to press criminal charges or pursue prosecutions of their attackers.[30] Uganda is one of the few countries in the world to recognise sign language in its Constitution, and has ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. However, based on the Uganda Demographic and Health Survey data from 2011-2016, nearly two-thirds (64%) of Ugandan WWD reported experiencing physical, sexual, psychological or emotional violence. Many are unable to gain access to basic services, including health care and justice, and they have been largely ignored in post-conflict reconstruction efforts.

Image to the left: A facilitator from NUWODU training journalists on best practice for reporting on women with disabilities.

30. See https://www.hrw.org/news/2010/08/26/uganda-women-disabilities-barriers-and-abuse

Key activity: Enabling more WWD to meaningfully and consistently participate in an inclusive, collective feminist space

Although each WAVE partner delivered a number of activities, for the purpose of this paper we are drawing on one example within this project highlight section to help underscore its role and impact. In April 2019, NUWODU conducted inception meetings at district level bringing together 30 district officials (25 women and five men) from Nakawa and Makindye divisions, two of the five divisions of Kampala, and 15 WWD, so those local leaders could better understand and mainstream issues faced by WWD within the WM and their own work.

The aim was to bring together these stakeholders, to facilitate WWD to participate, lead and influence policy and practice change for gender equality and women's rights. The meetings led to a common understanding of the issues faced by WWD, and the roles the leaders need to play to support WWD to actively be a part of the WM. Districts' officials increased their understanding of the WM and committed themselves toward supporting WWD by ensuring that their issues are reflected in budgets, and ensuring that WWD are invited for meetings, to enable the inclusion of their views and needs. Crucially, it has led officials to interrogate their own mind sets, and the need to change attitudes that tend to ignore and discriminate against WWD.

> ***"As a leader of Makindye division, I will ensure that I work with women and girls with disabilities to have their voices heard because they are my voters as well, and have rights so they are free to have their views."***
>
> **Local Leader of Makindye division, participant in the meetings**

A total of 25 WWD across Nakawa and Makindye divisions expressed positivity that the project had a special focus on WWD in urban areas, as usually funds tend to go to rural areas, presuming a greater need.

> ***"There's no budget in government to train or raise awareness on disability. We look forward to benefiting from the project as an eye opener to our rights."***
>
> **Woman with disabilities of Nakawa division, participant in the meetings**

Through WAVE, NUWODU have strengthened the ability of WWD in Kampala to speak out on pressing issues with the local government and to advocate for themselves, speaking before leaders and demanding access to services and inclusion in the mainstream. Additionally they feel that the project stakeholders are aware of the feminist movement and understand the role WWD need to play within it. One key change achieved is that the district level women's enterprise programme has operationalised a special allowance for WWD. Prior to the support provided through NUWODU, many women were being turned down when applying for funds through the programme.

The need for and power of solidarity and collaboration

As a women's rights organisation (WRO) and part of the wider WM, NUWODU has engaged with others but acknowledge that the WAVE project has been an important way for them to strengthen their involvement with the movement:

> ***"At the beginning, NUWODU were isolated, but now we are integrated and working with other WROs."***
>
> **Betty Achana, NUWODU, Executive Secretary**

The role that NUWODU played in the WAVE project has been catalytic; both for themselves and the other five partners in ways that were not foreseen at the outset. There was broad consensus among partners that the purposeful engagement of a disability focused WRO highlighted the many challenges and barriers that are faced, and the need for others in the WM to strengthen their own approaches. The WAVE project served to encourage and better enable partners to proactively and meaningfully include WWD in their work.

For example, MEMPROW staff confirmed that through WAVE activities, they mentored some young WWD for the very first time, to honour the agreement between WAVE partners to adopt an intersectional approach. The Uganda Feminist Forum activity, led by The Peace Centre made a concerted effort to engage WWD, and while that was not without its challenges, the intentional engagement was a practical commitment to intersectional approaches within the project and a concrete show of solidarity. Equally, engaging in the WAVE project became a critical moment in NUWODU's feminist journey.

> ***"As a [women-led] disability organisation we knew we were gender sensitive but the awareness of how to be feminist is just starting [for us], from the project and interaction with partners such as The Peace Centre. Having participated in The Peace Centre led feminist training – the project has been a mind igniting phenomenon. It's a journey we have just started but we are ready to walk the journey; to increase the knowledge we have got but also to spread it within the sector."***
>
> **Betty Achana, NUWODU Executive Secretary**

Learning and next steps

According to NUWODU staff, within the disability movement:

> ***"[A]t the back of people's minds, the understanding of feminism is totally different; there are misconceptions, and as a feminist organisation, we need to put down the true meaning of what feminist means and who a feminist is."***
>
> **Joy Nakyesa, NUWODU Programme Assistant and WAVE project lead**

Through WAVE, NUWODU originally intended to deliver two more activities, which they instead purposefully paused, and spent some much needed time (with the support of The Peace Centre as the implementing project lead), to understand how to align NUWODU's values and approach with a more feminist one.

The approach of the WAVE project including engagement with project partners, and Womankind, allowed for adaptive planning and the ability to respond to emerging needs or changes. Of particular note is NUWODU's responsiveness to feminist consciousness raising in the project and strengthened integration of this in their organisational approach.

Image below: Activists taking part in transformational leadership training.



PHOTO CREDIT: WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL PEACE CENTRE

Project Highlight: THE PEACE CENTRE

WAVE Highlight

Women's International Peace Centre (The Peace Centre), formerly known as Isis-Women's International Cross-Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE), was established in Uganda in 1994, and is an international feminist organisation that works in conflict and post-conflict areas. The Peace Centre exists to promote justice and empowerment of women globally through documenting violations of women's rights, and facilitating the exchange of information and skills to strengthen women's capacities, potential and visibility, and raise women's voices across Uganda and further. The Peace Centre uses different creative strategies to generate and share information and knowledge, to enable women to enhance their leadership potential and participate in decision making. They aim to make sure women's voices are heard in government by working with other organisations, training campaigners, and making women aware of their rights and how to achieve them. In recognition of their significant role in WAVE project design, and in the women's movement (WM), The Peace Centre's role as lead implementing partner in the collaboration was to help guide WAVE partners further on their feminist journeys, through modelling their own feminist approach and values. This included through transformational leadership and wellness, and to use their strategic role as one of the organisers of the Uganda Feminist Forum (UFF) to make the space more inclusive.

Setting the scene

Over the last 12 years, the Ugandan WM developed its own UFF, bringing together women with a desire to pursue a progressive feminist agenda. The Forum is usually held every two years.

Drawing from this, the WM has focused on a rights-based agenda, including through policy and advocacy at national, regional and international levels. However, in the current context in Uganda, women's rights organisations (WROs) experience particular challenges in their work, as outlined earlier in this paper. Against this backdrop, the UFF remains a vital and vibrant space for activists to come together, to grow as feminists and build solidarity. It has also become a place of nurturing understanding on lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex+ (LBTQI+) issues, operating as a space for support and constructive critique, including for young feminists and intergenerational dialogue. The UFF adopts a 'full inclusion - no ifs, no buts' policy and only those committed to this are admitted. Many of the women in this space are from WROs, which means that progressive feminist thought is able to trickle down into the infrastructure and work of these organisations. Given the established presence of the UFF, the WAVE project was an opportunity to provide funds to re-invigorate this as a key space in which to push a progressive agenda in Uganda.

Key Activity: Supporting the UFF as an inclusive space for movement strengthening

Although each WAVE partner delivered a number of activities, for the purpose of this paper we are drawing on one example in this project highlight section to help underscore its role and impact. The Peace Centre's project activities focused around two key areas which primarily contributed to strengthening the Ugandan WM: supporting the development of transformational and inclusive feminist leaders who actively engage with the most marginalised women, and further developing and strengthening an inclusive feminist approach.

This was done first through developing a bespoke curriculum and subsequent training model: *"Harnessing Our Power with Soul: Bespoke curriculum for Transformational Leadership and Wellness"* focused on transformational leadership and wellness.[31] This built on the knowledge and needs of all six WAVE partners, and reflected the needs of the WM to strengthen feminist leadership and address entrenched hierarchies. It also had a context specific self-care approach, to strengthen the resilience of individuals and contribute to the overall sustainability of the WM. The training enabled participants to explore transformational leadership traits that can strengthen and broaden the WM. The approach also included appreciation that leadership from a feminist standpoint enables the feminist leader to identify injustices and oppressions, and inspires one to facilitate the development of more inclusive and holistic communities.
The second area focused on reinvigorating the existing UFF as a key space to pursue a progressive feminist agenda and strengthen transformational feminist leadership, and to support the UFF to be more inclusive.[32]
As part of the WAVE project a working group for the UFF, hosted by Akina Mama wa Afrika secretariat, was established to act as the core group of feminist leaders and direct the activities leading up to, during and after the UFF; to ensure the mission and vision of the movement was upheld. During these working group meetings, the need for the inclusion of marginalised groups was discussed extensively.

The Forum was convened over two days in 2019, under the theme, *'Silencing our fears and fearing our silence',* with a total of 110 women including LBTQI+, women with disabilities (WWD) and female sex workers (FSW) participating. The UFF aimed to create a safe space for feminist healing and strategising, to generate feminist knowledge and teachings, document and amplify the movement's herstories; including recognition of the contributions of women from marginalised groups, to expand and transform the movement into a foundation for organising and activism.[33]

Having promoted diversity and inclusivity, the UFF provided a powerful space for the WM to appreciate and build sisterhood rooted in solidarity and respect for diversity; strengthening and re-energising the Ugandan feminist movement. The feminist movement in Uganda has previously been silent on issues of women and girls with disability, and this platform provided space for Ugandan feminists to understand and appreciate their sisters with disability, to enable them thrive and grow in both their environment and in decision making. The UFF also provided a significant space for LBTQI+ women to be included and gain visibility within the mainstream WM:

31. Women's International Peace Centre (2019). Harnessing Our Power with Soul: Bespoke Curriculum for Transformational Leadership and Wellness. Available online at https:/The Peace Centre.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Bespoke-Curriculum-on-Transformational-Leadership-and-wellness-FINAL.pdf

32. The 2019 UFF was funded by the African Women Development Fund, (AWDF), Urgent Action Fund Africa, Open Society Initiative for Eastern Africa, Womankind, Hivos and the UFF Working Group

33. Full report on the 2019 UFF – Akina Mama wa Afrika (2019) Silencing our fears and fearing our silence: A report of the 8th Convening of the Uganda Feminist Forum, Available online at https:/www.akinamamawaafrika.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Official-UFF-2019-Report.pdf

> ***"Our project is mainly on inclusivity, making sure that marginalised women are visible in the women's movement. I wasn't disappointed. FARUG convened a panel on Silence on sexual orientation and gender identity and it was a fantastic experience. We were able to share our stories, our knowledge and also helped many people unlearn many of the myths they came with to UFF."***
>
> **Gloriah Mutyaba, FARUG, Director of Programmes and WAVE project lead**

However, challenges remained in terms of inclusivity for WWD, as detailed in the earlier section learnings on Pillar 4 of Womankind's Theory of Change. (See page 18.)

The UFF proved to be a useful mechanism for WRO's to engage and explore collaboration. While this critical platform already existed, support through WAVE enabled it to do better follow up, and focus on being even more representative, providing the opportunity for the forum to fulfil its potential as a space for a truly diverse and vibrant WM. Following the forum, the working group also focused on post-forum follow up to ensure momentum was maintained, and the UFF's influence and impact is optimised.

The need for and power of solidarity and collaboration

The WAVE project was successful in bringing diverse women together from project design through to continued collaboration beyond the project period. The focus of The Peace Centre was on movement strengthening to more meaningfully engage the LBTQI+ community, the differently abled, and women at the grassroots, which was supported through collaboration with other project partners such as FARUG, NUWODU and NAWOU.

The Peace Centre, and other partners, acknowledged the challenges and gaps in meeting some of needs of WWD at the UFF. This has formed part of the reflection process and learning from the project, and underscores each partner's awareness and commitment to more effectively understand and respond to such needs, including accessibility and budget considerations. The project also encouraged partners to examine their complicity, whether inadvertent or not, in being less inclusive while understanding how to build and strengthen relationships between diverse women, to claim for the rights of all women.

Learning

The Peace Centre, through its particular role as lead partner in the WAVE project, was not without its challenges. A significant focus from the outset was to strengthen shared understanding of feminist approaches and ideologies to be adopted and applied in the project itself. However, there were differences in view and understanding, and a key learning area is that this aspect of collaboration should have been discussed and agreed at the project design stage. There were assumptions that all partners were already in agreement about feminist principles, when this was not necessarily the case. The Peace Centre navigated this aspect of the project and led partners through a process of feminist consciousness raising, underscoring the importance of this in their work together.

Ultimately the project brought different areas of expertise and experience together in support of women's rights with a clear commitment to learning, rooted in an intersectional approach. The WAVE project has provided a firm foundation for the continued connection between project partners, reaching out to each other and inviting participation in their meetings. The role of The Peace Centre in the WAVE project has helped to facilitate such learning and inclusion, and further strengthen the feminist approach and values with the other five partners, to continue beyond the project.



PHOTO CREDIT: WOMEN'S INTERNATIONAL PEACE CENTRE.

Womankind's approach to the WAVE collaboration

During the WAVE project design phase, Womankind's project lead first liaised independently with all six partners to understand their individual motivations and priorities. This formed the basis of work to identify synergies and potential duplication, whilst ensuring that each partner retained autonomy alongside a collective aim and collaborative approach.

The WAVE project is aligned with Womankind's ethos to be intentionally feminist and intersectional whilst acknowledging that we still have much to learn and understand. In its most fundamental sense, the feminist values Womankind put into practice during WAVE were equity, being mindful of power dynamics, being inclusive, respecting difference and standing in solidarity. An example of this in practice is Womankind's efforts to ensure transparency, and a sense of equity in how project funding was allocated. The Peace Centre as the lead partner had the single largest, and a significant financial contribution among all project partners (including Womankind), and the remaining five in Uganda received equal funding irrespective of their size, focus or track record. In a pilot initiative, where the intention was primarily to create a space of trust and equity, Womankind felt that this was crucial, and budgets and finance reports were shared among all the partners to support mutual accountability.

> ***"The active inclusion of women with disabilities (WWD) was influenced by Womankind. [With] NUWODU as a WAVE partner, [NAWOU] could not go down a road of implementing the project without WWD, but also the importance Womankind placed on this influenced NAWOU to make sure they were included. NAWOU felt that Womankind so much follows the theory and principles of feminism, which NAWOU are applying, including self-care. Womankind are doing a very good job imparting these principles of feminism to their partner organisations and have really done well in popularizing and mainstreaming feminism in our organisation."***
>
> **Monica Natule, NAWOU Membership officer and Co-Coordinator of WAVE**

The WAVE project had a devolved structure of accountability to create a balance between shared project commitments and the need for independence and autonomy of project partners, including to shape and pace their work.[34]

Image to the left: Staff from The Peace Centre preparing for the self-care session at the transformational leadership training.

34. See section on Collaborative working, pages 30–31.

WAVE partners fed back to Womankind that they valued our efforts to support beyond funding; to provide resources to expand partners' advocacy interventions and programming, including support to attend key spaces. Partners also acknowledged the sharing of information about fundraising opportunities and calls for proposals, and profiling others' via social media and other platforms.

> ***"MEMPROW found Womankind to be a supportive partner in many ways, communicating well, seeking clarity from partners to ensure everything was well understood on their side, flexibility for project adaptation and ensuring Womankind understood the context for this was appreciated; really embodied the term 'Womankind'. On top of support to the consortium Womankind didn't forget MEMPROW as a separate entity, and were always willing to support all partners on any issues which came up."***
>
> **Immaculate Mukasa,**
> **MEMPROW Executive Director**

> ***"I met Piyumi [Womankind's project lead] once – but heard a lot about her before that – she has been a significant and present party from Womankind's side from the start; some donors give funds and a whole year goes by without even knowing any of the people – Piyumi is as active as though she is Womankind herself!"***
>
> **Josephine Namatovu,**
> **NAWOU Project Officer**

To meet the constraints of the funding available for WAVE, Womankind adapted the project design and did not include our usual approach of a project visit to engage face-to-face with WAVE partners. As a principle, Womankind prioritised getting funds to the partners that were implementing activities on the ground.

The Womankind project lead was in Uganda in October 2019 for other work purposes, and was able to partially attend a project activity led by The Peace Centre, although we could not engage with all project partners, as would have usually been the case. However, it is clear that being able to travel to meet partners would have been appreciated by them:

> ***"If resources allow, Womankind could come for an annual visit to give partners an opportunity to share experiences and to bring Womankind staff to the field to understand the beneficiary impact."***
>
> **Monica Natule, NAWOU Membership officer and Co-Coordinator of WAVE**

Womankind found other appropriate and creative ways to engage with partners, including joining the quarterly WAVE steering committee meetings online to share information related to reporting, and clarify any questions in the presence of all partners. Womankind staff also stayed in touch with individual partners via WhatsApp and Skype, to offer direct contact with Womankind so that any issues could be raised beyond the role of The Peace Centre as project lead.

Together with the WAVE partners, Womankind is committed to continued and sustained work to further support and strengthen intersectional approaches, and collaboration between women, in all their diversity, as part of the women's movement in Uganda. We will draw upon the evidence and learning from the project, and actively seek funding for the next phase of WAVE.

LESSONS LEARNED

Movement strengthening programming

- **Movement strengthening** work with a collaborative approach is dynamic and can be less structured than other projects. This can often make it difficult to design and resource in line with prescribed donor formats because it is not always possible to focus on achieving pre-determined results. Therefore we need to take risks in pilots and allocate or seek flexible funding that supports this kind of work.

- **Alliance work –** Womankind made a deliberate decision to engage larger and smaller women's rights organisations (WRO) with consideration given to power dynamics and relations. This was with the knowledge that we cannot force collaboration but can help to make it possible within our partnership model and approach. Being transparent about funding allocations for all partners working together is also key to building trust.

- **Knowledge and evidence is key** – There is a need for evidence and track record to help to make the case for future projects of this kind, and particularly for donors. More work is needed to clarify a movement focused monitoring, evaluation and learning framework that sits above the individual contributions of each implementing partner in such projects.

- **Disability inclusion is non-negotiable –** It is essential to intentionally build in disability inclusion expertise into movement strengthening projects at the project design stage. This is to ensure that there is more meaningful engagement of women with disabilities (WWD) as well as the active involvement of partners.

- **Self-care and wellbeing need resourcing –** During project design, with a core intersectional approach, more consideration is required to resourcing and budgeting for self-care and wellbeing.

- **Include security in budgeting –** Equally important is the need to intentionally budget to mitigate any security risks which are always context specific.

- **Centring power-with strategies –** In line with Womankind's principles of partnership, it is important to be partner-led, through collaborative programme design. This can be non-linear and time consuming, but it helps avoid replicating the power imbalances of patriarchal structures and systems, and ultimately is more effective.

- **Intersectional approaches are key –** Intergenerational, intersectional dialogues are a strong tool for movement strengthening

- Creating opportunities for **cross movement dialogues** is also critical in movement building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

for women's rights practitioners and donors

Meaningful collaboration that supports movement strengthening

- Avoid making assumptions about the uniformity of organisational approaches and feminist capacity, even when working in partnership with agreed roles and responsibilities for each organisation within the collaboration.
- Establish and document agreed norms, management arrangements and guidelines collectively between partners.
- Ensure women and women's rights organisations closest to the ground take the lead in design and implementation.
- Recognise and trust the expertise and lived experiences of women's rights organisations and women's movements, including those representing marginalised women.
- Make room for diverse, marginalised and excluded voices at project design stage.
- Account for regional and contextual realities, and ensure that these are adequately resourced.
- Account for and adequately resource safety and security costs in the global context of closing civic spaces.
- Account for and adequately resource the meaningful engagement of persons with disabilities and the cost of their access.
- Create sufficient space in programming for actors to both meet within a movement, as well as across movements to ensure that they do not feel the need to choose one over another.

Evidence and learning

- Provide support for women's rights organisations and women's movements to develop feminist trainings and related documentation to evidence the impact and value of their work.
- Ensure that feminist, participatory methodologies are used for any such activities.
- Peer review the outputs with wider women's rights organisations as a way to improve the content and share ownership of the findings.
- Fund women's rights organisations and women's movements to facilitate safe spaces where particularly marginalised communities can feel empowered to speak freely.
- Create opportunities and spaces to learn about, make mistakes and adapt movement strengthening.
- Document lessons learned wherever possible, including intersectional stories to underscore the importance of intersectional programming.
- Support information communication technologies in organisations.

Funding

- Advocate for more flexibility in funding for women's movement strengthening that is designed with the involvement of women from those movements.
- Enable small, flexible funding pots for pilot projects which can help organisations establish an evidence base and recognised track record.
- Share lessons learned with donors about what works to strengthen women's movements, which may not always be about funding tangible project results but may focus on the mechanisms and relationships that support stronger movements.
- Increase devolved funding through women's funds and specialist intermediary organisations that have strong partnerships with Global South women's rights organisations and women's movements.
- Increase the accessibility of existing funding streams to women's rights organisations and women's movements, particularly funds targeted at human rights and civil society organisations.
- Ensure adequate funding is allocated for monitoring, evaluation and learning and that chosen methodologies are suitable to the nature of the work women's movements undertake.
- Place greater emphasis on core and long term funding, where possible, based on women's rights organisations' plans and budgets, and provide sizeable grants.
- Understand that while small amounts of money can stimulate innovation, they do not enable expansion, scale-up and strengthening of organisational and operational capacity where these might be necessary.
- Work with and support feminist funders.

Womankind Worldwide

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Womankind Worldwide
Wenlock Studios, 50–52 Wharf Rd,
London N1 7EU United Kingdom

info@womankind.org.uk
womankind.org.uk
Charity Reg. no 328206