



Experience by CARE International In Northern UGANDA

Background: In Northern Uganda few women participated actively in higher levels of local and national politics. Issues affecting women have not attracted much attention by government or civil society. Even elected women at the lower levels were often too timid to engage effectively in raising and discussing such issues. Reasons for limited participation of women as contestants in elections included harassments of female opponents, resistance by husbands and common perceptions about women in leadership.

The solution was

1. Improving women rights especially regarding land rights, Gender-Based Violence and participation of women in governance.
2. Community dialogues fostered exchange on women participation in politics.
3. Trainings, mentorship and regional roundtables for women were organized.
4. Framework for women participation was developed
5. Together with the Ministry of Gender the national gender action plan was reviewed.

Experience description

Uganda enacted laws that grant men and women equal rights to land and other property rights, regardless of their marital status. The application of these laws was hindered by: legal pluralism that stems from the recognition of both customary and national laws (often not mediated by statutory provisions as prescribed in the constitution), lack of knowledge of the laws, poor access to justice, weak institutional and incapacitated legal system as well as social norms. Despite the strong normative framework on Gender Equality, including regulations, guidelines, protocols and even district level laws and ordinances, actual implementation of the policies has remained challenging.



Other characteristics



IMPACTS

- Implementation of national plans including women agendas – i.e. gender focused budgeting
- Upsurge in the number of women elected into political offices
- More women were elected as chairpersons for local council committees



CHALLENGES

- Many CSOs compete for resources rather than pursuing a common agenda
- Low levels of education and low levels of self-esteem among women
- Women feel intimidated by some cultural leaders



LESSONS LEARNED

- CSOs must learn to collaborate for resource mobilization
- Capacitation of local leaders is key to create awareness regarding existing laws
- Synergies with other projects work well in order to foster self-esteem and confidence among women