

Highlighting Gender-Equality Champions among men and boys in Uganda to accelerate SDG 5

This initiative aimed at enhancing the development of a collaborative project focused on gender equality in Uganda. The one year project involved a range of activities, including regular meetings, field visits, workshops, interviews, and mapping exercises. These activities were conducted to deepen insights and understanding of local dynamics in the context of the project focus on gender equality, to ensure the success of the subsequent implementation.

Background

Involving men and boys is increasingly being recognized as critical for achieving gender equality. However, being called a feminist in Uganda is not advantageous. This means that those who advocate for the rights of women face challenges such as stigma and discrimination in their communities, which sometimes leads them to withdraw from activism. As a result, role models, particularly male role models engaged in gender equality issues, are therefore lacking. Recent reports indicate an increase in gender-based violence (GBV), primarily domestic violence, and setbacks in gender equality in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic. According to research conducted by the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), recruiting male role models from intervention communities is effective in catalysing norm change and promoting gender-equitable views. Using role models and influencers to advocate for gender equality can initiate shifts in overall gender norms that result in inequitable outcomes for women (Gender Equity and Male Engagement: It Only Works When Everyone Plays, 2018).

The project started in 2022 and has laid a robust foundation for future initiatives and collaboration, demonstrating the potential for promoting gender equality and positive change in Uganda. **The project has received funding from the Swedish Institute.**