



OIL REFINERY RESIDENT ASSOCIATION

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A PROCEEDING REPORT ON WOMEN EMPOWERMENT MEETING HELD ON 25TH JULY, 2020 IN KIGAAGA VILLAGE KABAAL PARISH.



Group photo: 25th July, 2020

Introduction

On 25th July, 2020 ORRA carried out a sensitization empowerment meeting for women in Kigaaga village. The meeting was organized following the ministry of health guidelines. The participants came from Kijumba, Katooke, Kyakatamba and Kigaaga B. This engagement was meant to create awareness about women and girl children rights and to provide the women with knowledge and skills to respond to the issues of women and girl children rights violation.

Proceedings;

opening remarks from ORRA

Peninah Ruhindi who is ORRA's community resource person for Kabaale welcomed all the participants in the meeting and asked members to put on their masks, stay a distance from one another and if sneezing, one should cover their mouth. She also added that the participants should ensure that they use the sanitizer which was at the entrance of the meeting venue. Ms. Peninah told the meeting participants that ORRA is implementing a project aimed at promoting and protecting rights of women and girl children. She also said that due to covid 19, ORRA has reduced on the number of community meetings and as a result ORRA has produced a number of publications in all the languages to help reach women since meetings are not a good option now. She concluded by asking the participants to take the information from the meeting to other fellow women who did not attend the meeting and also encourage the women to listen to Spice FM as ORRA has a message for them that run every day on the radio.



Mrs. Peninah Ruhindi ORRA community focal person for Kabaale giving a welcome remark.

The chairperson Local Council one

Norah Bahonge the local council representative of women in Kigaaga thanked ORRA for thinking about women and establishing a platform that brings together stakeholders to discuss matters that affect human rights and environment. Ms. Norah emphasizes that the participants should ensure they remain vigilant and respect all the guidelines that was put by the government to prevent the spread of the corona virus. She added that women are facing a lot of violence in their homes and this has worsened with the outbreak of corona virus and welcomed the idea of empowering women on their rights. However, Norah said that ORRA should ensure that they also involve men in these meetings so that they also get to understand that women are very key in the

development of a given society. She finally declared the meeting opened and wished members a fruitful deliberation.



Speaking is Mrs. Norah Bahonge the representative of women on the local council one Kigaaga giving an opening remarks.

Introduction to the programme

Christopher Opio the program coordinator at ORRA like the previous speakers welcomed the meeting participants and informed them to at least keep a distance of one meter from one another and ensure they use the sanitizer at the entrance. He continued that ORRA is implementing a project "Advancing women and girl children land rights". Christopher added that ORRA believes that by addressing land rights for women and girl children will help bridge the economic gap between women and men. He said that agriculture is the backbone of Uganda and over 70% of the agriculture labour force is

provided by women who unfortunately in most cases do not benefit from their work. He continued to say that this is because land is predominantly owned by male counterpart and as such women remain with little say on the land they till year in year out. Therefore, he said that it is high time women stand up to fight for their rights to own land and participate fully in the decision making of their property especially during land acquisition processes. He said that women should ensure they engage with their leaders such as religious, cultural and local government leaders to break of the cultural barriers that hinder women and girl children from for instance inheriting their family land. He concluded by asking the women to form champion groups which will help to engage with different stakeholders to champion women rights in their communities but he also encourage the participants to support girl child education as this will help reduce the illiteracy level among the women.



The program coordinator ORRA, Mr. Christopher Opio giving brief introduction to the project being implemented.

The facilitator

Counsel Brighton Aryampa a member of Uganda law society started by taking the women through some of the constitutional safeguards and provisions that that give rights to women to own land and also exercise their other rights like any other person. For example, he said that article 26 of the 1995 constitution of Uganda gives right to all citizen of Uganda to own land and the constitution does not allow any form of discrimination against women, here he sighted article 21 of the Constitution that prohibits discrimination based on gender and accords men and women the same status and rights, thus women are entitled to own land like any other individuals in the society. Brighton thanked ORRA for implementing this kind of initiatives in the rural areas because women in the rural areas lack access some information and therefore any efforts to reach them and provide them

with relevant information is very necessary. He said that women and girl children to always participate in the processes of land acquisition as a lot of oil and gas infrastructures are being developed in their areas which require acquisition of land.

He further said that Article **26(1)** protects the right to own property either individually or in association with others including women and that in case of acquisition, prompt, fair and adequate compensation should be paid without discriminating anyone in land and property ownership. He added that women in the Albertine region have a big role to play to ensure that their rights are respected during these processes and that this requires them to stand up to start to dialogue with their family members, communities, local leaders and government at different levels to discuss issues that are affecting women and what are can be done to solve them. He added by requesting the participants to be ambassadors by making sure that the information they have gotten from the meeting reach to majority of other women that did not attend the meeting and he also encouraged the participants of the meeting support girl child education.

He concluded by saying that women are pillars of development of any society and therefore, he told the women that they have a right to go to court for redress where agreements have failed and that they should know that laws are not enough to fight for their rights, but awareness creation is very key in the struggle to liberate themselves.



Mr. Brighton Aryampa sensitizing the women on their constitutional rights and their role in promoting women and girl children rights.

Responses from the participants

Annah Kwikiriza from Kigaaga B thanked ORRA and the facilitator for the good work they are doing to help women in their community. She said that when she got married to her husband, he was staying in his parent's compound but later the parents gave them land a side where they are settled now. She said the husband want to sell the land now and when she asked the husband as to why, the husband told her to shut down because the land does not belong to her. Therefore, she wanted to know how can she be helped.



Standing is Mrs. Annah Kwikiriza expressing her concerns during the question and answer session.

Response, the facilitator said that the fact that she has children with this man and they have been living on this land, the land belongs to the whole family. Therefore, she should engage the parents of the man and if she does not get help, let her engage the area leaders but she shouldn't make a mistake to keep quiet over this matter.

Mary Mugisha told the meeting that her husband has on several occasions tried to push her out of their land claiming that after all they were not officially married. She asked how she could go about this?

Response, the facilitator said that marriage does not mean tying a knot, there are several forms of marriage ranging from traditional, church, Islam and court. Therefore, Mary should not be watered down by a mere fact that she has no ring on her finger but the

fact the whole community know her as Mugisha's wife is enough and on top of that she has children with him so she shouldn't fear fighting for rights.

Innocent Tumwebaze a member of ORRA board said that during the land acquisition for the oil refinery in 2012 women and children suffered great injustices because they never they never had information regarding their rights. He added that ORRA is committed to work with women to ensure they are economically empowered and they are in a better position to sustain their livelihoods.

Janet Ayesiga requested ORRA to continue to engage with them but also involve their husbands since most of them are the ones that violates the rights of women to decision making and own land. Christopher responded to Janet by saying that ORRA has designed stickers with key information on women and girl children land rights and therefore, these stickers should be put on the doors so that the men can read them. He also said that they are going to put some of the stickers in the trading centers so that the information on women rights should reach a wider audience.

Bahonge Norah thanked the facilitator and she said that when the country is free from corona virus, ORRA should organize another meeting because there are many issues concerning women rights in the communities and because women lack some of these information, they tend die in silence. She also added that she will in their village council the information she has gotten in the meeting and she requested fellow women to do the same.

Agnes Kyomuhendo asked ORRA to organize more meetings of this kind because majority of women do not have enough information about their rights and at the end they suffer because of ignorance yet women would not be taken advantage of if they had adequate information regarding their rights.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Peninah Ruhindi thanked the participants for leaving whatever they were doing to come and participate in the sensitization meeting. She also thanked ORRA secretariat for technical support and mobilizing resources to ensure implementation of its activities. She said that ORRA has developed easy to read manual and stickers which will

be distributed to ensure that these messages live with us and reach to the people in this time of corona virus. She finally wished all the participants safe journey back home and she encouraged the participants of the meeting to continue to share with other women the information about women and girl children rights to create community awareness.

Pictorial highlights



