



AN OVERVIEW OF UGANDA'S FEMINIST MOVEMENT



Acknowledgements

The Center for Health, Human Rights and Development (CEHURD) wishes to extend sincere appreciation to the team at Afya na Haki (Ahaki) for the collaboration in the production of this piece of work, by providing the technical leadership. We sincerely appreciate the leadership and contribution of Dr Mulumba Moses, Ms Joselyn Nakyeyune, Ms Alimah Komuhangi, Mr Baguma Christopher, Mr Nimrod Muhumuza, Mr Ibrahim Nsereko, Mr Muhumuza Abdulkharim, Ms. Molly C. Nkosi and Ms Jessica O. Oga.

CEHURD appreciates the valuable contribution and input of partners towards the publication. These include: the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) movement in Uganda; the Feminist Movement in Uganda; the Coalition To Stop Maternal Mortality Due to Unsafe Abortion (CSMMUA) and the Generation Equality Forum. Their views informed this paper and aligned it with the context of the feminist and women's movements in Uganda.

We appreciate the French Embassy in Uganda and other development partners for the financial contribution towards this publication. Lastly, appreciation goes to Ms Annah Kukundakwe and Ms Anne Lumbasi for the leadership and coordination of this work; to Ms Fatia Kiyange and Ms Noor Nakibuuka Musisi for the conceptualisation of this piece of work and providing oversight and Ms Faith Nabunya for the design work.

We hope that this paper compliments the already available evidence on the evolution of the feminist movement in Uganda and that the recommendations will further strengthen the movement. Recommendations cut across key areas such as capacity development; fostering collaboration; advocacy for gender-responsive policies; mobilising at the grassroots level; engaging with media, boys and men; diversification of resources; embracing intersectionality; participating in political processes and generating evidence-based knowledge.

Abstract

This research aims to provide an overview of the evolution of the feminist movement in Uganda. It highlights the distinguishing characteristics of modern feminist movements in pre-colonial Uganda, colonial Uganda, and post-colonial Uganda. The purpose of this study is to explore the unique history of Uganda's feminist movement to gain a better grasp of its evolution and theoretical framework. The paper discusses liberal feminism, radical feminism, socialist feminism, intersectional feminism, postcolonial feminism, and Afro-feminist philosophies and difficulties.

To analyse the status of the feminist movement in Uganda, the study identifies and profiles the important participants and promoters of the feminist movement, with a special focus on those involved in the SRHR movement in Uganda. Important events that have led to the evolution of the feminist movement are emphasized, and the movement's tremendous contributions to the accomplishment of gender equality and the SRHR movement are explored. It examines the impact of Missionary Girl's schools on the Ugandan feminist movement and the Mothers Union, which resulted in the formation of an inclusive women's organization in Uganda. The role of trailblazers such as the Uganda Council of Women and Florence Lubega in advancing women's rights and political representation is highlighted, and the paper details key events such as the Kabaka crisis, the impact of the Women's Council Act, and the landmark legal battles and campaigns that the feminist movement has undertaken in uncovering historical events.

The study goes on to discuss how the Ugandan feminist movement is resourced, its contributions to the progress of SRHR and the achievement of the Global Acceleration Plan for the Generation Equality Forum, and the responsibilities that CSOs play in the feminist and SRHR movements. The study assesses the feminist movement in Uganda's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in light of the Generation Equality Forum, and then gives recommendations for the feminist movement.

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1. Background and Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In September 1995, 189 countries adopted the Beijing Declaration and the Platform of Action at the Fourth World Conference on Women. There was a commitment made to make serious efforts towards achieving gender equality by pursuing the platform for action which identified critical areas of concern and set out strategies to focus on those critical areas namely, poverty, education, and training of women, health, violence against women, armed conflict, women and the economy, power, and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights, media, environment, and the girl child.¹ Twenty-five years after adopting the said platform for action, there was a conscious realization that there were slow efforts towards the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, thus, in 2021, UN Women convened the Generation Equality Forum to speed up this process by increasing quick investment and implementation of gender equality by expanding public support and infusing collective efforts from various stakeholders through investments, establishing platforms for meaningful conversations and pushing for concrete and speedy results.²

The Forum thus generated a 5-year Global Acceleration Plan which was based on human rights principles and developed after consultation with governments, feminist groups, activists, civil society organizations, and other key stakeholders.³ The Global Acceleration Plan identified 6 key thematic areas of focus namely gender-based violence, economic justice and rights, bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), feminist action for climate justice, technology and innovation for gender equality, and feminist movements and leadership. The Forum recognised the significance of women's rights activism and the feminist movement in the formulation of an agenda and achieving the goals set out in the Global Acceleration Plan. Women's movement and feminist movement are a linguistic and conceptual minefield. The two phrases are often conflated and used interchangeably, particularly in common parlance. However, key differences can help us identify and distinguish the two.

1.2. Conceptual Definitions of the Women's Movement and the Feminist Movement

Gouws in her article, proposes the following: a women's movement may be defined as a subset of sociopolitical movements with a focus on women's gendered experiences [such as] women's sewing clubs. Further, women's movements may not always champion equal rights.⁴ Instead, they may have sought to protect women's roles of mothering and caregiving in traditional and contemporary African societies. A feminist movement, on the other hand, is characterized by its challenge to patriarchy.⁵ In keeping with the Foucauldian theme of analyzing gender-based power relations and imbalances, Horn defines feminist movements as those that align themselves with feminism as a political ideology, [and] seek to challenge inequalities and injustices between men and women. Women's movements, on the other hand, are those that are built and constituted by women seeking to challenge inequalities and injustice between women and men [even though] individuals within might not always ally themselves with the political ideology of feminism.⁶ Thus, one of the distinguishing features between either movement would be whether a gendered analysis of the relations between men and women is a frame of reference for their activities. Feminism's gendered analysis extends to other axes of power such as capitalism, racism and ethnic privilege, heterosexism, and ableism with patriarchy to oppress and create hierarchies of privilege among men and women.⁷

1 Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/pdf/BDPFA%20E.pdf> accessed 11 July 2023.

2 "About Generation Equality Forum" < <https://forum.generationequality.org/about> > accessed 11 July 2023.

3 Ibid.

4 Amanda Gouws, 'Unpacking the difference between feminist and women's movements in Africa' (The Conversation, 9 August 2015) <<https://theconversation.com/unpacking-the-difference-between-feminist-and-womens-movements-in-africa-45258>> accessed 20 September 2023

5 Ibid.

6 Jessica Horn, 'Gender and Social Movements – Overview Report', (2013) < <https://www.ludenet.org/projects-files/6/resources/gender-and-social-movements-overview-report-2013-2016.pdf> > accessed 10 September 2023.

7 Nidal Karim, 'Feminist and Women's Movements in the Context of EAZnding Violence against Women and Girls – Implications for Funders and Grant Makers (An external literature review)' (UN Women 2022) < https://unf.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022_EN_Feminist%20and%20Women%27s%20Movements_FINAL.pdf > accessed 11 July 2023

1.3. Principles of Feminism

Feminism is a complex and ever-changing ideology that focuses on promoting gender equality and questioning societal norms that contribute to gender-based inequalities.⁸ It aims to tackle and dismantle the systemic inequalities and biases that women and other marginalized genders encounter in different aspects of life, such as politics, research, society, economy, and personal experiences.⁹ This ideology encompasses a wide array of principles, with some of the main tenets being the promotion of equal rights, the support for the social, economic, and political equality of all genders, and the acknowledgement of the varied experiences and identities within the feminist movement.¹⁰ Feminists work towards challenging and reforming laws, social norms, and practices that perpetuate gender discrimination.¹¹ Their goal is to create a society where opportunities, rights, and social roles are not determined by one's gender.

Feminism also supports bodily autonomy and reproductive rights, advocating for individuals' right to make decisions about their bodies and health. In addition, feminism questions conventional gender roles and stereotypes,¹² promoting a society that enables individuals to freely express their identities and make choices without being limited by gender expectations.

One of the important principles of feminism is intersectionality.¹³ It recognizes that gender oppression is connected to other types of discrimination, including race, class, sexual orientation, and ability. This principle emphasizes that gender-based inequality is not uniform, but rather influenced by multiple intersecting identities. A vivid example of intersectionality is the ground on which LGBTQ feminism stands, which recognizes the multi-faceted nature of gender oppression and how it interacts with other types of discrimination, such as sexual orientation and social norms.¹⁴

In highlighting the principles of feminism, it is important to state that there are several misconceptions on the principles of feminism especially in the area of programming and policy. However, feminism has commonly been misconceived. One common misconception is that feminism solely serves the interests of women and patriarchy.¹⁵ This misconception risks reducing gender equality efforts in programming and policy to an obsession with individual gains at the expense of society as a whole. It is important to state that because feminism recognizes that the same social systems that oppress women also oppress men and non-binary people, its core principle is the promotion of equal rights and opportunities for all genders.¹⁶

Another misconception is the idea that feminist programming automatically opposes men.¹⁷ In its most basic form, feminism seeks to free women and men from patriarchal systems, which this misconception fails to grasp. It is important to state that the goal of feminism is not the subjugation of males,¹⁸ but rather the elimination of gender inequality as a whole, and many of these programs encourage and facilitate men's engagement in the fight for gender equality. Beyond this misconception, it is often believed that feminism, especially Western feminism, applies a universal standard that does not take into account cultural differences.¹⁹ However, modern feminist programming and policy have begun to recognize and incorporate varied cultural settings into modern feminist programming and policy.²⁰

1.4. The Waves of Feminism

Feminist scholars have outlined different waves of feminism and it is said that feminism can be traced its origins back to ancient Greece or the medieval world, however, the development of feminism into an organized ideology began to take place around the late 19th and the early 20th centuries.²¹ The struggle at this time was for the opening of more opportunities for women in this period and women began fighting for equal rights, it was the emergence of

8 The Lancet, 'Feminism Is for Everybody' (2019) 393 The Lancet 493.

9 Ibid.

10 Gita Sen, 'Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Feminist Mobilization for the SDGs' (2019) 10 Global Policy 28.

11 Sarah Wendt and Nicole Moulding, 'The Current State of Feminism and Social Work' (2017) 70 Australian Social Work 261.

12 Gloria Jiménez-Moya and others, 'Is Support for Feminism Enough for Change? How Sexism and Gender Stereotypes Might Hinder Gender Justice' (2022) 13 Frontiers in Psychology.

13 Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw and Leslie McCall, 'Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis' (2013) 38 Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 785.

14 Isabelle Rojek, 'The Mall the Mall the Past, Present, and Future Feminism: LGBTQ+ Representation the Past, Present, and Future Feminism: LGBTQ+ Representation Matters Matters' (2020) <https://digitalcommons.butler.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1421&context=the-mall> accessed 21 January 2024.

15 Rana Bou Saleh, 'Feminism 101: 10 Misconceptions about Feminism | Outlook' (sites.aub.edu.lb27 February 2022) <<https://sites.aub.edu.lb/outlook/2022/02/27/feminism-101-10-misconceptions-about-feminism/>> accessed 21 January 2024.

16 Hannah Coombes, 'Feminism: The Path to Achieving Rights for All Women and Girls' (Womankind Worldwide8 March 2021) <<https://www.womankind.org.uk/feminism-rights-for-women/#:~:text=Feminism%20is%20the%20path%20to%20achieve%20gender%20equality>> accessed 21 January 2024.

17 Rana Bou Saleh, supra 15.

18 The Lancet, supra 8. See also, Laura Bates, 'There Is No "War on Men" – We Now Know Feminism Is Good for Boys | Laura Bates' (the Guardian8 November 2022) <<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/nov/08/feminists-war-on-men-misogyny-boys-gender-stereotypes-masculinity>> accessed 21 January 2024.

19 Violet K Dixon, 'Western Feminism in a Global Perspective' (2011) 3 Inquiries Journal.

20 Kiara Alfonseca, 'The Feminist Movement Has Changed Drastically. Here's What the Movement Looks like Today' (ABC News8 March 2023) <<https://abcnews.go.com/US/examining-modern-feminism-wave-now/story?id=97617121>> accessed 21 January 2024.

21 Martha Rampton, 'Four Waves of Feminism' (Pacific University Oregon 25 October 2015) <<https://www.pacificu.edu/magazine/four-waves-feminism>> accessed 13 July 2023

a social and political movement.²² The feminist movement gave birth to the Seneca Falls Declaration (Declaration of Sentiments), which was developed at the first documented feminist meeting held at Seneca Falls (the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848).²³ The Declaration advocated for the political participation of women in leadership positions, and the reinforcement of women's laws that cannot be alienated by "the man".²⁴ This period is described as the first wave of feminism and was considered by critics as an elitist movement because it consisted mostly of white women and women of color in developing countries.²⁵

The second wave of feminism occurred between the 1960s and 1990s, it was a more radical movement, characterized by the civil rights movement, with a conscious acknowledgement of the existence of different minority groups around the world. Advocacy for reproductive rights, sexuality, and equality in all ways was at the center of the movement. This wave was overshadowed by many other social movements, and to be heard there was a need to have one unified voice, thus the development of feminist organizations. The third wave, on the other hand, came with its ideologies and destabilized the constructs of universal womanhood, body, gender, and sexuality. Second-wave feminists embraced individuality and gave beauty and sexuality their definition. Third-wave feminists refuse to even call themselves feminists and shun being restricted to one ideology.

The fourth wave is characterized by having most feminist goals met, greater access to education, gender equality (though not fully realized), open platforms for discussions of women's rights issues, more women's organizations and legislation to support women, and a greater realization of the importance of intersectionality with a larger recognition that oppression existed across all different aspects like race, class and more.²⁶

While African women share the challenges of women all across the world, their history, which includes colonial conflicts, has affected the way African feminism has evolved.²⁷ African feminism has been shaped by traditional cultures of the precolonial era, colonial rule, and the fight for independence. Afro-feminists have classified the formation of feminism in Africa into the pre-colonial, colonial, post-colonial, and present states of African feminism.²⁸ It is stated that the roots of feminism in Africa date as far back as pre-colonial times. To understand the evolution of any feminist movement, it is important to understand its unique historical journey. Uganda's history of feminism also being traced as far back as pre-colonial times, has continued to develop during colonial times while shaping into a more identifiable organized movement throughout the years.

1.5. Practical Feminism in Uganda

The current state of 'practical feminism' in Uganda, as in other regions, demonstrates a complex interaction between global feminist ideology and local socio-cultural environments. In Uganda, feminism is expressed and observed through diverse means, encompassing official domains like governmental policies and legal structures,²⁹ as well as unofficial domains like community customs and cultural conventions.³⁰

In an informal setting, the concept and application of feminism are closely connected to the country's diverse social and cultural tapestry. The various factors at play, such as community norms, grassroots activism, and cultural beliefs, have a profound impact on how feminist principles are perceived and applied. It is important to highlight that the understanding and practice of feminism in Uganda are greatly influenced by cultural and social dynamics.³¹ In numerous communities, traditional perspectives on gender roles and relations continue to exert considerable influence, despite the increasing recognition and embrace of gender equality.³²

The formal contexts of feminism in Uganda on the other hand include laws, policies, and institutional efforts, all of which have an important impact on how the country views gender equality and the empowerment of women. The national-level practical implementation of feminist concepts is supported by these formal organizations. For example, there have been major strides in integrating feminist principles into Uganda's legislative and policy framework. Several legislation such as the Domestic Violence Act of 2010³³ and the Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act of 2010³⁴ have been passed by the government with the express purpose of empowering women

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 National Park Service, 'Declaration of Sentiments - Women's Rights National Historical Park (U.S. National Park Service)' (Nps.gov/26 February 2015) <https://www.nps.gov/wori/learn/historyculture/declaration-of-sentiments.htm> accessed 13 July 2023

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 Pumla Dineo Gqola, 'Ufanele Uqavile: Black women, Feminisms and Postcoloniality in Africa' (2001) 50 African Feminisms One.

28 Minnah Salami, 'What Is African Feminism, Actually?' (msafropolitan.com/6 December 2017) <<https://msafropolitan.com/2017/12/what-is-afri-can-feminism-actually.html>> accessed 13 July 2023.

29 UN Women, 'Ending Violence against Women in Uganda Takes a Step Forward with Critical Law Reforms Passed in Parliament' (UN Women) <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/8/feature-uganda-critical-law-reforms-passed-in-parliament-to-end-violence-against-women>> accessed 21 January 2024

30 Dagmar Wolf, 'Experiencing Feminism in Uganda | D+c - Development + Cooperation' (www.dandc.eu/7 August 2023) <<https://www.dandc.eu/en/article/first-woman-ugandan-author-jennifer-makumbi-portrays-many-facets-feminism-uganda>> accessed 21 January 2024.

31 Amon Ashaba Mwiine, 'Tracking the Trajectory of Feminist Advocacy in Uganda: How Has Theory Informed the Practice of Advocacy?' [2022] Agenda 1.

32 Michael Flood, 'Gender Equality: Engaging Men in Change' (2019) 393 The Lancet 2386. See also, Helen Kezie-Nwoha, 'Religion, Feminist Peace, and Security in Nigeria and Uganda' [2023] Springer eBooks 643.

33 Domestic Violence Act, 2010 Act 3 of 2010.

34 Prohibition of Female Genital Mutilation Act, 2010

and advancing gender parity. Other institutions like the Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development have been one of the leading organizations fighting for women's empowerment and gender equality in Uganda.³⁵

1.6. Ugandan Feminism in the Pre-colonial Era

Feminist scholars such as Asiimire, Twinamatsiko, and Tripp have shown that in the pre-colonial era, women had informal influence in political affairs and took on key societal roles, demonstrating that they were more than just caregivers and child bearers. The history of the Baganda, Ankole, Teso, and Acholi peoples, all of whom had women playing key roles in society, provides numerous examples of the influence of women in pre-colonial Uganda.

Tripp, in her book 'Women and Politics in Uganda' detailed much on the key roles that women had in pre-colonial Uganda. She noted the existence of female traditional rulers (kabaka) between the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, praising women like Julia Kiburura of the Ankole and Naku (the daughter of Mukibi), Queen Nanono, Princess Nassolo, and Princess Nakuyita (second in command of Sunna II's army) among the Baganda.³⁶ She states that Naku was known to be the de facto ruler of the Lugave clan of the Baganda, and despite her de facto position, she was said to be the most powerful woman of her time and that every king that followed desired to have a wife from her clan to emulate her qualities.³⁷ Further to that she states that Queen Nanono³⁸ and Princess Nassolo were tasked with appointing future kings after successfully leading their clans in battles, either by preventing future losses or by eliminating brutal kings.³⁹

She further provides that although most precolonial women were not for the most part directly involved in political affairs, they had an indirect influence. According to her, the subsequent Baganda monarchs were chosen by the king's mother's clan rather than the king's father and the elite women controlled the majority of chiefs and thus yielded the most power.⁴⁰ It is clear from Tripp's writings that the king's mother exercised enormous political influence over the Baganda and Acholi, and in those societies, the king's mother chose to do so in cooperation with particular women of her choosing in a hamlet of her choosing. Further to that, she states that women frequently claimed the title of king among the Acholi and Nilotic peoples. This was also true of the Luo, and in places like Puranga, women were authorized to do so when the monarch's son was too young to succeed him at the time of the king's death.⁴¹

With regards to the Teso kingdoms, Tripp states that they embraced an inclusive approach to political affairs, except situations deemed unsafe for women, such as interclan gatherings. She details that while law and order were upheld by male elders, one of the most important positions in Teso settlements belonged to *apolon ka etale*, a senior and knowledgeable woman who was in charge of the rites that created clan taboos.⁴² Tripp provides that owing to the nature of her duties, the *apolon ka etale* controlled women and children and that Teso women were known for their work as spiritual healers and fate tellers, which gave them the power to sway military chiefs and play a crucial role in maintaining societal order. According to Tripp, the Ankole people also believed that women had supernatural abilities and were assigned the duty of diviners. They thought their female leaders were endowed with extraordinary abilities.⁴³

Asiimire and Twinamatsiko have described how the "Omwigarire" (the king's wife), of the Ankole people, served as an advisor because people confided in her when they were dissatisfied with the king's conduct in political matters.⁴⁴ They provide that the king also trusted his mother's advice, which she gave along with her sisters and daughters, as such, he would consult them when making major decisions. Furthermore, they state that the "Abahangu" who were a group of wise women would constitute an advisory council to the king on economic and social matters.⁴⁵ They state that women's councils and courts would be established to preserve women's dignity and that these platforms would give women a collective voice when giving opinions on political and social matters.⁴⁶ Tripp agrees with the view of Ankole women being influential in political matters, stating that they frequently had female chiefs and that the only female chief chosen by the British administration came from the Ankole people.⁴⁷

35 UN Women, 'Uganda Commits to Achieving Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls at the 66th Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women' (UN Women – Africa 31 October 2022) <<https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2022/10/uganda-commits-to-achieving-gender-equality-and-the-empowerment-of-all-women-and-girls-at-the-66th-session-of-the-un-commission-on-the-status-of-women>> accessed 21 January 2024.

36 Aili Mari Tripp, UW Press -: Women and Politics in Uganda (2000) The University of Wisconsin Press.

37 Ibid.

38 'Queen Nanono ruled as Kabaka for 18 months.' Aili Mari Tripp, UW Press -: Women and Politics in Uganda (2000) The University of Wisconsin Press.

39 Aili Mari Tripp, UW Press -: Women and Politics in Uganda (2000) The University of Wisconsin Press.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid.

43 Ibid.

44 Donath Asiimire and Medard Twinamatsiko, 'Pan African Feminist Perspectives Promoting Matriarchy. Women's Pre-Colonial Linguistic Power Perspectives, Power loss and the Contemporary State of Affairs in the Ankole Sub Region', (2021) 08 OALib 1.

45 Ibid.

46 Ibid.

47 Aili Mari Tripp, UW Press -: Women and Politics in Uganda (2000) The University of Wisconsin Press.

According to Asimire and Twinamatsiko's research, it was clear that precolonial women played a significant role in the economy in addition to holding positions of social, religious, and political power. These women engaged in farming and the creation of goods that were sold to make a living. They also provided herbal and spiritual care to the communities to treat various ailments, including inducing labor.⁴⁸ It is evident that the first instance of pre-colonial women organizing in Uganda was through councils and collective advisory groups. The women had more experience providing sexual and reproductive healthcare and were generally key in providing healthcare in their communities. Asimire and Twinamatsiko believed that colonial rule reduced the status of Ugandan women and made them less important in society. Tripp, however, remained of the opinion that pre-colonial practices like clientelism and polygyny had an impact on how women interacted in formal and unofficial political settings after independence.

1.7. Ugandan Feminism in the Colonial era

Tripp, who has extensively outlined the history of women's organizations formation in Uganda, states that the emergence of colonial rule in 1894 changed the nature of women's organizations. Although scholars such as Asimire and Twinamatsiko argue that colonizers changed the power dynamics of African women and how they were perceived in society⁴⁹ Tripp contends that women missionaries and missionary wives established the first voluntary associations in Uganda, with education as their focal point to enable women to be elevated to leadership positions.

Tripp states that between 1894 and 1930, these associations taught girls how to lead voluntary associations nationally and internationally. Girls in Uganda thus were opportune to access education earlier than most girls in Africa and subsequently, they began to get formal secondary education as early as the 1930s.⁵⁰ She goes on to say that schools like Namirembe Girls School and Gayaza Girls Boarding School were founded by women missionaries, which resulted in Ugandan women having the necessary skills to take on leadership roles and sit on Church Councils. Further to that, Tripp provides that the Protestant Mothers' Union, founded in 1906 by British missionary wives, was open to Ugandan women who took leadership roles in the union's various chapters throughout Uganda, and by the 1930s, formal and informal associations such as the Girl Guides and the Red Cross were forming. She states that between 1945 and 1962, the new form of the women's movement experienced a revival with women of European, African, and Asian descent being among those who joined the new movement⁵¹ and organizations such as the Ugandan Women's League, which later became part of the Red Cross, did a lot of humanitarian work, such as establishing nursery schools, educating teachers, and contributing to the construction of maternity facilities in hospitals.

As explained by Tripp, between 1945 and 1962, the Mothers Union recognized the need to integrate women's organizations and influenced the formation of the Uganda Council of Women, which advocated for the advancement of women in leadership positions and the amendment of legislation, and that during this time, other influential women's organizations, such as the Young Christian Women's Association, emerged.⁵²

1.8. Ugandan Feminism in the Post-Colonial Era

Hernandez emphasized the sentiments laid out by Butegwa in her work 'The Situation of the Women's Movement in Uganda,' who stated that the first female politicians not only contributed to the process of independence but also promoted full political participation and voting rights for women. She claims that the development of the women's movement into an organized ideology in Uganda can thus be traced back to the process of independence.⁵³ According to Tripp, political forces began to exert control and influence over the women's movement through the Uganda Association of Women's Organizations (which served as the umbrella organization for women's organizations) after they realized the impact of the movement following Uganda's independence. Hernandez states that as the authoritarian regimes that followed permitted little to no autonomy for organizing, the movement's level of activism dramatically decreased in the ensuing decades.⁵⁴ Idi Amin's imposition of discriminatory laws, such as the prohibition on wearing miniskirts, wigs, pants, perfumes, and other items, according to Tripp, exacerbated harassment of women and served as a wake-up call for the women's movement to resurrect.⁵⁵

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 Monitor, 'The pioneers of women movements in Uganda' (People and Power, 7 March 2015) <<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/magazines/people-power/the-pioneers-of-women-movements-in-uganda-1603030>> accessed 1 August 2023.

51 Aili Mari Tripp, 'Women's Mobilization in Uganda: Nonracial Ideologies in European-African-Asian Encounters, 1945-1962' (2001) 34 *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 543.

52 Aili Mari Tripp, *UW Press -: Women and Politics in Uganda* (2000) The University of Wisconsin Press.

53 Andrea R Hernandez, 'In context: The women's movement in Uganda' (*Innovative Research Methods*, 2 January 2021) <<https://innovativeresearchmethods.org/in-context-the-womens-movement-in-uganda/>> accessed 2 August 2023.

54 Aili Mari Tripp, *UW Press -: Women and Politics in Uganda* (2000) The University of Wisconsin Press.

55 Ibid.

According to Hernandez, events such as the end of UN Decade for Women (which ended with the UN Nairobi Conference on Women, 1985), spurred many Ugandan women's ambitions for gender equality and women's empowerment, and the changes in political regimes coincided with this resuscitation of the women's movement. According to Tripp, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) came to power at a time when the women's movement began to concentrate on the fight for the advancement of women to important leadership positions.⁵⁶ To reinforce the view of how favourable the environment was at that time, Hernandez states that the NRM recognized the role that women played during the period of political instability and started implementing policies that favoured women's freedom of association and participation in political spheres.⁵⁷ By the mid-1990s, according to Tripp, the Ugandan women's movement became 'one of the strongest movements in Africa,'⁵⁸ with significant participation of women from all walks of life at both the local and national levels.⁵⁹ According to Hernandez, this period is when we saw a lot of advocacy for women's rights through raising public awareness and encouraging women's participation in the drafting of the 1995 constitution to build a legal framework that guaranteed women's rights including the right to secure and control their own bodies.

Hernandez adds that it was at this time when feminist organizations like Akina Mama wa Africa in Uganda and pan-African networks such as the African Women's Development Fund (AWDF) were founded.⁶⁰ She goes on to say, however, that the trend in the 2000s changed as the political will for supporting the women's movement waned and the emergence of economic and societal challenges led to shifting resource commitments and a contracting civic space, which further caused fragmentation of the feminist movement and limited its ability to act. Additionally, because of the stigma associated with the identification of women as feminists, there were moving efforts by feminist organizations to combat this stigma.⁶¹ Sylvia Tamale, Hope Chigudu, and Sarah Mukasa, three feminist activists, made one such attempt when they joined forces to create the Ugandan Feminist Venue, which offers a forum for feminists to coordinate activities and share experiences.⁶² According to the political and social contexts in which it had to operate, the dynamics and perspective of the feminist movement in Uganda have continuously altered, helping it to develop into what it is now.

1.9. Problem/Justification

This study seeks to trace the evolution of the feminist movement in Uganda with a focus on the key players, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the country. It also seeks an understanding of feminist principles in Uganda, the contribution of the feminist movement towards the advancement of SRHR and the realization of the Global Action Plan for the Generation Equality Forum. The evolution of any social movement or ideology owes a lot to the peculiar circumstances of the community or society from which it emerges. This is true of the feminist movement in Uganda. Although feminism is a global transnational movement, its adoption in Uganda and interaction with the country's history, societal constitution, and the current needs and aspirations of its people warrant a deeper analysis. That is the aim of this paper. The feminist movement can be categorized by diverse ideological standpoints within the movement. African feminism can be distinguished from the global feminist struggle. Africans need to understand African feminism, and its different models and characteristics to avoid being lost in the struggle and finding themselves being spoken for by the West, a reality of the movement that occurred during colonial times.⁶³ The first rise of African feminism occurred between 1990 and 2010 and it was during this period that we also observe the development of the feminist movement in Uganda. To understand how this emergence occurred, it is important to understand the evolution of the feminist movement at different times in the Ugandan context.

56 Ibid.

57 Andrea R Hernandez, 'In context: The women's movement in Uganda' (Innovative Research Methods, 2 January 2021) <<https://innovativeresearchmethods.org/in-context-the-womens-movement-in-uganda/>> accessed 2 August 2023

58 Aili Mari Tripp, *Women and Politics in Uganda* (2000) The University of Wisconsin Press.

59 Andrea R Hernandez, 'In context: The women's movement in Uganda' (Innovative Research Methods, 2 January 2021) <<https://innovativeresearchmethods.org/in-context-the-womens-movement-in-uganda/>> accessed 2 August 2023.

60 Ibid.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Simidile, Dosekun, 'African Feminisms' (2019) The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies. <https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-77030-7_58-1> accessed 26 June 2023.

SECTION TWO:

2. Theoretical framework

This paper draws on insights from Feminist Theory while also integrating “African feminism” as a conceptual framework. By acknowledging the distinctive experiences, interactions, and manifestations of feminism among African women compared to those in Western or Asian societies, this research aims to enrich our understanding of the complexities within the feminist movement. Embracing African feminism allows for a more inclusive analysis, considering the impact of cultural contexts and recognizing the importance of intersectionality in shaping the realities faced by African women in their pursuit of gender equality. In doing this, it is imperative to define what feminist theory entails. Feminist theory is a multidisciplinary field of study that examines the social, cultural, political, and economic forces that contribute to gender inequality and oppression.⁶⁴

It aims to challenge and transform the existing structures and norms that perpetuate the subordination of women and to promote gender equality.⁶⁵ By exploring how gender operates as a social construct, feminist theorists analyse how societal expectations and norms shape individuals’ experiences and opportunities based on their gender.⁶⁶ One important concept within feminist theory is intersectionality, which recognizes that gender intersects with other social categories such as race, class, sexuality, and ability.⁶⁷ Intersectional feminism highlights the interconnected nature of various systems of oppression and privileges.⁶⁸ It acknowledges that individuals’ experiences of discrimination and privilege are shaped by the intersection of multiple identities.⁶⁹ Intersectional feminist theory emphasizes the need for an inclusive and comprehensive analysis that considers the complexity of individuals’ experiences and identities.⁷⁰

Patriarchy is a central focus of feminist theory.⁷¹ It refers to a social system in which men hold primary power and authority, while women are marginalized and subordinated.⁷² Feminist theorists examine how patriarchal structures, norms, and values perpetuate gender inequality.⁷³ They analyse how power is distributed unequally in society, with women often facing discrimination and disempowerment.⁷⁴ By understanding the mechanisms through which patriarchy operates, feminist theory seeks to challenge and dismantle these systems of oppression. Feminist theory also emphasizes women’s agency and resistance within oppressive systems.⁷⁵

It recognizes that women actively navigate and challenge gender norms and inequalities. It highlights women’s individual and collective efforts to challenge gender inequality, ranging from grassroots activism to academic scholarship. By amplifying women’s voices and experiences, feminist theory aims to empower women and promote social and political change. One of the critical contributions of feminist theory is its critique of existing knowledge and theories.⁷⁶ Feminist scholars have questioned and challenged the biases and assumptions embedded within traditional academic disciplines.⁷⁷ They uncover and expose gender inequalities within these fields and work to include feminist perspectives, theories, and methodologies. By offering alternative frameworks and knowledge production, feminist theory seeks to create more inclusive and equitable academic spaces.⁷⁸

Feminist theory is also deeply concerned with social change and activism.⁷⁹ It goes beyond theoretical analysis and encourages action to challenge oppressive systems, institutions, and practices.⁸⁰ Feminist activists work toward achieving gender equality through various means, including policy reform, grassroots organizing, awareness-

64 Arinder JA, ‘Feminist Theory – Theoretical Models for Teaching and Research’ (Wsu.edu2020) <<https://opentext.wsu.edu/theoreticalmodelsforteachingandresearch/chapter/feminist-theory/>> accessed 27 June 2023

65 Pranab Dahal, Sunil Kumar Joshi and Katarina Swahnberg, ‘A Qualitative Study on Gender Inequality and Gender-Based Violence in Nepal’ (2022) 22 BMC Public Health. See also, Amy Allen, ‘Feminist Perspectives on Power’ (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy2005) <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminist-power/>> accessed 27 June 2023.

66 Barbara J Risman, ‘Gender as a Social Structure: Theory Wrestling with Activism’ (2004) 18 Gender and Society 429.

67 Jo Ann Bond, ‘Foundations of Intersectionality Theory’ [2021] Global Intersectionality and Contemporary Human Rights 6. See also, UN Women, ‘Intersectional Feminism: What It Means and Why It Matters Right Now’ (UN Women1 July 2020) <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>> accessed 27 June 2023.

68 Ibid.

69 Ibid.

70 Ibid.

71 Mary Becker, ‘Patriarchy and Inequality: Towards a Substantive Feminism’ (1999) 1999 University of Chicago Legal Forum 3 <<https://chicagounbound.uchicago.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1266&context=ucflf>>.

72 DV Kumar, ‘Gellnerian Theory of Nation and Nationalism: A Critical Appraisal’ (2010) 59 Sociological Bulletin 392.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

75 Kathy E Ferguson, ‘Feminist Theory Today’ (2017) 20 Annual Review of Political Science 269.

76 Linda Briskin and Rebecca Priegert Coulter, ‘Introduction: Feminist Pedagogy: Challenging the Normative’ (1992) 17 Canadian Journal of Education / Revue canadienne de l’éducation 247.

77 Ibid.

78 Ibid.

79 Janet Chafetz, ‘Front Matter’ (1996) 22 Annual Review of Sociology.

80 Kathy E Ferguson, *supra* 12.

raising campaigns, and cultural interventions.⁸¹ They strive to create a more just and inclusive society where all individuals, regardless of gender, can live free from discrimination and oppression.⁸² It is important to note that there are several types of feminist theory, each offering unique perspectives and approaches to understanding and challenging gender-based discrimination. However, this paper will focus on liberal feminism, radical feminism, intersectional feminism, postcolonial feminism, and African feminism.

2.1. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminism is a strand of feminist theory that places a strong emphasis on achieving gender equality through legal and political means.⁸³ It seeks to challenge and reform existing systems, laws, policies, and practices that hinder women's rights and opportunities.⁸⁴ Liberal feminists advocate for equal access to education, employment, and reproductive rights, among other areas of life.⁸⁵ They aim to ensure that women are afforded the same legal and political rights as men, and they emphasize individual rights and equal treatment under the law.⁸⁶ They believe that by advocating for legal and policy changes, women can achieve significant progress in attaining gender equality.⁸⁷ They argue for the importance of working within existing institutions to bring about change, rather than seeking radical or revolutionary transformations of society.⁸⁸

Feminists often engage in lobbying, advocacy, and legal challenges to promote gender equality and combat discrimination. In the context of gender equality per the overall goal of the Realization of the Global Action Plan for the Generation Equality Forum (GEF), liberal feminism played an integral role in the development of the legal framework for the Uganda Gender Policy which recognizes equality between women and the Gender in Education Policy (2016) which complements other existing policy initiatives that addresses the barriers to girls and women's education in Uganda. On bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Uganda, liberal feminism has also played a significant role in advancing women's rights and reproductive autonomy.

This was demonstrated in Uganda's involvement in the East Africa Community Sexual and Reproductive Health Bill 2021 which requires every EAC Member State to provide adequate, accessible, and – where they are not free – affordable, sexual, and reproductive health services to facilitate the realisation of the highest attainable standard of health by every person. It is important to note that Uganda faces various challenges in terms of reproductive healthcare, including limited access to contraceptives, high rates of teenage pregnancy, and unsafe abortion practices.⁸⁹ Liberal feminists have utilized the principles of liberal feminism to advocate for reproductive rights and comprehensive sexual education.⁹⁰

In Uganda, the liberal feminist approach has been instrumental in raising awareness about women's reproductive rights and in pushing for legal reforms.⁹¹ These efforts have led to some positive developments, such as increased access to contraception and the introduction of policies aimed at reducing maternal mortality rates.⁹² Liberal feminist organizations and activists have also played a crucial role in providing information and support to women regarding their reproductive health options.

However, it is important to note that the advancement of SRHR in Uganda faces significant challenges, including deeply entrenched cultural and religious beliefs, inadequate healthcare infrastructure, and conservative societal attitudes. Despite the efforts of liberal feminists, progress has been slow, and there is still a long way to go in achieving comprehensive reproductive rights for all women in Uganda.

81 Nidal Karim, 'Feminist and Women's Movements in the Context of Ending Violence against Women and Girls –Implications for Funders and Grant Makers (an EXTERNAL LITERATURE REVIEW) a Working Paper Commissioned by the United Nations Trust Fund to End Violence against Women' <https://untf.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022_EN_Feminist%20and%20Women%27s%20Movements_FINAL.pdf> accessed 27 June 2023.

82 Ibid.

83 P Priyadarshini and others, 'Authenticity of Liberal Feminism in Namita Gokhale's Texts' (2021) 5 *Linguistics and Culture Review* 46. See also, Camille Cottais, 'Liberal Feminism' (2020) <https://igg-geo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/IGG_Cottais_Liberal_feminism2020.pdf> accessed 27 June 2023.

84 Ibid. See also, Loretta Kensinger, '(In)Quest of Liberal Feminism' (1997) 12 *Hypatia* 178

85 Karl Thompson, 'Liberal, Marxist and Radical Feminist Perspectives on Society: An Introduction' (ReviseSociology 11 July 2016) <<https://revisesociology.com/2016/07/11/liberal-radical-marxist-feminist-perspectives-society-sociology/>> accessed 27 June 2023. See also, Susan Wendell, 'A (Qualified) Defense of Liberal Feminism' (1987) 2 *Hypatia* 65.

86 Ibid. See also, Yiyue Zhang and Kimberly Rios, 'Understanding Perceptions of Radical and Liberal Feminists: The Nuanced Roles of Warmth and Competence' [2022] 86 *Sex Roles*.

87 Laura Parisi, 'Feminist Perspectives on Human Rights', <<https://oxfordre.com/internationalstudies/display/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.001.0001/acrefore-9780190846626-e-48;jsessionid=E196B925F4CB5E90194E691B6B6B7002>> accessed 27 June 2023. See also,

88 Karl Thompson, supra 22. Olga A Rorintulus and others, 'WOMEN'S STRUGGLE to ACHIEVE THEIR GENDER EQUALITY in PRIDE and PREJUDICE and JURNAL PH.D MAMA: A COMPARATIVE STUDY' (2022) 4 *KLASIKAL: JOURNAL OF EDUCATION, LANGUAGE TEACHING AND SCIENCE* 197. See also, P Priyadarshini and others, supra 47.

89 Gorrette Nalwadda and others, 'Persistent High Fertility in Uganda: Young People Recount Obstacles and Enabling Factors to Use of Contraceptives' (2010) 10 *BMC Public Health*.

90 UNESCO, 'National Adolescent Health Policy for Uganda | Health and Education Resource Centre' (healtheducationresources.unesco.org) <<https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/national-adolescent-health-policy-uganda>> accessed 20 June 2023.

91 Akina Mama Wa Afrika, 'An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Legal and Policy Framework in Uganda – Akina Mama Wa Afrika' <<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/an-intersectional-feminist-analysis-of-the-sexual-reproductive-health-and-rights-legal-and-policy-framework-in-uganda/>> accessed 27 June 2023.

92 UNESCO, 'National Adolescent Health Policy for Uganda | Health and Education Resource Centre' (healtheducationresources.unesco.org) <<https://healtheducationresources.unesco.org/library/documents/national-adolescent-health-policy-uganda>> accessed 20 June 2023. See also, UN Women, 'Ending Violence against Women in Uganda Takes a Step Forward with Critical Law Reforms Passed in Parliament' (UN Women) <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/8/feature-uganda-critical-law-reforms-passed-in-parliament-to-end-violence-against-women>> accessed 20 June 2023.

2.2. Radical Feminism

Radical feminism is a feminist theory that views patriarchy, a social system that upholds male dominance and female subordination, as the root cause of women's oppression.⁹³ Radical feminists argue that gender inequality is deeply embedded in all aspects of society, including social, cultural, political, and economic structures.⁹⁴ They advocate for radical social and cultural transformations to dismantle patriarchy and create a more egalitarian society.⁹⁵ One key aspect of radical feminism is its critique of traditional gender roles, institutions, and norms.⁹⁶ Radical feminists argue that these societal constructs perpetuate male dominance and female subordination, limiting women's autonomy and opportunities.⁹⁷ They emphasize the need to challenge and transform these systems to achieve gender equality.⁹⁸

Radical feminists also emphasize the importance of female solidarity and separatism.⁹⁹ They believe that women's experiences and perspectives are marginalized within patriarchal structures, and they promote spaces and movements that prioritize women's voices and empowerment. Through female solidarity and separatist practices, radical feminists aim to create supportive communities and challenge patriarchal power dynamics. When analysing the extent to which radical feminism has been utilized in advancing SRHR in Uganda, it is important to note that radical feminist activism and strategies can vary across different contexts and organizations. In the case of Uganda, where the country faces various challenges regarding reproductive healthcare, radical feminism has played a role in advocating for women's rights and bodily autonomy.

Radical feminist organizations and activists in Uganda like Akina Mama Wa Afrika have focused on challenging societal norms and advocating for comprehensive SRHR policies.¹⁰⁰ They have been at the forefront of campaigns calling for the decriminalization of abortion, increased access to contraceptives, and improved reproductive healthcare services.¹⁰¹ Radical feminists have also highlighted the importance of sexual education that addresses gender power imbalances, consent, and reproductive rights.¹⁰²

However, it is important to acknowledge that radical feminist approaches may face resistance in Uganda due to conservative cultural and religious beliefs, limited access to resources, and opposition from traditional power structures. Implementing radical feminist ideals in advancing SRHR requires navigating these challenges and engaging with a diverse range of stakeholders, including policymakers, healthcare providers, religious leaders, and community members to promote gender equality and reproductive autonomy.

2.3. Socialist Feminism

Socialist feminism is a feminist theory that examines the intersectionality of gender and class oppression.¹⁰³ It recognizes that gender inequality is intertwined with economic exploitation within capitalist systems.¹⁰⁴ Socialist feminists argue that capitalism not only perpetuates gender disparities but also exploits and marginalizes women, particularly those from marginalized communities.¹⁰⁵ One of the key tenets of socialist feminism is the belief that economic equality is crucial for achieving gender equality.¹⁰⁶ Socialist feminists advocate for economic and social reforms that address the systemic inequalities faced by women. This includes advocating for policies such as affordable and accessible childcare, paid maternity leave, equal pay for equal work, and improved workers' rights.¹⁰⁷ They argue that by addressing economic disparities, gender inequalities can be mitigated and women can achieve greater autonomy and agency in their lives.¹⁰⁸ Socialist feminists also emphasize the importance of collective action and solidarity among different social justice movements. They recognize that the struggles against gender inequality and economic exploitation are interconnected and intersect with other forms of oppression, such as racism and ableism. Socialist feminists aim to build coalitions and alliances with other marginalized groups to

93 Jone Johnson Lewis, 'What Is Radical Feminism?' (ThoughtCo25 November 2020) <<https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-radical-feminism-3528997>> accessed 27 June 2023.

94 Ellen Willis, 'Radical Feminism and Feminist Radicalism' (1984) 9 *Social Text* 91.

95 *Ibid.*

96 Camille Cottais, 'Radical Feminism Written by Camille Cottais Translated by Caroline Feldner 1. Definition Context of Emergence' (2021) <<https://igg-geo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/Technical-Sheet-Radical-feminism.pdf>>.

97 *Ibid.*

98 *Ibid.*

99 Noëlle McAfee and Howard Katie, 'Feminist Political Philosophy (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)' (Stanford.edu2009) <<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-political/>> accessed 27 June 2023.

100 Akina Mama Wa Afrika, 'Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights – Akina Mama Wa Afrika' <<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/sexual-and-reproductive-health-and-rights/>> accessed 27 June 2023.

101 *Ibid.*

102 *Ibid.*

103 Siiri Koski, 'Scholars Archive Scholars Archive Little Interventions Everywhere: Wielding Intersectionality to Little Interventions Everywhere: Wielding Intersectionality to Reclaim Socialist Feminism Reclaim Socialist Feminism' <<https://scholarsarchive.library.albany.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=wgss-masters-finalprojects>> accessed 27 June 2023.

104 Heidi Hartmann, 'Capitalism, Patriarchy, and Job Segregation by Sex' (1976) 1 *Signs* 137.

105 *Ibid.*

106 Study Smarter, 'Socialist Feminism: Definition, Criticism, & Theory | StudySmarter' (StudySmarter UK) <<https://www.studysmarter.co.uk/explanations/politics/political-ideology/socialist-feminism/>> accessed 27 June 2023.

107 Elizabeth Armstrong, 'Marxist and Socialist Feminism' (Smith College 2020) *Study of Women and Gender: Faculty Publications* <https://scholarworks.smith.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1014&context=swg_facpubs> accessed 27 June 2023.

108 *Ibid.*

challenge the intersecting systems of power and advocate for broader social and economic justice.

When analysing the extent to which socialist feminism has been utilized in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Uganda, it is important to note that the application of socialist feminist principles can vary among different contexts and organizations. Socialist feminist perspectives have contributed to the understanding of how economic disparities intersect with gender inequalities, particularly in accessing SRHR services and resources. In Uganda, socialist feminist organizations like the Center for Reproductive Rights and activists have highlighted the need for comprehensive SRHR policies that address the economic barriers faced by women. They have advocated for affordable and accessible healthcare services, including reproductive healthcare and family planning resources. Additionally, they have called for policies and reforms that address the economic burden of SRHR, such as subsidies for contraceptives and comprehensive sex education that challenges traditional gender roles and promotes reproductive autonomy.¹⁰⁹

However, it is important to acknowledge that implementing socialist feminist ideals in advancing SRHR in Uganda can face challenges. These challenges include limited resources, conservative cultural norms, and resistance from powerful economic and political interests. Overcoming these challenges requires engaging with a range of stakeholders, including government officials, healthcare providers, grassroots organizations, and communities, to advocate for economic reforms that prioritize gender equality and SRHR.

2.4. Intersectional Feminism

Intersectional feminism is a feminist framework that acknowledges the intersection of various social identities and how they contribute to unique experiences of oppression and privilege.¹¹⁰ It recognizes that gender cannot be examined in isolation but must be understood within other social categories such as race, class, sexuality, and ability. Intersectional feminists argue that these intersecting systems of power shape individuals' experiences and must be considered when analysing and addressing gender inequalities. One of the key principles of intersectional feminism is the understanding that different forms of discrimination are interconnected and cannot be separated. Intersectional feminists advocate for an inclusive and diverse feminist movement that takes into account the experiences and needs of marginalized women who face multiple layers of oppression.

They highlight the importance of addressing structural inequalities and power dynamics within feminist movements themselves. In the context of advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in Uganda, intersectional feminism plays a crucial role in recognizing and addressing the specific challenges faced by marginalized women. Intersectional feminist organizations like Akina Mama Wa Afrika and activists in Uganda have been at the forefront of advocating for SRHR policies and initiatives that take into account the intersections of gender, race, class, and other social identities.¹¹¹ These efforts include addressing the unique barriers faced by marginalized women in accessing reproductive healthcare services, such as limited access to information and resources, discrimination based on race or ethnicity, economic disparities, and cultural norms that perpetuate gender inequalities. Intersectional feminists in Uganda have worked to amplify the voices and experiences of marginalized women and ensure that SRHR policies and programs are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to their diverse needs.

The application of intersectional feminist principles in advancing SRHR in Uganda involves collaborating with a range of stakeholders, including grassroots organizations, healthcare providers, policymakers, and community leaders. Intersectional feminists in Uganda have engaged in advocacy, research, and community organizing to promote comprehensive SRHR services, comprehensive sexuality education, and the recognition of diverse sexual and reproductive identities.¹¹²

However, it is important to acknowledge that implementing intersectional feminist ideals in advancing SRHR in Uganda can face challenges. These challenges include deeply rooted cultural norms, limited resources, and systemic discrimination. Overcoming these challenges requires sustained efforts to challenge social norms, raise awareness, and engage in policy advocacy that centers the experiences of marginalized women and promotes inclusive and equitable SRHR practices.

109 Center for Reproductive Rights, 'Submission of the Center for Reproductive Rights and the Ugandan Association of Women Lawyers Regarding Uganda's Compliance with its International Obligations in the Area of Women's Reproductive and Sexual Rights', <<https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/lib-docs/HRBodies/UPR/Documents/session12/UG/JSII-JointSubmission11-eng.pdf>> accessed 27 June 2023.

110 Loretta J Ross, 'Reproductive Justice as Intersectional Feminist Activism' (2017) 19 *Souls* 286.

111 Akina Mama Wa Afrika, 'An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of the Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights Legal and Policy Framework in Uganda – Akina Mama Wa Afrika' <<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/an-intersectional-feminist-analysis-of-the-sexual-reproductive-health-and-rights-legal-and-policy-framework-in-uganda/>> accessed 27 June 2023

112 Ibid.

2.5. Postcolonial Feminism

Postcolonial feminism is a feminist theory that analyses the intersections between gender oppression and the legacies of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization.¹¹³ It focuses on the experiences of women in postcolonial societies and examines how power dynamics shaped by colonial and neocolonial forces influence gender relations and women's lives.¹¹⁴ Postcolonial feminists' critique Western-centric perspectives and seek to center the voices and experiences of women from the Global South. Postcolonial feminism recognizes that the effects of colonialism continue to shape social, political, and cultural structures in postcolonial societies. It examines how colonial powers imposed patriarchal norms, gender roles, and systems of oppression that continue to marginalize and disadvantage women. Postcolonial feminists highlight how gender intersects with race, class, nationality, and other identities to create complex systems of power and inequality.

In the context of Uganda and advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), postcolonial feminism plays a significant role in understanding and addressing the specific challenges faced by Ugandan women in the aftermath of colonial rule.¹¹⁵ Postcolonial feminist activists and scholars in Uganda have worked to challenge the Western-centric narratives around SRHR and highlight how colonial and neocolonial forces have influenced gender relations and women's access to reproductive healthcare. Postcolonial feminists in Uganda have advocated for policies and initiatives that recognize and address the historical and ongoing effects of colonialism on women's reproductive health.¹¹⁶ They have focused on decolonizing knowledge and research by centering local perspectives and expertise in shaping SRHR programs and policies. This includes incorporating indigenous practices, cultural values, and community-based approaches into SRHR interventions. Furthermore, postcolonial feminists in Uganda continue to work to challenge the power dynamics within the global health landscape that often prioritize Western models and interventions. They advocate for a more equitable distribution of resources, funding, and decision-making power in SRHR initiatives to ensure that the needs and priorities of Ugandan women are adequately addressed.

However, it is important to note that implementing postcolonial feminist ideals in advancing SRHR in Uganda faces various challenges. Neocolonial power dynamics, limited resources, and institutional barriers can hinder progress. Overcoming these challenges requires sustained efforts to challenge colonial legacies, empower local communities, and engage in advocacy and policy reform that center the voices and experiences of Ugandan women.

2.6. Afro-feminism

Afro-feminism, commonly known as African feminism, is a powerful feminist theory that centers on dismantling patriarchy and addressing the unique struggles faced by African women. It confronts the ideologies and systematic biases that colonial rule engraved on the African continent.¹¹⁷ African feminism recognizes that while the fight against patriarchy is global, Western feminist ideologies have often overlooked the specific realities of African women, instead focusing primarily on gender disparities faced in the global north.¹¹⁸

The core of African feminism lies in challenging various issues that affect African women directly. It places significant emphasis on women's economic empowerment, the elimination of sexual violence and violence against women and girls, femicide (the murdering of women simply because they are women), and securing sexual and reproductive health and rights. In the political sphere, African feminism has gained considerable acceptance, evident through its influence on gendered legislation and policies. However, it has faced resistance to radical transformation due to deeply ingrained cultural and religious influences.¹¹⁹ Despite this resistance, African feminists persist in their advocacy and activism, choosing to identify as gender activists rather than solely as feminists. They recognize the need to tread carefully, aware of the controversies that may arise from confronting established norms.

Historically, African women have demonstrated incredible agency and autonomy, actively resisting the infringement of their freedoms and rights, even against colonial administrations.¹²⁰ Their strategies for resistance have often been deeply rooted in traditional and distinctly female practices and symbols, such as "witchcraft,"

113 Neil Larsen, 'Imperialism, Colonialism, Postcolonialism' [2007] *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies* 23. See also, Umme AlWazedi, 'Postcolonial Feminism' [2020] *Companion to Feminist Studies* 155.

114 Serene Khader, *Identifying adaptive preferences in practice: lessons from postcolonial feminisms*, (2015) Routledge 1st Edition.

115 Moses Mulumba, Ana Lorena Ruano and Katrina Perekhodoff, (June 2021) *Decolonizing Health Governance: A Uganda Case Study on the Influence of Political History on Community Participation* <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2469/2021/06/Mulumba_final.pdf> accessed 31 May 2023.

116 Ibid.

117 Eunice Wangui Stuhlhofer, nd, *Navigating African Feminisms: Wangari Maathai as a Portrait* <https://nomadit.co.uk/conference/africaknows/paper/58023/paper-download.pdf> accessed 13 July 2023

118 Obioma Nnaemeka, 'Negotiating Feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way' [2004] 29(02) *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 357-385.

119 Josephine Ahikire, 'African feminism in context: Reflections on the legitimization battles, victories and reversals' <http://www.agi.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/429/feminist_africa_journals/archive/02/features_-_african_feminism_in_the_21st_century_-_a_reflection_on_ugandagcos_victories_battles_and_reversals.pdf> accessed 12 July 2023

120 Patti Henderson and Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands (Gender and Sex in an African Society)* [1988] *Agenda* 43, Zed Books.

using public displays of defiance like stripping naked to shame oppressors and employing “genital cursing” and verbal challenges to assert their power. The narratives of influential female figures like queens and priestesses further reinforce the notion that African women were “feminist before feminism.” Their engagement in agentic and self-determined collective efforts to advance their interests long predated the modern women’s movement.¹²¹

In Uganda, A significant milestone in the feminist movement in Uganda occurred in 1946 with the formation of the Uganda Council of Women¹²² in 1942 serves as a testament to the country’s rich history of women’s resistance and activism. Another testament to women’s resistance and activism was the formation of the Women in Nigeria organization, founded in 1982.¹²³ They advocate for “indigenous feminisms,” asserting that the fight for women’s rights in Nigeria is deeply rooted in the nation’s own traditions, values, and experiences. African feminism, as an audacious ideological entity, positions itself within the African body politic through the African Feminist Forum (AFF) charter.¹²⁴ The charter boldly proclaims that the work of fighting for women’s rights is deeply political and that adopting the feminist identity is a transformative and empowering choice. By embracing the term “Feminist,” advocates politicize the struggle for women’s rights and challenge the structures that perpetuate women’s subjugation.

Some African women scholars propose models of African feminism that are rooted in values, traditions, philosophies, and cosmologies intrinsic to Africa. Catherine Acholonu, for example, advocates an alternative African feminism centered on Africa’s “matriarchal metaphysics” and the cultural value placed on nature and nurture.¹²⁵ Her approach emphasizes embracing femininity, inner harmony, and a complex matrix of power that acknowledges the interconnectedness of power and femininity. In contrast, African womanism, as theorized by Kolawole,¹²⁶ takes an inclusive approach that values the traditional complementarity and cooperation of the sexes. It is not anti-men but rather emphasizes understanding and respecting the interconnectedness of both genders within society. With a strong ideological foundation, African feminism stands as a formidable force in promoting gender equality and women’s rights while recognizing and embracing the diverse identities and experiences of African women. Through collective efforts and continued activism, African feminists continue to pave the way toward a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

121 Oyewumi Oyeronke, 'Introduction: Feminism, sisterhood, and other foreign relation' (2003) In Oyeronke Oyewumi (Ed.), 'African women and feminism: Reflecting on the politics of sisterhood' Trenton: Africa World Press (pp.1-24)

122 Yaliwe Dr and Constance O'brien, 'Re-Imagining Subversion: Agency and Women's Peace Activism in Northern Uganda' (2017) <https://dawnnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Re-imagining-Subversion_-_Agency-and-Womens-Peace-Activism-in-Northern-Uganda_DAWN-Discussion-paper1.pdf> accessed 11 July 2023.

123 Sara Panata, "It Is Not Breasts or Vaginas That Women Use to Wash Dishes": Gender, Class, and Neocolonialism through the Women in Nigeria Movement (1982-1992)' (2022) 23 Journal of International Women's Studies 87. See also, Altine Mohammed and Bene Madunagu, 'WIN: A Militant Approach to the Mobilisation of Women' (1986) Review of African Political Economy, (37), 103-105.

124 Ahikire Josephine, 'African Feminism in Context: Reflections on the Legitimation Battles, Victories and Reversals' (2014) Feminist Africa, (19), pp. 7-23.

125 Simidele Dosekun, 'African Feminisms' [2021] The Palgrave Handbook of African Women's Studies 47. See also, Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, 'Beyond Determinism: The Phenomenology of African Female Existence' [2003] Feminist Africa See also, Amadi Luke and Amadi Cajetan, 'Towards Institutionalizing Gender Equality in Africa: How Effective Are the Global Gender Summits and Convention? A Critique' (2015) 9 African Journal of Political Science and International Relations 12.

126 Kolawole Mary, 'Transcending Incongruities: Rethinking Feminism and the Dynamics of Identity in Africa', (2002) 17 (54) Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity, pp. 92-98.

3. Objectives and Methodology

3.1. Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to explore the evolution, key players, threats, and opportunities in Uganda's feminist movement.

The sub-objectives of this study are:

- To explore the evolution of the feminist movement in Uganda;
- To assess the role of CSOs in Uganda's feminist movement;
- To analyze the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the feminist movement in Uganda.

3.2. Methodology

3.2.1. Study design

This study employed a qualitative research methodology to investigate the feminist movement in Uganda. The primary focus was to understand the evolution of the feminist movement within the Ugandan context, encompassing the pre-colonial era, colonial era, post-independence women's organizations, and the emergence of the contemporary feminist movement. The study applied cooperative methods of data collection and analysis using writing workshops, panel discussions, and reviews of relevant literature to understand the feminist movement in Uganda. Data for this study was collected through an in-depth desk review, utilizing content analysis techniques. The review will comprehensively examine various sources, such as historical documents, literature, and media representations, to gain a nuanced understanding of the development and progression of the feminist movement in Uganda.

3.2.2 Scope of the study

To assess the role of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Uganda's feminist movement, a case selection approach was employed. Specifically, the study analysed the influence of women's professional bodies and human rights frameworks in advancing judicial activism for women's rights in Uganda. The study also reviewed and assessed key women's organisations in Uganda, their various contributions, core functions, principles, and approaches, beginning from the pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial eras. The case selection provided valuable insights into the contributions and effectiveness of CSOs within the feminist movement with a specific focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights.

3.2.3 Data Sources and Analysis

The details of historical events, findings, and recommendations in this study are based on primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through writing workshops, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and a review of the action coalition global acceleration plan. Secondary data were collected through a desk review of online resources including feminist organization's strategy documents, research papers, published articles and books, legal and policy documents, Journal articles, and official reports on the country and regional feminist efforts following a reference list of sources and resources considered relevant to the subject under study.

3.2.3.1 Desk review

The study undertook a desk review of the existing literature on feminism and feminist theory and the feminist movement in Uganda. This process involved scanning the available literature, analyzing secondary data, and creating a reference list for the study. The study relied on data drawn from existing databases of the country and feminist organizations in Uganda.

3.2.3.2 Writing Workshop

Nine (9) experts in law, public health, and human rights were called for a five-day writing workshop. The workshop discussed the history of the feminist movement in Uganda, different feminist organizations, their contributions, and their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The approaches used to gather and analyse data from participants during the workshop included Focus Group Discussions (FDGs), individual assignments, plenary questions and answer sessions, and expert panel presentations, all of which provided relevant insights.

3.2.4 Data analysis

The data collected was interpreted using the Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) and historical analysis. The study utilised the Thematic Content Analysis (TCA) which involved reading through the data and identifying patterns across the themes developed for the study for interpretations and making sense out of the data. The study also read different literature on different major historical events, organizations, and individuals in the feminist movement and surrounding major developments concerning women's rights issues to understand the chronological effects of the events and actions of different key players of the feminist movement. Lastly, a SWOT analysis was conducted to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats faced by the feminist movement in Uganda. This analysis incorporated content analysis, examining various sources such as articles, social media content, and organizational communications. This offered a comprehensive understanding of the internal and external factors influencing the movement's progress.

3.2.5 Quality assurance

The research team was oriented on the key areas of the study, the research objectives, methodology, the target, and methods of data collection. Information on organizations was collected from directed sources of the organizations themselves either through interviews with people working in the organizations or directly by reading the organization's missions, visions, objectives, strategies, and newsletters. Consultations with key players were made and the draft report was edited and proofread by an independent resource person.

SECTION FOUR:

4. Evolution of the feminist movement in Uganda

4.1. The impact of missionary girls' schools on the feminist movement in Uganda

Over the years, the feminist movement in Uganda has undergone a remarkable evolution, driven by a series of events and initiatives that have shaped the landscape of women's empowerment and gender equality.¹²⁷ From its early beginnings in the 1970s to the present day, Ugandan feminists have tirelessly worked to challenge social norms, address gender-based discrimination, and advance the rights of women.¹²⁸ Constitutional reforms, grassroots organizations, political representation, activism against gender-based violence, economic empowerment initiatives, and the embrace of intersectionality and digital activism are among the key factors that have propelled the movement forward.¹²⁹

Starting from the late 19th century, the emergence of missionary girls' schools in Uganda, notably Gayaza, had a transformative impact on girls' education and challenged traditional cultural norms, ultimately promoting girl-child empowerment.¹³⁰ These schools provided girls with unprecedented educational opportunities that had previously been limited or non-existent. By offering a comprehensive curriculum encompassing academic, vocational, and religious education, these schools empowered girls with knowledge and critical thinking skills while equipping them with practical skills for their personal and professional lives.

The establishment of these schools challenged prevailing cultural norms that confined women to domestic roles and limited their access to education.¹³¹ They played a crucial role in breaking down barriers and empowering girls to aspire to greater heights. By gaining literacy and numeracy skills, girls were able to expand their horizons, pursue further education, and actively participate in society as agents of change in their communities. The impact of these schools extended beyond the individual girls who attended them. By showcasing the capabilities and achievements of educated girls, they challenged societal perceptions of gender roles and paved the way for broader societal change. The visibility of educated girls catalysed transforming attitudes and promoting the importance of girls' education in Ugandan society.

4.2. The Mothers' Union and the birth of inclusive women's movements in Uganda

In the early 20th century, the establishment of the Mothers' Union in Uganda¹³² had a profound impact on organizing women across races and religions, fostering unity, and laying the foundation for inclusive women's movements. The Mothers' Union, initially founded as an Anglican organization, provided a platform for women to come together, regardless of their racial or religious backgrounds, to address common concerns and advocate for their rights.¹³³ The Mothers' Union played a crucial role in creating spaces for women to voice their opinions and engage in collective action.¹³⁴ Organizing women across different racial and religious communities, fostered a sense of unity and solidarity among women who faced similar challenges and shared aspirations. This cross-cultural collaboration was instrumental in breaking down barriers, promoting understanding, and challenging divisions within society. Moreover, the Mothers' Union catalysed the formulation of women's organizations and movements in Uganda.¹³⁵ It inspired the establishment of similar organizations and women's groups that focused on addressing various issues affecting women's lives. These organizations provided platforms for women to organize, discuss concerns, and advocate for change on a broader scale.

127 The Borgen Project, 'The Progress of the Women's Movement in Uganda', < <https://borgenproject.org/womens-movement-in-uganda/> > accessed 29 June 2023.

128 Caroline Harper and others, 'Historical Lessons on Gender Norm Change, with Case Studies from Uganda and Nepal' <https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2020-03/align_lessons_briefing_paper_-_web.pdf> accessed 11 July 2023.

129 Akina Mama Wa Afrika, 'The Beijing Dispatch: Progress in Achievement of Women's Rights and Gender Equality as the Beijing Platform for Action Turns 25', < <https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/THE-BEIJING-DISPATCH-AMWA.pdf> > accessed 29 June 2023.

130 New Vision, 'Girl Child Education: An Unresolved Battle' (New Vision) <https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1315291/girl-child-education-unresolved-battle> accessed 11 July 2023.

131 Moulfi Leila and others, 'Western Education in Uganda' (1878) <<https://ds.univ-oran2.dz:8443/bitstream/123456789/3731/1/Dziri%20Khadidja.pdf>> accessed 11 July 2023.

132 Diocese of Bristol, 'Celebrating 100 Years of the Mother's Union in Uganda - Diocese of Bristol' (www.bristol.anglican.org) <<https://www.bristol.anglican.org/news/celebrating-100-years-of-the-mothers-union-in-uganda.php#:~:text=The%20Mothers%20Union%20in%20Uganda>> accessed 11 July 2023

133 Mother's Union, 'Our Story | Mothers' Union' (www.mothersunion.org) <<https://www.mothersunion.org/our-story>> accessed 11 July 2023

134 Ibid.

135 Ibid.

The inclusive nature of the Mothers' Union and subsequent women's organizations helped amplify women's voices and promote the principles of equality, justice, and empowerment across Uganda. By uniting women from diverse backgrounds, these movements fostered a sense of solidarity that transcended racial, religious, and ethnic differences. This inclusive approach laid the foundation for future women's movements that aimed to address the intersecting forms of discrimination and oppression faced by women in Uganda. Furthermore, the Mothers' Union and subsequent women's organizations focused not only on addressing women's immediate needs but also on promoting women's rights and influencing policy changes.¹³⁶ They played an instrumental role in advocating for legal reforms, policies, and programs that addressed gender inequality, violence against women, education, health, and economic opportunities.

4.3. Trailblazers of change: The Uganda Council of Women and the Advancement of Women's Rights in Uganda

A significant milestone in the feminist movement in Uganda occurred in 1946 with the formation of the Uganda Council of Women.¹³⁷ This organization played a pivotal role in advocating for women's rights, gaining international recognition, and becoming a powerful voice for women's empowerment and gender equality in the country.¹³⁸ The Uganda Council of Women emerged at a time when women's rights were gaining momentum globally, and women in Uganda were becoming increasingly aware of the need for collective action to address gender disparities and discrimination. The formation of this organization marked a turning point in the feminist movement, as it provided a platform for women from diverse backgrounds to come together, unite their efforts, and drive meaningful change.

One of the key achievements of the Uganda Council of Women was its active advocacy for women's rights through influencing legislation and policy. The organization was instrumental in lobbying for the inclusion of women's voices in the Uganda Legislative Council, the highest governing body at the time. By pushing for women's representation in decision-making processes, the Council sought to ensure that women's perspectives and concerns were considered in shaping laws and policies that directly impacted their lives. The impact of the Uganda Council of Women extended far beyond its formation. It laid the foundation for subsequent women's organizations and movements in Uganda, inspiring generations of women to continue the fight for women's empowerment and gender equality. The organization's legacy is evident in the ongoing efforts to address gender disparities, promote women's rights, and advance the status of women in various spheres of Ugandan society.

4.4. Florence Lubega and the Trailblazing Journey of Women's Political Representation in Uganda

The appointment of Florence Lubega as the first Ugandan woman to the legislative council in 1956 marked a groundbreaking moment for women's involvement in leadership positions and political participation in Uganda.¹³⁹ This significant event shattered traditional gender roles and norms, opening doors for more women to engage in political and decision-making processes. Florence Lubega's appointment to the legislative council was a remarkable achievement, considering the prevailing societal expectations and barriers that limited women's participation in politics¹⁴⁰. Her presence in this historically male-dominated space challenged the status quo and showcased the capabilities and potential of women as leaders and decision-makers. Lubega's appointment not only symbolized a breakthrough for women's political representation but also had tangible impacts on the advancement of women's rights. As a legislator, she actively advocated for women's issues, drawing attention to the challenges faced by women in Uganda and pushing for policies and legislation that addressed their needs. Her voice and presence in the legislative council helped to shift the discourse and ensure that women's concerns were brought to the forefront of political discussions.

Beyond her achievements, Lubega's appointment served as an inspiration and catalyst for more women to pursue political careers and seek leadership positions. Her trailblazing role shattered the perception that politics was exclusively a male domain and encouraged other women to believe in their capabilities to contribute to governance and decision-making. The appointment of Florence Lubega paved the way for more women to enter politics, challenging traditional gender roles and fostering a more inclusive political landscape in Uganda. The appointment of Florence Lubega sparked conversations and debates about the importance of gender equality and women's representation in governance and leadership positions. Her presence in the legislative council raised awareness about the need for more diverse perspectives and experiences in decision-making processes. It highlighted the fact that women's voices and participation are essential.

136 Ibid.

137 Yaliwe Dr and Constance O'Brien, 'Re-Imagining Subversion: Agency and Women's Peace Activism in Northern Uganda' (2017) <https://dawnnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Re-imagining-Subversion_-_Agency-and-Womens-Peace-Activism-in-Northern-Uganda_DAWN-Discussion-paper1.pdf> accessed 11 July 2023.

138 Ibid.

139 Aili Mari Tripp, 'Women in Ugandan Politics and History: Collective Biography' [2020] Oxford Research Encyclopaedias.

140 Ibid.

4.5. From the Kabaka Crisis to Resilience: Women's Political Engagement and the Pursuit of Gender Equality in Buganda, Uganda

The Kabaka crisis of 1955 stands as a significant turning point in Buganda's history, as it not only had political implications but also marked the beginning of women's involvement in modern-day Buganda politics.¹⁴¹ This event unfolded when Sir Edward Muteesa II, the Kabaka (King) of Buganda, clashed with the colonial administration over his demands for more autonomy and political power.¹⁴² The crisis provided a platform for women to actively participate in political movements, demonstrating their capacity for leadership and their unwavering desire for equal rights and representation.¹⁴³

During the Kabaka crisis, women in Buganda played a prominent role in supporting and mobilizing for Kabaka's cause.¹⁴⁴ They organized rallies, demonstrations, and protests, showcasing their determination to contribute to the political landscape and advocate for their rights.¹⁴⁵ Women's active involvement in the crisis challenged societal norms that had traditionally relegated them to passive roles and demonstrated their readiness to actively engage in political struggles.¹⁴⁶ The participation of women in the Kabaka crisis not only highlighted their abilities as political actors but also underscored their desire for equal rights and representation. Women demanded a voice in decision-making processes and called for an end to discriminatory practices that limited their opportunities for political participation.

Through their actions, they made it clear that they were crucial stakeholders in shaping the future of Buganda and that their perspectives and concerns deserved to be heard and addressed. The Kabaka crisis served as a catalyst for the emergence of women's organizations and movements in Buganda. It prompted women to recognize the importance of collective action and encouraged them to unite in groups and associations to advocate for their rights and tackle gender disparities effectively. These organized efforts provided a valuable platform for women to strengthen their voices, engage in discussions about common issues, and devise strategies to promote gender equality. As a result of this crisis, women were inspired to collaborate and lead various initiatives aimed at advancing their cause and fostering lasting change.

The 1960s and 1970s were a challenging period for the feminist movement in Uganda due to the oppressive regime of President Idi Amin.¹⁴⁷ During this time, women's organizations faced severe restrictions and were effectively banned by the government, hampering their ability to operate and advocate for gender equality.¹⁴⁸ The ban on women's organizations had a detrimental impact on the advancement of women's rights and the pursuit of gender equality issues during that period. Despite these challenges, it is important to note that the spirit of feminism and gender equality persevered even during this oppressive period. Women continued to find ways to support one another and advocate for their rights, albeit in more covert or informal ways. They maintained networks of solidarity, shared experiences, and supported each other's personal and collective struggles. The ban on women's organizations under President Idi Amin eventually came to an end with his ousting from power in 1979.¹⁴⁹ After his regime, women's organizations gradually began to re-emerge and re-establish themselves, picking up where they had left off in their pursuit of gender equality and women's empowerment.

The 1990s marked a significant period in Uganda's feminist movement with notable developments aimed at advancing women's rights and representation.¹⁵⁰ One key development during this time was the implementation of Affirmative Action policies in higher education.¹⁵¹ These policies were designed to address gender disparities in access to education and increase women's enrolment and participation in universities and colleges. Affirmative Action measures sought to create a more level playing field for women, providing them with greater opportunities to pursue higher education and acquire skills and knowledge for personal and professional growth.

141 Kevin Ward, 'The Church of Uganda and the Exile of Kabaka Muteesa II, 1953-55' (1998) 28 *Journal of Religion in Africa* 411.

142 *Ibid.*

143 *Ibid.*

144 Alicia C Decker, 'Women in Uganda' [2023] *Oxford Research Encyclopedias*. See also, Carol Summers, 'All the Kabaka's Wives: Marital Claims in Buganda's 1953-5 Kabaka Crisis' (2017) 58 *The Journal of African History* 107 <<https://www.jstor.org/stable/44509368>> accessed 11 July 2023.

145 *Ibid.*

146 *Ibid.*

147 Alicia Decker, 'In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda' (Ohio University Press • Swallow Press) See also, Carol Summers, 'All the Kabaka's Wives: Marital Claims in Buganda's 1953-5 Kabaka Crisis' (2017) 58 *The Journal of African History* 107.

148 *Ibid.* See also, LSE, 'Book Review: In Idi Amin's Shadow: Women, Gender and Militarism in Uganda by Alicia C Decker' (Africa at LSE10 July 2015) <<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/africaatlse/2015/07/10/book-review-in-idi-amins-shadow-women-gender-and-militarism-in-uganda-by-alicia-c-decker/>> accessed 11 July 2023.

149 History Channel, 'Ugandan Dictator Idi Amin Overthrown' (HISTORY14 June 2019) <<https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/idi-amin-overthrown>> accessed 11 July 2023.

150 Josephine Ahikire, 'African Feminism in Context: Reflections on the Legitimation Battles, Victories and Reversals' <http://www.agi.ac.za/sites/default/files/image_tool/images/429/feminist_africa_journals/archive/02/features_-_african_feminism_in_the_21st_century_-_a_reflection_on_ugandagcos_victories_battles_and_reversals.pdf> accessed 11 July 2023.

151 Geoffrey Odaga, 'Affirmative Action and Women in Uganda's Public University Education' [2020] Higher Education Policy.

4.6. The Impact of the Women’s Council Act on Equality and Participation in Uganda

Another significant milestone in the 1990s was the establishment of the Women’s Council Act in 1993.¹⁵² This Act was enacted to promote women’s engagement in social and political activities at the national level.¹⁵³ It aimed to strengthen women’s participation in decision-making processes, increase their representation in key positions, and address the specific needs and concerns of women in Ugandan society. The Women’s Council Act recognized the importance of women’s voices in shaping policies and laws, and it provided a platform for women to advocate for their rights and contribute to the development and advancement of the nation.¹⁵⁴ The Women’s Council Act not only promoted women’s participation but also empowered women to take on leadership roles and engage in community development initiatives.¹⁵⁵ The Act facilitated the formation of women’s councils at various levels, including village, sub-county, and district levels, allowing women to have a voice and influence in local governance and decision-making processes.¹⁵⁶ These councils provided a forum for women to discuss and address issues affecting their communities, such as education, health, economic empowerment, and gender-based violence.

Additionally, the Women’s Council Act helped to create a supportive environment for women’s organizations and networks. It facilitated their collaboration and coordination, enabling them to work together towards common goals and share resources and experiences. Women’s organizations and networks played a crucial role in raising awareness about women’s rights, advocating for policy reforms, and providing support services to women in need.

The implementation of Affirmative Action policies in higher education and the establishment of the Women’s Council Act in the 1990s were significant steps towards advancing women’s rights and representation in Uganda. These measures aimed to address gender disparities in education, promote women’s participation in decision-making processes, and empower women to actively engage in social and political activities. They provided a framework for creating a more inclusive and equitable society, where women’s voices and contributions are valued and recognized. The developments of the 1990s laid a foundation for ongoing efforts in promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment in Uganda. They demonstrated a growing recognition of the importance of women’s participation in all spheres of life and the need to address gender disparities and discriminatory practices. The implementation of Affirmative Action policies and the establishment of the Women’s Council Act signalled a commitment to promoting women’s rights and ensuring their full participation in shaping the country’s future.

4.7. Uganda’s Role in the Generation Equality Forum for Gender Equality and Empowerment

Uganda’s participation in the Generation Equality Forum in 1999 showcased its commitment to promoting gender equality and advancing women’s rights globally. The forum provided a platform for dialogue, knowledge sharing, and policy development on critical issues such as women’s empowerment, gender-based violence, and access to education and healthcare. By participating in the forum, Uganda demonstrated its willingness to collaborate with other countries, civil society organizations, and international agencies to address challenges faced by women and work towards gender equality. This involvement highlighted Uganda’s recognition of the importance of creating an enabling environment for women to exercise their rights and achieve their full potential.

Uganda’s participation enabled the country to showcase its progress, share best practices, and learn from the experiences of other nations. It also facilitated collaborations with international partners, providing access to resources, funding, and technical assistance to strengthen Uganda’s initiatives for women’s rights and gender equality. Legal battles have been instrumental in advancing women’s rights in Uganda, with notable cases shaping the legal landscape and challenging discriminatory practices. One significant case is *Ugandan Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA) v Attorney General*, which took place in 2004.¹⁵⁷ The Ugandan Association of Women Lawyers filed the case to challenge the discriminatory provisions of the Divorce Act, which disadvantaged women in divorce proceedings.

It is important to note that although these milestones signify Uganda’s dedication, there are certain areas that require additional enhancement. At the grassroots level, the implementation of policies and laws promoting gender equality encounter various challenges. Also, Uganda still faces challenges including gender-based violence, disparities in women’s access to education and healthcare, and limited economic opportunities, which calls for stronger and continuous efforts. In addition, it is imperative that in considering Uganda’s commitment to gender equality, diverse factors that intersect with gender, such as socio-economic background, ethnicity, and

152 Jocelyn Hackett, ‘National Women’s Council Act of 1993 (Amended 2010, 2015)’ (LII / Legal Information Institute) 16 September 2017 <https://www.law.cornell.edu/women-and-justice/resource/national_women%27s_council_act_of_1993_%28amended_2010_2015%29> accessed 11 July 2023.

153 *Ibid.*

154 *Ibid.*

155 *Ibid.*

156 *Ibid.*

157 *Uganda Association of Women Lawyers and Ors v Attorney General (Constitutional Petition No. 2 of 2003) [2004] UGCC 1 (10 March 2004)*

rural-urban divides should be taken into account. This is because these factors have distinct impacts on women's experiences.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the effectiveness of gender-focused initiatives relies on the proper allocation of sufficient resources to ensure their successful implementation. These resources require not only financial investment but also a dedication to developing and sustaining institutional capacities that can support and promote gender equality in Uganda.

4.8. Paving the path to gender equality: Landmark legal battles for women's rights in Uganda

The FIDA (Uganda) case¹⁵⁸ sought to ensure fair treatment for women by challenging provisions that granted men greater advantages in divorce settlements, custody battles, and property division. In this case, the petitioners filed a lawsuit seeking the nullification of various sections of the Divorce Act, citing gender-based discrimination. The Court ruled that sections 4, 5, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 26 of the Divorce Act are invalid to the extent that they discriminate based on gender. Consequently, the grounds for divorce listed in the Act are now accessible to both sexes, and provisions relating to compensation for adultery, costs against a co-respondent, alimony, and settlement are applicable without any gender bias.

By advocating for the removal of these discriminatory provisions, the Ugandan Association of Women Lawyers aimed to promote gender equality in marriage dissolution and empower women to assert their rights in family matters. The case highlighted the need for legal protections that safeguarded women's rights and ensured equitable treatment within the realm of divorce and family law. Another significant legal battle that contributed to women's rights was the MIFUMI v Attorney General case.¹⁵⁹ In this case, the organization MIFUMI (an NGO working to end violence against women) challenged the constitutionality of bride price, a traditional practice where the groom's family pays a sum of money or goods to the bride's family upon marriage. MIFUMI argued that the practice violated women's rights and perpetuated gender-based violence and discrimination.

The MIFUMI v. Attorney General case resulted in a landmark ruling by the Constitutional Court of Uganda in 2015. In this case, the petitioners challenged the constitutionality of the traditional custom of requiring the payment of bride price. They argued that making bride price a mandatory condition for marriage and its repayment as a prerequisite for marriage dissolution should be declared unconstitutional. They contended that such practices may infringe upon the dignity of individuals, as guaranteed by Article 24 of the Constitution. The respondents, the Attorney General (first respondent) and Mr. Kakuru (second respondent) oppose the petition and deny that the custom and practice of bride price are unconstitutional. They point out that the custom of paying bride price is constitutionally protected under Article 37 of the Constitution, and thus, they request the court to dismiss the petition.

During the joint scheduling conference, both parties agreed to address eight specific issues. First, whether the petition raises issues for constitutional interpretation. Second, whether the payment of bride price before marriage and its refund during divorce are customary practices that require no further proof and can be judicially noticed. The third issue centered around the possibility that the term "bride price" may carry different meanings in various Ugandan cultures, potentially making it difficult to establish a uniform interpretation. The fourth issue pertains specifically to the meaning of 'okujuga' in Ankole culture and whether it refers to the refund of bride price.

Another point of contention raised in the fifth issue is whether bride price is a customary practice commonly observed across all tribes in Uganda. The sixth issue involves examining whether the custom of paying the bride price by the groom's family to the bride's family promotes inequality in marriage, potentially conflicting with Article 21(1), (2), and (3) of the Constitution. The seventh issue explored the impact of the demand for bride price by the bride's parents as a condition for marriage and how it may affect the free consent of the individuals intending to marry, potentially contravening the equal rights in marriage as stipulated in Article 31(3) of the Constitution.

Finally, the eighth issue scrutinized whether the demand and payment of bride price as a prerequisite for customary marriages and the requirement for its refund during marriage dissolution are cultural practices protected under Article 37 of the Constitution, which guarantees the rights of individuals to participate in their culture. The court held that the practice of bride price, when it involved the exchange of money, property, or other valuables, could be deemed unconstitutional. This decision affirmed the importance of legal protections for women and recognized that certain traditional practices can perpetuate gender inequality and harm women's rights.

Both the FIDA v Attorney General and MIFUMI v Attorney General court cases exemplify how legal battles have

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Mifumi (U) Ltd & 12 Ors v Attorney General, Kenneth Kakuru (Constitutional Petition No. 12 of 2007) [2010] UGSC 2 (26 March 2010).

been instrumental in challenging discriminatory laws and practices and promoting gender equality in Uganda. These cases have not only resulted in significant legal victories but have also raised awareness about women's rights, sparked public debate, and contributed to the broader societal transformation towards gender equality. Furthermore, the outcomes of these cases have had a lasting impact on women's lives. The FIDA case led to the amendment of the Divorce Act, ensuring more equitable treatment for women in divorce proceedings. The MIFUMI case established a legal precedent that recognizes the importance of protecting women's rights and challenging harmful traditional practices. Both cases have contributed to shaping the legal framework to better safeguard women's rights and promote gender equality in Uganda.

4.9. From silence to solidarity: The MeToo Campaign and fight against sexual abuse in Uganda

The emergence of the MeToo campaign in Uganda in 2019 marked a significant milestone in the feminist movement.¹⁶⁰ This global movement against sexual abuse, harassment, and rape culture gained traction in Uganda, raising awareness about these pervasive issues and empowering women to speak out about their experiences. The MeToo campaign provided a platform for survivors to share their stories, breaking the silence that often surrounds cases of sexual abuse and harassment.¹⁶¹ It created a sense of solidarity among women and demonstrated the magnitude of the problem within Ugandan society. By sharing their experiences, survivors challenged the prevailing culture of victim-blaming and shifted the focus onto the perpetrators and the need for accountability. The campaign also sheds light on the prevalence of rape culture, which perpetuates attitudes and behaviours that normalize or excuse sexual violence.¹⁶²

It prompted discussions about consent, gender norms, and the importance of educating both men and women about healthy relationships and respect. Furthermore, the MeToo movement in Uganda brought attention to the need for systemic change.¹⁶³ In September 2018, Ugandan lawyer Samantha Mwesigye bravely filed a sexual harassment complaint against her boss at the Ministry of Justice, hoping to end the cycle of unwanted advances and retaliation.¹⁶⁴ This action came in the wake of the global #MeToo movement, empowering women to hold powerful men accountable for sexual misconduct. However, instead of finding justice, Mwesigye faced a far worse fate. She was fired from her job and found herself "unemployable" within legal circles. Meanwhile, her boss, Christopher Gashirabake, was cleared of wrongdoing by an internal review at the ministry and was even promoted twice, ultimately becoming an appeal court judge.¹⁶⁵

In 2019, Mwesigye filed a lawsuit against Gashirabake and the Attorney General, seeking justice for sexual harassment and wrongful termination.¹⁶⁶ However, the case has been subjected to numerous adjournments, delaying her quest for justice.¹⁶⁷ Despite the challenges, Mwesigye remains determined to pursue her case and seek accountability. She acknowledges that the legal battle may span a decade, but she is resolute in her commitment to be heard and fight for justice.¹⁶⁸ In a similar incident in 2018, a female student accused her lecturer of attempted rape at a prestigious university. However, she faced severe backlash, as her complaint was disregarded by the Dean, who not only disclosed the information but also threatened her with consequences for speaking out.¹⁶⁹ After the news of her accusation against her lecturer was leaked, she faced ostracization and shame from both university officials and her fellow students.¹⁷⁰ Unfortunately, in cases of sexual abuse, the claims are often distorted and transformed into narratives of consensual love affairs turned sour, with women wrongly accused of having seduced their attackers.¹⁷¹

The MeToo movement highlighted gaps in legal frameworks, support services, and societal attitudes towards survivors of sexual abuse and harassment. This increased awareness paved the way for discussions around legislative reforms, the improvement of support services for survivors, and the implementation of preventive measures.

As a result of the MeToo campaign, there has been an increased focus on addressing these issues at various levels. This heightened awareness and activism led to a protest in support of Samantha Mwesigye, turning her

160 Keishi Foecke, 'No More Silence: The Emergence of the #MeToo Movement in Uganda' (Pulitzer Center 2019) <<https://pulitzercenter.org/stories/no-more-silence-emergence-metoo-movement-uganda>> accessed 11 July 2023.

161 Nonee Walsh, '#METOO CAMPAIGN in UGANDA' (IAWRT28 June 2018) <<https://iawrt.org/metoo-campaign-uganda/>> accessed 11 July 2023.

162 Michela Menegatti and others, 'Behind the Lines of #MeToo: Exploring Women's and Men's Intentions to Join the Movement' (2022) 14 Sustainability 12294. See also, TOA, 'Sexual Violence, the #MeToo Movement, and Narrative Shift' (The Opportunity Agenda) <https://opportunityagenda.org/messaging_reports/shift-ing-the-narrative/case-4/> accessed 11 July 2023.

163 Akina Mama Wa Afrika, '#MeToo?: Building a Movement to End Impunity on Sexual Gender Based Violence in Uganda – Akina Mama Wa Afrika' <<https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/metoo-building-a-movement-to-end-impunity-on-sexual-gender-based-violence-in-uganda/>> accessed 11 July 2023.

164 The Guardian, 'Sexual Abuse Is Normalised': Uganda Struggles with #MeToo' (the Guardian 11 July 2022) <<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/jul/11/sexual-abuse-is-normalised-metoo-takes-off-in-uganda-samantha-mwesigye>> accessed 26 July 2023.

165 Ibid.

166 Ibid.

167 Ibid.

168 Ibid.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

171 Ibid.

complaint into a significant test case in Uganda. Her case serves as an important milestone in the ongoing fight for justice and accountability in matters of sexual harassment and abuse civil society organizations, activists, and policymakers have worked to strengthen legal protections for survivors, improve access to justice, and provide comprehensive support services. The campaign has also influenced public discourse and challenged societal norms that perpetuate gender-based violence. In conclusion, the MeToo campaign in Uganda has had a profound impact on the feminist movement. It has empowered women to speak out against sexual abuse, harassment, and rape culture, and has brought attention to the need for systemic change. By raising awareness, fostering solidarity, and demanding accountability, the campaign has played a crucial role in advancing women's rights and challenging societal attitudes and behaviours in Uganda.

4.10. Precedent and Impact on the feminist movement

| Year | Event | Impact on feminism |
|---------------|---|--|
| 1894 | Missionary Girl's Schools like Gayaza | The existing culture didn't give girls an opportunity to have a formal education and therefore the missionary schools were formed to promote girl child empowerment through education |
| 1906 | Mothers' Union | They initiated the formulation of women's organizations that included women from all races and religions |
| 1921 | Girl Guides of Namirembe | They held camps for girls of all races to enable them to have integrated knowledge of different customs |
| 1946 | Formation Of Uganda Council of Women | This was the biggest women's organization at the time and had international recognition. It supported influence legislation, lobbied for women's representation in the Uganda Legislative Council among others |
| 1956 | Appointment of the first Ugandan woman on the legislative council and later independent Uganda parliament (Florence Lubega) | This opened the door for women's involvement in leadership positions |
| 1952 | Young Women Christian Association | This focused on promoting women's empowerment and participation in the building of Uganda |
| 1953 | Africa Uganda Women's League | This lobbied for the appointment of the first black African woman to serve on the legislative council |
| 1955 | The Kabaka Crisis of 1955 | This represented the beginning of women's involvement in modern-day Buganda politics |
| 1963/5 | Uganda Family Planning Association | This focuses on population control and women's health issues |
| 1973 | The Ban of Women Organizations by Idd Amin | This hampered the operation of women's organizations thus hindering the advancement of gender and equality issues |
| The mid-1980s | The National Resistance Movement (10-point forum) | Opened up CSO space allowing women's organizations to champion gender and women's issues |
| 1990 | Affirmative Action Policy in the Governance of Higher Education | This sought to increase enrollment of women and girls in higher education |
| 1993 | Women's Council Act | To promote the engagement of women in social, and political activities in the nation through the establishment of the Women's Council |
| | The Maputo protocol and Uganda's reservation | The only reservation is on abortion thus denying any international obligation to women's rights to control their fertility and access Comprehensive Abortion Care |

| Year | Event | Impact on feminism |
|------|--|---|
| 1991 | 16 days of Activism | This was established to raise awareness about GBV challenge discriminatory attitudes and call for improved laws and services to end Violence against Women (VAW) for good. |
| 1995 | The Uganda Constitution (Article 33) | This focuses on gender equality and mandates the state to provide facilities and opportunities that advance women to reach their full potential |
| 1995 | Ministry of Gender, Labor, and Social Development | As a result of the 1995 constitution, the government was mandated to establish this Ministry which advocates for social protection, gender equality, human rights, culture, decent work conditions, and empowerment for various groups, including women, and children. |
| 1997 | Local Government Act | Introducing special interest groups for women to hold political offices |
| 1999 | Generation Equality Forum and Uganda's participation | This was focused on promoting gender equality specifically bodily autonomy |
| 2004 | FIDA v Attorney General on Adultery ¹⁷² | Challenging the divorce Act that required women to prove two grounds - before being granted a divorce |
| 2005 | The ban on the vagina monologue | This resulted in the mobilization of women CSOs to opening speak about their bodies |
| 2007 | Gender Policy | This framework helps to address gender imbalances in Uganda |
| 2007 | Law and Advocacy for Women V Attorney General ¹⁷³ | Some of the provisions of the Succession Act were being challenged on the grounds of discrimination based on sex |
| 2010 | FGM Act | Prohibiting harmful cultural practices specifically FGM to protect girls and women from being subjected to inhumane and degrading treatment |
| | MIFUMI V Attorney General ¹⁷⁴ | This upheld the constitutionality of the bride price |
| 2010 | Equal Opportunities Commission | The commission's mandate is to make sure that the most vulnerable people are not subjected to sex and gender-based marginalization and discrimination by organs of state, statutory bodies, public bodies, private businesses and enterprises, NGOs, and social and cultural communities. When it is clear that there was prejudice or marginalization, the commission offers legal recourse. |
| 2019 | The emergence of the #Metoo campaign in Uganda | Social movement and awareness campaign against sexual abuse, harassment, and rape culture. |

¹⁷² Uganda Law Society & Anor v The Attorney General (Constitutional Petition No. 2 of 2002) [2009] UGSC 1 (4 February 2009).

¹⁷³ Law Advocacy for Women in Uganda v Attorney General (Constitutional Petition No. 13 of 2005) [2007] UGSC 71 (5 April 2007).

¹⁷⁴ Mifumi (U) Ltd & Anor v Attorney General & Anor (Constitutional Appeal No. 2 of 2014) [2015] UGSC 13 (6 August 2015).

5. The role of CSOs in Uganda's feminist movement

The United Nations (UN) defines Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) as “non-state voluntary and non-profit making organisations that are organised by individuals in the social sphere.”¹⁷⁵ CSOs address critical issues by providing solutions to the challenges faced by citizens at the grassroots level. The evolution of CSOs in Uganda dates back to pre-colonial and post-independence, although accelerated momentum is witnessed from the 1970s and the 1980s through the 2000s.¹⁷⁶ CSOs play a key role in promoting inclusive social, economic, and political development and are seen as advocates of the poor through their participatory and citizen-driven approach to voicing their concerns.¹⁷⁷ Civil society, and specifically women-led organizations, play a pivotal role in advancing gender equality and realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They hold governments accountable for translating their commitments into laws and policies and implementation and enforcement. They address the needs of the marginalised at the community level (who are mostly women and girls).¹⁷⁸

Over the past years, CSOs' approaches to addressing women's interests in social, political, and economic environments have evolved creating a category of CSOs that advance gender equality using different initiatives to address women's concerns. The role of CSOs in Uganda's feminist movement is traced back and motivated by the oppressive gender regime in the pre-colonial and colonial States.¹⁷⁹ Initially, feminist movements were often organized by missionary wives, Christian-centred, and community development-focused.¹⁸⁰ In the 1980s–90s CSOs¹⁸¹ as non-state actors contributed to the country's development initiatives to reach the poor and marginalised people resulting in the emergence of networks such as Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO),¹⁸² which was founded in 1986 to address the needs of orphaned and vulnerable children, with a focus on the well-being and rights of girls; Uganda Women's Network (UWONET), which was founded in 1993 to amplify the voices of women's organizations, advocate for policy changes, and foster collaboration.¹⁸³ These were established to promote women's rights and empowerment.

5.1. Policy advocacy

CSOs have the power to organising collective efforts in influencing policies, they hold the government accountable and ensure that they translate international obligations into laws and policies that are implemented at a national and local level.¹⁸⁴ In most instances, CSOs are more connected to the general citizenry and as such are viewed as a more viable alternative to state policies and services that ignore the needs of the marginalised and this enables them to set in place strategies and policies which set a benchmark for government to adopt. However, CSOs have at times been considered to be the silent opposition to the government and therefore face competitive resistance from the government consequently limiting their ability to influence government policies at times.¹⁸⁵

5.2. Capacity enhancement

CSOs often provide platforms for knowledge and information sharing of experiences, strategies, and challenges faced in the feminist movement. They have also been able to provide training, workshops, and activities to build the capacities of individuals, organizations in the feminist movement, and women and girls in the local communities to enable them to be effective in pursuing progressive changes in their communities.

¹⁷⁵ www.un.org, 'United Nations, Civil Society', <https://www.ungpreporting.org/glossary/civil-society-organizations-csos/> accessed 13 July 2023.

¹⁷⁶ Nicola Banks and David Hulme, 'NGOs, civil society and development' [2012] 171 *The role of NGOs and civil society in development and poverty reduction*.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*

¹⁷⁸ UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality (2019)

¹⁷⁹ Amon Ashaba Mwiine, 'Tracking the Trajectory of Feminist Advocacy in Uganda: How Has Theory Informed the Practice of Advocacy?' [2022] *Agenda* 1.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁸¹ The term "Civil Society Organisations" encompasses a wide range of organisations including women's groups, community-based groups, trades unions, religious groups, employers' associations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

¹⁸² Uganda Women's Effort to Save Orphans, 'Striving to Maintain the Quality of Life' <<https://uweso.org/>> accessed 13 July 2023

¹⁸³ Uganda Women's Network, 'Gender Transformation and Empowerment' (Uganda Women's Network - Gender Transformation and Empowerment.) <<https://www.uwonet.or.ug/>> accessed 13 July 2023

¹⁸⁴ UN Women's Fund for Gender Equality (2019)

¹⁸⁵ Michael Mugisha, Yusuf Kiranda, Michael Mbate, 'Civil Society in Uganda Broadening Understanding of Uganda's Civil Society Ecosystem and Identifying Pathways for Effective Engagement with Civil Society in the Development Process' (2019) <<https://www.kas.de/documents/280229/280278/Reality+Check+11+Civil+Society.pdf/c17c76f7-e3d5-40d4-a5e8-fc8af1107a5b?t=1580718867580>> accessed 28 July 2023.

5.3. Funding

CSOs have benefited from multi- and bilateral donors' by-passing state channels. The 1995 Beijing Women's Conference encouraged donors to increase their support for CSOs' work on gender. In addition, Gender Units or Gender Focal Points were active in many of the larger organisations, and gender issues were supported by internal funding as well as donor funds.¹⁸⁶ Generation Equality Forum (GEF) raised financial commitments of up to 40 billion US dollars which is aimed at various initiatives for achieving gender equality, and part of this funding is directly aimed at achieving feminist initiatives.¹⁸⁷

5.4. The HerVoice Fund

Is an initiative launched by Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA), a feminist organization based in Uganda. The fund aims to support grassroots women's organizations and feminist movements in Africa, including Uganda, to advance gender equality and women's rights. The HerVoice Fund provides financial grants to women-led organizations and groups working on a range of issues related to women's empowerment, such as economic justice, political participation, sexual and reproductive health rights, and ending gender-based violence. The fund aims to strengthen the capacity and sustainability of these organizations, enabling them to implement their initiatives effectively and create lasting change. In addition to financial support, the HerVoice Fund offers capacity-building activities, training programs, and networking opportunities.

These activities aim to enhance the skills, knowledge, and advocacy capacity of women's organizations, empowering them to be effective agents of change in their communities and beyond. The HerVoice Fund also emphasizes an intersectional approach, recognizing the diverse experiences and challenges faced by women. It supports initiatives that address the specific needs of marginalized women, including those based on race, ethnicity, sexuality, disability, and socioeconomic status. By supporting grassroots organizations and feminist movements, the HerVoice Fund contributes to the broader feminist agenda of promoting gender equality, challenging patriarchal norms, and amplifying the voices of women. It recognizes the importance of local knowledge and expertise and aims to create sustainable change by investing in women-led initiatives.

These case studies illustrate a few of the many feminist activities and movements that are taking place in Uganda. Each of these movements takes on particular problems, organizes communities, and promotes women's rights and gender equality in distinctive ways. Top of Form

5.5. Profiled Organizations

This section introduces organizations whose work is based on feminist principles and approaches, and which contribute to the SRHR movement and the realization of the Generation Equality Forum's Global Acceleration Plan (GAP). Cooperative data collection and analysis of organizations' visions, missions, and objectives were used to determine whether or not they align with feminist principles and approaches and the GAP to profile the organizations listed in the table below.

186 Helen Collinson, Helen Derbyshire, Brita Fernandez Schmidt, Tina Wallace, 'Women's Rights and Gender Equality, the New Aid Environment and Civil Society Organisations' (2008) < <https://oxfamlibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/112451/women's-rights-gender-equality-new-aid-environment-civil-society-organisations-010108-en.pdf;jsessionid=D13BED7D74EDF9544FCC5C77AF07A7B7?sequence=1> > accessed 14 July 2023

187 "About Generation Equality Forum" < <https://forum.generationequality.org/about> > accessed 11 July 2023.

Table: Profile of organizations grounded in feminist principles and approaches and their contribution to the SRHR movement and the Global Acceleration Plan

| Institution/ Organization | Mandate | Contribution to the SRHR Movement | Alignment to the Global Acceleration Plan |
|---|--|---|--|
| Akina Mama wa Afrika (AMWA) | <p>Akina Mama wa Afrika¹⁸⁸ is a feminist-Pan-African civil society organization founded in 1985 by a group of African women who aim to dismantle patriarchy, through forming social movements campaigning against gender inequality, women's exploitation, and discrimination.</p> <p>AMWA is the current host of the Uganda Feminist Forum (UFF) and working group member of the African Feminist Forum (AFF) and also a proud member of the Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SoAWR), NGO CSW Africa, the Gender is My Agenda Campaign and more recently Tax Justice Network Africa</p> <p>Through collaboration with sister organizations, AMWA has established strong coalitions that have brought critical women's rights issues to policy-making spaces at the national and regional levels.</p> | <p>AMWA's flagship programme – the African Women's Leadership Institute (AWLI), (and a pioneer on the continent), is well known for igniting feminist fires and has produced a strong community of over 8000 feminist leaders, aka AMwAzons who are championing a progressive women rights agenda in different parts of Africa.</p> <p>Supporting diverse and inclusive African feminist movement</p> <p>Boldly challenge negative social, religious, and gender norms and structures that undermine SRHR</p> <p>Strengthen the capacity of African feminists to demand SRHR</p> <p>Policy briefs: https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/policy-briefs/</p> <p>Publications: https://www.akinamamawaafrika.org/other-publications/</p> | <p>AMWA's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Feminist action for climate justice;</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership.</p> |
| Alliance for Women Advocating for Change (AWAC) | <p>Alliance for Women Advocating for Change (AWAC)¹⁸⁹ is a feminist network of grassroots Female Sex Workers (FSWs) established in 2015 whose focus is on lobbying for the rights of FSWs and eliminating stigma, discrimination, and criminalization in all forms of Female Sex Workers by addressing and responding to their comprehensive SRHR and mental health needs.</p> | <p>SRHR, GBV, and mental health services are among the integrated intervention services that are made available to promote access to combat stigma, discrimination, and criminality.</p> <p>developing strategic partnerships, alliances, and networking at all levels to increase stakeholder engagement and collaboration</p> <p>Through rights-based research, knowledge management, and learning, the alliance aims to achieve evidence-based policies and programs for grassroots rural and peri-urban female sex workers with intersecting vulnerabilities</p> | <p>AWAC's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) for sex workers</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>and</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |

¹⁸⁸ Akina Mama Wa Afrika www.akinamamawaafrika.org

¹⁸⁹ Alliance for Women Advocating for Change <https://awacuganda.org/> accessed 20 September 2023.

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|--|---|--|---|
| | | <p>Strengthening advocacy efforts to promote the rights of female sex workers.</p> <p>Skills development and economic empowerment for FSWs.</p> <p>enhancing community structures, raising literacy levels, and developing feminist leadership through movement-building and service expansion across Uganda.</p> | |
| <p>Association of Women Lawyers in Uganda (FIDA- Uganda)</p> | <p>The Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA Uganda)¹⁹⁰ uses multiple strategies aimed at advancing law and policy reform for the protection of women including advocacy, public interest litigation, and various forms of public engagement.</p> <p>It is a feminist organization formed in 1974 with an established track record of promoting and defending human rights, with a focus on the rights of women and children.</p> | <p>FIDA Uganda has an established track record of promoting and defending human rights, with a focus on the rights of women and children.</p> <p>Enhancing access to justice for women in Uganda.</p> <p>Advancing gender equality through the promotion of women's rights.</p> <p>Promoting social-economic rights and justice for women.</p> <p>Advancing gender-responsive governance and women's effective participation in public life.</p> <p>FIDA has undertaken studies on SGBV, access to justice for women and girls, climate change, and its impact on women's rights among others;</p> <p>Publications https://fidauganda.org/publications/</p> | <p>FIDA's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Feminist action for climate justice;</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership.</p> |
| <p>Ugandan Feminist Forum</p> | <p>The Ugandan Feminist Forum was established in 2008 following the African Feminist Forum. Its guiding principles and guiding philosophy are based on the Charter of Feminist Principles for African Feminists, which all members are expected to maintain. Among the many challenges that Ugandan feminists faced in their fight against patriarchal dominance, the UFF served as a platform for members of the community to share ideas, discuss politics, and plan actions.</p> | <p>UFF advances Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) in Uganda by fighting for comprehensive, inclusive SRHR policies and laws and fight legislation that violates women's reproductive rights.</p> <p>They raise awareness of SRHR issues to decrease stigma and misinformation and encourage informed decision-making.</p> <p>During the pandemic, UFF's role in advocating for SRHR was more vital than ever.</p> <p>They advocate for the marginalization of groups such as LGBTQI individuals and the stark</p> | <p>UFF's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas:</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR);</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership.</p> |

190 Uganda Association of Women Lawyers (FIDA Uganda) www.fidauganda.org

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| | | <p>inequalities exposed by these groups highlighting the need for inclusive and intersectional approaches to SRHR.</p> <p>http://ugandafeministforum.org/</p> | |
| Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP) | <p>Center for Domestic Violence Prevention (CEDOVIP)¹⁹¹ is a local CSO established in 2003 that works in collaboration with key stakeholders to build a movement aimed at preventing violence against women and girls in Uganda.</p> <p>CEDOVIP aims to challenge power structures to address underlying power imbalances and harmful social norms to prevent violence against women and girls and promote safe, healthy, and happy relationships, homes, and communities.</p> | <p>CEDOVIP works with the government to provide guidelines, instructions, and manuals for service providers like the police, judiciary, and healthcare providers so they can provide victims of domestic and sexual violence with the support they need.</p> <p>Involved in lobbying activities to influence policymakers and the legislative to enact laws and policies to prevent domestic violence.</p> <p>CEDOVIP advocates for better implementation of existing laws, the passage of new laws on violence against women and girls, and also the repeal of discriminatory laws and policies such as the 2014 anti-pornography act, which discriminated against women and left it up to men to decide whether their clothing constituted pornographic content.</p> <p>Involved in anti-FGM advocacy to eliminate the practice in Uganda.</p> | <p>CEDOVIP's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |
| Eliezah Foundation Initiative Uganda | <p>Eliezah Foundation is a Ugandan non-profit established in 2005.</p> <p>It works with communities to address sexual and gender-based violence and HIV.</p> <p>It aims at women and children having the right to enjoy and explore equal freedoms and opportunities as everybody else and that their safety and health are extremely important to both the individuals and the entire world.</p> | <p>Initiatives to end violence against children</p> <p>Establishing HIV preventative structural strategies</p> <p>Ensuring that all children - including the most vulnerable - have access to safe and inclusive learning environments</p> <p>Strengthening systems, building capacities, and innovative technology solutions to tackle online harms to children.</p> <p>Raising awareness and advocating with governments, industry, and other key stakeholders to prioritise online child safety in their policies, budgets, and business practices</p> | <p>Eliezah Foundation Initiative's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas:</p> <p>Gender-based Violence</p> <p>Bodily autonomy & SRHR</p> <p>Economic justice & rights</p> <p>Feminist action for climate justice;</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |

191 Center for Domestic Violence Prevention <https://www.cedovip.org/> accessed 20 September 2023.

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|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <p>Embibo Gender Initiative</p> | <p>Embibo Gender Initiative (EGI)¹⁹² was established in 2018 as a community-based organisation that focuses exclusively on Gender-Based Violence, Socio-Economic Empowerment, Girls' Child Education Support, and Sexual and Reproductive Health.</p> <p>Embibo Gender Initiative uses community-based approaches as an integral part of a long-term strategy to strengthen the rural community's awareness and resilience regarding gender and sexual reproductive health.</p> | <p>Embibo Gender Initiative creates spaces for SGBV survivors and their families to access healing, wellness, and reconciliation where needed. This is through counselling, medical and legal referrals, and group therapy.</p> <p>Empowers teachers with the knowledge to make schools conducive and violence-free towards girls, thus reducing dropout and increasing enrolment.</p> <p>Community accountability and faster referral of SGBV cases. VGT community members receive training in GBV laws, policies, prevention measures, and handling of cases.</p> | <p>Embibo Gender Initiatives' work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR);</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality; and</p> <p>Feminist movement & leadership</p> |
| <p>Femme fort</p> | <p>Femme forte¹⁹³ is a movement-building entity that exists to strengthen pathways between young and older women who aspire to meaningfully contribute to the greater women's movement in Uganda. They love women and believe in their advancement in the economic, social, and political spheres.</p> <p>Femme Fort is a turning point for women, where advances in women's rights are at threat from rising fundamentalisms, financial crises, political turmoil, and backlash against feminism.</p> <p>Very important gains have been made in many frameworks, policies, and laws that protect the rights of women, yet, the power dynamics that drive inequality between women and men remain in force at all levels.</p> | <p>Femme forte creates safe environments for expression, self-care, participation, and growth of leadership skills. Its programs are hinged on three strategic anchors: Communication, Organizing and Leadership;</p> <p><i>Body Rights and Integrity:</i> Sexual rights and health, Gender-based violence, celebrating sexuality, menstruation, and yoga.</p> <p><i>Financial Literacy and the Wealth Agenda:</i> Economic empowerment and equality.</p> <p><i>Transformative Feminist Leadership:</i> Femme Forte School of Leadership and Workcamps, Femme Forte Writers' Initiative - The journals; The Equip Circles & The moving Library.</p> <p>Policy advocacy and influence for women's bodily autonomy and SRHR</p> <p>Programs: https://www.femmeforteug.org/copy-of-about</p> <p>Publications: https://www.femmeforteug.org/publications</p> | <p>Femme Fort's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR); and</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership.</p> |

192 Embibo Gender Initiative (EGI) www.embibogenderinitiative.org

193 Femme Forte www.femmeforteug.org

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| <p>Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)</p> | <p>Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE)¹⁹⁴ is a non-governmental organization founded in 1994, that offers a platform for Ugandan women's learning, networking, sharing experiences, and advocating for gender equality and equity in the decision-making process.</p> <p>Relentlessly pursuing a non-partisan path and grounded in the Ugandan and African women's rights movements, FOWODE has focused its efforts on building transformative leadership for women's rights and influencing public policy.</p> | <p>FOWODE has strategically positioned itself as a champion for women's rights protection, participation in political decision-making, and engagement in issues of macroeconomic governance such as Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB).</p> <p>Ending violence against girls and women and engaging parents, teachers, and young people on the rights of women and girls.</p> <p>Catalysing a new generation of activities to challenge FGM and child-early and forced marriage in Kenya and Uganda. Focused on a community response to challenging FGM and CEFM.</p> <p>Promoting Economic Justice for Women and advancing women's economic rights.</p> <p>Strengthening Women's Voice, Leadership, and Participation.</p> <p>Promoting the inclusion of women with disabilities in the key socio-economic sectors.</p> <p>Promoting gender equality in decision-making.</p> <p>Publications https://fowode.org/research/</p> | <p>Feminist movement and leadership. FOWODE's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership.</p> |
| <p>Girls Not Brides</p> | <p>Girls n Not Brides¹⁹⁵ is a global network of civil society organizations with membership in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East.</p> <p>Girls Not Brides was initiated by a group of global peace and human rights leaders in 2011 called The Elders to eradicate harmful practices affecting girls and women and to end child marriages.</p> <p>Girls Not Brides is a key government partner implementing the National Strategy to end child marriages and teenage pregnancies in Uganda.</p> | <p>Utilizing shared learning and capacity enhancement through research, advocacy, fundraising, youth activism, and coalition building.</p> <p>Advocating for comprehensive sexuality education for the youth.</p> <p>Utilizing inclusive approaches and community engagement to challenge social norms regarding girls' sexuality</p> <p>Training programmes for youth-friendly services by service providers, including reproductive health care services.</p> <p>Utilization of media for advocacy against FGM and child marriage</p> | <p>Girls Not Brides' work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |

¹⁹⁴ Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) www.fowode.org

¹⁹⁵ Girls Not Brides <https://www.girlsnotbrides.org/about-us/>, accessed 23 September 2023.

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| | | Advancing girls' rights and leadership through the increase of girls' knowledge and skills to support decision-making capabilities, collective action, and their ability to take control of their future. | |
| MEMPROW | The Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW) ¹⁹⁶ uses initiatives to enable girls and young women to become leaders and decision-makers who are self-reliant to challenge patriarchy in their everyday lives. | <p>MEMPROW creates space for building the capacity of young women, to engage more actively in leadership for transformation, and creating an environment based on respect for social justice and women's worth, women's rights, and gender equality.</p> <p>Advocating for young women's rights and increased awareness on access and utilization of sexual and reproductive health rights.</p> <p>Creates a safe space for girls and young women to learn about feminism and build their knowledge, and activism to organise and build a strong sisterhood that demands freedom for all women.</p> <p>Gender and human rights training for leaders and beauty bearers.</p> <p>ANNUAL REPORT 2022 – MEMPROW The Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women</p> <p>Publications: https://memprow.org/publications/</p> | <p>MEMPROW's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> |
| MIFUMI | <p>MIFUMI¹⁹⁷ has been in existence since 1994 and is made up of women activists and human rights defenders committed to ending gender-based violence. It seeks to find an end to domestic violence plus bride price and polygamy which it views as a cultural driver of violence against women and children.</p> <p>MIFUMI works to create community "champions" from among the women supported together with supportive individuals in the community to build a "safety net" around survivors of Gender-based violence.</p> | <p>MIFUMI has championed and pioneered innovative approaches to ending violence against women through;</p> <p>Surfacing underlying causes of VAWG and enabling the community to make the connections, such as bride price and strategic litigation on identified drivers of violence to pronounce them unconstitutional. The campaign on bride price was bold and forced communities to deal with the issue of VAWG.</p> <p>Building a women's social movement concerned with and addressing the issue of VAWG and rights, with the knowledge, awareness, skills, intent,</p> | <p>MIFUMI's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership.</p> |

196 The Mentoring and Empowerment Programme for Young Women (MEMPROW) www.memprow.org

197 MIFUMI www.mifumi.org/ accessed 21 July 2023

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| | | <p>and courage to take action at the community level, and support women to access justice, while building their livelihood base and economic empowerment.</p> <p>Movement building to strengthen women’s leadership and gender power relations in communities.</p> <p>Ensuring that harmful norms are replaced by women-friendly laws, policies, and practices.</p> <p>Providing legal empowerment and advocacy in the community to enable women to access justice.</p> <p>MIFUMI has developed Domestic Violence Training Manuals in the Companion series to harness and formally package experience and knowledge as an effective tool for strengthening key services in response to women experiencing domestic violence and abuse.</p> <p>https://mifumi.org/the-companion-for-health-professionals/</p> | |
| Nile Girls Forum | <p>Nile Girls Forum¹⁹⁸ is a girl-led organization focusing on elevating resilient girls and young women with an emphasis on Leadership, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, Climate Justice, and Economic Development. Through their programs, they facilitate the development of aspirations, self-worth, and achievement of girls and women from the grassroots to competent leaders.</p> <p>Nile Girls Forum’s goal is to strengthen interventions that accelerate gender equality and empowerment of adolescent girls and young women to have a productive life. Through creating solutions and platforms that groom vulnerable girls to realize their life potential.</p> | <p>Creative feminist advocacy by strengthening the involvement of adolescent girls and young women with disabilities through sexual and reproductive health and rights leadership development pieces of training and advocacy campaigns in the Zombo District.</p> <p>Strengthen the influence and position of young women whose sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) are neglected the most. It targets young women and adolescent girls who: live with HIV; face vulnerability and discrimination; live with a disability; and/or are affected by displacement.</p> <p>Support adolescent girls and young women to participate and influence local and national level budgeting to ensure resource allocation to the needs of the girl child.</p> <p>Empower adolescent girls and young women to make forefront decisions at all levels in recognizing the critical need to reshape systems and policies.</p> | <p>Nile Girls Forum’s work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Feminist action for climate justice;</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |

198 Nile Girls Forum <https://nilegirlsforum.org/>, accessed 21 July 2023

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| | | <p>Provide access to mentors to deliver an insightful understanding of equality and adolescent girls and young women taking up space in communities.</p> <p>Increased proportion of adolescent girls and young women with comprehensive knowledge on accessing and utilizing friendly, and age-appropriate Sexual Reproductive information and services.</p> <p>Through a program code-named WAYA – PONJI PA NYILAK. That means aunt-daughter mentorship aimed to address sexual and reproductive health and rights to enable adolescent girls and young women to acquire necessary skills in life and make informed life decisions.</p> <p>Programs: https://nilegirlsforum.org/our-programs/</p> | |
| She Decides | <p>She Decides¹⁹⁹ is a global political movement that, since 2017, has aimed to mobilize collective action for bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive rights for all.</p> <p>She decides focuses on increasing access to information about women's, girls and young people's bodies and rights and enabling them to have agency to act on these rights and to make informed decisions regarding their bodies and their sexual and reproductive health. Lastly, it aims to ensure that there is the availability of services to help them support the decisions that they make.</p> | <p>Building collective strength movements and creating opportunities for reaching new audiences through providing funding (such as the Spark Grants) to young feminist movements.</p> <p>Utilization of social media mobilization.</p> <p>Global coordination for accountability for political and financial commitments by hosting high-level events in UN spaces to increase political pressure for action, and convening government ministries, heads of institutions, and UN agencies to discuss progress in abortion rights.</p> <p>Utilization of She Decides champions to speak out about Roe V Wade and support youth activists to make recommendations on the UN Youth Office to 23 governments.</p> <p>Increasing social media engagement rate on international safe abortion day to increase awareness.</p> | <p>She Decides' work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |

199 She Decides. <https://www.shedecides.com/> accessed 24 September 2023.

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| <p>The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR)</p> | <p>The Solidarity for African Women's Rights²⁰⁰ (SOAWR) is a powerful coalition of over 80 civil society organizations that operate across 33 countries, established in 2003. Its main objective is to ensure that policymakers in Africa prioritize the rights of women as outlined in the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa, also known as the Maputo Protocol.</p> <p>With its vast network and unwavering determination, SOAWR is leading the charge to protect and promote the rights of African women.</p> | <p>Accelerating the ratification of the Maputo Protocol and supporting its domestication and implementation.</p> <p>Ensuring that progress is tracked effectively and that all relevant information is properly documented through the implementation of tracking and documentation mechanisms for the Maputo Protocol.</p> <p>Enhancing the national community mobilization efforts in promoting and utilizing the Maputo Protocol.</p> <p>Improving the understanding and agreement among coalition members regarding the advocacy for the Maputo Protocol.</p> | <p>SOAWR's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Feminist action for climate justice;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR);</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality; AND</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |
| <p>Women Pro Bono Initiative (WPI)</p> | <p>The Women's Pro Bono Initiative (WPI)²⁰¹ uses formal and informal justice avenues, legal knowledge, and legal tools to increase access to justice for women and girls by developing mediation mechanisms to be utilized out of court, educating women about their rights, conducting research and documenting practices to inform national advocacy campaigns and impact litigation.</p> | <p>Women Probono Initiative advances women's and girls' rights through awareness creation for human rights, legal representation, research, and knowledge sharing.</p> <p>Case brief on access to safe and legal abortion services in Uganda; https://womenprobono.org/download/case-brief-access-to-safe-legal-abortion-services-in-uganda/</p> <p>Toolkit on making re-usable sanitary pads in Uganda; https://womenprobono.org/download/tool-kit-on-making-re-usable-sanitary-pads-in-uganda/</p> <p>Case digest on abortion in Africa; https://womenprobono.org/download/case-digest-on-abortion-in-africa/</p> <p>Annual reports and other study reports; https://womenprobono.org/reports/</p> <p>Publications; https://womenprobono.org/our-publications/</p> <p>Press release; https://womenprobono.org/international-womens-day-release-innovation-and-technology-for-gender-equality/</p> | <p>WPI's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |

200 The Solidarity for African Women's Rights (SOAWR) <https://soawr.org/> accessed 24 October 2023

201 Women Probono Initiative <https://womenprobonoinitiative.org/> accessed 21 July 2023

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| | | <p>Press statement; https://womenprobono.org/press-statement-menstrual-hygiene-day-2023/</p> <p>Press release; https://womenprobono.org/press-release-on-the-launch-of-16-days-of-activism-2022/</p> | |
| Women With a Mission (WWM) | <p>Women with a Mission (WWM)²⁰² WWM is a non-profit human rights organization that focuses on advocating for gender equality and justiciability of health rights in Uganda. Its secretariat is located in Mbale, Eastern Uganda. The organization was established to address issues such as gender inequality, sexual gender-based violence, human rights violations, and health problems affecting women and girls.</p> <p>WWM's five programmatic areas are Enhanced Access to Justice, Advocacy, Research and Documentation, Community Capacity Enhancement, and Strategic Partnerships & Collaboration.</p> <p>The organization aims to create a supportive legal environment for the adoption, implementation, and expansion of harm reduction programs.</p> | <p>Women with a Mission enhances the capacity of target communities, duty bearers, and key stakeholders to promote human rights, prevention, and response to GBV/ intimate violence, SRHR, Human Rights, and Laws affecting women and girls.</p> <p>Advocacy, Research, and Documentation for a just and fair legal and policy environment that promotes rights, equality, and non-discrimination.</p> <p>Partnerships with mainstream human rights organisations and legal aid service providers to expand legal aid for Women and Girls and provide mentorship to paralegals.</p> <p>WWM uses strategic litigation as one of the major advocacy tools to advance the promotion and observance of human rights especially the right to health for our target communities.</p> <p>Awareness creation on SRHR laws and policies affecting marginalized groups to increase advocacy and promotion of access to justice.</p> <p>Reports and publications; https://womenwithmission.org/reports-and-publications/</p> <p>https://womenwithmission.org/Annual_Narrative_Report_2022.pdf</p> | <p>WWM's work aligns with the following GAP critical areas;</p> <p>Gender-based violence;</p> <p>Economic justice and rights;</p> <p>Bodily autonomy and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR)</p> <p>Feminist action for climate justice;</p> <p>Technology and innovation for gender equality;</p> <p>Feminist movement and leadership</p> |

²⁰² Women With a Mission <https://womenwithmission.org/> accessed 21 July 2023

SECTION SIX:

6. The strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the feminist movement in Uganda

| STRENGTHS | WEAKNESSES |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversity • Commitment to intersectionality and inclusivity • Technology and innovation • Engagement and mobilization of young people as change agents | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fragmented coordination • Inert participation and involvement of men • Persistent societal resistance, stigma, and backlash against the feminist movement and gender equality. • Limited resources and Limitations in engaging and mobilizing rural communities • Generational gap within the feminist movement • Effective implementation and enforcement of gender-responsive laws and policies |
| OPPORTUNITIES | THREATS |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alignment of Uganda’s national development planning frameworks to the BpFA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and under the Third National Development Plan (NDP III) • growing awareness and consciousness around gender equality • policy reforms and international commitments • Youth engagements and technology advancements • Strategic partnerships and collaborations • Education and awareness programs • Access to international solidarity and support • Existing feminist global movements that Uganda can be part to influence the feminist agenda • Existing political will for women empowerment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrenched patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles are deeply rooted in Ugandan society • Limited legal protection and enforcement mechanisms • The influence of conservative religious and cultural institutions • Limited access to resources • Stigma, resistance, and backlash against feminist activists • Lack of comprehensive sex education and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services |

The history and evolution of Uganda’s feminist movement depict that there are several strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and weaknesses. To elaborate on these, the study undertook a SWOT analysis and weighed them against the cross-cutting issues highlighted by the Generation Equality Forum (GEF). The Forum’s establishment embraces the power of women’s rights activism, feminist solidarity, and youth leadership. This offered a unique opportunity to confront challenges that are widening the gap of gender inequality.²⁰³ The Forum launched a 5-year action-journey to achieve irreversible progress towards gender equality founded on a series of concrete, ambitious and transformative actions, including \$40 billion in financial commitments to deliver tangible developments on gender equality in the pursuit of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This funding will also support SDG 5 that seeks to “achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.”²⁰⁴

The agenda under the forum aims to address the six thematic areas by tackling the critical cross-cutting issues such as financing, transforming gender norms (including by engaging men and boys), law and policy reform,

203 Generation Equality, ‘Generation Equality Forum’ (Generation Equality Forum) <<https://forum.generationequality.org/>> accessed 13 July 2023
 204 Ibid

education, gender data and accountability, addressing intersectional discrimination, focusing on systemic change by addressing structural inequalities, the centrality of adolescent girls and young women.

The Global Acceleration Plan (GAP), prioritizes six main thematic areas, dubbed 'action coalitions',²⁰⁵ namely:

Gender-based violence (GBV): This action coalition aims to address GBV by ensuring a comprehensive commitment to changing GBV strategies and has highlighted the following action points for the next five years. The action points include strengthening domestic, regional, and international legal frameworks with government, public, and private sector commitment; strengthening prevention strategies; increasing comprehensive, accessible, and quality services for GBV survivors; intensifying and increasing accountability of girl-led and women's rights organisations; and increasing and intensifying accountability and quality accessible funding from the state, public, and private sectors.

Economic justice and rights: By improving the care economy and addressing labour disparities to enhance women's economic empowerment and expanding decent work in the formal and informal sectors, this action coalition aims to ensure that women and girls have guaranteed economic and justice rights with gender-responsive, non-discriminatory, and empowering systems and structures by 2026. The action coalition's other goals include increasing women's control and ownership of productive resources and firms, as well as promoting transformative economies.

Bodily Autonomy and Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR): The action coalition's goal is to achieve complete bodily autonomy for women and girls by empowering them to make decisions about their sexual and reproductive health and rights. The coalition aims to achieve this by expanding comprehensive sexuality education, ensuring that quality comprehensive abortion services and contraception are more acceptable, accessible, and available, and strengthening the organizations and initiatives of girls, women, and feminists to promote and achieve bodily autonomy and comprehensive SRHR.

Feminist Action for Climate Justice: This action coalition aims to transition and improve climate issues by recognising that climate justice is inextricably linked to gender justice, empowering women to take the frontline in decision-making and being leaders in environmental governance, and creating an inclusive green economy in which women and girls have land rights and tenure security, as well as the ability to deal with the effects of climate disasters, risks, loss, and damage. It also intends to increase the number of data banks that demonstrate the link between climate justice and gender justice.

Innovation for gender equality: The coalition aims to ensure that women and girls have equal access to opportunities in technology and innovation in an environment with feminist technology that is safe from online and tech-facilitated GBV and discrimination.

Feminist movement and leadership: By funding the feminist movement, promoting and creating a civic space for feminist action, mobilization, and organization, and empowering adolescent girls and feminist leaders, organizations, and movements, the action coalition aims to build an all-inclusive feminist movement with feminist leadership and meaningful participation in decision-making.

Stakeholders and actors committed to delivering on agreed-upon goals and objectives under each of these Action Coalitions. Two of these coalitions specifically support feminist movements and leadership in order to ensure that, by 2026, feminist leaders, movements, and organisations, including those led by trans, intersex, nonbinary people, indigenous women, young feminists, and other historically excluded people, are supported to become sustainable, and can carry out their work without fear of retaliation to advance gender equality, peace, and human rights for all, while also furthering feminist action for climate justice.²⁰⁶

Highlighted below is an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the feminist movement in light of the six action coalitions of the GAP:

6.1. Strengths

Diversity: Uganda's feminist movement has diverse representation from grassroots to national, sub-regional, and regional organizations. It encompasses a diverse range of organizations, networks, and grassroots movements that have demonstrated robust organizational capacity. These entities have established well-defined structures,

²⁰⁵ Generation Equality, 'Action Coalitions' <<https://commitments.generationequality.org/sites/default/files/2022-09/UNW-GAP-Report-EN-web.pdf>> accessed 13 July 2023

²⁰⁶ United Nations, 'Generation Equality Forum Action Coalitions Launch Transformative Commitments for Gender Equality' (UN Women – Headquarters 2 July 2021) <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2021/7/news-gef-paris-action-coalitions-launch-commitments-for-gender-equality>> accessed 13 July 2023

effective leadership, and strategic planning, allowing them to operate efficiently and achieve their objectives.²⁰⁷ This diversity presents an opportunity for the movement to tackle the different themes of the GAP in advancing irreversible progress toward achieving gender equality in Uganda.

Commitment to intersectionality and inclusivity: The GAP recognizes the need to ensure that by 2026, feminist leaders, movements, and organizations, including those led by trans, intersex, and nonbinary people, indigenous women, young feminists, and other historically excluded people. Notably, Uganda's feminist movements recognize the intersecting nature of oppression, the movement strives to be inclusive and acknowledges the diverse experiences of women.²⁰⁸ It embraces an intersectional approach that addresses the specific challenges faced by marginalized groups, including women with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, ethnic minorities, and rural women. This inclusive perspective strengthens the movement's ability to advocate for the rights of all women and fosters a more comprehensive and equitable approach to gender equality while advancing the GAP thematic areas.

Technology and innovation: The feminist movement in Uganda strategically utilizes media and communication strategies to amplify its message and influence public discourse. Activists within the movement leverage technological innovations including digital media platforms to raise awareness, challenge gender norms, and advocate for policy changes. By utilizing creative communication techniques and engaging with a wider audience, they effectively disseminate key messages and foster public support for gender equality. These engagements enhance the movement's visibility, broaden its reach, and strengthen its influence within Ugandan society while contributing towards the 5th thematic area of the GAP.

Engagement and mobilization of young people as change agents: The Uganda feminist movement has created platforms for youth leadership, fostering their active participation and ensuring the sustainability of the movement. By empowering young feminists, the movement ensures the continuation of advocacy efforts and the transmission of feminist principles and values to future generations. This youth engagement strengthens the movement's capacity to adapt and evolve, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness in addressing emerging gender issues and challenges. This as a result contributes to the realization of the GAP set targets of 2026.

6.2. Weaknesses

Fragmented coordination: While collaboration and solidarity exist within the movement, there is also a presence of multiple organizations and networks working towards similar goals. This fragmentation continues to lead to duplication of efforts, competition for limited resources, and a lack of cohesive and unified strategies. It should be noted that to realize the aspirations of the GAP, there is a need to ensure that all these networks and organisations are well coordinated and work towards the same agenda by 2026. The GEF established coalitions that would encourage collaborative efforts and the feminist movement needs to utilise such types of global and international initiatives to strengthen their coordinating efforts. It is also important to note that for any entity to be a commitment maker under any of the coalitions, the GEF requires that commitments are to be made in collaboration with other stakeholders therefore encouraging collaborative and coordinated efforts.

Persistent societal resistance, stigma, and backlash against the feminist movement and gender equality: Deep-rooted cultural and traditional norms often perpetuate patriarchal attitudes, limiting the acceptance and implementation of feminist ideals.²⁰⁹ The movement faces opposition from conservative forces that challenge its goals and hinder progress toward gender equality. This resistance can manifest in various forms, including stigmatization, marginalization, and even threats or violence against feminist activists and organizations. GAP recognises that for the action coalition on gender-based violence to be achieved, there is a need to eliminate stigma and patriarchal backlash towards women's rights and one way of tackling this is by promoting evidence-based strategies.

Limited resources: Many feminist organizations struggle to secure sustainable funding for their initiatives and activities. This lack of financial resources hampers their ability to effectively implement projects, conduct research, and mobilize communities. Insufficient funding restricts the scope of their work and limits their impact in advocating for gender equality and women's rights. It also hinders their capacity to sustain long-term programs and initiatives that address systemic issues. The GEF managed to pool in up to 40 billion US dollars in financial commitments, however, more funding is directed to purely feminist initiatives and the feminist movement. The GAP also commits to investing more in feminist leadership and capacity enhancement of women's organizations, therefore saving room to utilize the limited resources for specific activities that the movement is involved in.

Limitations in engaging and mobilizing rural communities: Engaging and mobilizing rural communities,

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ UN Women, 'Intersectional Feminism: What It Means and Why It Matters Right Now' (UN Women July 2020) <<https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters>> accessed 20 June 2023.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

particularly in remote areas, remains a significant challenge for the feminist movement. Access to information, resources, and services is often limited in these areas, making it difficult for feminist activists to reach and empower marginalized women and girls. Overcoming geographical barriers, addressing cultural sensitivities, and tailoring approaches to specific community needs are essential to ensure that the movement is inclusive and representative of the diverse experiences of women across Uganda. The GEF explores different strategies for reaching women from both urban and rural communities to achieve economic empowerment of women and through the usage of technology and digital platforms.

The generational gap within the feminist movement: Despite efforts to engage young people, there can be a generational gap within the feminist movement.²¹⁰ Older generations may sometimes struggle to effectively connect with and understand the concerns and perspectives of young feminists.²¹¹ Bridging this gap and creating spaces for intergenerational dialogue and collaboration is crucial to ensure the sustainability and relevance of the movement. It is important to empower and amplify the voices of young feminists while also valuing the knowledge and experience of older activists. GEF set up a platform to foster conversations amongst generations and has action plans to groom young feminist leaders and engage youth-led initiatives. This is one way of bridging the generational gap and shaping an intergenerational movement where lessons from the older generation can be shared and novel ideas that are relevant to the younger generation can be integrated into the feminist movement.

Effective implementation and enforcement of gender-responsive laws and policies: While the feminist movement in Uganda has made significant strides in policy advocacy, the effective implementation and enforcement of gender-responsive laws and policies can be challenging. Limited political will, inadequate institutional capacity, and corruption within the system can undermine the impact of policy reforms. Additionally, the movement faces difficulties in monitoring and holding government officials accountable for their commitments, thereby hindering progress in achieving gender equality. Strengthening enforcement agencies and expanding access and availability of services for survivors of GBV is a priority action under the gender-based violence action coalition as there indeed has been a lot of progress made in advocating for laws and policies that address gender issues, and now the challenge remains in their enforcement.

6.3. Opportunities

Alignment of Uganda's national development planning frameworks to the BPfA and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and under the Third National Development Plan (NDPIII)

In fulfilling its commitment to the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (BDPfA), Uganda aligned and prioritized community mobilization and mindset change to address the negative social norms, practices, and gender stereotypes that constrain the attainment of all SDGs. Specific interventions sought out include investing in the education of the girl child to reduce the persistently high level of teenage pregnancies and child marriages by keeping the girls longer in schools; Strengthening livelihood and economic empowerment programmes and investing in gender-responsive national statistics development strategies to inform evidence-based monitoring, evaluation, and progress reporting on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (GEWE).²¹²

Growing awareness and consciousness around gender equality: the growing awareness and consciousness around gender equality provide a receptive environment for the movement to gain support and mobilize communities.²¹³ By raising awareness, challenging stereotypes, and promoting inclusive dialogue, the feminist movement can generate broader societal engagement and foster a greater understanding of the importance of gender equality.

Policy reforms and international commitments: policy reforms and international commitments offer a strategic opportunity for the movement to advocate for the effective implementation of gender equality policies.²¹⁴ By aligning with national development plans and global action plans like the Generation Equality Forum, the movement can shape policy agendas, push for gender-responsive budgeting, and ensure the allocation of resources towards gender equality goals.

210 Roberta S Sigel and John V Reynolds, 'Generational Differences and the Women's Movement' (1979) 94 Political Science Quarterly 635.

211 UN Women, 'MAXINE MOLYNEUX, ADRIJA DEY, MALU A.C. GATTO and HOLLY ROWDEN BACKGROUND PAPER PREPARED for the 25 Th ANNIVERSARY of the BEIJING PLATFORM for ACTION, 64 Th SESSION of the COMMISSION on the STATUS of WOMEN' <<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/Library/Publications/2021/Discussion-paper-New-feminist-activism-waves-and-generations-en.pdf>> accessed 20 June 2023.

212 United Nations, 'NATIONAL REPORT on IMPLEMENTATION of the BEIJING DECLARATION and PLATFORM for ACTION Final Report MINISTRY of GENDER LABOUR and SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT' (2019) <<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Headquarters/Attachments/Sections/CSW/64/National-reviews/Uganda.pdf>> accessed 13 July 2023.

213 Europa, 'Gender Awareness-Raising' (European Institute for Gender Equality 9 June 2023) <https://eige.europa.eu/gender-mainstreaming/tools-methods/gender-awareness-raising?language_content_entity=en> accessed 21 June 2023

214 UNDP, 'UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY 2022-2025' <https://www.undp.org/sites/g/files/zskgke326/files/2022-09/UNDP_Gender_Equality_Strategy_2022-2025_EN.pdf> accessed 21 June 2023.

Youth Engagements and Technology Advancements: the engagement of youth and advancements in technology provide promising avenues for the feminist movement to expand its reach and impact.²¹⁵ By actively involving young people in initiatives, campaigns, and leadership positions, the movement can tap into their energy and passion. Furthermore, leveraging technology, particularly social media platforms, allows the movement to amplify its message, mobilize support, and reach a wider audience, thus facilitating broader social change.

Strategic partnerships and collaborations: strategic partnerships and collaborations with civil society organizations, human rights groups, and social justice movements can significantly strengthen the feminist movement.²¹⁶ By working together with like-minded organizations, the movement can pool resources, expertise, and advocacy efforts. These collaborations not only amplify the impact of their collective advocacy but also provide a united front for advancing gender equality.

Education and Awareness programs: Education and awareness programs represent an important opportunity for the feminist movement to challenge discriminatory norms and promote gender equality.²¹⁷ By advocating for comprehensive and inclusive curriculum reforms, the movement can ensure that educational institutions foster gender-sensitive environments and promote values of gender equality. Additionally, targeted awareness programs aimed at educators, parents, and community leaders can contribute to transforming societal attitudes and behaviours toward gender equality.

Access to international solidarity and support: accessing international solidarity and support can provide valuable resources, expertise, and networks for the feminist movement in Uganda.²¹⁸ Engaging with global women's rights organizations, donor agencies, and feminist networks allows for knowledge exchange, capacity-building opportunities, and collaboration. By leveraging international support, the movement can strengthen its advocacy efforts, align with broader global feminist movements, and amplify its influence.

6.4. Threats

Entrenched patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles which are deeply rooted in Ugandan society: One of the primary threats is entrenched patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles deeply rooted in Ugandan society.²¹⁹ These norms perpetuate gender inequalities and discrimination against women, making it challenging for the feminist movement to challenge and dismantle these ingrained beliefs. The resistance from conservative elements within society, who view gender equality as a threat to traditional values, poses a significant obstacle to the advancement of the feminist agenda.

Limited legal protection and enforcement mechanisms: Despite the existence of laws and policies aimed at reducing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, their implementation and enforcement are insufficient. The feminist movement's efforts to combat violence against women and promote accountability for perpetrators are hampered by a lack of robust mechanisms to address gender-based violence and ensure justice for survivors.

The influence of conservative religious and cultural institutions: The influence of conservative religious and cultural institutions also poses a significant threat to the feminist movement: These institutions often promote and reinforce traditional gender norms and practices that perpetuate inequality. Their opposition to progressive policies and reforms aimed at advancing women's rights can hinder the movement's advocacy efforts and impede the realization of gender equality in Uganda.²²⁰

Limited access to resources: Many feminist organizations and activists in Uganda struggle to secure adequate financial resources to sustain their work. This financial vulnerability restricts their ability to mobilize effectively, engage in advocacy campaigns, and provide essential services to women and girls.

Stigma, resistance, and backlash against feminist activists: The threat of resistance and backlash against

215 UN Women, 'INNOVATION and TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE, and EDUCATION in the DIGITAL AGE for ACHIEVING GENDER EQUALITY and the EMPOWERMENT of ALL WOMEN and GIRLS Expert Guidance and Substantive Inputs to Preparations for the 67th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women' <<https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/CSW67-Expert-Group-Meeting-report-en.pdf>> accessed 21 June 2023.

216 Melita Louise Grant and others, 'Working Together: A Study of Civil Society Partnerships between WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene) and GESI (Gender Equality and Social Inclusion) Organisations in Timor-Leste' (2023) 5 *Frontiers in Water*. See also, Spotlight Initiative, 'Investing in Civil Society Organizations and Movements – Driving Transformative, Sustainable Change' (2021) <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/sites/default/files/publication/Civil_society_funding_2021.pdf> accessed 21 June 2023.

217 Council of Europe, 'Feminism and Women's Rights Movements' (Gender Matters2002) <<https://www.coe.int/en/web/gender-matters/feminism-and-women-s-rights-movements>> accessed 21 June 2023.

218 UN Women, 'UN Women Uganda Convenes Women's Movement Building Training to Rethink Advocacy for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment' (UN Women – Africa26 July 2022) <<https://africa.unwomen.org/en/stories/news/2022/07/un-women-uganda-convenes-womens-movement-building-training-to-rethink-advocacy-for-gender-equality-and-womens-empowerment>> accessed 21 June 2023. See also, OECD, 'Donor Support to Women's Rights Movement', <<https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/OECD-report-on-womens-rights-organisations.pdf>> accessed 21 June 2023.

219 Sarah Ssali, 'A Matrix and Analysis of GENDER EQUALITY Laws and Policies in Uganda a Matrix and Analysis of GENDER EQUALITY Laws and Policies in Uganda' (2019) <<https://www.dgf.ug/sites/default/files/resrc/A-Matrix-and-Analysis-of-the-Gender-Equality-Laws-and-Policies-in-Uganda.pdf>> accessed 24 May 2022.

220 Hamdy A Hassan, 'Religion as a Security Threat' (2022) 51 *Journal of Religion in Africa* 426.

feminist activists is another concern: As the feminist movement challenges existing power structures and norms, it often faces resistance and backlash from individuals and groups seeking to maintain the status quo. Activists are at risk of harassment, threats, and violence, which can deter their work and undermine their safety and well-being.²²¹

Lack of comprehensive sex education and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services: The lack of comprehensive sex education and limited access to sexual and reproductive health services hinder the feminist movement's efforts to promote women's autonomy and reproductive rights.²²² The societal stigma surrounding issues such as contraception, abortion, and comprehensive sex education perpetuates misinformation and restricts women's access to essential healthcare services.²²³

221 Richard Ssewakiryanga, "That Beijing Thing!": Challenging Transnational Feminisms in Kampala, Uganda' [2002] Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity 16.

222 FIDH, 'Women's Rights in Uganda: Gaps between Policy and Practice' (2012) <<https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/uganda582afinal.pdf>> accessed 21 June 2023. See also, Sharon Eva Ahumuza and others, 'Challenges in Accessing Sexual and Reproductive Health Services by People with Physical Disabilities in Kampala, Uganda' (2014) 11 Reproductive Health.

223 Marielle E Meurice and others, 'Stigma Surrounding Contraceptive Use and Abortion among Secondary School Teachers: A Cross-Sectional Study in Western Kenya' (2021) 3 Contraception: X100062.

SECTION SEVEN:

7. Key findings

7.1. International fora/convenings and their role in the movement

Many recent feminist movements and organizations in Uganda were formed as a result of international convenings such as the ICPD Cairo, Beijing Platform for Action, and the Generation Equality Forum among others. From the organizations profiled, we note that there is a cluster that emerged after the Cairo Conference that pushed for the advancement of gender equality and feminist advocacy.

7.2. The inert role of men in the movement

While it is clear that the movement encourages voluntary participation and inclusion, the role of men and adolescent boys in Uganda's women's movement is seen as minimal. For instance, of all the historical events and organizations mapped under this study, there has been very minimal information detailing the contributions of men toward the feminist movement.

7.3. The role of social and political influence (invisible hand) in the movement

The feminist movement in Uganda has been influenced by both social and political events. We for instance note that during the regime of Amin, all women's organizations were banned thus restraining the activities of feminist movements. However, we see a re-emergence of these organizations during the NRM regime. In regards to the social aspects, while we see the queen of Buganda very actively participating in the feminist movement, we note that she is deliberate in focusing on specific facets and nothing viewed as controversial due to religious and cultural beliefs. We have seen the feminist movement become actively acceptable and encouraged in the political spheres, however, this looming invisible hand could become a threat to the feminist movement in the future.

7.4. Working in silos

Different clusters of feminist organizations work on particular problems, organize specific communities, and promote women's rights and gender equality in distinctive ways. This has as a result led to the poor coordination of the clusters. In this study, we find that in instances where the movement coordinated efforts from different clusters, key outcomes were achieved. A case in point is the "Women's protest working group" which focused on fighting the increasing number of women killings in Uganda where we see different feminist organizations coming together to fight this resulting in the establishment of SGBV offices at the police stations. Upon observing historical events, the uncoordinated approach, though has yielded results in some instances, has been slow to yield meaningful results and it is clear that having coordinated efforts has been proven to be more effective and efficient.

7.5. The role of the Global Acceleration Plan in the feminist movement

Currently, the strengths of the feminist movement align with GAP, it is clear that the feminist movement has been making meaningful contributions towards the goals set in the Beijing Platform for Action and the recognition to have a feminist voice in the formulation of the GAP was paramount to developing relevant and all-encompassing plans of action. The GAP has indeed set in strategies to eliminate or strengthen the feminist movement and has opened up opportunities that the movement can utilize such as setting up platforms for coordinated efforts, youth engagement, usage of technology and innovation, strengthening enforcement policies, strengthening SRHR initiatives, soliciting funding commitments and encouraging feminist leadership and mobilization.

7.6. Alignment of the feminist movement with the GEF action coalitions

The feminist movement has made significant contributions to advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as aligning with GEF action coalitions. Several organizations within the movement have concentrated

their efforts on tackling issues such as gender-based violence, reproductive rights, economic justice, and feminist leadership. However, there remain gaps in the movement's focus on areas such as technology and innovation feminist action for climate justice. Notably, the Eliezah Foundation Initiative Uganda is a pioneering example of a feminist organization with specific strategies aimed at addressing the challenges of technology and online safety, which have emerged as pressing concerns in the post-COVID-19 pandemic era. Despite this progress, the feminist movement has yet to prioritize climate action, with only five of the profiled institutions in the movement aligned with this action coalition.

8. Recommendations and conclusion

8.1. Recommendations

To strengthen and sustain the feminist movement in Uganda at the national and sub-national levels, the following recommendations can be considered:

Firstly, there is a need for capacity building within feminist organizations and activist networks. Investing in training programs that focus on advocacy strategies, organizational management, leadership development, and gender analysis can enhance the skills and knowledge of individuals and organizations. This will enable them to effectively navigate challenges, adapt to changing contexts, and maximize their impact.

Secondly, fostering networking and collaboration among feminist organizations, activists, and grassroots groups is crucial. Creating platforms for information sharing, coordination, and joint action can foster collective strength and amplify the movement's voice. Engaging in partnerships with other civil society organizations, human rights groups, and social justice movements can also contribute to broader coalitions for gender equality.

Thirdly, policy advocacy should remain a priority for the feminist movement. Actively engaging with policymakers, government officials, and key stakeholders to influence the development, implementation, and monitoring of gender equality policies is essential. Conducting research, providing evidence-based recommendations, and participating in policy dialogues can ensure that women's rights and gender equality are prioritized in national and subnational agendas.

Fourthly, grassroots mobilization is vital for the sustainability of the feminist movement. Supporting community-based organizations, women's groups, and feminist activists at the subnational level can help address local challenges and ensure that the movement is inclusive and representative of diverse communities. Building networks and supporting grassroots initiatives can increase the movement's reach and effectiveness.

Additionally, media engagement plays a crucial role in shaping narratives around gender equality issues. Actively engaging with media outlets, building relationships with media professionals, and providing accurate information can promote gender-sensitive reporting and challenge stereotypes. Utilizing digital platforms and social media can also help amplify the movement's messages and reach a wider audience.

Engaging men and boys as allies is another important recommendation. Promoting dialogue, education, and awareness programs that challenge harmful gender norms and encourage male allies can foster a more inclusive movement. Engaging men and boys in the feminist movement can help shift societal attitudes and behaviours toward gender equality.

Resource mobilization is critical for the sustainability of the feminist movement. Strengthening efforts to diversify funding sources, explore innovative financing mechanisms, and build partnerships with local philanthropists, corporate entities, and government agencies can help secure sustainable funding. Developing long-term donor relationships and sustainable income-generation models can also reduce reliance on limited and unpredictable funding sources.

Furthermore, embracing intersectional approaches is essential. Recognizing and addressing the overlapping forms of discrimination and oppression faced by marginalized groups, such as women with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and ethnic minorities, ensures an inclusive and equitable movement. Incorporating intersectionality into policy advocacy, programming, and organizational practices can strengthen the movement's effectiveness and relevance.

Political engagement is also crucial for influencing decision-making and policy outcomes. Encouraging feminist activists to participate in political leadership, run for office, and engage in political campaigns can increase the movement's impact. Having a presence within political spaces allows the movement to directly influence policies and advance gender equality agendas.

Lastly, investing in knowledge and research is important. Supporting research on gender-related issues and generating evidence-based knowledge can inform advocacy strategies, identify gaps in policies and programs, and provide data for evidence-based decision-making. Building partnerships with academic institutions and supporting feminist researchers can contribute to the production of quality research that supports the movement's objectives.

8.2. Conclusion

By implementing these recommendations, the feminist movement in Uganda can strengthen its capacity, foster collaboration, advocate for gender-responsive policies, mobilize at the grassroots level, engage with media and men, diversify resources, embrace intersectionality, participate in political processes, and generate evidence-based knowledge. These efforts will contribute to the sustainability and effectiveness of the movement in advancing gender equality and women's rights in Uganda.

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