

# The Other Voice

Tune in to  
**MAMA**  
**101.7 FM**  
"THE VOICE TO LISTEN TO"

A unique community  
radio station

Main studio  
line 041-531042

For a fair and just society

Vol 8 No.4 August 8 2004

## Women councils to receive more funding

### INSIDE

*The Other Voice*

Published monthly by  
Uganda Media Women's  
Association (UMWA)

P.O. BOX 7263  
TEL: 543996 / 077-469-363  
FAX: 543996

e-mail: [umwa@utonline.co.ug](mailto:umwa@utonline.co.ug)



What use are  
Uganda's  
weather fore-  
casts?...P.2

World Vision  
helps Rakai  
women fight  
HIV/AIDS  
depression..  
.P.6

### We should target top position- Naava



Mrs Mary Kalyango, Councillor for Nkoni Parish in Masaka shares her benefits from the Get Smart Project.

PRESIDENTIAL Advisor for Legal Affairs Ms Naava Nabagesera has advised women to target the top position in the country if total liberation is to be achieved reports Lilian Nalubega.

Naava, a former Residential District Commissioner (RDC) for Bugiri and Kayunga Districts claims that a 56% population edge for Ugandan women over men is just enough to catch the

top position in the country.

"Women should be ambitious. The present leadership has done enough for us and we appreciate, but if the women's movement feel that our gains

are not enough, then we should target the top position," Naava remarked.

She was reacting to a question, "What are women's interests for 2006 and how can they be

To Page 7

Bya Annet Nakate

MORE funding has been earmarked for women councils at the Sub-county as a way of improving their effectiveness and penetration.

In the new financial year 2004/2005, women activities at each subcounty will receive more funding contrary to previous practice where the annual budget for these councils was only limited to three hundred thousand Shillings (300,000/-).

The Minister for Gender Labour and Social Development Hon. Zoe Bakoko Bakoru revealed this while officiating at an evaluation workshop for the Rural women's Get Smart Project implemented by Uganda Media Women's Association (UMWA).

Participating women in the evaluation exercise in June demanded to know why existing women council structures are not facilitated by the central government to operate normally and yet they are utilised during elections.

The Get Smart Rural Women's Project is aimed at helping rural women have timely and relevant information about government programs and policies so as to enable them participate and benefit better in the development process.

"Women

To Page 7

Mother-tongue instruction only hope for Uganda's education system...P.3



UGANDA MEDIA WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION  
Kisaasi/Bukoto. Plot 226 P.O.BOX 7263 Kampala,  
Uganda. Tel:077-469-363,543996,531042  
e-mail:umwa@utlonline.co.ug

## Editorial

### Uganda's agriculture needs a coherent fix

UGANDA faces a perpetual hunger crisis! Reports suggest that in a few months time, most families around the country will struggle to feed themselves.

In most of the areas, produce was lost because of poor rains and a dry season which set in quite early. In Masaka district for instance, 30% of the maize harvest according to the District Agricultural Officer Ms Prossy Mutumba was lost and beans performed poorly. In the Eastern region, rains came too early, in January, when they were expected in March. The lack of a good meteorological department to guide farmers has also left the whole country to grapple under the weight of an impending hunger crisis.

Since 1990 the availability of food per person is expected to have risen by 30% across Africa. But now, Uganda is the latest country in the region to come clean on a looming hunger crisis. Kenya was the first to announce last year that it needed food supplements. There's hunger in DR Congo, Tanzania, Angola, Mozambique and Ethiopia. In fact our neighbours have been depending on smuggled produce from Uganda while our Government has been turning a blind eye!

The crux of the matter is that whereas in Uganda food production had increased overtime, it's increase has not been enough to offset population growth. It needed a visionary leadership to ascertain that in the near future a hunger crisis like the one coming needed an early but coherent fix. Now we shall all suffer because of this lack of vision!

Ours is a rain-fed agriculture as opposed to irrigation which should not be the case. The importance of women in ensuring household food security has also been undermined. The fact that the 1998 Land Act did not cater for women's unique interests on land ownership shows this. And the absence of a functioning and competitive market for produce has created idle labour. Yet Government should have made it profitable for people to engage in commercial agriculture. So much for a lack of Vision!

# What use are Uganda's weather forecasts?

It's common to receive a heavy down-pour where the country's senior meteorologists have predicted clear skies!

By Judith Akolo

It is that time of the year when farmers resort to tilling their land. The second rains are on and the land has to be tilled anyway! Lucy is one such peasant farmer who looks in the sky to see the clouds forming and who makes up her mind that it is time to start tilling.

With her whole family in tow she trudges to her three-acre farm. The family is careful not to incur losses for planting late. Once tilling is over, they will go ahead and plant maize and beans. And they will ofcourse weed the banana plantation and the area around the house.

For three years now, the first weeks of the rainy season are good, only to collapse there after.

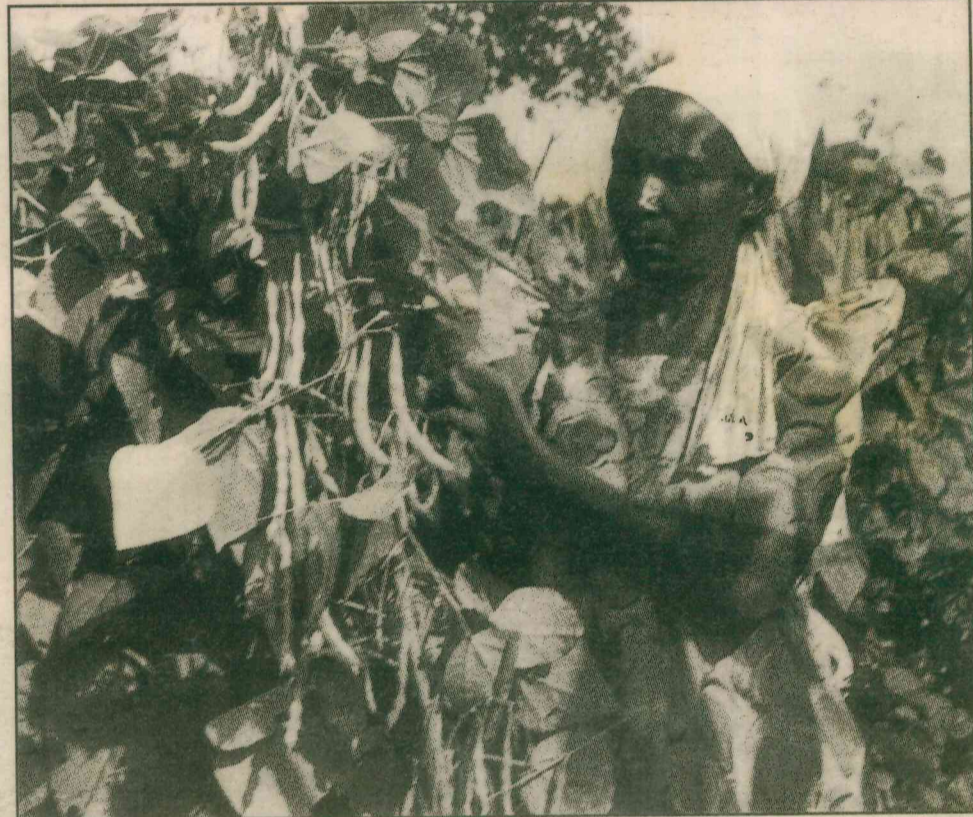
Lucy is among many peasant farmers whose faith is invested in the forming clouds, but who has no way of telling whether it is the right time to plant, weed or harvest. Many radio and television stations have weather forecasts, but on top of being highly inaccurate, they may not be understood by the peasantry.

The Department of Meteorology contends that deficiency in data collection and a shortage of staff is compromising accuracy of forecasts generated on weather and climate.

The department which once boasted of having 1040 rain gauges dotted through out the country now has less than 500. Yet for a highly agricultural country like Uganda, this is a very important component of collecting data on rainfall. This is happening at a time when the threat of climate change is very real. The atmosphere in the tropics, which straddle Uganda, is less stable than it was in the 1960s when the network had more observation stations.

Meteorologists say production of a forecast is both labour and capital intensive. In order therefore, to get accurate analysis sufficient data from many spots has to be collected and analysed. However this is not the case for Uganda's Department of Meteorology, as the observation network in the country has disintegrated.

Uganda being a country in the tropics data collection



Small farmers like Ms Kato lose whole harvests because of poor weather forecasts.

is supposed to be a continuous exercise.

Principal Meteorologist Mr Paul Isabirye recently said that the atmosphere is not stable, it is very dynamic, it changes continuously and therefore calls for monitoring. In the temperate areas where the atmosphere is more stable, the forecasts are deemed to be accurate, "but it is just because the atmosphere there is more stable," he says.

However hard meteorologists try to make the forecasts as accurate as possible, the lack of sufficient observation stations in the country is compromising such efforts. The radio communication used at the department is also unreliable, as it breaks down due to insufficient power supply. These are the radios used in transmitting data to the department from the field.

Every one agrees that meteorologists in the country give out inaccurate forecasts. However a study conducted in 1999 showed that whereas traditional forecasters are trusted their forecasts are less accurate than the scientific ones. The study showed that only 22 per cent of what was forecasted by the traditional forecasters came out right, while in comparison with scientific forecasts, had 70 per cent

accuracy.

The department at the same time lacks the necessary inputs to do work. For instance shortage of stationery could prevent an important report reaching the target users. Many important forecasts are made but remain in computers because there's no stationery. And yet most farmers do not have access to the internet where they could easily pick the information.

In Uganda, the meteorological department now uses District Agricultural Officers to send information to farmers. Forecasts are developed and printed, and then sent to DAOs who in return are supposed to print the copies and distribute them to the farmers. However most of the weather reports end up in trays where they gather dust.

In any case whereas on each sub-county there's an extension worker of agricultural officer, many of them cannot interpret weather forecasts. What can they advise the farmer if they themselves need to be advised?

Mr. Isabirye and Agrometeorologist Samwel Senkunda however note that meteorologists are out to ensure that their efforts bear fruit.

They advise that the solution lies in increasing the

number of observation stations in the country. This they say can be done through encouraging the public to participate as voluntary weather observers.

Students in various institutions, could be encouraged to man weather observation stations in their institutions, the police could also have some installed in their compounds as it were before the network degenerated. They maintain that observation should not be misconstrued to mean that the voluntary observers will also generate the forecast. They will only be collecting the data and then transmit it to the Department of Meteorology.

The need to purchase modern equipment is very necessary now, as the old radio communication system sometimes does not work due to erratic power supply.

Among the information generated at the Department of Meteorology are the daily weather forecasts, disseminated through the media. However of late newspapers have stopped running weather forecasts because they are nor reliable.

Currently the Uganda Television and Radio are the only ones still running forecasts. The department produces ten-day forecasts which are distributed free to people on request.



## EMPOWERMENT

# More funding for women councils

And with UMWA's Get Smart Project, more coordination



STAND UP AND BE COUNTED: Ziobwe Get Smart Project women's group confer.

According to Rashida Kayiza from Nabbaale Sub County, Get Smart project has enlightened the women about the women's vote at the sub county. "Get Smart has taught us how to monitor government programmes. Now that the President has promised us some money, we are not simply going to look on while our leaders use our money for any of

their personal needs; we are just going to demand accountability" Rashida says.

The Minister cautioned women to be appreciative of the Movement government that has brought sanity and peace in Uganda and to the women to be specific. She reminded the women that it is this Government that has transformed their men into real men. "the terrorists had

rendered your men useless, many women used to say 'agasaja gaze'... weren't your men, real men she challenged the women amidst laughter.

The Get Smart project has also encouraged women to form groups in order to benefit from programs that do not benefit individuals but groups. These programs include NAADs and PMA.

Annet Nakimuli

Wasswa, Chairperson of Ziroobwe Women's Council in Luwero District said that Get Smart has enlightened her on her role as a leader.

"I was not sure of what I was supposed to do as a chairperson, however, after attending some training workshops of the Get Smart Project, I was able to mobilize women to participate in various activities. I have particularly encouraged the women to form or join existing groups so that they can be able to increase their agricultural outputs" Says Annette.

She requested the project implementers to access women with low priced radio sets so that they can continue to get more information about government programs.

Get Smart Rural Women's Project is a pilot project supported by Oxfam GB Uganda in the districts of Luweero, Masaka and Mukono and women in these three dis-

## MAMA FM's 'Soul Buddy's' now on

By Mugumya Robert

A brand new drama series that targets the youth has been introduced on MAMA FM.

'Soul Buddy's' is a South African production acted out by youths and teenagers. It tackles all youth activities like bullying, stealing, respect, leadership, remaining chaste and other teenage behaviours.

On MAMA FM 101.7 Soul Buddy's is aired with Presenter Robert Mugumya's thriller 'Heartbeat'. Mugumya is popularly known by MAM FM fans as "the best" and Wilex Mukisa known as "the humble servant" only on Mama fm 101.7 every Saturday 3-5 pm.

Heartbeat is a program that will relax you, educate you and give you tips on how to lead a better life, remember success cannot be achieved without life.

In the same programme don't miss a bit of "food for thought" every 4.30pm, followed by two gospel tracks.

And at 4:10 pm after the news in English, don't miss your Joke line with famous Richard Nyombi who stars as "Okwonkworikor".

Remember also to tune in for a double play of the Oldies, at 4.45pm and the real life experience at 4:55 that tell and gives you lots of hope and a life's real lesson.

The programme is in now aired in both Luganda and English. So with Mama fm., miss only if you can. The voice for the Voiceless

Presenter Robert Mugumya also bring out lots of fun and all the happenings in your popular theatre.

All the drama and music, cultures, festival preparation and all activities related to theatre are aired in the programme Theatre World. Catch it out every Friday between 1-2 pm where all your life time choices are played. This is a unique program, in that it transcends all similarities from other programs of the kind.

Every day at 1:30 don't miss out on "Katambala", your choosy comedian. He will show you why at times you don't have to complicate all life's events.

In the program many artists are hosted and they tell their side of the story about art and music.

The programme is done in both Luganda and English.

## Women's political participation should go beyond numbers

From Page 1

achieved' floated by *The Other Voice* team to sample women's views on requirements for the coming transition to multiparty democracy.

The women's movement has recently been quiet about their role in the coming transitional period that is set to present both the Presidential and Parliamentary elections in 2006.

Naava said that women should look at all party manifestos. "The one that most incorporates women's interests should be the one we should support. If they all leave women out of their aspirations, then we can target the top position," she said.

Naava feels that since women have been great contributors to the development of the nation they should have access to all resources.

To achieve this after the 2006 elections, the organisa-



Naava Nabagesera



Stella Mayambala

tion that increases women's access to micro-finance, promotes the rule of law, education of the girl-child should be supported.

"Women are practical leaders. They should however focus their energies on advanced leadership."

The woman MP for Mayuge District Ms. Lukia Isanga feels that since most women stand out as pillars of their households, and because of the fact that many have taken on the role of bread-winners, a system that empowers women's

financial needs should be upheld and supported.

"We should fight for financial liberation. This can start from family level, all the way to national happenings. We should fight for land, credit, lower taxes on our businesses

but all this can only be achieved if we had someone in government who can front our interests," she says.

She feels this is the time to educate women about the need to co-own land, about marital rape, governance and human rights so that they may not be hoodwinked during the 2006 election period.

Stella Mayambala, a florist on Burton Street in Kampala says that every woman should think about girl-child education.

"Whoever wants to promote the women's cause should assure us that more education of our girls can be assured.

In fact I think instead of a three-term per year education system, it should be reduced to two so that poor women can be able to afford the cost of educating their children," Stella says.

The woman MP for Kotido District Hon. Christine Tubbo feels that the key issue at the moment is how to concretize the role of women in good governance.

"Boosting women's political participation needs to go beyond raw numbers to encompass the relationship between power, poverty and participation," she argues.

As far as she's concerned women want and need to be able to participate in the decisions that affect them, their families, communities and the nation as a whole.

She counsels that there's need to establish mechanisms that allow women

directly to influence broader political and economic measures, particularly the allocations of the national budget.

For women, Hon Tubbo asserts that they should take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities for national, regional and global networking to achieve their objectives.

The woman Councilor for Naggulu II Parish in Kampala District Ms Aidah Prossy Zavuga and the proprietor of Naggulu Charity Women's group says that whoever wants the women's vote should think about ways in which they can get access to credit without strings attached.

"Women are more trustworthy but most financial institutions need a letter from the husband in order for a woman to access credit. This should stop, we should have total independence," she argues. What do you think? Write to us on P.O BOX 7263 Kampala.



# The Other Voice

For a fair and just society

Vol 7 No.4 August 8 2004

Time in to  
MAMA  
101.7 FM  
THE VOICE TO LISTEN TO

A unique community  
radio station

Main studio  
line 041-531042

Tororo headmistress Prossy Ayo narrates how Ministry officials and the DEO have persecuted her

By Judith Akolo

**T**HE programme activity for the workshop by the American Chamber of Commerce in East Africa, read in part, "Gender-based Sexual Harassment a Personal Testimony."

For a journalist this meant that a human interest story, was just about to break. But, the item did not prepare most participants for the bombshell that was about to fall.

As one facilitator after the other walked to the front of the hall to make their presentations, we watched and waited for the personal experience. In my mind, I kept writing and re-writing the story, before it was told.

I was thinking perhaps it is harassment by a senior demanding for sexual favours at the person's place of work. But as the speaker took her place at the front of the room, it all turned out completely different, many were dumbfounded and wondered aloud what the world has come to.

Ms Ayo Proscovia, had arrived to the meeting like any other participant, clad in a yellow and green flowered dress and spotting black low heeled shoes. She took her seat just behind me.

When her turn came, Ayo walked to the front. The first thing she did was to throw one question after the other. "I am here to ask questions. Questions that have bothered me for quite sometime," she began.

"I am a trained teacher, I rose through the ranks to the level of Headmistress grade One. At this level when I thought my life had now taken shape for the better, my castle just came down tumbling faster than I had imagined," she said and paused.

"I tested HIV positive in 1998 that is also the time I had got the promotion. But, I did not last in this position. The community neglected me and threw all manner of false accusations

## 'Because I'm HIV positive!'



Siella Sisulu's recent tour of Uganda to sensitise about HIV/AIDS should have spread to education officials.

at me. Every finger was pointing at me and not in good light. The District Education Officer in Tororo was ordered by the community to throw me out of my job."

**M**y situation notwithstanding, the DEO sent me to a school 20 miles away from my home. To reach the new school, I always had to change vehicles three times and then use a bodaboda for seven miles. My health deteriorated quickly.

It meant that the earliest I could get to my place of work was at 9 o'clock and had to leave by 3 pm to get home. I was spending all my salary on bus fare,

moreover I have four children to look after."

With all her effort to get to school, the community at the second school again rejected her and locked her out. She continues, "All that I was going through was because of my HIV status, but I was not sick. I was as strong as anybody else, I really wondered why I was being treated in this way.

For all this time I have been out of my work station, but I am earning a salary. What I would like to ask the education officials in Tororo is, what are the contents of the reports they are sending to the headquarters? Do they write to the government

and say that I am working? What exactly do they write about me?"

As if that is not enough, Ayo has also gone to the Education Ministry seeking to be granted a sick leave, but this attempt has always fallen on deaf ears. She is now caught between a rock and a hard place. They will not give it to her.

Her next attempt was to ask that she be granted early retirement, access her terminal benefits so as to prepare her four children. But again this hit a snag. Her file could not be traced! The question is, who is punishing Ayo and for what reason?

Ayo is a mother of four,

two daughters and two sons. She was thrown out of her matrimonial home by her husband's relatives because of her HIV status. Her husband, now deceased, fell ill frequently, and this prompted Ayo to seek for an HIV test to determine her sero-status.

"The other reason for my decision to go for the test was that I had been appointed as the Tororo District Executive Commissioner for Girl guides and part of my task was to sensitise the youths on HIV/Aids."

"I thought it would be wise to know my status so that as I talk to the young minds I know what I am telling them about this dis-

ease.

But when I disclosed this to my husband who was already sick he got very upset with me. He turned violent," she says.

As if that was not enough, when Ayo's husband died in August 1999, she and her children were not allowed to bury their father and husband.

"On the day of the burial my children and I were not allowed to cover his head as is the tradition. We were chased out of the home amidst abuses and mistreatment."

Ayo moved to Kampala where she rented someone's kitchen. "Together with my children, we bought a mattress and a few cups, two sauce pans and a few other items. Sleeping was a nightmare as we had to leave our legs hanging down while the head and torso remained on the thin mattress," she narrates.

Every bad beginning has a good ending. Ayo's first born, now works for a local non governmental organisation, two daughters are at Tororo Girls and the last born is in primary four.

Ayo who gets anti-retroviral drugs through the CDC in Tororo, is preparing her family well. She has built houses for all her children, including the youngest. Ayo updates her Will continuously to ensure that all her property goes to the right people when she passes away.

Ayo is the chairperson of the Centre Advisory Committee for TASO in Tororo. She is on the District HIV/Aids Committee representing people living with HIV/Aids and also the National Treasurer of NACWOLA, the National Coalition of Women Living with Aids.

She feels that with the state of things currently, many people are refusing to come out in the open about their HIV status. But, she warns that silence is not the easy way out of the mess. Measures need to be put in place to remove the stigma.