

Your Gifts at Work in Uganda



“When equipped with the right knowledge and facts, communities are able to defend themselves.”

In 2017, a grant from PHP is supporting a project through **Action for Rural Women's Empowerment (ARUWE)** in Gayaza Sub County, Kyankwanzi district, Uganda. This grant was made possible by gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing and the Hunger Program.

In an area faced with many land conflicts, the goal was to deepen awareness of land rights and to enhance the capacity of rural women farmers to protect those rights, especially for poor women and widows. 900 rural women farmers learned skills in conflict resolution, group dynamics, leadership,

and advocacy and received training in the process of land registration. Spouses attended the trainings as well.

In three villages, community meetings offered education on land rights, policies, laws, and making legally recognized wills. During legal aid clinics, a group of human rights lawyers offered legal advice for groups and individuals on tenant roles and responsibilities, legal mechanisms that community members can appeal to, the importance of making a will to protect land rights of loved ones, and legalization of marital relationships as a measure for protecting property rights.

The lawyers helped draft letters which successfully kept women in two villages from being evicted from their land, and the authorities were notified to ensure the women would no longer be threatened. More than 140 households were supported through this initiative.

Interactive radio talk shows on land rights provided education on land governance issues. Topics included proper steps in conducting land search (to avoid illegal purchase which, in turn created conflicts), different land tenure systems in Uganda, and roles and responsibilities of land lords and tenants. Listeners to the evening broadcasts heard information about the national land policy and land act and about justice access centers within their communities.

Posters printed in the local language helped disseminate information about land lord and tenant roles and responsibilities. The aim was to promote peaceful co-existence when sharing land. Trainings were also conducted for formal and informal dispute bodies, enabling them to provide better services in land redress.

Ten paralegals (8 female) received refresher training on acting as Advocacy champions. They have already reported successfully helping with land/property cases for widows and orphans and escorting victims to court to help ensure they receive justice.

When we are more secure on our land, we are able to meaningfully carry out our agricultural activities. We are not threatened by land lords to slash down our produce or to grab our land. —Dimintria

Voices from Uganda

“...Armed with this information, I was able to defend my property and land left behind by my late father. Our male relatives wanted to grab our land saying that I could not be in charge since I was a woman. Having been equipped with knowledge ... I have secured all our family property.” —Nansiimo (a paralegal)

Najjuma, a 56 year old widow taking care of 8 grandchildren in Kasubi village, has been able to secure her land of 8 acres from her in-laws and landlord who wanted to unlawfully evict her from land. Armed with knowledge from the trainings, Najjuma was able to utilize her rights through the community land governance structures to stop the unlawful evictions. Since she is secure on her land, Najjuma has set up two acres of demonstration plots of beans and maize on her land and she is able to train community members on good agriculture practices. —ARUWE 2017 report

“ARUWE conducted legal aid clinics in our community. The village legal aid clinic is an answer to our prayers. We had no idea that we as tenants or bona fide occupants had any rights to land we occupy. We always thought that our land lords could do as they pleased and we had nowhere to turn to help. Now that we know our rights and responsibilities over our land and property, we will defend ourselves as need arises.” —a community member

“Through the project trainings on the important of making a will and how to write it, I got to appreciate that even women could make a will. I have made mine to protect the property and land rights of my children in the event of my death.” —Kasalina

Due to the knowledge and skills acquired through the project, Ms. Ganyana Juliet was appointed chairperson of the Kyankwanzi district land Board. This was the first time a woman became a chairperson of a male dominated committee. Ganyana stated that having been educated in national land governance issues, she was in a better position to be nominated and appointed in the position. She said that her focus area was to ensure people understand proper processes of registration and certification of land as well as protecting widows and orphans using the legal system. —ARUWE 2017 report



Presbyterian gifts are at work supporting ministries of compassion, peace and justice around the world. Through One Great Hour of Sharing and gifts to the Presbyterian Hunger Program (PHP), we and our partners are working to alleviate hunger and eliminate its causes. One way we reach toward this goal is through grants that support partners working in their home countries to bring about transformation. Thanks to ARUWE for the photos, quotes, and information.



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