



AMWA NEWS

Akina Mama wa Afrika-Bi-annual Newsletter January-June 2009

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Dutch Ambassador in Uganda



Lion of Judah statue in Addis Ababa

Editorial

You are welcome to the first bi-annual edition of AMWA news in the year 2009 and we hope that you will have a successful year. In this issue there are many articles of events that have happened so far. Events like, The Uganda Feminist Forum, The CSW summit among others. We have also included the Alumni Spotlight to update you about what is happening to the African Women Leadership Institute Alumni. We hope that you will enjoy and benefit greatly from this issue. For inquiries, please contact us at amwa@amwa-ea.org

AU GENDER PRE-SUMMIT IN ADDIS ABABA, 3-4 JULY 2009.

The AU Gender Pre-summit conference was held in Addis Ababa as a precursor to the African Union summit. The African Union Women Gender and Development Directorate (WGDD) in conjunction with the civil society organizations (CSO's) organized a Gender Pre-Summit ahead of AU Summits of Heads of State and Governments.

Participants in this meeting included: Representatives from the civil society, ECOSSOC, Pan African Women Organization

(PAWO), Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR), women networks and NGOs as well as Network of Women Ministers and Parliamentarians.

At this meeting SOAWR a key partner of the Women and Gender Development Directorate, which has done groundbreaking work on the ratification of the Women's Protocol in Africa launched a SOAWR book.

For more details please visit www.Africa-union.org



Participants in a session at the UFF 2009

Uganda Feminist Forum (UFF), 2009

10th-13th February 2009

The Second Uganda Feminist Forum was held from 10th to 13th February 2009. The event gathered about 30 Ugandan feminists to deliberate and plan on stronger feminist movement building at national level after “releasing the feminist brakes” in 2008.

This year's forum made a significant contribution towards the strengthening of movement building at national level, maximizing impact towards feminist building and resolved what an ideal feminist organization should look like, feel like, smell like and be like.

At the UFF there was the realization that there was a need to bridge the gaps between women to dispel the growing perception that the women's movement was elitist and this could be achieved through purposeful movement building.

For more information, contact uff@amwa-ea.org.



A group discussion at the UFF 2009

This year's forum made a significant contribution towards the strengthening of movement building at national level.



Souvenirs for the "Stop AIDS" campaign

53rd Session of the CSW Summit

In its 53rd session, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women focused on the theme 'The Equal Sharing of Responsibilities between Women and Men Including Care-giving in the Context of HIV/AIDS' to relieve women of the

“ Women and girls continue to bear an alarming risk and burden of HIV infection and are not able to receive adequate prevention, treatment, care and support as a result of the persisting social, cultural and economic subordination, structural inequalities, as well as pervasive violence from different sectors in society. ”



The burden of HIV/AIDS infection without adequate care

unequal distribution of responsibility. Therein, key issues addressed related to the political and social economy of care, the promotion of more equitable parental leave policies and the role of men and boys in sharing domestic and care giving responsibilities, in the context of HIV and AIDS especially in Africa where this epidemic has hit hardest.

CSW-53 discussed the causes and consequences of the unequal sharing of responsibilities between women and men in the public and private spheres in view of recommending policies to address the inequality and to empower the women of today.

Women have historically assumed a major role in households and while women have enabled societies to grow their work in the household has never been compensated nor recognized for its value.

At this event, AMWA's very own Christine Butegwa presented a paper in which highlighted "The Promise of the Protocol and the Status of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Africa". For more details please contact amwa@amwa-ea.org



Vigil and March (6th March 2009) Against Domestic Violence

As part of the advocacy campaign to pressure the Government of Uganda to pass gender sensitive bills in light of the escalating cases of domestic violence and violation of women's rights, the Uganda Women's Movement was engaged in a series of campaigns and lobby meetings which culminated into a march and vigil on Women's Day. The chief walker for the peaceful demonstration to demand for the rights of women was the Member of Parliament for Kampala, Hon. Nabilah Nagayi Semapala. The march culminated into a vigil at parliament to mourn the victims of domestic violence and this was

marked by the lighting of a candle by the Speaker of Parliament, Hon. Edward Sekandi.

The candle was lit and set in parliament as a constant reminder that the women of Uganda wanted the gender bills passed. Prior to this, the Speaker was presented with a mural which constituted of the names of victims of domestic violence that had appeared in the media. Later in the day the procession was hosted in parliamentary gardens where documentaries were shown and stories on the realities of domestic violence were told.

The candle was lit and set in parliament as a constant reminder that the women of Uganda wanted the gender bills passed.



The speaker of Parliament, flanked by members of Parliament and members of Civil Society after lighting the candle

“Building an AMwA with a Soul

(14th-18th March 2009)

The Board and Staff of AMwA had a retreat at Ranch on the Lake in Lweza. The staff from the two offices in United Kingdom and Uganda had a chance to finally put faces to the names they have exchanged emails with over time. The UK team comprised of Kekeli Kpognon, Molaria Farombi and Alberta Boston- Mammah. The Staff also got a chance to meet the members of AMwA board who are distinguished and successful African women and above all with a love for AMwA. The board was represented by Amanda Mukwashi, Zeedah Meirhoffer, Joyce Tamale and Stella Mukasa. The retreat was both business and pleasure mingled with a sense of belonging and moving towards “AMwA with a Soul”. All this was achieved through team discussions and creative presentations on how to propel AMwA

to greater and heights through team building and bonding and strategic planning. One of the activities that captured the moment was the “love letters” in which members confessed undying love, admiration and appreciation for one another and the challenges that hindered growth. This activity was meant to help the staff and Board members discover themselves and enable them to build better inter-personal relationships. Another inspiring moment of the retreat was the dreaming session where members were allowed to dream big without resolve. The members of staff and Board members interacted and got to know each other better. By the end of the retreat there was a clear understanding of roles and each one’s contribution to the growth of AMwA.



Dancers entertain Staff and Board members at the retreat

The retreat was both business and pleasure mingled with a sense of belonging and moving towards an “AMwA with a Soul”.



Staff and Board members having a good time

Dutch Ambassador to Uganda launches AMwA project



AMwA Rolls Out Project on Harnessing the Power of Women: Building Sustainable Movements (28th -29th April 2009)

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A Regional Consultative Meeting convened by Akina Mama wa Afrika was held at Munyonyo Commonwealth Resort, in Kampala, Uganda on 28th-29th April 2009.

The consultation drew together a cross section of actors in the area of conflict and post conflict in Africa. The consultative meeting reflected on national, regional and continental strategies, challenges, lessons learnt, emerging trends and experiences.

In this meeting, it was noted that the promotion of women's human rights had gained an unprecedented momentum over the last decade, in Africa and worldwide specifically with women's rights to peace and security, women's participation in peacebuilding and recognising rape as a war crime and a security issue. However, despite important milestones in recognition of women's human rights, African women are still subject to marked

discriminations and violations that manifest themselves both in private and public spheres.

In this meeting it was noted that African women's subjugation was a result of interconnected sites of oppression that required multi-sectoral approaches, engagement by and with progressive movements and partnership with stakeholders at all levels to contribute to radically transforming the situation of African women. This approach would contribute to creating greater synergies, impact and avoid duplication.

It was agreed that the power of movements lay in women's ability to create sustainable engagement mechanisms and a proactive citizenry

to actively engage in demanding accountable action. Movements would also make it possible to harness the collective energies of African women that

Entertainers at the launch



are grounded on a common ideology, goals, agenda and collective organizing.

The participants identified with the African feminist theory, practice and organizing as central to strengthening the women's movement, re-politicizing the struggle and shaping the discourse on

peace and security in Africa in a way that makes it possible to tackle contentious issues. There was consensus that the leadership and stewardship of women in conflict resolution, transformation and peace building would contribute to changing the face of conflict.

As representatives of intergovernmental agencies, civil society organizations, media and government in partnership with AMWA, they committed to concentrate efforts on the issues meriting redress.

For more details please contact amwa@amwa-ea.org



A woman and her child in a camp for internally displaced persons

EA AWLI Mombasa, (June 2009)

This was the first leadership training in the year and it took place in Mombasa, Kenya. The overall theme for the AWLI was: "Strengthened Leadership Capacities of Sexual Minorities in Africa" and it took place from 7th – 20th June 2009 in Mombasa, Kenya.

"Strengthened Leadership Capacities of Sexual Minorities in Africa"



Participants at the Mombasa AWLI

Alumni Spotlight News

Rita Aciro (AWLI Alumni 2008)

Rita Aciro an AWLI alumni of the year 2003 is currently in the spotlight as the new Coordinator of Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), an organization that does advocacy and lobbying coalition of National Women's NGOs, institutions and individuals in Uganda, founded in 1993. UWONET was born out of the East African Women's Conference held in Kampala in 1993. Rita has risen to the levels of leadership where she will be in decision making and we believe she will bring the women's Movement to a standard.

Rita is a women's right activist, researcher and trainer with long standing interest and passion in gender, justice and governance, research, monitoring and evaluation. She has greatly

contributed to women's rights advocacy at local, national and international levels.

Before joining UWONET, she worked as a Programme Officer, Capacity Building and Advocacy at the Uganda Land Alliance, a national advocacy NGO, Eastern Africa Sub-regional Support Initiative for the advancement of women (EASSI) and Slum Aid Project.

She has 12 years of experience in development work.

She is passionate about women's issues, mature and committed to the attainment of gender equality and equity. We believe that Rita will steer the organization to greater heights.

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AWLI ALUMNI NEWS

Monica Amoding

(AWLI Alumni 2008)

I have since then organised a national young women's leaders' conference bringing together over 100 young women from across the country. This conference marked the beginning of a new era in which senior women leaders would reach out and mentor young female leaders in leadership and in the promotion of the ideology of the Women's Movement.

AWLI 2008 held in Accra Ghana, is one event in my life that I will always remember. The night of 17th August 2008 saw me pack my bags headed to Accra, Ghana for a two weeks Africa Wide Women's Leadership Institute. On arrival, one of the things that put me off was, having to share a room with some body I did not know or had ever met before. To me, that was mistake number one that the organisers had done. However, it turned out to be the most important thing that happened to me at AWLI 2008. Having to meet other women leaders from Africa and networking with them. It turns out that my roommate during AWLI is now my leadership, business and prayer partner. I could have never known that this woman that was so much unknown to me before then had a lot that I could learn from and share with. The many young and very strong AWLI leaders that I met that time all turned out to be sources of inspiration. Each of those powerful women had a strong story to tell. Each one of them working for the transformation of humanity on various fronts. Loaded with so much inspiration, vigour and encouragement, I came back determined to make all of my dreams a reality.

I have since then organised a national young women's leaders' conference

bringing together over 100 young women from across the country. This conference marked the beginning of a new era in which senior women leaders would reach out and mentor young female leaders in leadership and in the promotion of the ideology of the Women's Movement. The conference offered space for young women to reflect on their own life visions and purposes and refocus them into offering visionary leadership where ever they are. In the first conference we also launched the Girls2Leaders Movement in Uganda that will sponsor annual national leadership

conferences for young women and reach out to young women across the country on issues of leadership, human rights, gender and development. Uganda and Ghana are now organising to hold an Africa wide leadership conference for young women at the end of the year

Together with my roommate then, we also started an Africa wide prayer group (Africa Leadership Prayer Network) that focuses on praying for leadership of this continent

because we know that Africa's problems stem from poor leadership, yet leaders are charged with the duty of finding solutions to society's problems. This prayer network is already operational in Uganda, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Malawi. These prayer meetings take place monthly in each of these countries and we hope to get more countries on board for this one purpose-praying for leadership.

There are many things that I put down in my AWLI work plan; many are still in the pipeline, such as running for election in

At Personal level I have already started two businesses and have embarked on saving money and earning income over what I have been earning. I also acquired myself a car like I targeted and planned by the time I left AWLI 2008

2011. This I must do and I am already doing my homework and refocusing my activities towards those that will only lead to achieving this goal. In conclusion, AWLI for me was a time to reflect on what I was doing as a leader, the dreams that I espoused for myself and the community I live and what I was doing to achieve them. Ever since then, I am working daily towards that work plan and I believe that each of the short term and long term objectives I espouse in life will be achieved.

MOVING ON...

Ann Kithaka (AWLI Alumni February 2008)

I am currently in Liberia, it is fine as we are pushing on with the peacekeeping business and I am trying hard to achieve my dream of becoming a 'legal expert' as I had planned in Mombassa. I am also doing some online courses and getting to meet great people. As you all know, there was this big international women colloquium that was taking place in Monrovia. The theme was centered on the UN Resolution 1325, Women in Leadership etc and it reminded me of our training in Mombassa. I think we should all thank God that we benefited from the AWLI personally, there are so many things that I know now just because I attended the AWLI. I even feel like nothing can touch me; all this self knowledge and self awareness, I feel we got something magical that will turn each one of us into a success story.



Lydia Wilberd (AWLI Alumni February 2008)

It has been a year since we met in Mombassa in AWLI program. As many of you would have done, by end of February I revised the letter I wrote to myself and the work plan I prepared. I have realized the miracle of having a work plan! It gives you direction and commitment to working hard on achieving it. It is amazing! I could not believe the achievement I made in one year. I feel very happy to share with you and recognize your contribution in transforming me. I bought my own nice Toyota Mark II in April. My nephew whom I supported since form one completed form four in October and he got div 2 allowing him to proceed with Advanced level in a government school. According to my work plan, I enrolled my niece in school who was neglected and everybody believed was dull. From the AWLI, I learnt to believe in people and encourage others, I have given her an opportunity and she is holding on, happy and doing wonders in school, she got 76% in her first examination. I have bought a piece of land in Dar-es-salaam and am planning to build my own house in the city within the next 5 years. Above all, God has blessed my plan; I have a fiancé, a man of my dreams and have been offered full time employment.



AMwA New Entrant

Sophia Ngugi (AWLI Alumni February 2008)

The 2008 AWLI was a total turning point for me both on my personal and professional life. I had a session with 21 young women in our network on "My dreams; my reality" focusing on strategic planning, setting priorities etc. AWLI experience plus more reading really helped and the young women were very happy with this hope they all put it into practice.



Jeremiah Ahumuza Birungi

On 25th January 2009 when the Obama inaugural mania was subsiding, AMwA got a new entrant on the podium to keep the excitement going. Patience Ayebazibwe, Programs Officer delivered an Obama look like, dress likea healthy bouncing boy by the names of Jeremiah Ahumuza Birungi. He is a dedicated feminist because he attended the AMwA Staff-Board retreat without any qualms. Bravo boy!!

Patience Congratulations!!

Lul Seyoum (AWLI Alumni 2008)

I celebrated women's day attending a relevant event organised by women from different parts of the world, mostly Africans and Europeans - 26 countries with babies/girls/ladies from age 9 months-80 years. The theme of the celebration was "Beating the credit crunch" It focused on the many ways that women can get through the global financial crisis. There were speeches on the importance of the day, presentations on how to save and earn money, displays and advice on setting up mini-enterprises, credit unions and avoiding debts.

There were also some witness statements by ladies who suffered extreme consequences of wars and yet managed not only to overcome them but also to inspire others.

Awards allocation to ladies who achieved great social work.

Besides there was a huge selection of International food tasting brought by participants and wonderful entertainment on different cultural shows, music and dances. Apparently we all enjoyed it.

I look forward to celebrating with you all the IWD centenary 2011! Hello, AMWA ladies, AWLI 09 is relying on your professionalism and generosity to accommodate this. Most importantly let's hope that each coming year we will witness the betterment of women's stand in all areas





A tribute to Rose Alinda (2009)

You rose above the waves, with a dance; Rest in Peace dear Rose

By Sophie Ngugi, YWLI, Kenya (On behalf of the AWLI 2009 Alumni)

Words fail, how does one capture the life of such a shero in few words on a paper? For Rose that was what you were. Anyone who met you has a lingering memory of a smile, a great smile that radiated from the heart. A smile that was so willingly and readily given; one that would not be ignored, but smile back.

The last time to encounter Rose was at Addis Ababa Ethiopia for a training of young women leaders (African Women's Leadership Institute- AWLI) by Akina Mama wa Afrika, and hence the memories of Rose was the energetic lady who didn't let music get wasted without a dance. The lady who was all smiles and laughter in the company of global sisterhood by the other sisters in the training. That was what the AWLI alumni, of Dec 2009 will remember for years to come. The energetic young lady is no more, we dare say, but her life is not over, just started in a different way.

Rose lived a courageous life that only a few persons can claim to. Having being diagnosed HIV positive on 28 July 2002, she had to overcome many hurdles and keep the smile, the sunshine that she never lost. Not the betrayal or the shock, not the bitterness of feeling her life has been cut short by a virus, but knew her life was more than that. The stigma did not keep her from coming out public and being a voice in the fight against HIV/Aids. She stood tall as she got her face in the media with adverts on use of anti retroviral drugs yet maintained her calm as she counseled many others and gave hope for life.

As a member of the Young Women's Leadership Institute (YWLI) network, she was eager to give her story and inspire other young women. Her precise words were, 'rising above the waves' and also mentioned "life has a way of sorting itself out as long as you keep the fight"

Those words ring true, for Rose, she rose above the waves, as her name suggest,

Rose above the stigma and self-pity that many wallow in;

Rose above the regrets of what has and could have been;

Rose above the silence that has been used as a weapon;

Rose above what would be expected by society;

To be a strong woman, a loving mother, a caring friend, a caring counselor, taking more than her share of burdens to make the world better for women and children.

She portrayed a strong woman, and you had to talk with her to know that there is a story behind every woman. If she felt otherwise, it was not evident in her face, for her face only portrayed love, laughter and life.

As you Rest In Peace, Rose, may the dance we saw welcome you with the angels in heaven where you will rest forever, never to worry again.

We will never dance with you again,
We will never share laughter with you again,
We will not exchange ideas on our strategic plans for our dear lives,
We will not share our dreams for 2013 as we did,
We will not share with you our stories of courage and struggle,
We will never and wonder what tomorrow holds,
For you are no longer physically with us;

However, in our hearts and minds, your memory shall linger,
In addition, we believe that one day, we will share with you the heavenly dance of the heavenly melodies; only that you are lucky to precede us in the dance;

**** Rest in Peace Dear Rose.****

By Sophie Ngugi, Young women's Leadership Institute, Kenya.
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Upcoming Events

1. Francophone AWLI will take place from 22nd-28th November 2009 in Dakar, Senegal. The theme will be **"From Gender Commitment to Action; Translating the normative work into positive change in women's lives"**
2. Roundtable Think Tank in partnership with Gender Links and Hivos, Johannesburg South Africa, 7th-10th December 2009
3. POT framework review workshop, January 2010
4. Central African AWLI ; This will take place from 1st – 14th February 2010 and the overall theme will be Women's Leadership and Movement Building in Conflict and Post Conflict countries in Africa and will take place in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo
5. 54th CSW Session, March 2010