Empowering rural communities
**Who we are**

Action for Rural Women’s Empowerment (ARUWE) is a non-profit, Non Governmental Organization working with marginalized groups of people especially the rural Women farmers in Uganda.

**Our vision:**

A world in which women and their children are able to realize their full social, economic, and civic potential.

**Mission:**

To support and advocate for needs and rights of marginalized rural poor women to enable them initiate and manage their own social-economic and development process.

ARUWE aspires to see a community where:

- Rural women households are food secure
- Rural women are economically empowered
- Children grow up in an enabling environment
- There is increased access to clean and safe water
- Rights of women and children are respected
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For the past 5 years, ARUWE has sought to transform the lives of rural women and their children in the communities in which they live with a vision for which women and their children to initiate their social, political and economic development processes.

This annual report highlights the progress and impacts of ARUWE’s work in 2011/2012 in Wakiso, Kiboga and Kyankwanzi District. The challenges and constraints ARUWE has overcome in pursuit of achieving her objectives too, have been stated. This report ends with where ARUWE wants to go, a small section no development partner may want to miss reading!

It draws attention to the importance of reaching out to the poor and most vulnerable women especially the elderly, and the HIV/AIDS infected and affected women through working in collaboration with various development partners. ARUWE is still implementing the projects focusing on the core operations however; there has been an addition of Reproductive health as one of the problems that rural women are facing especially those women on Busi Island.

ARUWE added another core operation and it is now focusing on Reproductive Health on top of the 5 core operations as one of the problems that rural women are facing.

In general, ARUWE has;

a. Contributed to the sustained wellbeing of women and their children within the communities

b. Worked effectively with local partners because ARUWE’s most valuable input is to enable women groups to work more effectively towards improving and sustaining women’s well being.

c. Equipped local level staff with skills in serving as catalysts and builders of the capacity of local partners contributing to women’s well being

Under advocacy, ARUWE launched the Reproductive Health campaign focusing on family planning. Our HIV and AIDS programming priorities are to care for Women Living with HIV and AIDS, OVC and care givers especially grandmothers.

We have also continued supporting women and children in capacity building because we believe that education should lead to development of a woman’s well being. This was done through support of women groups in social, political and economic issues that would help them in initiating their development processes.

To all those individuals and organizations who have a shared partnership with ARUWE, we say you have made us as an organization worthy of existence. ARUWE has received financial support from a number of donors whose officers in charge of our programs have always found time to give professional advice.

We appreciate the support that has been accorded to ARUWE by development partners in this financial year and these include: Global Fund for Women, Stephen Lewis Foundation, Strategies for Life, Wheels for Life, Action Water, American Embassy and Trees for the Future.

I am thankful to the partners who have worked with ARUWE to transform the lives of rural women and their children. I am also thankful to the Board, Management and staff of ARUWE for their commitment and tireless efforts in serving and changing the lives of the poor.

What this proves is that, we have all had a stake and made ARUWE what it is and this is how we want it to be for many, many years to come!

Enjoy reading this report

Grace Irene Nanyonjo
Ag. Executive Director
ARUWE in the year 2011/12 continued to expand her activities to benefit more rural women and children especially in contributing to women empowerment and community development. This was enhanced through her programs including: Food, nutrition and income security, rights awareness and leadership education, health, water, sanitation and HIV/AIDS, child growth and development and environment conservation and protection. ARUWE works in Nsangi Sub County and Busi Island in Wakiso district, Mulagi Sub County in Kyankwanzi district and is scaling up her operations in Kiboga district. Through the support of The Stephen Lewis Foundation, The Global Fund for Women, Action Water, Strategies for Life, Trees for the future, Wheels4Life and Rural Empowerment Trust, ARUWE has been able to reach rural women and children.

This year, ARUWE adopted a Model Home approach in interventions among rural women households. This approach was to promote a healthy, economically empowered woman household for sustainable development. ARUWE has reached 200 rural women households. ARUWE expanded operations to four schools to create HIV/AIDS awareness, promote hygiene and water usage and developing life skills among school children. 1300 school children have been reached through the school campaigns. On wider community, ARUWE intensified her efforts in increasing access to clean and safe water over 1000 people benefited. Health and HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns were conducted in response to the need in the community. Over 2300 community members and school children were reached through the campaigns.
ARUWE continued to address the issue of food security and nutrition among 200 women farmer households through training farmers in sustainable agriculture, empowering 5 women community based agricultural trainers, promoting kitchen gardening, promoting planting of maize, beans and bananas. In this activity, ARUWE not only dealt with the women but also put emphasis to the children in the women’s households especially those between 1 to 5 years. At least 68% of the women beneficiaries have children in the above mentioned age range. Kitchen gardening was promoted among households as vegetables play a big role in the proper growth of a child. Vegetables promoted included carrots, amaranthus, nakati and sukuma wiki. Women testified that vegetables boosted both immunity and that of their children. Women were trained in bottle irrigation to enable them plant vegetables even during dry season. ARUWE conducted trainings group dynamics to build group cohesion, 7 new groups of 15 members each have been formed. ARUWE now works with over 20 women groups.
Income generation

It is common knowledge that economic empowerment is one of the woman’s most powerful tools in bettering her life and her children. ARUWE therefore embarked on aspects of empowering the rural woman economically. Aspects emphasized included: micro credit, agribusiness, livestock rearing and crafts making. To foster sustainability, women were taken through thorough trainings to build their knowledge in the activity of interest.
Through this program:

105 women organized in 7 women groups were trained in credit management and accessed small loans. These were able to set up income generating activities.

89 women farmers engaged in agribusiness especially of crops such as maize, beans and hot pepper 20 women farmers were supported with livestock of goats and pigs. This was carried out on revolving basis. Women farmers were not only able to earn extra income but used the animal manure for fertilizing their gardens leading to increased agricultural yields.

45 women were supported with craft making materials to make crafts such as baskets, mats and other crafts as an income generating project.

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**Jane’s story**

Jane (47 years) is a hardworking farmer and business woman in Nanzinga village. In the previous year, she was faced with socio-economic difficulties that made her lose her shop which was her source of income. This propelled Jane to come together with 15 women to form a group with an objective of empowering themselves economically.

Through trainings in credit management and savings mobilization, Jane managed to get a small loan of Ugx 800,000 which enabled her to set up a retail shop that brings in a daily income Ugx 50,000. With this, Jane is not only able to look after her family but also encourage fellow women to work hard and build their lives.
Nakazibwe Florence, 56 years of age from Mulagi Sub County, is one of the beneficiaries ARUWE started working with in 2010. With the support given to her through trainings in sustainable agriculture and seed inputs of maize and beans, she was able to save more than 1,000,000 Ugx to set up a better house for her and her 5 grandchildren. Florence is continuing to work hard to earn enough savings to complete her house.

ARUWE provided 20 grandmother households with mattresses, blankets and mosquito nets to improve living standards for the grandmothers and OVC living with them. The impact of this seemingly simple activity was tremendous. This was evidenced by the grandmothers never ending smiles and show of gratitude for the kind gesture. Grandmothers were eager to enjoy a good night sleep with their grandchildren on their comfortable beddings.
Due to the overwhelming need for water, ARUWE supported the community of Mulagi to increase access to clean water. On household level, ARUWE constructed 20 water jars, 3 Ferro cement tanks in schools and two shallow wells in two villages. Through this program: At least 1000 community people were able to assess clean and safe water which helped in the reduction of the prevalence of water related diseases.

20 women households of an average of 6 members making a total of 120, who were 4 km from the nearest water source, were able to access clean water through water jars by rainwater harvesting. 1000 school children were able get clean water through the 30,000 liter Ferro cement tanks constructed in their schools. This enabled school children concentrate on their school work as they spent less time collecting water as opposed to before when they had to move far from the schools to get water.
Hygiene trainings were conducted in five schools to improve hygiene and sanitation. Through the trainings school children got to learn better body hygiene practices and water use.

ARUWE staff demonstrating hand washing in Kikabala Primary School

Robinah using a tippy tap  
Ronald and his grandmother using a dish rack
ARUWE carried out hygiene trainings among 100 women households where proper household hygiene practices were emphasized such as tippy taps, dish racks, latrine covers, and waste management.

Here is what the beneficiaries had to say about the Water, hygiene and sanitation improvement projects:

**Namboozo Margerate** (51 years)  
a widow from Munyaami village said  
“Life has been made easier since the water source (Shallow well) is within my reach compared to the 2 km I and my family used to walk to acquire clean and safe water. I can now practice proper hygiene and sanitation practices at my home and am assured of good health. Thank you so much ARUWE and the partners.”

**Nagadya Adisa** (56 years)  
a disabled community member from Kigando A said that although she could not pump the water herself from the shallow well, her grandchildren would fetch the water for her. The water they have been using had a terrible smell and exposed the people to diarrhea typhoid and other water born diseases. “The new water well is a long awaited answered prayer thanks to ARUWE, all the partners and everyone who made this possible”, she said with beaming with a smile.
ARUWE worked to improve community health through weekly health centre outreaches, Voluntary Counseling and Testing and HIV/AIDS awareness. ARUWE worked with Nalinya Health centre 111 to support weekly health centre outreaches for joint medical screening for 100 grandmothers and their grandchildren. ARUWE supported the beneficiaries with minor medical treatment requirements (costs). With the assistance of 2 nurses from the health centers, referral services for complicated cases were made and continually monitored. Sick Grandmothers were able to get free treatment and 6 who had TB were able to get treatment from Kiboga hospital after being referred.

To ARUWE, the health of not only her beneficiaries but the entire community was of interest. ARUWE worked with 27 Village Health Team members and Nalinya Health centre 111 to provide simple medication including vitamins, de-worming tablets, septrine and family planning manuals and kits to community members.

HIV/AIDS Awareness campaigns

Through the HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns, over 1000 community people and 1300 school children were reached. With the sensitizations came the need to carry out Voluntary Counseling and Testing. In partnership with the Infectious Disease Institute and Nalinya Health Centre 111, ARUWE conducted VCT among 200 community members. This enabled them to find out their sero status and prevent further spread of HIV/AIDS. Harmony was restored in a home of one discordant couple after receiving counseling.
ARUWE carried out eight out reaches in schools through Music, dance and drama with the youth Life Club from St Joseph Senior School Vvumba.

The Life club performing in a dance on the World AIDS day on 1st December 2011
ARUWE carried out trainings of 10 women community paralegals in women rights. ARUWE used the Ugandan constitution and CEDAW Convention. ARUWE worked with the police probation to carry out monitoring. This resulted in increased awareness of women’ rights, acquisition of knowledge in Gender based violence redress mechanisms and formation of women advocacy groups.
Chapter Five

Environment conservation and protection

ARUWE trained 50 women in agro forestry. 10 tree nurseries were set up in 5 women homes. The trees promoted include caliandra and salisbania as they add nutrients to the soil. In addition to the environment being protected, the soils are conserved too to bring forth increased agricultural yields.

Women looking after tree seedlings
in one of the nursery beds
Chapter six
Approaches to community sustainable development

Supporting the youth to become a voice in the community

Through the HIV/AIDS awareness, the youth became a strong voice in the community. ARUWE worked with a team of 50 youth in Mulagi to conduct HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns in schools and community. In reaching out to fellow students, the life club was able to relate and interact and share their life experiences with others. It was through this that other students saw the importance of forming such clubs in their schools to create more HIV/AIDS awareness and other issues that affect them.

Networking with Community structures

ARUWE networked with community structures to implement programs in the field through conducting meetings, trainings and working together to form solutions. These included local leaders, Village Health Teams, Water user Committees and Beach Management Units.

Women group approach

Building capacity of the women to form development groups through which they carry out activities is a major sustainability measure. It is extremely difficult to find a rural woman who had made it on her own. ARUWE therefore having recognized the power of women working together has put her energy in empowering women through groups and encouraged them to form leadership structures. In these women groups are more creative and self-reliant.
# Financial report

ARUWE receives support from both local and international partners to implement the initiated programs.

## Sources of fund

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## Thanks to our Funders

- [ARUWE ANNUAL REPORT 2011/2012](#)
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