

# Akina Mama wa Afrika Annual Report 2020







As an organisation, the advent of the pandemic forced us to adapt to numerous 'new normals' including shifting our work to mostly virtual spaces. Cognizant and aware of the inherent challenges, we walked as we charted a new path. For example, AMwA's ability to quickly pivot to online engagements was not without fault lines. We embrace failing forward and hope though that we continue to chart a new way of being that doesn't further negatively impact the lives of those we serve.

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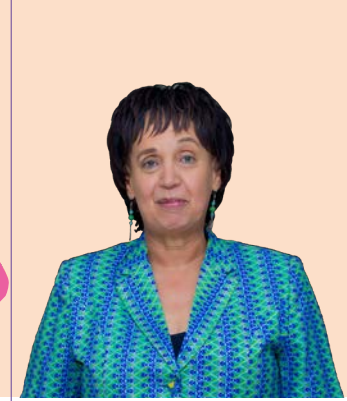
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# List of Acronyms

<b>AMWA</b>	Akina Mama Wa Afrika
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>AWLI</b>	African Women Leadership Institute
<b>CSO</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>CSW</b>	Commission on the Status of Women
<b>DGF</b>	Democratic Governance Fund
<b>DPI</b>	Defenders Protection Initiative
<b>DRC</b>	The Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>FORWARD</b>	Foundation for Women's Health Research & Development
<b>GEWE</b>	Gender Equality and Women Empowerment
<b>GIMAC</b>	Gender Is My Agenda Campaign
<b>IIE</b>	International Institute of Education
<b>ICGLR</b>	International Conference On the Great Lakes Region
<b>ILO</b>	International Labor Organization
<b>NGO/CSW/AFRICA</b>	Non- Government Organization Commission on the Status of Women /Africa
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual Gender Based Violence
<b>SOAWR</b>	Solidarity For African Women's Rights
<b>UHISPAWU</b>	Uganda Horticultural Industrial, Service Providers, and Allied Workers' Union
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>WGDD</b>	Women Gender and Development Directorate
<b>UAF</b>	Urgent Action Fund
<b>OSIEA</b>	Open Society Initiative for East Africa
<b>AC</b>	Amplify Change
<b>CR</b>	Comic Relief
<b>CW</b>	Common Wealth Foundation



# Report of the Directors



# Building Forward Transformatively

**Dr. Maggie Kigozi,**  
Chairperson, Board of Directors  
Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA)



From the highest levels of decision-making to frontline service delivery across the globe, women are providing powerful examples of how women's and feminist leadership and participation can bring more effective, inclusive and fair policies, plans and budgets to address not just the pandemic, but efforts to build back better.

Women are playing a critical role in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and preparing for a more equitable recovery as Heads of State and Government, Ministers of Health, Mayors of cities, health-care workers, leaders of women rights organizations, carers at home and community leaders and mobilizers, among other roles.

It is noteworthy that the leadership and influence of

women leaders in the COVID-19 response has been lauded for the exemplification of attributes of feminist transformational leadership. Women leaders have been described as more collective than individual, more collaborative than competitive, more collaborative than commanding, and more caring than narcissistic. In contrast to 2019, prior to the pandemic, nearly half of the world's population (47%) believed

that men made better political leaders than women.

While it should be obvious that the leadership styles of women qualify them to be at the center of decision making that will ultimately shape the post-pandemic future. A study conducted by CARE International revealed that the majority of national-level committees established to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic did not





*For the past 25 years since the Beijing Platform for Action, women's movements have taken lead in responding to crises and innovating to support women and girls while lobbying governments to do more to ensure their rights are not erased.*

have equal female-male representation. Of the countries that had established such committees surveyed, 74% had less than one-third female membership, and only one committee was fully equal. On average, women made up only 24% of the committees.

In seven countries; nearly 25% of the total sample space, CARE could not find evidence of government funding or policy commitments for Gender Based Violence (GBV), Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) services, or women specific economic assistance. 54% of countries sampled had not taken any action on GBV, and 33% did not appear to have addressed SRH in their response, despite clear evidence of the impact of the crisis on these issues. 76% of the countries surveyed made at least one policy commitment supporting women. But of what impact is a single policy in addressing the tremendous implications of the pandemic on gender equality?

It is absurd that 25 years after the Beijing Platform for Action, after the most progressive blueprint to achieving women's rights was adopted, there is only so much to write home about. In far too many areas of public life, women remain woefully under-represented in decision-making institutions and spaces. Women make up only a quarter (24.9%) of members of national parliaments worldwide and only 36.3% of elected officials in local deliberative bodies. Globally, as of 1 January 2020, only 21.3% of ministers are women. In only 30 cabinets worldwide do women make up at least 40% of ministers.

For the past 25 years since the Beijing Platform for Action, women's movements have taken lead

in responding to crises and innovating to support women and girls while lobbying governments to do more to ensure their rights are not erased. COVID-19 was no exception. It happened at a time when there is evidence of the power of feminist leadership and organising in shifting the needle in advancing women's rights and gender equality. This global pandemic is a wake-up call to the world to build feminist leadership, ready to disrupt systemic oppression and realize the rights of women and girls, once and for all.

What role is AMwA playing in disrupting systemic oppression? We are charting new territory with new streams of work across the continent in Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Zambia, Tunisia, Ethiopia and Sudan. I am excited to share that we are part of three consortia; the Power of Dialogue PROGRAMME- seeking to enhance collaboration of political and civic actors to participate in accountable political processes, Make Way- seeking to mobilise a critical mass of civil society as successful intersectional Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights advocates, and the Voices for Climate Action- centering excluded voices in public debate and amplifying them to engage and influence a just climate transition.

I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate all the development partners and friends of AMwA who have continued to work with us to effect change. Let's not give up the spirited fight to achieve gender equality, in solidarity. Let's firmly cling to the feminist credo we believe in. We owe it to our ancestors and the generations to come.

**Dr. Maggie Kigozi**





# 2020: A new Dawn for Akina Mama wa Afrika

**Eunice Musiime**

Executive Director  
Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA)



As many another, the Akina Mama wa Afrika community welcomed the year 2020 with renewed optimism to make the world a better place for humanity. The highly anticipated international, regional and national engagements, such as the commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action provided an opportunity to re-imagine a future where women and girls are centered, organizing towards gender equality is resourced and achievement of women's rights is accelerated.

In the midst of heightened preparations for the Beijing +25 and other strategic goals set for 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic reared its ugly head and brought the entire world to its knees. Lessons from previous crises have taught us that women and girls are most definitely disproportionately affected. It therefore became urgent and imperative for feminists to 'wear their fighting garb' to respond to practical needs but also seize the moment to reprise the need for systemic change.

Undoubtedly, this moment of intersecting crises is the consequence of the systems that patriarchy, white supremacy, colonialism, militarism, neoliberal capitalism, and authoritarianism have built. Alternative and emerging strategies for systems change need to be adopted to truly recover from these crises and the pandemic. While the impact of COVID-19 makes a bad situation worse, it also presents a window of opportunity to make structural and definitive decisions for a more just, sustainable, and feminist world for everyone to thrive.

For example, despite the woefully disappointing gender blind response, there were some bright spots especially in female-led countries, where arguably their leadership style exemplified elements of feminist leadership and delivered better outcomes for women and girls. Additionally, feminist leaders at all levels responded with haste and love to increased incidences of gender-based violence and other emergent needs for the millions of women directly affected by the stringency of lockdown measures. If nothing else, this period taught us that as we look ahead to rebuild in a transformative way, feminist leadership is critical to the process.

As an organisation, the advent of the pandemic forced us to adapt to numerous 'new normals' including shifting our work to mostly virtual spaces. Cognizant and aware of the inherent challenges, we walked as we charted a new path. For example, AMwA's ability to quickly pivot to online engagements was not without fault lines. We embraced failing forward and hope though that we continue to chart a new way of being that doesn't further negatively impact on the lives of those we serve.

Finally, it is said that the darkest part of the morning is just before dawn, the year 2020 heralded a new dawn for AMwA. AMwA together with other consortium partners, embarked on a journey to decisively champion women's rights in three thematic areas, Women's Political Leadership, Economic Justice and Climate Action as well as Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights with the support of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as Strategic Partners.

We wish to thank all our partners for riding this highly unexpected wave with us and for continuing to support us during a very precarious time. We are also grateful for women in the informal and formal sectors, public and private, feminists, and gender-expansive persons whose voices we amplify and whose needs we center in all our work.

Finally, and by no means least importantly, we appreciate the Board of Directors who continue to steadfastly play an excellent role in overseeing the organisation's work as well as the staff and management on whose paid and unpaid hours we draw on to deliver value to the AMwA community.

AMwA is...because you are.



# Organization background





Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMwA) is a feminist Pan-African leadership development organization 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 program and movement building activities. We envision a world in which African women are politically, economically and socially autonomous and are champions of change in their lives and society. 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.



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## AMwA's programmatic approach

Our thematic areas of focus include; Women in Power and Decision Making, Women's Economic Justice, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, and Violence against Women. The organization's work is advanced through feminist and transformational leadership development, feminist research

and knowledge building, and policy influence and movement building. This gives the foundation to AMwA's 3 strategic objectives;

**a) SO1:** Strengthening the African Women's Leadership Institute to become a center of excellence on Feminist and Transformational Leadership

**b) SO2:** Amplifying African Women's voices in critical spaces for collective advocacy and movement building, informed by feminist research and documentation.

**c) SO3:** Strengthening AMwA's capacity into a dynamic, learning and well-resourced organization





## Context Analysis of 2020: The Spectre of COVID-19

A few weeks into the new year, 2020 began to unravel as the COVID-19 pandemic spread, upending lives and challenging the socio-political and economic structures on which we had somewhat come to rely. A review of the year 2020 therefore cannot escape the long shadow that the pandemic has cast. For many people still alive today, not since World War II has the world been so affected by the ravages of pestilence and death as has happened with this pandemic.

As the number of infections and deaths ticked upwards into the millions, the world closed in on itself, closing borders, prohibiting social gatherings, shuttering schools and mandating curfews, amongst a number of precautions set up to contain the spread of the virus. These measures have come at a cost to wellbeing, and have greatly impacted civil society engagement.

*As the number of infections and deaths ticked upwards into the millions, the world closed in on itself, closing borders, prohibiting social gatherings, shuttering schools and mandating curfews, amongst a number of precautions set up to contain the spread of the virus.*



A noted trend around the continent has been the significant curtailing of human rights and civil liberties under the guise of enforcing safety measures. From Uganda, to Kenya, to South Africa, we were witness to the police brutalizing people for failing to wear masks, being out past curfew or being part of large crowds waiting for food rations. Most of the people caught on the other end of the police's batons were poor, and many of them women. As the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter trended globally in the wake of George Floyd's killing, it forced some conversations on the continent about the colonial legacy of the police force, trained to control African bodies through brute force, but not to serve and protect, as is their mandate. That discourse consequently morphed into action under the #EndSARS campaign led by Nigerians demanding for the disbandment of a police wing accused of torturing citizens.

As a number of African countries enter election season, the grip on personal freedoms is further tightening. Authoritarian regimes are now instrumentalizing public health laws enacted to slow down the spread of the virus to legitimize their repressive actions and cripple the participation of political opponents. In Uganda, the electoral commission has mandated campaigns to be held over the media. This essentially means that the electorate (many of whom have no access to media platforms) will be denied the right to be informed what candidates' positions are on a number of issues critical to them. Women candidates have expressed concerns about this deliberate disenfranchisement citing the high costs of media engagements as an impediment.

The protracted onslaught of the pandemic has also led to the deprioritization of human rights issues. For example, although increased cases of violence against women have been observed around the world, this has not necessarily resulted in a strong government response. Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) has also been severely challenged. Disruptions in the supply chain because of border closures has cut off SRHR medicines and commodities, while restrictions in movement have led to an untold number of maternal deaths.

On the funding landscape, civil society which largely depends on philanthropy to carry out its work has felt the pinch of the decimation of businesses and livelihoods and the attendant loss in income due to the pandemic. As taps run dry, Funders are also reprioritizing what they will support, most times redirecting resources to service delivery. For women's rights organizations, which were already receiving the smallest portion of funding, this has dealt a blow to the important work of centering women's experiences in the pandemic response. Notably, some donors have fortunately been more flexible and simply requested for recalibration of activities, or re-allocation of resources to more urgent budget items instead of withdrawing funding.

This context has no doubt impacted on our work internally and externally. At the beginning, as we battened down the hatches and our work migrated to online platforms, we, very much like other people in the world, were gripped by fear and uncertainty about what would come next. However, those early days of the pandemic although rudderless, also created opportunities for us to connect, and also strategise about how to organize differently.





## Finding healing amid the rubble

Of paramount importance was responding to the mental health needs of our staff and constituents. As support systems and physical connections vanished overnight, we attempted to create space for solidarity building and ensuring wellbeing, so that we could cope, and walk through this long and dark night together. First, we created a platform for alumni of the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) to write reflections on how the pandemic had impacted their lives and their work. The "COVID-19 Chronicles Life in the clutches of a global pandemic" blog series was a space for unburdening oneself through writing and attaining catharsis. Through that space, we also hoped that connections would be made through shared experiences. We also availed, as much as resources could allow us, professional therapy for both staff and sisters in the movement. In other virtual spaces, we also created space for community, building young women's leadership and for strategizing on resilient responses to the pandemic in a number

of webinars. At a webinar on embracing disruptions for example, participants got tips on how to navigate working from home through having a daily to-do list, de-cluttering, nurturing a habit of gratitude whether that is through having a gratitude jar or making a list, practicing breathing exercises, and creating a habit of checking on each other. The webinars also offered young women an opportunity to share lived experiences with the pandemic, and proffer strategies for a youth centered response. There was a sharing of innovative ways young leaders have navigated the pandemic ranging from creating awareness amongst themselves, to community sensitization campaigns, distributing food and health necessities to the vulnerable, and holding online reflection spaces to interrogate the gendered impacts of this pandemic. One of the more impressive shows of leadership was by Immaculate Nakyeyune who shared that her business "Mkazipreneur," had received certification to produce masks for sale to the public.



## 2020 at a glance



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Countries AMwA reached through the African Women's Leadership Institute.

Uganda, Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal, Gambia, Malawi and Zimbabwe)

COMMUNITY ACTION PROJECTS

### Capacity strengthening Interventions

REACHED

100  
people  
reached

24

Strengthening Young Women's Leadership Capacities to Influence Global Women's Rights Frameworks

30

Amplifying Young Women's Voices in Decision Making

25

Virtual Advocacy Training on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

21

Capacity Building on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights a feminist perspective

#### Yade Maimouna (Senegal)

hosted a virtual regional consultation meeting under the office of AU Special Envoy for Youth in response to COVID-19.

**Guided 27 young people** from Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Chad on how to apply a feminist lens in their discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on young people

**Ruth Kitamirike** used creative arts to raise awareness about sexual harassment in learning institutions using the AWLI seed grant

**Reached 600 people;** students, student leaders and members of civil society organizations



30

Feminist Young Leaders

20

Queer Feminist Forum

25

Thriving Women Initiative

350

Elle Parle Women

185

Wa kwan (Let's Read Literacy Hub)

25

Girls Must Uganda

150

Strengthening community response to women and girl's access to social justice

100

A call to action for more inclusive elections: violence against women in elections and gendered electoral violence

150

Women Skilling Initiative (WOSI)



# A snapshot of 2020 interventions





# SO1:

Strengthening the African Women's Leadership Institute to become a center of excellence on Feminist and Transformational Leadership





*During the year, AMWA's flagship program, the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), undergirded by the pillar on Feminist Leadership Development continued to be a critical space for growing the movement of African Feminists through raising political consciousness, building solidarity and nurturing the next generation of leaders with an agenda for disruption and transformation.*

In pursuit of a liberated Africa where women are politically, economically and socially autonomous, the organisation implemented a number of activities during the course of the year. As already elucidated, the COVID-19 pandemic cast a pall on some areas where we expected significant outcomes. Nevertheless, the organization forged ahead and registered some successes highlighted here.

The work of building a movement of feminist activists, organizers, trade unionists, scholars and others challenging the status quo through feminist and transformational leadership continued in 2020. During this period, a total of 100 people were engaged directly through myriad capacity building interventions held in fulfillment of this objective.

#### **1.1.1 African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI)**

During the year, AMWA's flagship program, the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), undergirded by the pillar on Feminist Leadership Development continued to be a critical space for growing the movement of African Feminists through raising political consciousness, building solidarity and nurturing the next generation of leaders with an agenda for disruption and transformation. Two feminist leadership institutes were conducted for AMWA's core constituency of women and gender diverse people. A sub-regional training in West Africa on Global Women's Rights Frameworks with 24 people from 6 countries including Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Senegal, and an institute on Amplifying Young Women's Voices in Decision Making with 30 participants from Uganda. This training targeted mainly people already established in the governance, civil and political spheres and those in spaces considered nurturing grounds for leadership such

*"Feminist theory is not theory for theory's sake. It is the foundation for action --action to change and transform the status quo. It must ultimately lead to a commitment to liberate. This is core to feminist theory."--*

**Dr Sylvia Tamale.'**





as institutions of higher learning. Due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, AMwA adapted to training participants virtually which prolonged their duration. This training which usually runs for 5 days ran for 8 weeks online.

These trainings are always complemented with incentives that enable participants to exercise their leadership skills. These include seed funding for community action projects which alumni use to implement interventions within their spheres of influence.

As a result, alumni have exhibited leadership abilities which have been tested and amplified by the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of the outstanding stories of leadership include; Fatumata Binta Sall, an alumna from Liberia who applied and received funding to support her campaign to feed at least 80 people including gay men and trans-

women who were severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and Yade Maimouna from Senegal who hosted a virtual regional consultation meeting under the office of AU Special Envoy for Youth in response to COVID-19. Through this virtual meeting, she was able to guide 27 young people from Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Chad on how to apply a feminist lens in their discussion on the impact of COVID-19 on young people. Furthermore, Alumna Ruth Kitamirike used creative arts to raise awareness about sexual harassment in learning institutions using the AWLI seed grant. Using poetry slams, dance, and storytelling she reached 600 students, student leaders and members of civil society organizations both at Makerere University and Jinja District.

Additionally, a number of AMwA's alumni are participating in political spaces at different levels in their countries. For instance,



Akinwonmi Tolulope Adebola from Nigeria is active in her constituency as an aspiring Member of Parliament. She is currently the Chairperson African Democratic Congress and taking lead in the COVID-19 response in her constituency.

Critical to this journey of growth in leadership is our mentorship program. Our feminist standpoint centres solidarity and collective sharing of knowledge as a way of passing on the baton in the movement. We stand on the shoulders of other women who came before

*“When I met my mentee, she was a new mom and who had just lost her job. The mentee narrated to me the specifics, and we realized that she had been unfairly dismissed. I encouraged her to return and seek fair severance from her organization which she did successfully”- Mentor*

us and whose knowledge and ideas we keep building on. Mentorship allows us to maintain this age-old practice of intergenerational knowledge, experience sharing and provide the mentee's with a support system along their leadership journey.

### **1.1.2 Capacity Building on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights a feminist perspective**

During the year, AMWA organized a training on SRHR for six consortium partners from the newly established Joint Advocacy on SRHR (JAS) Programme. 21 participants attended the training was meant to challenge orthodox approaches to SRHR. Renowned feminist academic and activist, Dr Sylvia Tamale, who facilitated the training looked to support participants to ground their approaches to SRHR in the feminist principles of bodily autonomy and choice, intersectionality, and challenging power. Dr Tamale proposed Ubuntu, an ideology of justice and fairness based on the philosophies of humanness, communitarianism, solidarity and interdependence as a possible alternative for SRHR practice. This framework puts heavy emphasis on unity in diversity and puts the most vulnerable at the centre when

reimagining SRHR. It is also a decolonization framework. Partners left with a deep appreciation for the new learning that they acquired, promising to centre marginalized groups in their SRHR interventions and to adopt a decolonized and inclusive framework.

Relatedly, there was a capacity building training on SRHR advocacy for 25 alumnae of different AWLI cohorts from nine African countries including; Uganda, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Ghana, Liberia, Gambia, Sierra Leone and Cameroon. The aim of this training was to explore and develop alternative forms of organizing and movement building for African Feminists to influence and disrupt the process of negotiation over women's bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights in traditional decision making spaces, at the national, regional and international level using the occasion of commemoration of 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The participants developed advocacy plans delineating some of the actions they were going to undertake to advance the SRHR needs of people existing on the periphery.



### 1.1.3 The Women in Leadership Symposium

In line with creating spaces and opportunities for young women to exercise their leadership skills and become authorities on a raft of issues, AMwA held a women in leadership symposium under the theme “Reimagining Leadership in the 21st Century”. The event that brought together over 100 participants created a space to strengthen leadership and reflect on the women’s leadership agenda. It also created opportunity for sharing best practices on feminist leadership development, intergenerational leadership, the role of mentorship in leadership growth, wellness, social entrepreneurship, and sexual harassment against women in leadership. Among the participants were alumni, representatives from women’s rights organizations, politicians, development partners, policymakers and key stakeholders involved in implementation, monitoring and promotion of women’s leadership including the Government of Uganda, academia and the media. Dr. Maggie Kigozi, the AMwA Board Chair, who expressed her joy at being in the presence of young, accomplished women and said that it is because of women like them, that she knows the future of young women and girls like her 8-year-old granddaughter is secure. She thanked all those women who came before and paved the way for those today.

*“Leadership is not about holding a position but rather the ability and the will to positively influence a society”.*

**Dr. Miria Matembe**

### 1.1.4. Alumni voices

A snapshot of the impact of the leadership institutes on alumni

*“Although I did not succeed during the National Resistance Movement (NRM) primary elections, the African Women’s Leadership Institute boosted my confidence to articulate issues while campaigning. The lessons I obtained in the Feminist Theory module improved my confidence and the ability to sell my ideas. This gave me solace and I plan to run for the position of the Woman Member of Parliament for Mbarara City in the year 2026,” --Judith Ninsiima- Uganda, 2020*

**AWLI Alumna.**

*“I learnt a lot about feminism and I loved the fact that it is rooted in choice and freedom. I now know that feminism gives us the tools to hold ourselves accountable with how we use our privilege and power, and the importance of that accountability,”--*

**Chelangat Gloria- Uganda, 2020 AWLI Alumna.**

*“The facilitation at the AWLI moved me to relinquish all the powers of patriarchy and relish the energies to confront societies that hold the girl child at ransom. I yearn to see a world where equity, equality, and justice are true birthrights to girls and young women,” --*

**Charity Agaba - Uganda, 2020 AWLI Alumna.**





#### 1.1.4.1 Spotlight on Monalisa Akintole: The African Women's Leadership Institute has boosted my morale and indulgence to self

Joining the Feminist and Transformational Leadership Fellowship was a dream come true. I had always wanted to be part of the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) to improve my feminist leadership and access more opportunities. I was extremely pleased that Akina Mama wa Afrika made this possible. For a transgender woman to be accepted to such a space is a great reminder that we are all equal and deserve to be given the opportunity to grow as a diverse group of amazing women.

So far, it has been a learning journey for me and the interaction with the amazing sisters has boosted my morale. The fellowship has opened up my mind to self-appreciation and self-indulgence and taught me self-love

and selfishness for the good of self. This experience has taught me that it is okay to not always be right but rather have room for failure and not be hard on myself about it.

I have learnt to love myself more, appreciate more, believe in myself more, care more, and also economically empower myself through the Innovation and Creativity module. I am therefore looking forward to how best I can be supported in applying these skills in my day to day life. I appreciate the support from UN Women Uganda because this platform is a place to thrive. My inner self is alive again and strong. The AWLI has people that strengthen sisterhood and solidarity. I am more fierce now and ready to conquer the world!



## SO2:

Amplify African Women's voices in critical spaces through collective advocacy, and through movement building, informed by feminist research and documentation.

MOTHERHOOD,  
LABOR, FAMILY,  
STRUGGLE AND  
SURVIVAL:

THE STATE OF  
THE ECONOMY FOR  
UGANDAN WOMEN

Presented at the  
2019 Uganda Feminist Forum  
by Anita Ntale



Hivos



African women's liberation can only happen with them in the vanguard, and their voices and experiences front and centre of the agenda. We therefore use our platforms and spaces as vehicles for women to articulate what is important to them, themselves. Although the pandemic threatened the way we organize and closed certain spaces where this experience sharing happened in the past, we tried to adapt to online engagements. However, with a weak internet infrastructure, and limited resources for purchasing data we, understand the deficiencies in this new way of organizing and we are responding to these issues as they emerge. During this period, we managed to capture African women's voices in writing, video and in public dialogues convened.

### **2.2.1. Feminist research and knowledge building**

*"The continuous insistence to frame theory in an elitist western perspective aims to silence, erase and discredit Black women. Twitter is a direct foil to this. Social media is now a space for African feminists to theorise and create knowledge on the internet, as opposed to being mere subjects or consumers of the knowledge produced, an act critical to decolonization of knowledge."*—

**Giramata delivering a keynote address at the Feminist Thought Leadership Retreat in Nairobi, January, 2020.**

Our goal to strengthen the evidence base of feminist thought and analysis is reflected in the knowledge production that was undertaken during the year. A total of 12 publications and one film were developed during the period. They have collectively been downloaded a total of 2,023 times. Some of the products developed include;



*African women's liberation can only happen with them in the vanguard, and their voices and experiences front and centre of the agenda. We therefore use our platforms and spaces as vehicles for women to articulate what is important to them, themselves.*





## Technical briefs

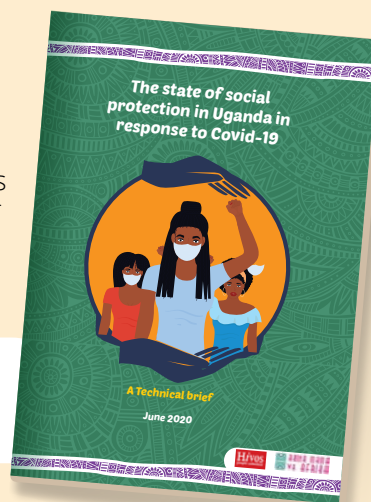
### 1. Technical Briefs on women, work and COVID-19:

AMWA developed three technical briefs with a focus on social protection-examining how safety nets are supporting workers during the pandemic, labor rights-analyzing how the legal and policy framework and employment regulations are being challenged during the pandemic and how they can be strengthened to support workers; and gender dynamics--adding a gender dimension to the discourse to examine how women workers have particularly been impacted by the pandemic. All briefs make concrete policy proposals for action by the government.

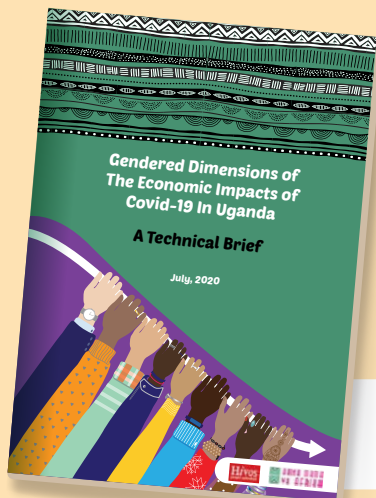
#### a. The state of social protection in Uganda in response to Covid-19

Uganda's National Social Protection Policy (NSPP) provides that regardless of status, every citizen can be faced with various risks and vulnerabilities which could render them unable to meet their basic needs. One of the guiding principles of the NSPP is universalism and inclusiveness; promoting appropriate measures to protect every Ugandan from risks and shocks. This policy brief uses a gendered lens to analyze the state of social protection in Uganda in response to Covid-19.

 <https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/the-state-of-social-protection-in-uganda-in-response-to-covid-19/>



#### b. Gendered Dimensions of the Economic Impact of Covid-19 in Uganda



In March 2020, Uganda joined the rest of the world to announce a nationwide lockdown, amongst other measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. This decision as in many other countries, came with a drastic economic impact, disproportionately affecting women. This policy brief gives a synopsis of the gendered dimensions of the economic impact of covid-19 in Uganda, highlighting three main areas; labour and the workforce, domestic work and care, and freedom from violence against women.

<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/gendered-dimensions-of-the-economic-impact-of-covid-19-in-uganda/>

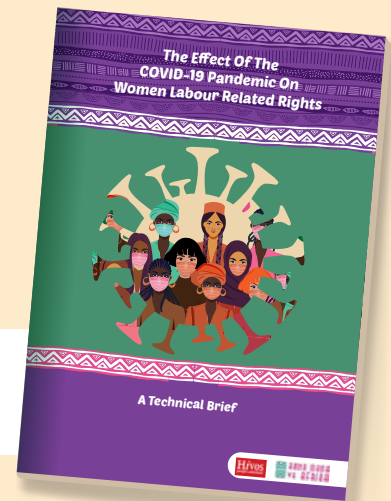


## c. The Effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women Labour Related Rights

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on businesses and employment exposed the weaknesses and loopholes in Uganda's employment policies, with 76% of the business reported to have reduced the size of their work force, some by 50%. This policy brief dissects the effect Covid-19 has had on women'S Labour rights in Uganda.



<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/the-effect-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-women-labour-related-rights/>

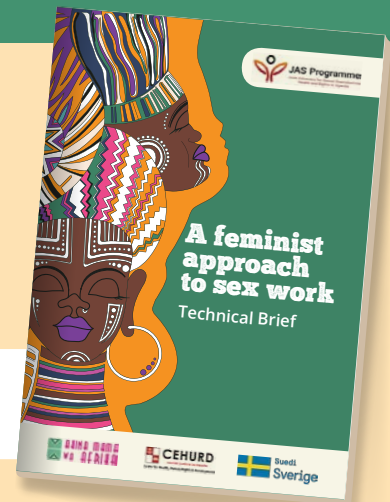


## 2. A Feminist Approach to Sex Work

This brief promotes a common understanding of an intersectional feminist analysis and approach to sex work in the context of Uganda. With this brief, we seek to contribute to strengthening the voice and agency of sex workers and sex worker organizations, to advocate for SRHR interventions that promote bodily autonomy and choice.



<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/a-feminist-approach-to-sex-work/>



## 3. Understanding ILO Convention C190 and Recommendation 206:

Following the historical adoption of the International Labor Organization's Convention on Violence and Harassment 2019 (C190), and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation 2019(R206) which set the standard to combat violence and harassment in the workplace, we developed a simplified information sheet to help advocates better understand the policy instruments as they undertake advocacy for ratification. The publication has been downloaded 252 times since publishing.



<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/understanding-the-ilo-convention-190-on-violence-and-harassment-in-the-world-of-work/>



## 4. The Gendered Impacts of Illicit Financial Flows:



This paper provides an anthology of the views and understandings of Illicit Financial Flows, the national, regional, international contexts in which they exist and the gendered impacts of all these factors. The paper contends that because the economy is a gendered construct, phenomena like IFFs that threaten socio-economic development cannot be gender neutral and are often prominent agents in the cultivation and retention of conditions that foster and uphold gender inequality.

<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/the-gendered-impacts-of-illicit-financial-flows-iffs/>



## Research reports/studies

### 5. Rapid Assessment Study on the Impact of COVID-19 on Women Workers in the Horticulture Sector in Uganda.



AMWA was supported by Hivos to conduct a rapid assessment study to gauge to what extent the COVID-19 pandemic affected women flower farm workers in order to devise adequate responses by both civil society and the government. The study found that the sector which is very export oriented was greatly affected by the lockdowns and border closures, a measure enacted to stem the spread of the coronavirus. This dealt a significant blow to the businesses forcing them to lay off a number of workers and send others on unpaid leave. Workers who

were retained to work were required to sleep at the farms, in a bid to reduce contact with family members and mitigate the spread of the virus, as directed by the Ministry of Health. The study recommended among other things, adopting a gender sensitive and intersectional lens to the pandemic response to ensure that women's and other marginalized groups' needs are centered; and activating and securing funding for prioritization of social protection systems and social security as key pillars for protecting the vulnerable from shocks.

<https://womenatworkcampaign.org/document/impact-of-covid-19-on-women-workers-in-the-horticulture-sector-in-uganda/>





## 6. “Tusikize, ‘Listen to Us’, Experiences of Sexual Harassment against Women,”



AMWA conducted a study on women's experiences with sexual harassment in the workplace across three sectors namely; banking, urban markets and flower farms. The title of the study hearkens to the situations of women experiencing and reporting sexual harassment and being disbelieved. It is a plaintive cry to be heard and for their experiences to be believed. The study sought to generate evidence to inform the design of meaningful and effective laws, policies, and interventions to stem sexual harassment. Specifically, it looked to document the voices and experiences of women; looking at the common characteristics of how sexual harassment manifests, how it is perpetuated and experienced across lines of industry, occupation and social status and how it has impacted the lives of women. Study findings show that there was deliberate normalisation of sexual harassment as part of the workplace and there was pressure to conform to the culture of sexual harassment. Women who resisted were talked down to by other women who essentially told them to grow up and accept the circumstances. Others were told that they would not advance in their careers if they did not accept sexual propositions thrown their way. The study found that a number of factors contribute to enabling sexual harassment in the workplace, and maintaining impunity by emboldening perpetrators and silencing survivors one of which included a lack of institutional policies to respond to sexual harassment. However, even with the existence of policies and structures, women were continually frustrated when they tried to report. In some instances, Human Resource Managers to whom the cases were reported were friendly with perpetrators which meant they could not be held to account. Women were afraid of being blamed for reporting, and feared being seen as betraying their colleagues. Others did not want their spouses to know about the abuse they suffered because they felt that it would ruin their marriages. Evidentiary requirements needed to prove sexual harassment also made it difficult for women to build a case against a perpetrator. The study makes a number of recommendations for workplaces, the government, and civil society to ensure safe and secure workplaces for women. The study can be found here;

<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/experiences-of-sexual-harassment-against-women-in-the-world-of-work-in-uganda/>



## 7. Journals

We officially launched two journals that were developed towards the end of 2019. The journals are spaces for refining intellectual rigour, igniting debate and mastering writing to influence discourse. These journals include;

### a. The Leaders Journal: Pushing the boundaries of Feminist Thought Leadership in Africa.



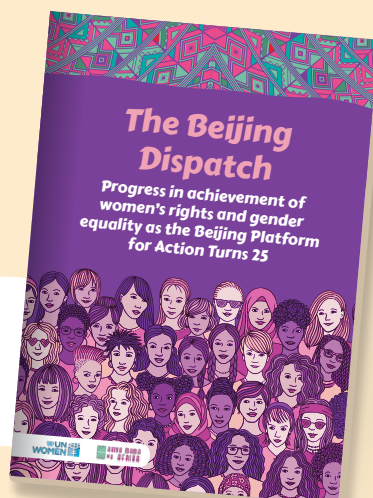
This journal contains seven papers written by young Ugandan feminists and includes poetry of Ugandan feminist activist Dr. Stella Nyanzi. The papers take on both old and emerging challenges faced by women in Uganda. From media's stereotypical portrayal of women, to sexual reproductive health and rights to continued criminalization of women by laws on sex work and abortion. The journal is bold, radical and reflective of feminist thought leadership. It has been downloaded 173 times.

<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/the-leaders-journal-pushing-the-boundaries-of-feminist-thought-leadership-in-africa/>

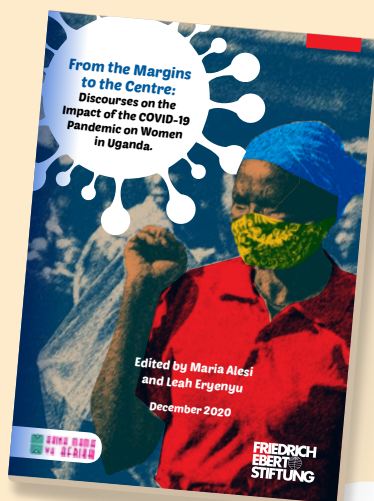
### b. The Beijing Dispatch: Progress in Achievement of Women's Rights and Gender Equality as the Beijing Platform for Action Turns 25

In commemoration of 25 years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, AMwA realised an opportunity to document and amplify the voices of African women as they critiqued progress in achievement of the aspirations of the framework, from a feminist perspective. The document has been downloaded 257 times.

<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/the-beijing-dispatch-progress-in-achievement-of-womens-rights-and-gender-equality-as-the-beijing-platform-for-action-turns-25/>



### c. From the Margins to the Centre: Discourses on the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Women in Uganda



An outcome of an effort by AMwA and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Uganda to document the different facets of the pandemic and its numerous impacts on different areas of life for women. It is a collection of essays, attempting to render visible the voices and experiences of women in all their diversities, and to collate and amplify demands for a pandemic response and recovery that is time-bound, inclusive and gender-conscious. The publication borrows from bell hooks' seminal critique of mainstream feminism's centering of white privileged women's issues at the expense of non-white women. With this publication, we hope to shift women's views and experiences from the margins to the centre.

<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/from-the-margins-to-the-centre-discourses-on-the-impact-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-women-in-uganda/>



## Other Publications

### 8. Keep Your Hands Off My Thighs Ssebo

Keep Your Hands Off My Thighs, Ssebo is a compilation of fictionalized accounts of women who have experienced abuse at the workplace, intended to provide a basic and simplified understanding and context of sexual harassment at places of work from a feminist perspective.

These stories of fear, shame, blame, and silence depict how the impunity around sexual abuse in the world of work has perpetuated a culture where women constantly bear the burden of public judgment and disbelief. Where you, dear reader, or a woman you know has experienced a form of violence shared here, all the ink in the world cannot express how much we believe you. While it is not our intention that you are triggered, receive love and light in the event that this happens. We stand with you.

These are also stories of courage, solidarity, speaking truth to power, and a world where violence against women is not reduced to secrets and whispers in corridors. A world where women are not rendered disposable by their employers when they speak out and where access to justice is not a myth. The book gives life to the ability of women to stand against harassment, reshaping narratives around the vice.



<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/keep-your-hands-off-my-thighs-ssebo/>





## Films/documentaries

**9. Prickly Roses; a star studded film portraying the grim reality of the experiences of women working on flower farms. It has been watched 96,783 times on YouTube.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gU738YFjE5c>



### 2.2.2. Policy Influencing

Influencing policy at the national and regional level remains a key components our work. In 2020, our interventions focused on influencing policies around decent work for women, specifically on strengthening the legal and policy framework on sexual harassment. This later on morphed to centre issues emerging out of the disruptions wrought by the pandemic including demanding for gender responsive stimulus packages and investment in social protection, particularly for women in the informal sector.

#### 2.2.2.1. Women in the changing world of work

At the beginning of 2020, before the pandemic hit, our advocacy work on the location of, and participation of women in the economy was markedly different. Between January and February, we had one singular goal, the advancement of decent work for women in horticultural supply chains. Some of our pre-pandemic interventions included;



### A. Prickly Roses: The movie event of the year

For Valentine's Day, we decided to go to the movies. Not to see another sappy Hollywood romance but to premiere a star studded film that portrayed the grim reality of the experiences of women working on flower farms. Flower sales traditionally explode in this season for lovers, usually at the expense of the women who nurture the roses. Many of them have to work overtime to meet the demand and some cannot even celebrate Valentine's Day as they have to keep working. Prickly Roses, produced in partnership with Nabwiso Films, with support from Hivos dramatises the experiences of women working on flower farms. It follows their journey of struggle as they navigate issues of inadequate social protection, meagre

wages and cases of sexual harassment at the workplace, a glimpse into the numerous oppressions that they face, compounded by the unfair experiences faced back home as a result of gendered roles and demands from their families, communities and societies.

The movie was intended to ignite public discourse about the labour conditions of women working on flower farms and other low cadre jobs such as domestic work, market vending and other sectors. The premiere was attended by participants from the informal sector, civil society, government and the entertainment industry. The movie is available on YouTube and has been shown local television channels several times.



## B. Women@Work: An Exhibition of Women's Foils and Triumphs in the Workplace

On the heels of Prickly Roses, our advocacy continued into Women's Day where, together with partner organizations, we held an exhibition to portray the experiences of women in the world of work. The overall goal of the 3 day event was mobilizing action to effect change in policy and practice in the workplace for decent work for women, looking particularly at passing the minimum wage bill into law and ratification of the International Labour Organization Convention 190 (ILO C 190) on Violence and Harassment at work. A

total of eight organizations showcased their work at the exhibition on a variety of topics including; the shocking labour conditions of women artisanal miners; the experiences of female sex workers in an environment that criminalizes their work; the experiences of women street vendors with harassment and violence; the plight of women caught within the cycle of violence that is the labor export industry; the over sexualization of women in the service industry, among many other thematics. AMWA's exhibition

showcased the experiences of women working on flower farms.

The exhibition opened with a half day meeting that had a diversity of participants including representatives of labor unions, civil society organizations the media, market entrepreneurs and other platforms working to enhance the experiences of women in the workplace. The Chief Guest was Ms. Rosa Malango, the UN Resident Coordinator, pledged to mobilize support to expedite the process of Uganda ratifying the ILO Convention 190 in Uganda.



The UN Resident Coordinator, Ms Rosa Malango (R) with AMWA's Executive Director at the Women@Work exhibition.



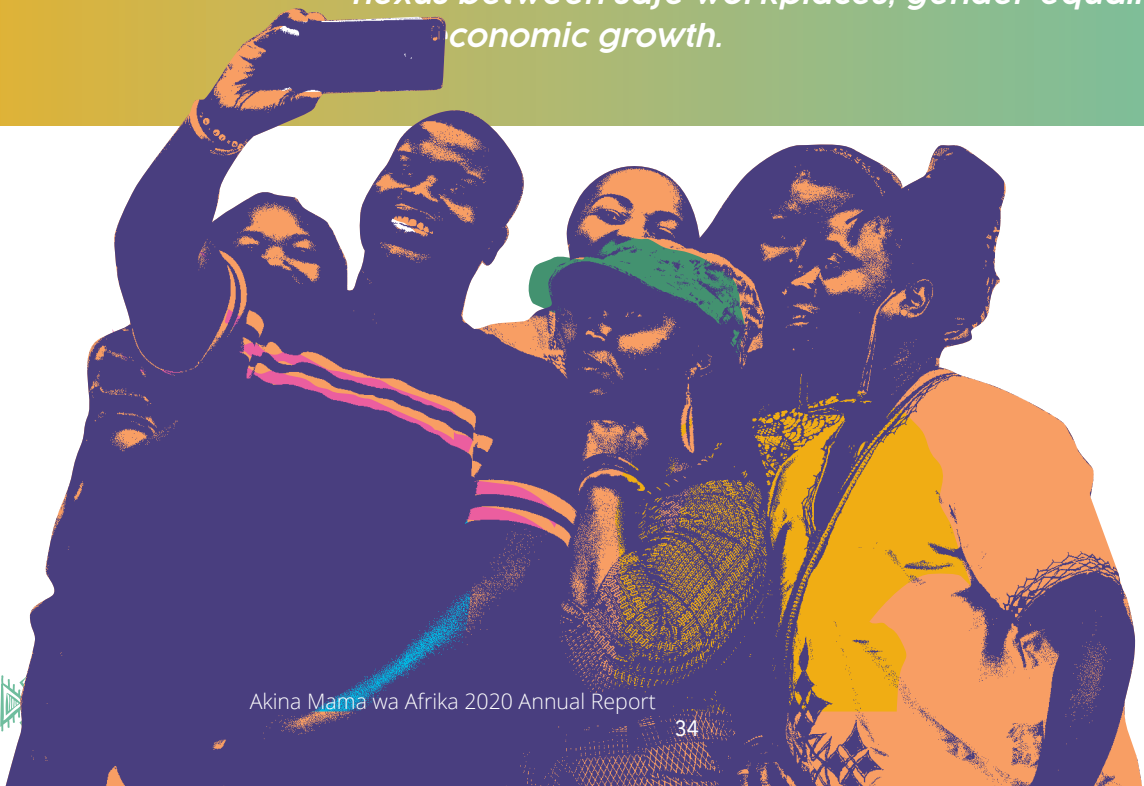
### C. The Africa Regional Forum on Sustainable Development (ARFSD)

Our decent work for women agenda was also evident at the ARFSD held in February, in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe under the theme “2020-2030: A Decade to Deliver a Transformed and Prosperous Africa through the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063.” A cross section of about 3000 stakeholders including governments, multilateral organizations, Trade Unions, Non-Governmental Organizations, and youth groups attended the event organized by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. AMwA, alongside other women@work partners from East and Southern Africa participated in the convening. The ARFSD had one common refrain; no country is on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 and by extension, the African Union's Agenda 2063 which is closely modelled along the framework. 2020-2030 is thus

being billed as the Decade of Action, calling for acceleration of sustainable solutions to all the world's biggest challenges — ranging from poverty and gender to climate change, inequality and closing the finance gap.

On the sidelines of the continental forum, AMwA, other partners under the Women@Work campaign and Hivos held a side event titled Gender Equality for Africa's Economic Growth. The event was an opportunity to address the nexus between safe workplaces, gender equality and economic growth. It looked specifically to develop ideas that can be implemented to leverage the newly adopted International Labour Organization Convention 190 on violence and harassment in the world of work as a tool to push for safe workplaces, dignified labour, and overall social and economic prosperity.

*On the sidelines of the continental forum, AMwA, other partners under the Women@Work campaign and Hivos held a side event titled Gender Equality for Africa's Economic Growth. The event was an opportunity to address the nexus between safe workplaces, gender equality and economic growth.*





#### D. Accelerating the Ratification of ILO C190: Violence and Harassment Convention in Africa

For the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Based Violence, we convened a webinar aimed at raising awareness and mobilizing various stakeholders about ILO C190 and the opportunities it presents as a tool for organizing. The panelists at the conversation included Hilda Nakagga- a Labour Officer at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Clare Leduce- a Cooperate attaché in charge of relationships with Civil Society at the French Embassy in Uganda, Namaganda Assumpta- Deputy Director of Operations and Projects at Uganda Hotels, Foods, Tourism and Supermarkets and the

Allied Workers' Union, and Valentina Beghini- a Technical Specialist in the Gender, equality and diversity and ILO AIDS branch of the International Labour Organisation in Geneva. They highlighted the importance of the ILO Convention C190, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the effects it has had especially towards escalating violence in the workplace, the steps being taken by governments towards ratification of the same, how civil society and government can collaborate to speed up the process, and how workers and employers are being involved in the ratification process, here in Uganda.



### 2.2.2.2 Campaign to end sexual harassment in the world of work

As part of AMwA's continuing campaign on ending sexual harassment in the world of work, a number of noteworthy interventions were held.

#### A. Media and #MeToo: A Conversation about Media's Trivialization of Sexual Harassment and Consequent Perpetuation of Rape Culture.

First, we convened webinar to interrogate the media's role in perpetuating and normalizing sexual violence. The discussions surfaced a critical issue; that newsrooms themselves are sites of sexual violence against women, with many women forced to accept this as a normal part of workplace culture. This consequently blinds and numbs reporters from treating cases of sexual violence with the seriousness that they deserve. The panel of experts composed of journalists from across Africa who had experience covering stories of sexual violence shared wisdom on what could be done to mitigate the problem. The culture within the newsroom needed to change before change could be effected elsewhere. The need to protect survivors of sexual violence by making perpetrators

the center of the story as the first step to accountability was also emphasized. Lastly, a good practice toolkit for telling stories of survivors was shared. The first and most critical step is believing the experience of sexual violence, otherwise one has no business telling the story in the first place. Journalists and story tellers were also told to try to use women as resource people (as photographers, illustrators, translators etc) when working on the story so that the survivor is at ease. Storytellers were also asked to be aware of the power dynamics between oneself and the survivor and how this might impact how the story will get told. The webinar sparked a parallel public discourse on the same issue on social media.

*"The way we report sexual harassment focuses too much on the victim and not enough on the perpetrator. It is high time that we transfer the shame we feel as victims/survivors to the perpetrators because if a person steals and they are caught, they feel shame but somehow when it is rape, it is the victim who feels ashamed. It does not make any sense..."-*

**Kiki Mordi, an award winning investigative Nigerian journalist, famous for the BBC Africa Eye documentary #SexForGrades exposing the sexual violence in universities in Nigeria and Ghana**



## B. Healing space for survivors of sexual violence

On January 18th, 2020, we convened a healing space for survivors of sexual violence. The purpose of the space was to create a safe space for survivors to share their stories and access psychological support to set them on a path of healing. This was after several young women found the courage to share their horrifying stories and experiences of rape and other forms of sexual violence, on social media.

In an effort to dispel victim-blaming, the space tackled the myths and facts about rape and sexual assault that many survivors often believe in. Some of the myths addressed were that you can spot a rapist by the way they look or act. Stories of rape by trusted family members, partners and religious leaders shared by the survivors, highlighting the fact that rapists are often people known to the survivors and who may never have

exhibited any kind of violence towards their victims prior to the sexual assault. Many of the participants shared that the healing space was the first time they were opening up about their experiences because there is a certain comfort in sharing with strangers who have similar experiences, that does not carry with it the shame and stigma that often comes with being raped.

The healing space provided a utopia, where survivors felt safe enough to unburden and light enough to have a bit of fun. And while recovering from sexual assault takes time, and the healing process can be painful they know they understood that with psychological support they can regain their sense of control, rebuild their self-worth, learn to heal and especially that long after their stories are not the talk of Uganda's social and mainstream media, they are not alone.

### 2.2.2.3 Virtual public dialogues in response to COVID-19

With the pandemic raging, it was important to plug into ongoing discussions about how to respond to it, particularly on matters related to the economy. In that regard, we partnered with the Friedrich Ebert Stiftung Uganda to convene a webinar series on areas relevant to our work. The webinars were intended to center the voices and experiences of marginalised communities in policy conversations surrounding the pandemic, to ensure an inclusive and appropriate response from the state, and to further demand for accountability from an informed point of view. The five webinars covered a wide range of issues. The webinar topics included:

- **“Counting the Cost of the Pandemic: A Conversation on the Impact of COVID-19 on Workers in Uganda.”** The webinar was born out of the need to create a space for critical reflection to respond to the economic ramifications of COVID-19 and develop responsive, intersectional and timely policy proposals to address the same. The conversation was intended to track and document the impact of

*“We cannot go back to normal because normal was not working for most of us.”*

**Crystal Simeoni on the need to reform systems as we tackle the covid-19 pandemic.**

The poster is for a Zoom Webinar titled "THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN THE GRIP OF THE PANDEMIC: Sharing experiences and strategies for a resilient recovery". It is scheduled for Thursday, 16th July 2020, at 11am EAT. The poster features a green background with a white geometric pattern at the bottom. Logos for Akina Mama wa Afrika, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, and Hivos are at the top left. A Zoom Webinar logo is at the top right. The poster lists the Moderator, Martha Tukahirwa, and three Panelists: Hope Katwine, Flavia Amoding, and Hope Kasimbazi. It also mentions testimonials from women in the informal economy.

**THE INFORMAL ECONOMY IN THE GRIP OF THE PANDEMIC:**  
Sharing experiences and strategies for a resilient recovery

**THUR 16TH JULY 2020 11am EAT**

**MODERATOR**  
Martha Tukahirwa  
Regional Advocacy & Communications Officer  
Strategic Initiative for women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA Network)

**PANELISTS**

- Hope Katwine  
Kampala City Traders Association (KACTA) & Chair, Women's League
- Flavia Amoding  
Uganda Workers Education Association (UWEA)
- Hope Kasimbazi  
Uganda Women Entrepreneurs Association Limited (UWEAL)

**Testimonials from women in the informal economy**

- ▶ Catherine Wanyama, Market entrepreneur, Nakawa market
- ▶ Hanneke Katerenge, Chairperson, Uganda Domestic Workers Association
- ▶ Amuny Josephine Sunday, Secretary Naguru Women's Cooperative





COVID-19 on workers- particularly those in the informal economy, to contribute to policy proposals aimed at addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and to highlight and nuance the gender dimensions of the pandemic.

- **“An Analysis of the Uganda 2020/21 Financial Year Budget: Interrogating and Recalibrating Priorities”** intended to facilitate a deeper understanding of the budget by the public to ensure widespread involvement in recasting priorities and demanding for accountability from the State.
- **“Social protection in Uganda: Re-imagining a post pandemic welfare state”**, to assess the level of preparedness of Uganda’s social protection systems to respond to shocks and explore alternatives to ensure citizens’ wellbeing by fostering a deeper understanding of Uganda’s social protection landscape and its response to the COVID-19 pandemic; creating space to re-imagine and advocate for radical reforms to the social protection system in Uganda; and exploring robust policy proposals to strengthen the social protection environment in Uganda.
- **“The Informal Economy in the Grip of the Pandemic: Sharing Experiences and Strategies for a Resilient Recovery”** to examine the

impact of COVID-19 on the informal sector and explore possible remedies and mechanisms that can be adopted by state and non-state actors, and to collate key demands and recommendations to ensure wellbeing of workers in the informal economy amidst the pandemic. The webinar comprised of women workers from the informal economy (women representing flower farms, street vendors, home based workers, and market vendors) who shared how they had been impacted the pandemic.

- **“In the shadow of the pandemic: The dark underbelly of private debt” to examine the state and impact of private debt** and abusive lending practices among vulnerable groups, especially women, in light of increased indebtedness arising from the pandemic accompanied by unmitigated economic hardships.

The webinars involved civil society actors, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social and Development, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, parliament, trade unionists, workers’ associations and informal and formal sector workers, among others. The conversations fielded a number of policy proposals for action.

Other webinars shaped by the pandemic also looked to centre the voices and experiences of young women, particularly alumnae of the AWLI.

- **Young Women Navigating the COVID-19 Civic Space:**

Looking to harness young women’s leadership to address COVID-19. The webinar paved way for participants to explore how the pandemic is affecting young people specifically young women. Part of the discussions included how businesses, brands and leaders can learn from women who are embracing disruption with



innovation and determination plus the skills needed to contribute to shaping a new reality for the ways we work, interact and live. Furthermore, the webinar gave the African Women Leadership Institute Alumni space to share their experiences on how they have responded to the pandemic and possible strategies that people can tap into post COVID-19. A key outcome of the webinar was the need for young women to mobilize and organize themselves in reforming policies so as to ensure that a conducive environment is created for them to maximize their full potential.

- **Young Women's Participation in Electoral Processes in Uganda:** To situate and examine the impact of COVID-19 on Young Women participating in politics, we hosted a webinar targeting young women involved in elective politics with the aim of creating a space for sharing personal stories, challenges and opportunities for advancing young women's participation in electoral processes in Uganda, specifically in regard to the 2021 general elections. The meeting made recommendations including ending impunity on Sexual Gender Based Violence, enhancing the feminist and transformational leadership of young women through trainings and making intergenerational mentorship available.

- **Reflection on 25 Years of Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA)** The webinar, "Reflecting on 25 Years of the Beijing Platform for Action", was held with support from UN Women, Amplify Change and AWDF. It targeted young women who have been part of AMwA's flagship program; the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), across Africa with the aim of inspiring them to contribute towards translating the Beijing Platform for Action's promises into concrete changes in their countries, by holding their governments accountable and making recommendations for accelerating the promise to achieve human rights for all women and girls. The panelists; Dinah Musindarwezo- Director of Policy and Communications, Womankind Worldwide, Memory Kachwamba- Executive Director, FEMNET, Kamanda Bosco Beatrice- Transgender Activist and Human Rights Defender, and Ketcha Pertulla Ezisha- Coordinator, Leap Girl Africa; took stock of the achievements of women's rights and gender equality at 25 years of the BPfA, examined the progress and identified the challenges so far, and discussed collective actionable steps moving forward in the monitoring of the implementation of regional and international policy frameworks on gender equality, as well as discussed re-strategizing on how best to achieve gender equality.



### 2.2.3. Feminist organizing and movement building

#### 2.2.3.1 Fierce feminists at the feminist thought leadership retreat

*"Is feminism only for female bodies? What is womanhood? Does being female bodied make you a woman?"-*

**-Noah Mirembe, sharing the lived experiences of transfolk and questioning the centering of the feminist movement on cisgender women.**

In January, we convened a feminist thought leadership retreat whose main objective was to create a space to influence feminist thought and practice for a stronger, intersectional and progressive movement in Africa. The retreat, served as a space to situate the status of the feminist movement and for two days, away from the daily labor of dismantling patriarchy, allowed for sharing, learning and an opportunity to inspire, energize and renew purpose for the work of women's liberation. 28 people from 5 countries; Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi and Ethiopia participated in the retreat. The retreat unpacked a number of issues and topics pertinent to African feminist organizing such as; building ally-ship with the trans-community, accountability within the feminist movement, lessons from feminist organizers in East Africa and decentering western feminism. By the end of the retreat the African Feminists in attendance had been re-energized to set the agenda for the movement by identifying issues critical for the feminist movement to focus on going forward and provide solutions.





### 2.2.3.2 Deepening Feminist Analysis in East Africa

*"We need to identify the limitations we encounter when we view the world in binaries; the selfishness that comes with dualism... One of the most effective ways coloniality works is through exaggerating our differences,"* **Dr. Sylvia Tamale, during the Deepening Feminist Analysis thought leadership conversation.**

AMWA, as the host of the Uganda Feminist Forum held a feminist thought leadership conversation titled 'Decolonization and Afro-feminism' based on the 2020 book by Dr. Sylvia Tamale a renowned scholar, feminist and author. The conversation attracted over 60 feminists from diverse backgrounds. (29 Participants attended physically, while 49 followed the conversation online). The conversation centered on how to apply decoloniality and afro-feminism as a framework to advance women's rights in Africa. Critical strategies were discussed and recommended including the need to hold regular learning spaces to raise consciousness on the decolonization project, create an enabling environment for African authors to rewrite the evolution of Pan-Africanism in order to include herstories recognizing women as the vanguard of the Pan-African movement, and revising the education curriculum among other things. AMWA in partnership with the wider feminist movement will draw from this conversation to inform and shape efforts towards building feminist futures.

### 2.2.3.3 Rethink! Conversation Series: Rethinking Choice, Rights and Reproductive Freedom.

We convened the first reflection space under the, "Re-think: Conversation series on SRHR") under the theme; "Choice, Rights and Reproductive Freedom". It was aimed at exploring current theory and praxis on abortion rights; discussing the complexities feminist advocacy faces as relates to rights-based approaches and helping participants critically think through new advocacy strategies. This space was the first of many that AMWA will be convening to brainstorm and share how the SRHR movement can organize differently.

The conversation was guided by a prior reading: *"Feminism and Abortion Politics: Choice, Rights and Reproductive Freedom"*, 25 *Women's Stud. Intl. Forum*, 335 – 345 (2002) by Lisa Smyth; a paper examining the problems associated with feminist articulations of rights' claims and other alternatives for advocating reproductive freedom. The paper asks the question; "How can feminism best advocate abortion access?". It was facilitated by Prof.

Sylvia Tamale, sitting in conversation with Lydia Namubiru, the Africa Editor for Open Democracy.

Professor Sylvia Tamale provided critique on what she considers the three facets/ strategies of abortion advocacy; choice and privacy, the rights rhetoric and public health discourse arguing that whenever we emphasize private choice, we excuse the state or government from availing women access to affordable and safe abortions by making it a matter of individual choice instead of an obligation for the power holders to provide access to safe abortion. She also contended that placing emphasis on individual rights allows us to neglect larger issues of social/gender justice and the helpless individual, who depends on the political commitment to give them their rights risks not enjoying them at all if they live in a state that is autocratic, racist, sexist or repressive.



A close-up photograph of a person's face, partially obscured by a blue surgical mask and black-rimmed glasses. The person is holding a pink, egg-shaped object in their hand. The egg has the word 'UBUNTU' written in blue capital letters, with a logo above and below it consisting of a cross-like symbol with horizontal lines and dots. The background is blurred, showing other people in a crowd.

## S03:

Strengthen  
AMwA's  
capacity into  
a dynamic,  
learning and  
well-resourced  
organization

## Grants Management and Funding

### 3.1 New projects and sources of funding

The year 2020 will not be remembered fondly, but even in the worst of times, sometimes opportunity knocks. In response to the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' call for proposals under their Strengthening Civil Society grant instrument, AMwA with a consortium of like minded partners, put in three bids; two under the Power of Voices Partnership mechanism and one under the SRHR Partnership Fund. All three bids were successful. The three grants will fund projects tackling women's political participation, intersectional SRHR, and climate justice, and will propel the organization to new heights as we entrench our presence in six countries in Africa, and explore new and challenging areas of work. The three projects will run from 2021 to 2025 with grants totaling US\$ 10,923,145

We were also able to secure funding and start three new projects this year. We officially started the Joint Advocacy for

Sexual and Reproductive Rights (SRHR) in Uganda (JAS) PROGRAMME in July. This multi-organization SRHR advocacy PROGRAMME steered by the Centre for Health Human Rights and Development-CEHURD and supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency – SIDA. It aims at building a progressive social movement boldly challenging the deep structures affecting the realization of SRHR in Uganda. AMwA is one of the 7 organizations implementing the program with a remit on the thematic area of gender. This project will run for a period of four years with a total grant of US\$49,324 per year.

Additionally, we have also just secured one year funding totaling US\$ 100,000 from the Adey-Hopewell Fund to strengthen feminist leadership for a bold and progressive movement of SRHR actors in Africa.

Lastly, the Democratic Governance Facility has provided a grant of US\$ 376,620 towards an 18 months project on enhancing women's political participation in Uganda. 2020 is closing off auspiciously and 2021 is poised to be our year of lift off!





### 3.2 Projects that ended during the course of the year

As we get busy with the work that is coming with new projects, other long running interventions have also come to a close.

#### 3.2.1 The Women@Work Campaign, 2017-2020

Funded by Hivos since 2017, the project came to an end in July this year. We contributed to the campaign through the women's leadership project where we looked to strengthen the leadership capacities of women workers and that of management and partnering farms; promote gender responsive work place policies and decent work for women; and to influence national, regional and international processes on gender equality and decent work. The project was implemented in partnership with Uganda Workers' Education Association (UWEA) in Uganda, The African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) in Kenya, Rwanda Women's Network and Rwanda Workers' Trade Union Confederation (CESTRAR) in Rwanda. It

Over the three year run of the campaign; a number of achievements were registered including;

- o More women taking up leadership positions as supervisors, and as committee members as result of having their confidence built.
- o More women changing their style of leadership to be more empathetic and understanding, having gained clarity on how gender relations impact women's participation in the workplace.

- o Stronger solidarity amongst workers to make demands from management, and to support colleagues to report violations such as sexual harassment.
- o Reported changes of power and gender dynamics within the home as some women and men who participated in leadership training said that decisions were now made in consultation with partners, while some women with male partners also reported making more financial contributions in the home, something they did not do before as they looked as men as being sole providers.
- o Commitment by farms management to undertake reforms to make workplaces more gender sensitive including constituting gender committees where there were none, strengthening sexual harassment policies, exploring construction of nurseries for toddlers, opening up positions that were traditionally ringfenced for men to women, amongst a number of changes.

The project was instrumental in strengthening and diversifying our understanding about the complex world of work, and women's role in it, and raising the organization's profile as a bonafide actor within the labour rights movement. It enabled us to connect struggles across issues, and to forge partnerships with trade unions. Critically, this project spurred the organization to explore work with broader economic issues as it became clear that the forces of neoliberal economic orthodoxy were central to the exploitation of women in global supply chains.



*The study found that a number of factors contribute to enabling sexual harassment in the workplace, and maintaining impunity by emboldening perpetrators and silencing survivors one of which included a lack of institutional policies to respond to sexual harassment.*

### **3.2.2 TuWezeshe Akina Dada Africa-UK Young Women's Leadership and Empowerment Movement, 2017 to 2020**

The project was funded by Comic Relief and implemented by Foundation for Women's Health Research and Development (FORWARD-UK) as the lead partner, Children's Dignity Forum (CDF), Sub Sahara Advisory Panel (SSAP), and Akili Dada. It was implemented in Kenya, Tanzania, Somaliland, England and Wales, with AMwA taking lead in Uganda. The project's vision was to raise up a new generation of young women leaders who are capable activists and advocates claiming their rights and freedoms.

Through the project, a vibrant young women's network emerged that addressed sexual and gender-based violence in Uganda. This was achieved through expanding opportunities for young women to engage and shape public policy on issues affecting them, supporting the fellows to further deepen and expand their interventions in communities through Social Action Plans (SAPs), creating spaces for feminist intergenerational dialogues on women's leadership, strengthening mentor and mentee mentorship and peer to peer learning. More than 6000 people including women and girls have benefited from through the SAPs that changed behaviors, attitudes and norms of communities. AMwA also created opportunities for the fellows to engage and influence policy discussions, particularly the Sexual Offences Bill

In Uganda, the following achievements were made,

- Young women's skills to build their own capacity as well as the ability to build the

capacity of other young activists and their communities to tackle violence against women in Uganda were strengthened. Through the seed grants that were disbursed to the trained fellows under the Tuwezeshe project, fellows were able to transfer the skills and knowledge acquired to their communities through their social action projects reaching out to more than 6000 people across Uganda.

- Creation of safe spaces for intergenerational dialogues on Women's Leadership Development. AMwA was able to create spaces for intergenerational dialogues that celebrated the gains made in the women's movement and discussions on the challenges that women face in developing their leadership, opportunities for women in leadership and strategies on building a strong feminist movement in Uganda and across Africa.
- The project bridged the gap between experienced and emerging feminist activists, building solidarity, fostering mutual learning and support, and enhancing sustainability through mentorship. A key outcome of the mentorship program has been a strong mentorship network which has enhanced young women's skills and knowledge on activism, SRHR and feminism.
- Young women taking up leadership positions. Five of the fellows have taken up leadership positions on various boards of institutions which has demonstrated their potential to influence decision making spaces and ensure that women and girls rights are promoted and protected.



## Statement of Receipt and Payments

	Notes	Actual UGX	31-Dec-20 Actual USD	Actual UGX	31-Dec-19 Actual USD
<b>RECEIPTS</b>					
Grants Received	7.10	1,514,628,392	419,776	1,945,451,379	526,182
Other Income		119,486,745	33,116	134,341,277	36,407
<b>Total Funds</b>		<b>1,634,115,137</b>	<b>452,892</b>	<b>2,079,792,656</b>	<b>562,589</b>
<b>PAYMENTS</b>					
<b>Program Costs</b>					
Strengthen the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) as a center of excellence on feminist and transformative leadership development	7.10	414,751,366	114,952	753,952,443	203,222
Amplify African women's voices in critical spaces through collective advocacy, and through movement building, informed by feminist research and documentation	7.10	511,917,070	141,554	524,301,394	141,321
Institutional Strengthening	7.10	870,542,711	240,594	826,050,695	222,655
<b>Total Program Costs</b>		<b>1,797,211,148</b>	<b>497,100</b>	<b>2,104,304,532</b>	<b>567,198</b>
Foreign Exchange Loss/(Gain)		(218,060)	(60.43)	43,463,955	11,802
<b>Surplus/(Deficit) for the year</b>		<b>(162,877,951)</b>	<b>(44,148)</b>	<b>(67,975,831)</b>	<b>(16,411)</b>





## Statement of Financial Position

	Notes	Actual UGX	31-Dec-20 Actual USD	Actual UGX	31-Dec-19 Actual USD
Property ,Plant and Equipment	7.4	42,216,051	11,412	26,953,778	7,246
Cash and Cash Equivalents	7.5	783,062,768	211,688	608,601,912	163,539
Accounts Receivable and Other Assets	7.6	106,524,796	28,797	283,262,271	76,116
		<b>931,803,616</b>	<b>251,898</b>	<b>918,817,961</b>	<b>246,901</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>					
Fund Balance as at 01 Jan		585,433,936	157,316	663,058,506	179,537
Adjustments to Funds Balance *		6,988,143	2,953	(9,648,739)	(5,810)
<b>Fund balance 01 Jan 2020</b>		<b>592,422,079</b>	<b>160,269</b>	<b>653,409,767</b>	<b>173,727</b>
Surplus/(Deficit)		(162,877,951)	(44,148)	(67,975,831)	(16,411)
<b>Accumulated Fund Balance</b>		<b>429,544,527</b>	<b>116,121</b>	<b>585,433,936</b>	<b>157,316</b>
Capital Fund	7.9	42,216,052	11,412	26,953,778	7,243
Accounts Payable	7.7	85,483,324	23,109	137,104,727	36,842
Deferred Income	7.8	374,559,713	101,256	169,325,520	45,500
		<b>502,259,089</b>	<b>135,778</b>	<b>333,384,025</b>	<b>89,585</b>
		<b>931,803,616</b>	<b>251,899</b>	<b>918,817,961</b>	<b>246,901</b>

Ushs 6.9m reported as adjustments to the Fund Balance relates to 2019 reported expenses that did not clear in the bank for a period of 6 months.



## Statement of Cash Flows

	Notes	31-Dec-20 UGX	31-Dec-19 UGX
<b>Cash flow from operating activities</b>			
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(162,877,951)	(67,975,831)
Prior year Adjustment		6,988,143	(9,648,739)
Gain realized on Opening Fund Balance		-	-
<b>Changes in operating assets and liabilities</b>			
Decrease/(Increase) in receivable	7.6	176,737,475	(242,293,855)
(Decrease)/Increase in payables	7.7	(51,620,403)	36,638,611
Increase/(Decrease) in Deferred Income	7.8	205,234,193	(184,810,041)
<b>Net cash from operating assets and liabilities</b>		<b>330,351,264</b>	<b>(390,465,285)</b>
<b>Cash generated from operations</b>		<b>174,461,855</b>	<b>(468,089,855)</b>
<b>Cash flow from Investing activities</b>			
Acquisition of PPE	7.4	(31,500,000)	(22,959,437)
<b>Net cash from Investing activities</b>		<b>(31,500,000)</b>	<b>(22,959,437)</b>
<b>Cash flow from financing activities</b>			
Increase in Capital Fund	7.9	15,261,274	13,475,007
<b>Adjustment for Non Cash in the Capital Fund</b>			
Revaluation Gain		-	-
Exchange diff unrealized		-	-
Depreciation		16,237,726	9,484,430
Write-off		-	-
<b>Net cash flow from financing activities</b>		<b>31,500,000</b>	<b>22,959,437</b>
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		174,460,856	(468,089,855)
Cash and Cash equivalent at start of the year		608,601,913	<b>1,076,691,768</b>
<b>Cash and Cash equivalent at end of the year</b>		<b>783,062,768</b>	<b>608,601,913</b>



## Budget Actual Performance.

Notes	Budget	31-Dec-20	Budget	31-Dec-20	Actual	31-Dec-19
	UGX	Actual	USD	Actual	UGX	Actual
Receipts		UGX		USD		USD
Grants Received	2,855,429,559	1,514,628,392	770,310	419,776	1,945,451,379	526,182
Other Income	17,131,018	119,486,745	4,630	33,116	134,341,277	36,407
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>2,872,560,577</b>	<b>1,634,115,137</b>	<b>774,940</b>	<b>452,892</b>	<b>2,079,792,656</b>	<b>562,589</b>
<b>Payments</b>						
<b>Programme Costs</b>						
Strengthen the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI) as a center of excellence on feminist and transformative leadership development	833,572,667	414,751,366	225,290	114,952	753,952,443	203,222
Amplify African women's voices in critical spaces through collective advocacy, and through movement building, informed by feminist research and documentation	918,280,427	511,917,070	248,184	141,554	505,953,044	141,321
Institutional Strengthening	1,165,331,458	870,542,711	314,954	240,594	844,399,045	222,655
<b>Total Program Costs</b>	<b>2,917,184,553</b>	<b>1,797,211,148</b>	<b>788,428</b>	<b>497,100</b>	<b>2,104,304,532</b>	<b>567,198</b>
Foreign Exchange (Gain)/Loss	-	(218,060)		(60)	43,463,955	11,802
<b>Deficit for the year</b>	<b>(44,623,976)</b>	<b>(162,877,951)</b>	<b>(13,488)</b>	<b>(44,148)</b>	<b>(67,975,831)</b>	<b>(16,411)</b>





└ The majority of donors exercised flexibility which allowed for recalibration and even proposal of new interventions to meet the new challenges arising because of the pandemic, while also meeting the wider objectives of the different projects.



## 4.0 Lesson Learned from 2020

- Building and nurturing strategic partnerships and networks is a well-worn lesson that bears repeating. The adage that our greatest social capital is our network has proved to be true for AMwA's fundraising successes. All new grants awarded to the organization in 2020 were because of pre-existing relationships with partners or funders.
- Funders can make or break an organization, so choose them carefully. In the context of ever dwindling funding for women's rights, it is not entirely unusual for CSOs to partner with funders whose values do not align with theirs entirely. When such partnerships are tested in a time of crisis as happened with the COVID-19 pandemic, the consequences may be disastrous, as we have seen with certain organizations during this period. In our case, having funding partners with similar flexibility and understanding helped us withstand the onslaught of disruptions that came with the pandemic. The majority of donors exercised flexibility which allowed for recalibration and even proposal of new interventions to meet the new challenges arising because of the pandemic, while also meeting the wider objectives of the different projects.
- Investing in staff's mental health and wellness is key to building and nurturing a team and ensuring that they flourish when things are going well, and resilient when things get tougher. The uncertainty, grief and disruption brought on by the pandemic unearthed a number of challenges that made it difficult for staff to cope in the new world order. AMwA saw this gap and understanding the value of mental health, made therapy sessions available at no cost to staff. We are grateful that donors like Hivos, the Adey-Hopewell Fund and the African Women's Development Fund recognised this need and amidst such trying and uncertain times provided funding for this critical need.
- It is important to build staff capacity to have a dynamic skillset that is responsive to unforeseen changes. Most activities this year were conducted online and the need to sharpen the skills of staff to deliver in the digital space and adjust to working remotely became apparent. It is also important to provide the requisite support for the team to continue being productive even with this new mode of work. Internet data was availed to staff to enable them work from home unencumbered.





## 5.0 Recommendations

- o **New Projects; Nnew Opportunities:** 2021 presents the immense privilege and challenge of kickstarting three multi-million dollar projects funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, moreover with one of them on climate change, a relatively new thematic area for us. It is an opportunity to prove our mettle and for us to advance the feminist agenda in these new areas of work. It is also an opportunity to forge new relationships with partners, which in turn will create more opportunities. But above all, it is a huge responsibility for us to do right by women in all their diversities, the constituents in whose name we do this work.
- o **Spreading our wings and anchoring our roots in 7 African countries and beyond:** Although our footprint is well established across the continent through our AWLIs, the new projects present a new opportunity to do work outside Uganda for longer periods of time which should entrench our presence and amplify impact. The projects are going to cut across Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Ethiopia, Zambia, Sudan and Tunisia. However, our work will also spill over to Latin America and Asia where we shall provide strategic and technical advice on feminist leadership to consortium partners working in those regions.
- o **A new bigger and bolder team:** The new streams of work will require a revision of the organogram to meet new PROGRAMME and finance and administration needs. A new team comes with both opportunities and challenges. In the context of onboarding in virtual world, there may difficulty in transferring and maintaining the organization's culture and building teamwork. However, new people also bring new ideas and new energies that we need as embark on the massive work that we shall be undertaking.
- o **New structures in place and new ways of doing things.** With the team bigger and scope of work widened, the boutique style of work we were using before is no longer fit for purpose. Programme and Human Resource Management structures need to be established to manage these emerging needs. In 2021, we also see continuance in working from home with a possible review of this policy later in the year.





## Our Team

During this period, the following people comprised the Board of Directors for AMwA in 2020

Name	Position	Country
Dr. Maggie Kigozi	Chairperson	Uganda
Claire Mathonsi	Vice Chairperson	South Africa
Abisagi Namugenze Mugenyi (ACCA)	Treasurer	Uganda
Alison Ngibuini	Member	Kenya
Mmabatho Motsamai	Member	Botswana
Rainatou Sow	Member	Guinea
Zoneziwoh Mbongulo	Member	Cameroon

## Staffing

By close of 2020 AMwA had (13) thirteen staff members, who were all devoted to attaining the mission, vision and strategic direction of the organisation as laid out in its strategic plan for 2017 – 2021. Members of the team comprised citizens of Uganda and Zimbabwe; with the vision to expand into other parts of the continent in the coming year.

## Staff

Name	Position
<b>Eunice Musiime</b>	Executive Director
<b>Leah Eryenyu</b>	Research Advocacy and Movement Building Manager
<b>Beth Naluboka</b>	Finance and Administration Manager
<b>Chipo Bangira</b>	Feminist and Transformational Leadership Manager
<b>Barbra Kahunde Birabwa</b>	Finance and Admin Associate
<b>Serubidde Wilson</b>	Finance and Admin Officer
<b>Mulindwa Isaac</b>	IT Officer
<b>Sunshine Fionah Komusana</b>	Research Advocacy and Movement Building Intern
<b>Twasiima P. Bigirwa</b>	Women's Economic Justice Lead
<b>Beth Nalukoba Masangah (CPA)</b>	Head of Finance and Admin
<b>Joanita Najjuko</b>	Feminist and Transformational Leadership Intern
<b>Costance Tumuhameye</b>	Office Assistant
<b>Vivienne Kabrungi</b>	Communications Intern
<b>Nakirya Rhona</b>	Finance and Admin Intern
<b>Namirimu Josephine</b>	Finance and Admin Intern



## Funding Partners



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