



WOMEN OF UGANDA NETWORK

2024 NewsLetter

First Quarter

Information Sharing Department

ABOUT WOUGNET

WOUGNET is a non-governmental organization in Uganda, was founded in May 2000 as a result of a meeting among several women's organizations. Our core activities include research on the intersection of gender and technology, analysis of internet and ICT policies to ensure gender inclusivity, promotion of equitable access to information, capacity building on emerging tech and online safety, and advocacy to challenge oppressive patriarchal structures both online and offline.

Our Vision:

An inclusive and just society where women and girls can utilise ICTs for sustainable development.

Our Mission:

To promote the use of ICTs by women and girls for gender equality and sustainable development.

Our Values:

Teamwork
Gender sensitivity
Integrity
Excellence
Commitment
Passion
Inclusiveness.

Strategic Objectives:

Our key result areas for the period 2021 – 2025 encompass:

- Integration and enforcement of gender and rights in government ICT policy processes and programs.
- Ensuring women and girls have access to relevant information in urban and rural areas.
- Empowering communities to use ICTs and advocate for their digital rights.
- Establishing WOUGNET as a strong, vibrant, and sustainable centre of Gender and ICT excellence in Africa.

Key Highlights of the first Quarter (January to March) 2024

Events, Conferences and Webinar

Empowering the Next Generation: WOUGNET's Gender and ICT Capacity Building at the International School of Uganda

In January, WOUGNET's Technical Support department participated in the esteemed International School of Uganda's community fair, marking a significant stride in advancing gender equality and ICT capacity development. At this pivotal event, the department established a digital clinic, serving as a beacon of knowledge and guidance for attendees. With meticulous care, they imparted invaluable insights on digital hygiene, online gender-based violence, and device security to approximately 300 students and 25 esteemed educators. Notably, the audience comprised predominantly of individuals aged between 11 and 18 years old, symbolizing a crucial demographic in the journey towards digital literacy and safety.



Through engaging presentations and interactive discussions, WOUGNET's presence illuminated the importance of fostering a culture of responsible digital citizenship among future generations. This endeavor exemplifies WOUGNET's unwavering commitment to empowering women and girls through targeted ICT initiatives, fostering a more inclusive and secure digital landscape for all.

NGO Commission on the Status of Women Sixty Eight (CSW68)

WOUGNET's Executive Director joined its partner, Institute of Development Studies event under the Countering Backlash Project on 'How is gender backlash weakening institutional contexts for gender justice globally with experts Pragyna Mahpara, Sandra Aceng, Nay El Rahi among others from Bangladesh, Lebanon, Serbia and India discussing the legislative weakening of institutional contexts in Uganda, examining Acts which exert control over Civil Society Organisations, and how organisations all over the world are countering Gender Justice attacks. More info: <https://counteringbacklash.org/update/how-is-backlash-weakening-institutional-contexts-for-gender-justice-globally/>



Advancing Locally-led Digital Transformation

Local leadership and ownership are central to successful and sustainable digital transformation. Achieving this requires work across several dimensions: from strengthening digital capacity, through investing in digital public infrastructure, to shifting how we operate from advancing point solutions to leveraging platforms and expanding interoperability. On March 19, 2024, at 09:20 AM - 10:00 AM (Africa/Accra), WOUGNET joined diverse leaders to discuss how they are driving and enabling local leadership, what successes and failures they have seen, and crucially, where our sector needs to change for us to achieve an equitable and inclusive digital future. More info:



<https://ict4dconference.dryfta.com/16953849811/program-schedule/program/80/plenary-advancing-locally-led-digital-transformation>

Digital Public Infrastructure: A tool for gender equality

WOUGNET joined the #CSW68 organized panel by Access Now and Wikimedia Foundation on Digital public infrastructure: A tool for gender equality. WOUGNET shared about tech for good and the community, and how gender equality is important to achieve a free, open, safe, and secure digital public infrastructure on Wikipedia and the internet. More info: <https://www.accessnow.org/event/digital-public-infrastructure-a-tool-for-gender-equality/>



Big Discussion: Programming Digital Solutions for Localised Development

For the past 20+ years, donors, INGOs, governments, and communities have been calling out the need for local solutions to local challenges. Sandra Aceng joined the amazing lineup of speakers from ChristianAid Ireland, Oxfam, NetHope and Pollicy on March 20th, between 02:15 PM- 03:00 PM (Africa/Accra) at the ICT4D2024.

Conference discussions:

- What are the appropriate technologies and strategies to ensure an accelerated roadmap with regards to service delivery by local organizations that have either not been attempted or must have further focus and real, life-changing commitment?
- What approaches to digital ecosystems are working to bridge the HQ to impact the

team divide?

- What are the technical and leadership skills necessary to enable local organizations to advance and sustain digital programming?
- Suggest promising advancements in which local organizations can use specific technologies to provide streamlined programmatic services, whilst still benefiting from global procurement and shared expert resources located virtually.

More info:

<https://ict4dconference.dryfta.com/16953849811/program-schedule/program/51/big-discussion-programming-digital-solutions-for-localized-development>

Education and Collaboration

Evaluation findings of the digital extension platform project

Women of Uganda Network (WOUGNET) participated in a Farm Radio International Dialogue and Knowledge Sharing Communication Platforms meeting at the Eureka Hotel in Uganda. The meeting was focused on sharing the evaluation findings of the digital extension platform project, which ran from 2022 to 2023. The purpose of the meeting was to take stock of the project's achievements, challenges, and lessons learned, as well as reflect on best practices for the second phase of the platform project. The ultimate goal of the project is to ensure that at least 70% of small-scale farming women, men, and youth across the country are served by sustainable, powerful e-extension platforms. This will enable them to adopt planet-positive farming practices to earn a decent income and provide a better life for their families.

Empowering Tomorrow's Digitally Competent Leaders: A partnership with WOUGNET a Maendeleo.

In a bold move towards gender equity in the digital world, WOUGNET joined forces with

Maendeleo Foundation and Equal Global Opportunities. Together, they launched a ground-breaking initiative to empower young women and girls with the vital skill of web development. With passion and dedication, a transformative workshop was held, where ten determined girls delved into the intricacies of coding and design. As the workshop concluded, these ten trailblazers emerged with newfound confidence and expertise, ready to conquer the digital realm. Through their collaboration, WOUGNET, Maendeleo Foundation, and Equal Global Opportunities are paving the way for a brighter future, where every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive in the digital age.

Check out on WOUGNET's Twitter page:

<https://twitter.com/wougnet/status/1771184093075554546>.



News and Blogs

Stakeholder Engagement on Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019

As part of our commitment to data privacy and protection, WOUNET in collaboration with APC members like Pollicy, conducted one-on-one visits with key stakeholders. These visits aimed to disseminate research findings on the compliance of the Data Protection and Privacy Act 2019 with the AU Data Framework 2022. Stakeholders visited included; Ministry of ICT & National Guidance, Ministry of Gender Labor and Social Development, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology and Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

We provided insights on the current data protection laws and policies, challenges faced by women in safeguarding their personal data, opportunities for strengthening data privacy rights for women and best practices for data protection and privacy.

During these visits, stakeholders expressed a growing concern to raise awareness about the importance of data protection and privacy regulations, and recognized the significance of aligning Uganda's data protection laws with the AU Data Protection Framework 2022. Conversations focused on the benefits of enhanced data security, cross-border data flows and regional data governance. The insights shared during these visits will inform our future advocacy efforts and contribute to a more inclusive and informed data protection landscape in Uganda.

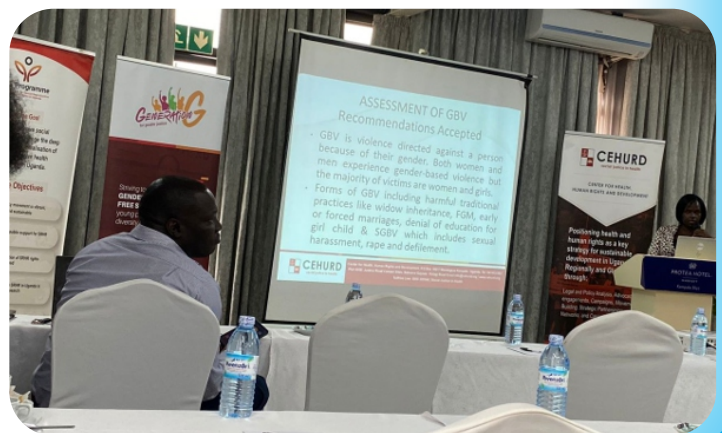
Uganda's Progress for Universal Periodic Review

We had an insightful engagement organized by the Centre for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) regarding Uganda's progress for the Universal Periodic Review. The event brought together



key stakeholders, experts and human rights advocates to discuss and assess Uganda's advancements in human rights, challenges faced and recommendations for the future.

Participants engaged in a comprehensive review of Uganda's progress in implementing the recommendations from the previous year UPR cycles. This included



discussions on advancements in Sexual and Reproductive Health and

Rights (SRHR), gender equality, access to justice, and the protection of marginalized groups like persons with disabilities.

The dialogue also highlighted persistent challenges and concerns such as access to quality health care, maternal mortality rates, gender-based violence, discrimination against marginalized groups, and limitations on Freedom of Expression.

Valuable recommendations were put forth by experts and advocates, emphasizing the need for strengthened legal frameworks, enhanced access to justice, improved healthcare services, and the promotion of women's rights.

Expert Review Engagement of ICT Intellectual Property Guidelines

Intellectual Property (IP) rights play a crucial role in fostering innovation, protecting innovations, and promoting creativity within the rapidly evolving technological landscape. These rights serve as a framework to safeguard the interests of creators. Innovators and inventors while also

In this regard, we participated in an expert review engagement of the ICT Intellectual Property Guidelines. This engagement, organized by the Ministry of ICT & National Guidance, brought together different Civil Society Organizations, legal practitioners and stakeholders to enhance the framework governing intellectual property rights within the ICT sector.

The expert review engagement aimed to assess the existing ICT Intellectual Property Guidelines, identify areas of improvement, propose recommendations to align the guidelines with international best practices and create a conducive environment for collaboration between stakeholders, including government, private sector, academia and innovators. Following group discussions and reviews, various recommendations were suggested including capacity-building initiatives, training programs and awareness campaigns to educate different CSOs and innovators on IP rights and obligations.

This engagement allowed us to contribute insights and recommendations towards shaping innovation and ICT intellectual property. Our involvement in this engagement underscores our strategic objective to promote innovation and technological advancements.



encouraging the growth of the ICT sector.

Community Capacity Building

Rural Broadband Connectivity

As part of The World Association for Christian Communication (WACC) #CommunicationForAll Programme, with support from the Association for Progressive Communications & Bread for the World-Germany, we are bridging the digital gap for communities in Uganda's rural north with affordable, reliable broadband – “connectivity for all” that is enabling women in particular to enjoy their full digital rights. “We want to improve access and use of affordable broadband with increased benefits for women and girls, to enhance the capacity of women in all their diversities to fully enjoy their digital rights and engage in dismantling patriarchy affecting digital inclusion.”— Sandra Aceng, [Women Of Uganda Network](https://waccglobal.org/strengthening-rural-womens-access-to-broadband-in-uganda/) executive director. Read more: <https://waccglobal.org/strengthening-rural-womens-access-to-broadband-in-uganda/>



Upholding our core values

As we conclude the first quarter of the year, we reflect on the incredible journey we have embarked on with resilience, determination and collaboration, together with our members, partners, allies and friends. for the incredible support and engagement Together, we have made significant achievements in advancing women's rights and empowerment across Uganda.

From advocating for gender equality in decision-making processes to amplifying women's voices in online spaces, we have continued to adapt our strategies, forge new partnerships, and demonstrate resilience. Looking ahead to the second quarter, we are filled with optimism and determination to expand our advocacy efforts and organize capacity-building programs and initiatives to further enhance our impact on society.

As we look forward to the coming months, we invite you to stay connected with our work through our website and social media platforms as we continue to amplify women's voices, promote gender equality, and strive towards creating a more inclusive society for all.



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