



Akina Mama wa Afrika

THEORY OF CHANGE

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About AMwA

Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) is a feminist-Pan-African leadership development organization that was founded in 1985 by a group of visionary African women in the United Kingdom but later relocated to Africa with headquarters in Kampala, Uganda. Our work is rooted in feminist principles and beliefs guided by the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists which define our leadership development programme and movement building activities. AMWA provides strategic direction in key Pan-African networks including NGO CSW Africa, Solidarity for African Women's Rights and the Gender Is My Agenda Campaign. AMwA also has consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council.

OUR VISION

We envision a world in which African women are politically, economically and socially autonomous and are champions of change in their lives and society

OUR MISSION

To strengthen the individual and collective leadership of African women, forming strategic partnerships, to tackle patriarchy and attain gender equality and women's empowerment for a just and secure Africa.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our work is rooted in and guided by the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists. We defend the full spectrum of human rights for African women in all their diversities. We believe in the agency and personhood of African women. We believe that the personal is political and we are committed to walking the talk. We commit to creating and sustaining a dynamic, cutting edge feminist organization with a soul. We strive for individual and organizational excellence, accountability and rigor in the work that we do. We believe in empowering advocates and the power of collaboration to advance our feminist agenda..

Problem Statement


Feminist leadership requires incredible agility and resilience because each step forward creates new and sometimes graver challenges or backlash. The different misconceptions about the feminist agenda such as the belief that feminism is against men, is a Western agenda, seek to destroy families and many other misconceptions has limited women's ability to organize under a collective feminist agenda.

Intersectional feminist praxis is still met with stiff resistance making it difficult for many to identify with and as feminist leaders. Loyalties to religious and cultural beliefs continue to deter many women from identifying with principles of intersectionality that are instrumental to achieving an intersectional feminist agenda. This has also created fractures within the feminist movement. With the decline in a collective women's voice in both civic and political spaces, it has made it more difficult for women to offer the necessary resistance to various oppressive systems.

For the women who identify as feminist, it becomes a burden to amplify and invest in a collective agenda as it requires dealing with constant resistance from various institutions. It thus becomes difficult to agree on shared feminist concerns across such wide gulfs of country, culture, religion, and more. This is further amplified by existing laws and practices that legalize discrimination and are widely accepted by the majority of the population.

The exclusion of women of various sexual and gender identities, class, and multiple identities from mainstream movements in this country in the past has hindered collective solidarity. Existing socio-cultural and economic standards constrict, condition and limit women's ability to exercise their full agency. These norms coupled with weak and unwilling state institutions as well as women's lack of awareness act as significant barriers. Gender roles that often dictate how and if women can exercise their full agency continue to serve as powerful tools that dictate social and cultural norms. These prescriptions for how men and women are expected to behave often determine that women's agency is limited and far in between. Women for example are expected to remain submissive, have limited control of their bodies, resources, among other restrictions.

Women too have internalized these beliefs and many of them have adopted the limited understandings of their ability to exercise agency. They include domesticity, playing reproductive roles, submissiveness, etc. for women. Limiting and toxic understandings of masculinity, among others for men. This is amplified by the patronage politics that still govern many of our countries where women are expected to seek permission from "father-figures" in order to gain access to resources and make individual decisions.



"Perception, representation, and acceptance of women in power is still met with resistance, enforced by current institutions and systems. Inequalities between men and women are one of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power"

Increasingly, these norms have resulted in legalized discrimination arising from the complicated interaction between laws and social-cultural norms. Furthermore, women who are seen to deviate from this norm receive stark backlash from institutions and individuals. For example, powerful women in politics who choose to make choices that deviate from accepted standards are misrepresented by the media and publicly berated.

Perception, representation, and acceptance of women in power is still met with resistance, enforced by current institutions and systems. Inequalities between men and women are one of the most persistent patterns in the distribution of power. Gender relations are power relations. Often what it means to be a 'woman' is to be powerless (quiet, obedient, accommodating). A 'real man', by contrast, is powerful (outspoken, in control, able to impose his will), particularly in relation to women. These gender roles tend to perpetuate the power inequalities that they are based on. For example, the fact that many men and women think it's not 'natural' for women to speak up in public often poses a key barrier to women's access to decision-making.

The manifestation of power in both public and private spaces; who heads government institutions, military, the decision makers at home, and how women are able to feel and react to power are still very masculine centred making it difficult for women to imagine themselves as powerful or to exercise their power without restriction.

Gendered forms of social differentiation influence women's ability to access, participate in and benefit from opportunities. This is compounded by the limitations of democratisation and governance. In most cases political parties are the main gatekeeper to access these opportunities, whether at local or national level and limit women's ability to influence outside those lines. Additionally, many parties tend to be highly exclusionary of women, often relegating women to secondary roles. These act as major barriers to women's ability to influence at all levels in political spaces.

Women are then expected to limit their influence to selected agendas that have been classified as "women's issues". For the most part, these are exclusive of key national and policy issues




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While there is now an increase in research and documentation on the location of women within the political economy and how that impacts and disenfranchises them, the information is still has some significant gaps. First, it is conducted through a development aid lens, foregrounding knowledge and methods that are not relevant to the African context. Secondly, the analysis is sometimes devoid of interrogation of power and deep seated, mostly invisible gender dynamics which then misses the systemic issues rife for change. This evidence base had led to the growth of the school of thought of economic empowerment as the panacea to all the challenges women face, and not just in the economy. The solutions proposed in this regard therefore gloss over the real structural problems that hold women back. Lastly, women in these pieces of evidence are mere subjects and are never seen as legitimate authorities to comment on and influence the economy, but only to participate in it.

The wide range of women's rights issues including violence against women, maternal health, education for girls, etc are impacted by political economic decisions which women's rights movements should be working actively to engage. What issue gets on the agenda, which issue gets funded and how much is allocated to it, which bill gains traction, are all political-economic decisions. A clear example of this is that a certificate of financial implication is always required by parliament as a prerequisite for debate and eventual passage of a bill into law. However, there is limited understanding of and connection of women's rights issues to macro-economic and political discourse. And yet the work of women's liberation and gender equality is tied to challenging power structures which are anchored to who owns and controls resources. The absence of an intersectional lens means that the multitude of women's rights are advocated for in isolation, and many times are blind to how women's participation in the economy merely as consumers and not bonafide constituents contributes to the slow realisation of those rights.

The legal and policy space on economic justice has a number of gaps both at the national, regional and global levels. Women feel the greatest impact of any policy decisions, particularly gender blind ones. Presently laws and policies that protect women remain largely unimplemented or implemented to the barest minimum. Despite existence in law, women are still largely discriminated against, exemplified by wage disparities, lack of access to certain jobs, and lack of provisions to support women's reproductive function. Laws on sexual harassment, many of which still have inadequate provisions, are also not implemented.




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Women make up the bulk of the workforce in low wage sectors like domestic work, and global supply chains like the garment industry, the horticultural sector, and in plantation agriculture. They also make up the bulk of the informal sector which enjoys scant protections. Women are often victims of rights violations including; sexual harassment and rape, unpaid or no maternity leave, poor pay, long working hours with no overtime pay, and lack of social security and employment benefits among others. There are also several occupational health and safety concerns that have been reported by workers such as the lack of personal protective gear, limited access to clean drinking water, first aid equipment and sick bays. These violations have a gendered impact on women preventing them from accessing leadership positions and negatively impacting their productivity. They also both visible and invisible gender discrimination for example by having work segregated according to gender with higher paying jobs reserved for men. Additionally, they are burdened with shouldering the majority of care work, most of which is either low wage or unpaid.

Women's lack of access to, control of and ownership of resources puts them at a great disadvantage as this severely limits their decision making power and shrinks the number of choices available. This has far reaching consequences not only for women's ability to participate as autonomous beings in all spheres of life, but also greatly impacts their wellbeing. Resources serve as one of the ways individuals and groups gain, access and entrench power. Without resources, women are cast to the periphery and decisions about them are made by those with power, which hampers issues of gender equality. Women are still locked out critical resources like land, and acquisition of knowledge through education, influenced in part by patriarchal cultural dictates that see women as second only to men and boys. This lack of power because of lack of resources has a ripple effect on the location of women in society.

Allocation of resources is a political choice and it is influenced by those with power. This means that women who are already greatly disenfranchised may not easily influence these processes. And yet ultimately, they are the ones who are most affected by them. Funding for gender justice has not been a big priority, exemplified by limited budget allocations. Budget analyses show the distribution of most state resources geared towards military spending, infrastructural development and debt servicing, to the detriment of social services like education and health which contribute greatly to women and girls' wellbeing, and at the expense of public services and infrastructure on which they depend the most. Women's human rights and the achievement of gender justice therefore remain unfinanced. Unfinanced priorities include SRHR services, social protection including domestic violence shelters, the justice law and order sector which means that justice becomes difficult to realise, etc. Furthermore, in situations of austerity, cuts are made to those same sectors, further marginalising gender issues.



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Women and girl's agency over their own bodies remains contested, with many times those with power getting to decide how women's bodies should be used. Most of the decisions are influenced by religious morality that sees women's bodies as sacred and in service of religion, while others see them as territories to exploit for their own ends. The power and control exerted over women in all sphere of life starts with the control of the body (in terms of pleasure, reproductive function, sexuality and eventually, their labour). Therefore women's bodies have become a political playing field where whoever has power (spouse, state, corporation, school, place of work) decides what is best for them. Here those with power decide whether to give or withhold contraceptives, whether to sterilise or give permission to reproduce, who they should have sex with and how many children they should have. This leaves women as nameless void vessels to be acted upon and from whom consent is not required. Without control over their own bodies, women cannot have control anywhere else.

Women in their diversities do not have the confidence to articulate their SRHR issues and needs, and do not have health seeking behaviour because of lack of awareness of their SRHR, influenced in part by societal norms that frown on discussion of SRHR. In order to control their behaviour, information on SRHR is also deliberately kept away from women and girls, exemplified by contestations over comprehensive sexuality education in schools are being the gateway for children to having sex with no regard.

Most health sectors in Africa are financed by a combination of taxpayers, project funds by development partners, and Public Private Partnerships. Financing for the sector is usually way below the threshold provided in the Abuja Declaration which mandates State parties to allocate at least 15% of their budgets to health. The achievement of universal SRHR depends on a robust health system. Limited funding has a ripple effect on access to health, impacting the density of health centres and therefore ease of access for those in remote areas, access to medicines, and remuneration of health workers which impacts quality of services among other things. High maternal mortality rates on the continent are a result of shortfalls in healthcare delivery with health centres being far away, some of them grossly understaffed, others demanding for user fees that women cannot afford, while others have drug/commodities stockouts that are critical to saving lives. Health systems are also not built to be inclusive to youth, key populations and people with disabilities which impedes access to healthcare.



"Despite the enactment of international instruments and standards, there is often still a lack of political action and adequate resources to translate these into effective practices into action."

The available data and evidence on VAW rarely takes into account the realities of women's lived experiences based on their fluid identities and the structural causes rooted in inequalities. Women are not a homogenous group as they carry multiple identities that are constantly changing and this needs to be captured in all the VAW initiatives. A feminist intersectional analysis moves beyond static conceptions of inequality to recognise forms of inequality that are routed through one another, and which cannot be untangled to reveal a single cause. Different sets of social relations, hierarchies and discourses and their framework expose both structural and dynamic factors causing VAW. Elderly women, young women, differently, abled, urban, rural women, women in the informal sector, LGBTQIA+ community, sex workers and refugees' experiences differ significantly. Such a diverse account of a woman's lived realities is critical in data and evidence building. Many countries still lack this reliable data and much of the existing information cannot be easily accessible. Few countries in Africa collect data on violence against women on a regular basis which often does not factor in the changing times that require new thinking and alternative ways of addressing issues.

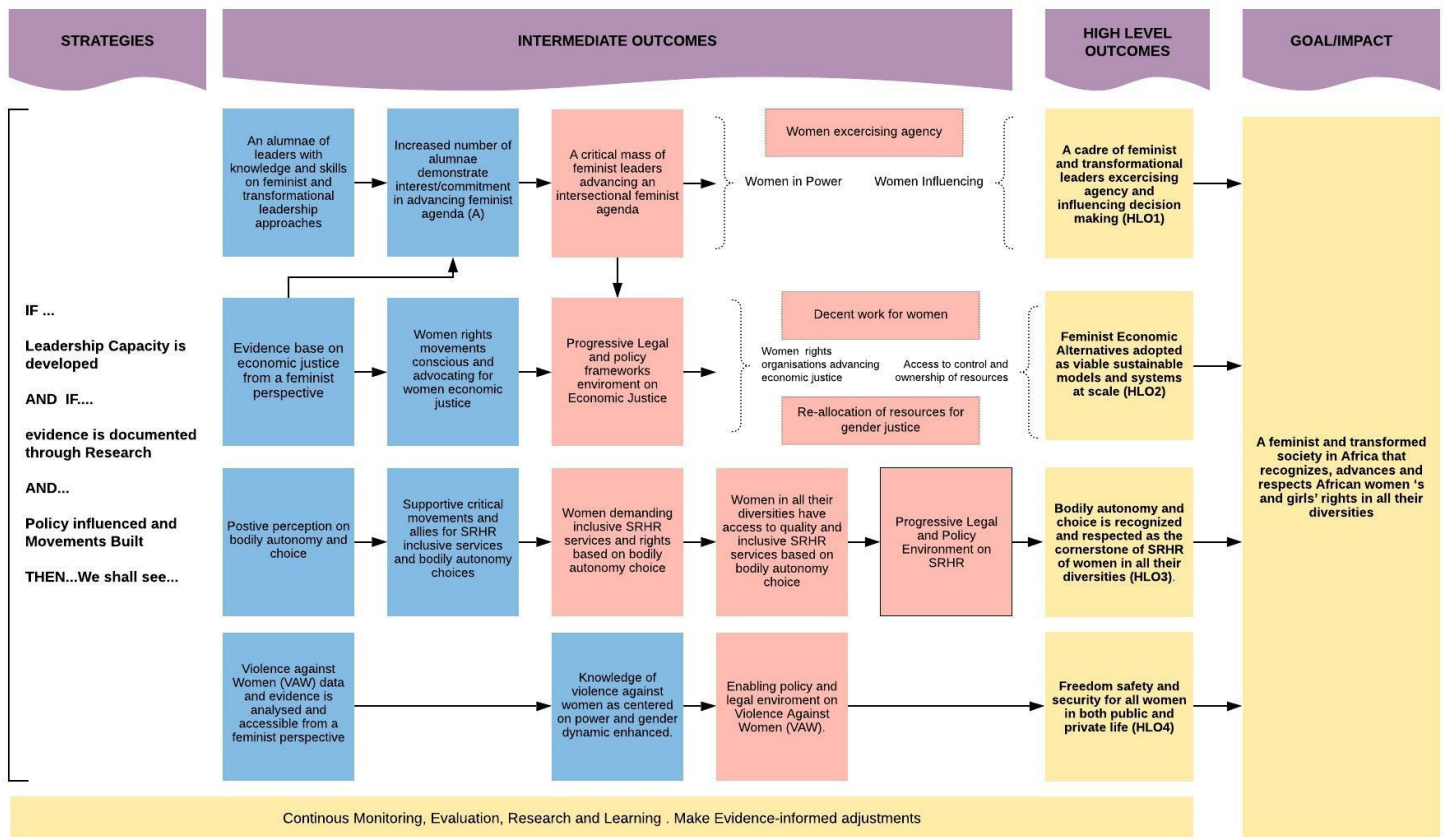
The current knowledge on SGBV is superficial it often does not take into account the gender norms and unequal power relationships as the root causes. Interventions on VAW are weak in taking into consideration how multiple power relations structure conditions within a society lead to the intentional use of violence against women to achieve political and economic ends.

Despite the enactment of international instruments and standards, there is often still a lack of political action and adequate resources to translate these into effective practices into action. While taking stock of the implementation of instruments such as the Kampala Declaration on Sexual Gender Based Violence 2011, United Nations Security Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000), Resolution 2493 (2019) and the Uganda Sexual Offenses Bill among others, it is key to note that perpetrators of violence still enjoy impunity, there is a huge gap in women and girls accessing holistic services, poor leadership of women in decision making processes on Women Peace and Security and lack of political will by government ministries in effectively implementing the many policies put in place. The gap between binding commitments, laws and policies and the lived experiences of the women and girls who should benefit from them is still far too wide.

Our Theory of Change



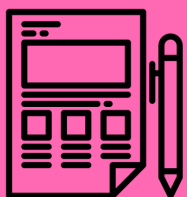
Theory of Change



Key::

Sphere of Control
Sphere of Influence
Sphere of Concern

Pathways of Change Explained



High Level Outcome 1: A cadre of feminist and transformational leaders exercising agency and influencing decision making

Feminist Leadership Development that integrates feminist principles, beliefs and values to advance the feminist agenda for social transformation. Feminist leaders challenge and resist the different oppressive ideologies and their intersections. They are able to work collectively to transform power relations between genders and different social groups. In turn the different social institutions and structures that reinforce gendered and other forms of discrimination are transformed.

Collective feminist leadership that work across differences and is able to navigate and support each other to advance a shared agenda. A stronger and more inclusive movement that brings together and recognises the multiple intersecting identities of different people that it represents, including a cross-section of women of all ages, races, religions, professions, beliefs, and sexual orientations. The ability to influence and strategically recruit as well as an increased ability to collaborate to create opportunities of coalitions for advancing the feminist agenda that seeks to transform political structures and the different systems and institutions that hinder the feminist objective of eliminating oppression.

Feminist leaders can navigate the different identities and collectively organize with a shared objective. Fully recognizing the multiple facets of people's shared identities while amplifying and fighting for the most marginalized in various institutions. Understanding that all our concerns and claims for justice are both parallel and intertwined combined with a renewed appreciation for the need of intersectionality. This translates into a shared agreement that whatever the differences, the shared inter-sectional agenda surmounts the difference and work together. This work would mean a consciousness raising that would result into a gradual but consistent change in perceptions about feminism that is adopted and accepted by mainstream institutions and systems making it possible for feminist leaders to influence and shape policies, laws and practices with a feminist analysis of issues.

Increased and safe participation in key decision-making processes improves, making it possible for more women to assert and exercise their agency. This translate into women having agency both in private and public spaces. This would imply a change in how women are represented and why they are celebrated.

"Both private and public spaces are transformed to see women's power as equally valuable and necessary to achieve various political goals"

Women's increased understanding and belief of their right to exercise their own agency has a symbolic and practical effect in how they can navigate various political and otherwise spaces. This increased agency of women is also able to yield broader development dividends and ultimately transform their families, communities, and societies.

The normalization and acceptance of women in power making it possible for women to exercise their power. Women are able to understand how power manifests in different realms and are able to influence and use their individual and collective power to transform themselves and others. Both private and public spaces are transformed to see women's power as equally valuable and necessary to achieve various political goals.



High Level Outcome 2: Feminist Economic alternatives adopted as viable sustainable models and systems at scale

Increased scholarship and knowledge generation on economic justice that applies an inter-sectional frame of analysis, foregrounds power and gender analysis, and centers the experiences of women in their diversities. The evidence generated looks into challenging dominant economic models and explore alternative ways of engaging with an economy that emphasizes well-being of people and planet. This is accompanied by increased knowledge and understanding of macro-economic policy issues from a feminist perspective.

Women's rights movements have increased capacity for macro-economic analysis, understand how macro-economic practices shape the everyday lives of women, and see the urgency of attaining

economic justice to achieve the wide spectrum of women's rights. They further adopt an intersectional frame of analysis that connects women's economic justice issues to the breadth of women's rights violations. Lastly, the movement of WROs is strengthened to advocate and demand for resources for fulfilment of gender justice for the transformation of the economy so that women live self-determined lives.

A legal and policy environment that promotes the economic rights of women and protects women's interests in desirable. The passage of the Minimum Wage Bill into a law would ensure that low wage workers particularly women, who do not have the power to negotiate over wages, are protected.

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Ratification, domestication and implementation of the International Labour Organization Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment in the Workplace would protect women in the world of work as it makes extensive provisions on sexual harassment, extending protections to women in the informal economy.

Fair wages to enable women live self-determined lives where their choices and decision-making power increases; dismantling of legal and socio-cultural barriers that either prevent women from participating in the workforce or limit their opportunities for growth for example providing subsidized or free childcare at work. A desired change is also violence and harassment free workplaces, and availability of social protection (maternity leave, childcare services). Women's equal progression and access to leadership positions, freedom from violence, discrimination and harassment, and enabling conditions for women's collective organizing and voice in decision-making.

Women in all their diversities have access to, control and ownership of resources like land with which they can build wealth and with which they can gain power and legitimacy to participate in all spheres of life. Another desirable change would also be mindset shifts that see women as legitimate owners, users and controllers of factors of production and in so doing, enabling them to gain autonomy. Increase in domestic resource mobilization by instituting fair and gender just taxation regimes and stemming the loss of resources through curbing illicit financial flows. This should be accompanied by reduction in reckless unaccountable borrowing to reduce the debt burden. This should enable the prioritization of women's rights and gender justice through increase in resources allocation in budgets that will finance women's rights



High Level Outcome 3: Bodily autonomy and choice is recognised and respected as the cornerstone of SRHR of women in all their diversities

Women recognize that they have power within, no matter how dire their circumstances, and they not only have the right to health, but are best placed to decide for themselves what is good for their bodies and their wellbeing. A proliferation of acceptance by society of choice and bodily autonomy as critical for agency and personhood and incumbent for the realization of other human rights and recognition women and girls have the power to give and revoke consent. SRHR anchored to bodily autonomy and choice means that women are free to access contraceptives and that the state makes them available; women and girls have access to safe and legal abortions; and

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the diversity of Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity and Expressions are free to exist on their own terms and have access to SRHR. Lastly, women and girls have access to information about sex and sexuality with which they can make informed choices that elevate their well-being.

Women understand that healthcare is a non-negotiable human right that should be respected and promoted by the state, are able to hold government accountable and can also articulate and put their SRHR issues on the agenda.

This can lead to changes like improvement in service delivery and enactment of progressive laws/frameworks for example a comprehensive sexuality education framework that is intersectional and fit for purpose.

Increased funding to the health sector to cater for shortfalls in healthcare provision. Civil society is mobilized and actively engaging on accountability on health systems to ensure responsiveness to health concerns for the diversity of people trying to access services. Increased capacity for budget tracking and social accountability audit of health centres to ensure effectiveness. Lastly, a mindset shift for health workers to ensure inclusiveness of all people in all their diversities to access healthcare without discrimination.

A legal and policy environment on SRHR that promotes and protect SRHR, and is inclusive, just and intersectional. Push for reinstatement of the National Policy Guidelines and Service Standards for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights which expands provisions for safe termination of a pregnancy and also provides guidance on contraceptive use by adolescents; advocacy for passage of the Sexual Offences Bill, 2019 which makes wide ranging provisions on sexual offences but with demand for amendments to several sections including one targeting LGBTI persons; and join forces on the ground to compel Uganda to lift reservations on Article 14 2 (c) on the Maputo Protocol which mandates

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High Level Outcome 4: Freedom safety and security for all women in both public and private life

Data and evidence on VAW is premised on feminist intersectionality that recognises the root causes of violence against women, the fluidity of gendered experiences/ realities of women and girls and how that affects makes them vulnerable to violence. A stronger knowledge base for effective targeted service delivery, advocacy, policy development, and accountability and monitoring of violence against women and girls. High quality knowledge and evidence is gathered, easily accessible and shared widely to all key stakeholders. This means translation of the evidence without watering down the diverse lived realities of women and ensuring it is user friendly and does disempower but rather empower and amplify women's voices. Strengthened knowledge management capacity of partners whose knowledge generation processes are premised on intersectionality.

Knowledge on VAW considers structures of labor, power, and social norms as risk factors for and exposure to SGBV. Conversations/dialogues/debates on VAW should enable all stakeholders involved in the response and mitigation measures understand how violence such as rape is a widely used weapon that reinforces gendered relations to display, communicate, and produce or maintain patriarchal dominance. Women and girls, CSOs have strengthened capacity in applying a of power analysis in conversations/dialogues on VAW.

Advocating for the enactment of laws that define different types of violence against women and girls, prescribing mandates and duties for enforcement and investigation, raising societal awareness and signalling government commitment. Change the Uganda Sexual Offences Bill that still does not serve justice to survivors and continues to give impunity to perpetrators of VAW. AMwA will continue pushing for the ratification and domestication of ILO C190, implementation of the United Nations Security Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000), Resolution 2493 (2019) which recognizes the participation of governments, Women Rights Organizations (WROs) and other relevant stakeholders towards the successful implementation of the Women and Peace Security Agenda and the Kampala Declaration on Sexual Gender Based Violence 2011 in the Great Lakes Region.



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