

Report of the UWT International Women's Day celebration/walk

8th March 2020



The participants walking around Nsambya in commemoration of the International women's day

International Women’s Day (IWD) is celebrated annually on the 8th of March; to recognise the role and contribution of women in development processes all over the world. The day also provides an opportunity to enhance advocacy for inclusion of women’s concerns in the development agenda at all levels; calling on United Nations Member States to design and implement interventions aimed at attaining gender equality and the empowerment of women. This year, the International Women’s Day was celebrated under the global theme: **“Think Equal, Build Smart, and Innovate for Change”**. This theme focuses on creating a paradigm shift for transforming mind sets to the goal of gender equality and identifying new ways of advancing women’s agendas at all levels.

Uganda Women’s Trust joined the rest of the world to celebrate and commemorate this day under the National theme: **“Empowering Women through Innovative Approaches to Social Protection: A Pre-requisite for Inclusive and Sustainable Development”**. This theme recognizes the importance of providing social protection to women with the aim of minimizing their vulnerability, building their potential through innovative approaches so that they contribute to and benefit from a sustainable development process.

On the 8th of March 2020 UWT honoured this day by organising a women’s walk in the main Programme area in Nsambya parish. The main objective of this activity was to recognise the role and contribution of women in the socio-economic and political spheres world-wide, nationally and in our Community.



L: UWT Coordinator, Administrator and Board member with Mrs. Tereza Mbiire; and R: Board members listening to Mrs. Mbiire’s remarks before the walk.

100 out of the 150 anticipated participants including UWT beneficiaries, Founder members, Staff members and Community leaders took part in the walk. The Walk which was intended for women and girls, 18 years and above, attracted about 99% women, with some few men joining in.

The Chief Walker and one of the Founder members, Mrs. Tereza Mbiire flagged the participants off after speaking to them. In her remarks, she emphasized the importance of hard work and urged the women to never give up. Sharing her own experience; she encouraged women to be submissive to their husbands and behave well in the communities where they live and work. She further explained that these are the virtues that enabled her to grow her Businesses and take care of her family.

The participants walked from the UWT office in Nsambya, Kiggundu road and the route followed through Nsereko Road to Mubiru Road along Ave Maria Road; Katwe road to Kevina road and Kabega Road and eventually back to the UWT Offices. The journey that lasted one and a half hours covered approximately 2 km.

The Participants, who were smartly dressed in UWT T-shirts, also carried a UWT banner. Members of the community were attracted by the band and while some joined in the walk, others cheered the women as they walked through their residences and business locations. UWT notably received visibility in the community.



The Founder member Mrs. Tereza Mbiire flagging off the participants for the walk

In accordance with the Public Order Management Act, UWT sought permission from the Uganda Police Force (UPF) to hold the walk and was granted security of both Field police and Traffic police who guided the traffic during the procession. The walk was given rhythm by the Children’s Brass band from Nsambya “MLISADA” Organization, a local Organization focusing on the provision of skills to street children in the slum areas of Katwe.

Four media houses, NBS TV, KS TV, BBS TV and KTV were invited to cover the event. The media houses interviewed the Chief Walker, UWT Board Members, UWT Founder members and other participants. The event was televised on all the four media houses during prime news: Amasengeje at 7.00pm on NBS, KTV at the 8.00pm bulletin, KS TV at the 8.00pm bulletin and BBS TV during the 10.00pm bulletin.

Community Participation

The participants, who were mostly residents of Nsambya Parish were very happy and grateful for the opportunity to participate in this momentous walk, which was the first of its kind in celebration of women. Most of the women confessed that they had never celebrated the IWD this way as it was always celebrated nationally and felt very distant.

The walk attracted different categories of participants ranging from teenagers to youth and adults including three breast feeding mothers, who were not willing to miss out on this colourful commemoration of IWD. The women attributed this determination to two aspects, *“I am a woman so I have to celebrate my value and contribution in the world. Secondly, this recognition comes once a year,”* said a participant.



Mothers carrying their babies during the walk during the IWD celebration.

Following the energetic walk, participants gathered at the UWT Secretariat where they were treated to light refreshments as the Board members and Mrs. Josephine Kalule, another Founder member addressed them.

In her remarks, Mrs. Kalule, who is also the former vice Board Chairperson welcomed and thanked the Programme Committee and Secretariat for organizing a very colourful event. She also appreciated the participants for sacrificing their time to commemorate such an important day in big numbers. She then encouraged them to work hard for their families and livelihood. In addition, she reassured the women that UWT is here for them and urged them to use the opportunity to learn more business skills to grow their businesses.

Mr. Edward Kabongoya, a Board member encouraged the women participants to continue working together in order to realise their economic rights. He thanked the Secretariat for the mobilization and for organizing the event so well.

Ms. Margaret Akello, another board member was happy to see many participants at the event.

“Work hard and never to give up. If things fail today, keep trying and be confident that they will work out eventually”, she said before appreciating the secretariat for successfully organizing the event.

On behalf of the leaders, Ms. Joan Bayendera thanked the UWT Management for inviting and recognizing them.

“I thank UWT for organizing such a ground-breaking event in our Community. We shall continue mobilising women to join UWT,” she said. She then went ahead to appreciate the participants for attending the event in big numbers.

In her remarks, the Coordinator at the secretariat appreciated Founder Members, Board members and participants for their support in ensuring a colourful and successful event. She thanked the Community leaders, mobilizers and all participants for celebrating the women and supporting the noble cause of empowering low-income women for whom UWT stands.

Key Observations from the Event

1. It is critical to always have a medical team in the event that there are any casualties.
2. UWT beneficiaries appreciate interacting with Founder Members and Board Members. It is vital for UWT leadership to always have a presence in the organisation’s events and activities whenever possible.
3. It is important to always start preparations early for smooth and successful events.
4. Localised commemoration of international events brings the meaning of the commemoration closer to our beneficiaries and increases visibility for UWT.
5. UWT needs to have resources put aside for commemorating days that recognise women. This will prevent limitation of participants and will make events colourful and increase visibility for UWT.

Acknowledgement

The Secretariat would like to acknowledge the support and guidance from the Programme Committee Members all through the organization process. We are grateful to the Programme Committee members; Ms. Pamela Sinia (Chairperson), Ms. Margaret Akello and Mr. Edward Kabongoya. We thank Ms. Sinia and Ms. Akello for moderating the event.

In a special way we acknowledge the UWT Founder Member and a Senior Presidential Advisor Mrs. Tereza Mbiire, for going an extra mile to assist UWT in securing Police permission to hold the event at the last minute. She contributed greatly in the success of the event.

We want to thank Mrs. Josephine Kalule, the Board vice Chairperson for her effort and sacrifice in organising the event.

In a special way, we thank the Community Leaders: Mr. Orlando Michael Nsubuga, the LC 1 Chairman and his entire leadership, who were actively involved in the planning process and throughout the event. We appreciate their time and energy towards the success of the event.

Last but not least, we wish to thank all the participants who invested their time and energy in ensuring the success of the event. They made it very colourful.

Conclusion

UWT Secretariat and Management pledges to review the event in order to use the lessons learned to organise a bigger event in the consequent years.