

# COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT WESTNILE (CEPAD-WN)



## International Women's Day Celebrations

*Breaking Barriers: Unlocking Women's Potential through Social Protection in Uganda (Celebrating Women Rights/Led Organisations in Uganda).*



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As we celebrate International Women's Day 2025, Community Empowerment for Peace and Development West Nile (CEPAD-WN), a women-led organization in Uganda, honors the achievements and contributions of women from Uganda. This year's theme, **"Empowering Women through Innovative Approaches to Social Protection: A Prerequisite for Inclusive and Sustainable Development,"** resonates deeply with our organization's mission and values.

Ugandan women through the established Feminist /Women Rights Organisations and/or individually have made significant strides in various fields, from politics and business to education and healthcare. However, despite these gains, women in Uganda still face numerous challenges, including poverty, violence, unemployment, and limited access to opportunities and social services such as education and healthcare. To address these challenges, it is essential to empower women through innovative approaches to social protection.

Social protection is critical for women's empowerment, as it provides a safety net against poverty, hunger, and other forms of vulnerability. In Uganda, social protection programs, such as cash transfers, vocational training, refugee, education, microfinance and GBV support programs among others, have been shown to improve women's economic empowerment, reduce poverty, and enhance the overall wellbeing to women and girls.

However, traditional social protection approaches often fail to address the specific needs and challenges of women. For instance, many social protection programs are designed with a one-size-fits-all approach, neglecting the unique experiences and realities of women from different walks of life. To effectively empower women, social protection programs must be tailored to in Uganda. By providing women with tailored support and services, we can address the specific challenges and needs of women, enhance their economic

empowerment, and improve their overall well-being.

As we celebrate International Women's Day 2025, CEPAD-WN honors the achievements and contributions of women from Uganda. We recognize the critical role that women and play in driving economic growth, promoting social justice, and advancing sustainable development.

We call upon governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector to invest in innovative approaches to social protection that empower women. By working together, we can create a more just and equitable society, where women and girls can thrive and reach their full potential.

#### **A call to action:**

1. The Feminist/WROs should join the FHN National Humanitarian Platform hosted by CEPADWN in Uganda to have amplified voices, engage in collective action, share experiences and, coordinate efforts to address the complex and interconnected challenges facing women and girls in Uganda.
2. Invest in Innovative Approaches to Social Protection: Governments, civil society organizations, and the private sector should invest in innovative approaches to social protection that empower women, such as mobile money transfers, vocational training, and digital literacy programs.
3. Provide Tailored Support and Services: Social protection programs should be tailored to address the specific needs and challenges of women, providing them with access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities. This includes providing support for women with address their specific needs and challenges and this can work better if the WROs take the lead.

WROs have employed and demonstrated the impact of using innovative approaches to social protection which are essential for empowering women in Uganda because they recognize and live the unique experiences and challenges of women and are better placed to provide tailored support to address these specific needs.

We applaud several Women Rights Organizations in Uganda using innovative approaches to social protection to empower women such as Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO), National Association of Women's Organizations in Uganda (NAWOU), and Women's Economic Empowerment Project (WEEP) among many that use digital literacy, skilling, sponsorships, financial inclusion programs to provide women with the skills and knowledge they need to navigate the digital world, access information, and improve their economic well-being.

Empowering women through innovative approaches to social protection is critical for achieving inclusive and sustainable development disabilities, women in rural areas, and women who are survivors of violence.

4. Strengthen Women Rights Organizations: Governments and civil society organizations should strengthen women's organizations by providing them with the resources and support they need to advocate for women's rights and provide social protection services.

5. Promote/Enhance Digital Literacy: Digital literacy programs should be promoted to provide women with the skills and knowledge they need to navigate the digital world, access information, and improve their economic well-being.

6. Address the Root Causes of Poverty: Social protection programs should address the root causes of poverty, including lack of education, limited access to healthcare, and unemployment.

7. Involve Men in Empowering Women: Men should be involved in empowering women, recognizing the critical role they play in promoting gender equality and challenging patriarchal norms that are still deep rooted particularly in our rural communities.

