



## KEY LEARNINGS FROM LAND RIGHTS AWARENESS CAMPAIGNS CONDUCTED BY ARUWE



In November 2014, ARUWE conducted needs assessment in access and utilization land rights and responsibilities among the 100 rural women farmers in Gayaza Sub County in Kyankwanzi district. The gaps identified were lack of knowledge of the existing national land instruments and the inefficiency of the area land management structures. In addition, women especially the widowed, elderly or those separated from their spouses were vulnerable to evictions from their land/homes.

In March 2015, ARUWE conducted trainings in land rights and responsibilities awareness among 204 rural women farmers and 28 local leaders five of who were area land management committee members. ARUWE also trained 6 community paralegals to offer information for land issues. These were attached to the women groups supported by ARUWE. ARUWE used the Amended Land Act 2010 and the 1995 constitution to create the awareness. ARUWE organized a dialogue where the women farmers forwarded their issues to the chairperson of the land board- Kyankwanzi district.

From the intervention, ARUWE drew lessons that could be used in designing future land rights programs.

1. Empowering local community groups / structures to manage land conflicts is more effective and sustainable.

2. A greater need is to have strong redress mechanisms for land issues at community level. There is need to have conflict resolution mechanisms between landlords and occupants.
3. It is important to scale up the interventions to benefit more community members. More people especially the women need to understand their rights and responsibility concerning land and property in general. Land security plays an important role in socio economic development of the community.
4. For sustainability, it is important to have advocacy initiatives to strengthen land structures right from village, sub county and district levels to enable communities get redress for land rights violations. These can include allocation of more resources including financial, technical, documenting the selection criteria for area land communities, more community engagements and supervisions.
5. Creating and establishing grassroots women movements to promote land security especially for women, widows and orphans will also help in creating sustainability.
6. Male inclusion in land and property rights awareness is very important for better impact in the community. Since men are the major property owners especially, it is essential to address the gender roles and power relations when it comes to land and development.
7. **The importance of a will:** Widows and orphans are most affected by violation of property and land rights. In case a widow was not legally married i.e. through customary law, civil and church/mosque, she had no right to inherit land or any property left by the deceased spouse even if she had children and had been married for a number of years. The law does not protect such a woman and she most likely faces eviction from the husband's property especially by the relatives. Women who are not legally married will be protected if the husband's will includes them. It is therefore of paramount importance not only to sensitize the communities (male spouses) of the need to make a will but also on how to go about it. In this way, widows and orphans will be protected even when the marriage was not legally registered.
8. Legally recognised marriages: In a bid to protect women even in the event of divorce, it is important to encourage males to legally register their marriages. Women also need to be encouraged to beseech their spouses to register their marriages. Males are usually not intent on legal marriages due to the financial costs involved. However, civil marriages are cost effective. Many rural community members are ignorant to the civil marriages. It will be important to train communities on the different types of marriages and how they can benefit from them using the least costs.
9. Big knowledge gap in land rights and laws: Out of the 20,423 people in Gayaza Sub County, the project was only able to reach 204 i.e. 1% of the entire population. There is such a great need from the community to educate them on their land rights and responsibilities.  
 One of the participants had this to say, "*Since we are an agricultural community and land is our major production resource, this training not only relevant but empowering too for our livelihood. It is the first of its kind in our sub county and we request to receive more trainings and for the neighbouring parishes too. Equipped with more knowledge, we hope our land security will be enhanced. Knowledge is power*".

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