

# NEWSLETTER

October 2021



During the month of October, there was an increased demand for legal aid services at FIDA's various offices and justice desks. FIDA Uganda celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child and strengthened our partnerships for women's economic empowerment in Luweero district. FIDA Uganda also proudly participated in the launch of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights.

## ENHANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN



A locus mediation held in Makondo, Lwengo district on 29<sup>th</sup> October 2021 in order to resolve a land dispute.

### Success story of the month

#### A young woman's walk to economic independence

When co-habiting relationships come to an end, either or both partners can find themselves at a loss since the current laws of Uganda do not protect their property rights. This was the case for a young woman named Mary\* after she unexpectedly lost her partner of five years.

Mary is a 23-year-old mother of two of Kibona Village, Lwengo district. Her male partner of 5 years died in an accident in March 2021. Mary's partner did not leave a will. After his death, Mary and her children continued to live in a temporary

### Case Statistics

During the month of October, a total of **2465 cases** were handled at FIDA Uganda's **15 field offices** and **4 justice desks**. This is a **36% increase** from the 1809 that were handled during September 2021. Out of these, a total of **1760 clients** were female and **705** were male. A total of **1824 cases** were concluded through alternative dispute resolution, mediation, the court process, referral to partners or legal advice. A total of 641 remained pending mediation or court processes by the end of the month. The organization handled high numbers of **land disputes** during the month, as well as a large number of **custody and maintenance cases**.

structure on a small piece of land that her partner had received from his father. Mary's partner also left behind a cow and a motorcycle. Shortly after the burial, the relatives of Mary's late partner sold the motorcycle and told Mary that the Local Council (LC) Chairperson will keep the proceeds on her behalf until she is ready to do something productive with it.

As the months went by, Mary kept asking the relatives of her late partner for the money, but they kept referring her to the LC Chairperson. In turn, the LC Chairperson refused to release the money to Mary. Considering that it is the role of the LC 1 to support residents of their area in instances of conflict and injustice, Mary felt she had nowhere to turn. Fortunately, a FIDA Community Legal Volunteer (CLV) came to learn about Mary's plight. The CLV escorted Mary to the Community Development Officer (CDO) in order to report her case. The CDO sided with the LC 1 and the relatives of Mary's late partner, claiming that Mary was young and that they had to pay off the debts incurred from burying Mary's partner.

A few weeks later, a Legal Officer of FIDA visited the area in order to conduct a locus mediation. The CLV mentioned the case to the Legal Officer, who paid a visit to Mary and guided her to visit the FIDA Offices with needed documents on hand. FIDA organized a mediation to which all the concerned parties were invited.

The LC Chairperson as well as Mary's late partner's relatives attended the first mediation. However, the relatives insisted that a large proportion of the profit from the sale of the motorcycle was due to them in order to settle outstanding debts. Upon further investigation, the FIDA lawyers discovered that the deceased owned other property which has already been sold by his relatives in order to cover the costs of his burial. The FIDA lawyers demanded that the money should be paid to Mary. The LC Chairperson, who kept the UGX 2,000,000 proceeds from selling the motorcycle in his personal bank account, agreed to withdraw the money and deliver it to the FIDA Lwengo office on an agreed date. While the LC Chairperson did not keep his commitment to deliver the money on the agreed date, he did deliver the money a few days later after further follow up by FIDA. The money was handed over to Mary at the FIDA offices.

FIDA advised Mary to use the money to buy a piece of land and to register it in the names of her children. With the help of an elder, she bought land to the value of UGX 1,500,000. Mary is grateful to now be the owner of a piece of land which she cultivates in order to provide for herself and her

family. Upon follow up, the client expressed her gratitude as follows: *"If I had known earlier that there would be an organisation that would help me, fight for me, I would never have been I tears both for my late partner, my children or property, I would still never have been able to report the matter at our office, thank you for visiting me at my home and encouraging me to come to your offices, that gave me hope and will to fight for my children."*



**The locus mediation held at Kibona Village, Lwengo district during which FIDA facilitated negotiations between Mary, the LC Chairperson and the relatives of her late partner.**

Mary's case illustrates the continued need to sensitize communities on the importance of drawing up a will. A will which benefits one's domestic partner is ever more important in cases where co-habiting parties are not formally married. In most cases, the absence of a marriage certificate and a will would have the greatest impact on the woman in a co-habiting relationship.■

## PROMOTING GENDER-RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE AND WOMEN'S EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC LIFE

### *International Day of the Girl Child*

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2021, FIDA Uganda joined the world in commemorating International Day of the Girl Child under the theme 'Digital generation, Our generation'. FIDA Uganda sought to amplify the voices of girls on the benefits and challenges faced during the digital era by sharing their views in a video and on flyers which were disseminated on our social media platforms. The girls interviewed mostly expressed that the internet provided them with greater access to learning and opportunities, but also called for the protection of girls against the harms of the online world. The girls also

expressed the solution that they need to excel as technologists on their diverse pathways. On 21<sup>st</sup> October, FIDA in collaboration with Women's Pro Bono Initiative and Frauen Initiative Uganda, hosted a Tweet chat on the impact of the digital era on the girl child, which has exposed girl children to cyber bullying, body shaming and sexual violence. The conversation was moderated by Faith Mulungi, who is the founder of the Amani Foundation. Discussions centred around steps that can be taken to make the internet a safe space where girl children can learn and seize opportunities. In Lwengo district,

FIDA Uganda was invited to join the celebrations of the Cotton On Foundation and to address a group of girls who are part of their programme. A FIDA officer discussed the impact of COVID-19 on girls' education and vulnerability to early marriage and encouraged the participating girls to remain in school regardless of the challenges of the season. The FIDA team also discussed avenues for reporting defilement and forced marriage with the girls. Finally, FIDA published an article in the New Vision online in which we call on government to protect girls in the rural parts of Uganda against GBV and forced marriage as a first step toward ensuring that no girl is left behind in the digital era.■



### Addressing child trafficking in Napak district

The Napak district is known to have the worst rates of child trafficking in the Karamoja sub-region. FIDA Uganda has been involved in trafficking prevention and repatriation of child victims. During the month of October, FIDA Uganda in partnership with Dwelling Places, has held consultations with the Council members of Napak District in order to develop four specific sub-county by-laws on child trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. These by-laws will apply in the sub-counties of Lorengechora, Lopei, Lokopo and Matany. It is believed that sub-county specific by-laws will go a long way in addressing the area-specific practices around child trafficking.■

### PROMOTING SOCIO-ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

#### FIDA formalizes partnership with Church of Uganda

FIDA Uganda has formalized our partnership with the Church of Uganda in order to strengthen FIDA Uganda's economic empowerment work within Luweero district. This partnership will allow FIDA's economic justice work within Luweero to benefit from the broad network and influence which the Church enjoys. FIDA Uganda also envisions establishing an office as well as a women and youth centre within the district on land leased from the Church. On 20<sup>th</sup> October 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed between FIDA Uganda and the Church of Uganda.■



FIDA's Chief Executive Officer, Ms. Liliane Adriko (Second from left) and Lord Bishop Eridad Nsubuga (Centre), signed the MOU on behalf of FIDA Uganda and the Church of Uganda respectively.

## Enhancing financial literacy of women

FIDA Uganda has partnered with Centenary Bank in our efforts to increase the financial literacy of women and support them to become more economically empowered and independent. FIDA Uganda supports Centenary Bank's 'Supawoman Club' initiative which offers financial literacy training, mentoring, networking opportunities, business advisory services and insurance discounts to women clients. On 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021, FIDA held an awareness campaign with 100 women who are part of the Supawoman Club at Mukono Hotel Resort. The session was intended to teach women on best practices in terms of savings and investments, the importance of proper documentation of

transactions and the benefits of forming investment groups. The women who participated in the session pledged that they will form their own savings groups and will call on FIDA to support them with the drafting of their group constitutions and registration.■

**Maureen Nuwamanya, Legal Officer of FIDA Uganda, address women who are part of the Centenary Bank Supawoman Club at a financial literacy session held at Mukono Hotel Resort on 5<sup>th</sup> October 2021.**



## Launch of the National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights

FIDA Uganda has been instrumental in the development of National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights (NAPBRH) and has ensured that a gender perspective is reflected in the objectives and strategies of the Plan. FIDA Uganda facilitated consultations between the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) and women who work in the extractives industry in Karamoja. A study was commissioned on best practices for engendering NAPs to ensure that the rights and interests of women are adequately protected and addressed in Uganda's NAPBHR. Over the course of 2020 and 2021, FIDA-U hosted various meetings to bring stakeholders together in order to develop the NAP, address and incorporate comments from various government ministries and undertake detailed editing of the final draft. On 28<sup>th</sup> October 2021, the NAPBHR was officially launched in Uganda. The NAPBHR presents new opportunities for ensuring effective participation and consent of affected communities in business operations and for victims of business-related human rights abuses and violations to access remedy.■

## FIDA STAFF AND MEMBERSHIP

### Celebrating professional achievements

In October, a FIDA Member as well as a FIDA staff member have been appointed as Magistrates Grade 1. We congratulate Her Worship Mary Goret Nalubowa and Her Worship Annet Namankati on this wonderful achievement and wish them well as they continue to promote and protect the rights of women in this new capacity.■



**Annet Namankati,**  
Legal Officer, FIDA Uganda



**Mary Goret Nalubowa,**  
FIDA Member



Plot 4, Robert Mugabe Road.  
Off Chwa 11, Mbuya.  
P. O. Box 2157. Kampala-Uganda



Tel: +256-414-697-067  
Toll free: 0800-111-511



Email: [fida@fidauganda.org](mailto:fida@fidauganda.org)  
[www.fidauganda.org](http://www.fidauganda.org)