

November 2021

# Alumni Challenge Horn of Africa

18 ideas  
for impact

**nuffic**  
meet the world



Security and Rule of Law

Co-creating with and  
by NL Alumni

From Ethiopia, Kenya,  
Somalia, South-Sudan,  
Sudan, Uganda

# Content



<b>1 Preface</b>	<b>3</b>	Keynote Adrine Atwiine	10	<b>4 Alumni Challenge 2021</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>2 Alumni event</b>	<b>4</b>	A product of collaboration	13	The design challenge in a nutshell	21
Learning, sharing and winning together	4	<b>3 In conversation with NL Alumni</b>	<b>15</b>	Winning proposals	22
Keynote Titia Bredée	6	Nigest Haile	15	Honorable mentions	29
Keynote Thijs Woudstra	8	Jackson Odong	18	<b>5 Colophon</b>	<b>37</b>

# Preface

Nuffic boasts over 75.000 thousand alumni, the result of almost 70 years knowledge cooperation efforts between Dutch and international knowledge institutes. Many of those are from the southern hemisphere, and among those we count many from the Horn of Africa. Even today, this east African region is a focus region for Nuffic's current capacity strengthening initiatives. Naturally, we continuously strive for sustainable transfer of knowledge and experience. And it is with great pleasure that we present this magazine about our latest efforts in this regard: the Alumni Challenge 2021 - Horn of Africa. With this magazine, we offer an overview of the results of the challenge. This Alumni Challenge is a coproduction of Nuffic and the Netherlands Alumni Associations (NAA) of Kenya and Uganda. We are very proud of this coproduction. Please find further information on the NAAs on page 13.

The Alumni Challenge is a way to showcase the strength and impact of alumni in the **Horn of Africa** (Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda). Our alumni action heroes have designed and developed interventions that they think will be successful in addressing issues pertaining to **Security and Rule of Law**. After receiving more than 75 very promising proposals, the winning ideas were chosen by Nuffic, the NAAs and the Embassies. A panel of experts, from both Dutch and local partners, have added and will add their strengths to the alumni teams, by providing feedback on initial designs. During an online conference on November 4th, 2021 the winning ideas were presented to a public of NL alumni, experts within Security and Rule of Law and other stakeholders.

## Security and Rule of Law

Aligning with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs' policy, the central topic of the challenge was Security and Rule of Law. The subthemes the alumni were able to choose from were:

- economic empowerment of marginalised groups
- professionalising media
- land rights
- gender based-violence

Cross cutting themes were allowed or a combination with other themes, as long as the overarching theme remained the same.

Alumni were free to decide on the type of intervention; a workshop, an awareness raising campaign online/offline, a poster, an article, the design of an app or anything that is realistic, feasible, and supports the issue addressed in the subtheme.

## Winners and honorable mentions

As with any contest, not every contestant can be crowned as winner. This doesn't mean these were the only good ideas, because we saw a lot of great potential ideas that could aid the communities of the alumni. Therefore we also want to share the summaries of the interventions that showed great ambition and promise.

Updates about the implementation of the ideas can be found on the LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter pages of Nuffic Global Development.

Our gratitude goes out to every one who has helped making this event a success. From the keynotes, the moderator, to the presenters of the break-out rooms, all the alumni and experts who joined and all the people working behind the screens to ensure a great event: thank you!

# Learning, sharing and winning together: key take aways from the conference on November 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021

How do you let good ideas gain traction? With so many talented alumni in the Horn of Africa, there is a wealth of ideas to improve society. Nuffic facilitated the process by organizing an 'Alumni Challenge' **to gather ideas for interventions** in the field of Security and Rule of Law. **On the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, six alumni** received €3000, - to implement their idea.

**If NL alumni in the Horn of Africa had the power to influence what policies to change, what would those ideas look like? Over 75 alumni** in Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda **grasped the opportunity and sent in their suggestions for interventions in the field of Security and the Rule of Law.**

## **Alumni co-created the event**

The alumni challenge came about through a process of co-creation, as Titia Bredée (Director-General of Nuffic) pointed out. "Traditionally, alumni events are initiated by Nuffic staff in the Netherlands or by active alumni associations. We switched it up: the subthemes were suggested by the alumni; the design challenge concept was inspired and enriched by the input of the alumni; and experts and knowledge institutions were invited by alumni."

In the run-up to the announcement of the winners of the alumni challenge, several keynote speakers took the floor with contributions on the topic of Security and the Rule of Law. After the moderator Nancy Onyango and Director-General of Nuffic Titia Bredée opened the conference, a keynote speech was given by Thijs Woudstra (the Deputy Head of Mission/Head of Development Cooperation of the Embassy of the Netherlands to Ethiopia). "Nuffic scholarships are a stepping stone to future leadership positions in your country", he told the audience (read his complete speech on page 18).

Afterwards Adrine Atwiine offered an in-depth view on a specific topic within Security and Rule of Law: how to train professionals in dealing with sexual and gender-based violence. The Regional Training Facility (RTF) in Uganda, supported by Nuffic, plays a role in disseminating knowledge about this topic. "We are mandated to train police officers, judicial officers, medical officers and media representatives. We are proud to associate with Nuffic and the Maastricht School of Management to make this important work possible."

In one of the following breakout sessions, Daniel Adyera continued the topic of gender-based violence. "The causes for gender-based violence lie in masculine social-cultural norms, but also in poverty and in political power imbalance", Adyera explained. He drew a line between the effects of gender-based violence and food shortages, since women often are the providers of their families. In the other break-out session Gerrit Ribbink shared ideas on developing entrepreneurship skills, based on his experience in Nuffic funded programmes in the past. He stressed the importance of education and aligning with labour market needs.

#### **Drumroll... the winner is....**

During the award-winning ceremony on November 4th, six winners from Ethiopia, Kenya, South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia and Uganda received €3000, - each to implement their ideas. The Ethiopian winner, Nigest Haile, submitted an idea to provide marketable skills to returnees from the United Arab Emirates in order to give these women economic independence.

Both professor Huho from Kenya (see page 24) and Jacque Karungi from Uganda (see page 28) won their rewards for project ideas for male victims. Most projects in the respective societies focus on female survivors of gender-based violence, but there are many men who are also victims of gender-based violence. In order to overcome stigma both prize winners devised workshops.

The Somali prize winner Abdirahman Mohamud Abdi (see page 25) focused on land rights for women; the South Sudanese James Muorwel (see page 26) won his reward for creating a gender sensitivity training for uniformed forces. Lastly, the Sudanese winner Hassan Timase (see page 27) wants to create more awareness about the land rights in Lagowa, West Kordofan State.

During the whole conference many great comments and insights were shared by the participants. To conclude, we totally agree with this comment by NL alumnus Rukundo Allen Owembabazi: "Thank you all for the participation. It was educative and engaging for me. Nancy and your team, you were on point. Thanks".

#### **Titia Bredée**

*"Hopefully, in about a year's time, the winners of today will be the leaders of tomorrow and steering the discussions on new themes and new ideas. I wish them the best of luck and would very much like to see how our horizons expand together."*



# Alumni, bridging countries and minds

## Keynote speech Titia Bredée

Nuffic prides itself on its strong alumni network counting over 75.000 members across the world. A network carefully crafted over 70 years of international knowledge collaboration, connecting and strengthening higher education and TVET institutions. Scholarships and scholars have been crucial to this process, Many of them from countries represented here today: Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and South-Sudan. For some of you, you've finished your studies abroad only recently, maybe even remotely. For others, your days of wandering the halls of Dutch education institutes were decades ago.

In this regard, the essence of knowledge collaboration remains unaltered. Talented professionals in pursuit of deepening their know-how and skills grasp the opportunity to obtain that specific knowledge in an international environment. And during that experience, and by means of being submerged in new countries and cultures, they gain insights and observations hitherto unknown to them. Together with their certificates, it is this experience that is brought back home again. But the international students do not come empty handed either and leave invaluable legacies. They enrich the international classroom with lived-through experience. They add on the knowledge infrastructure

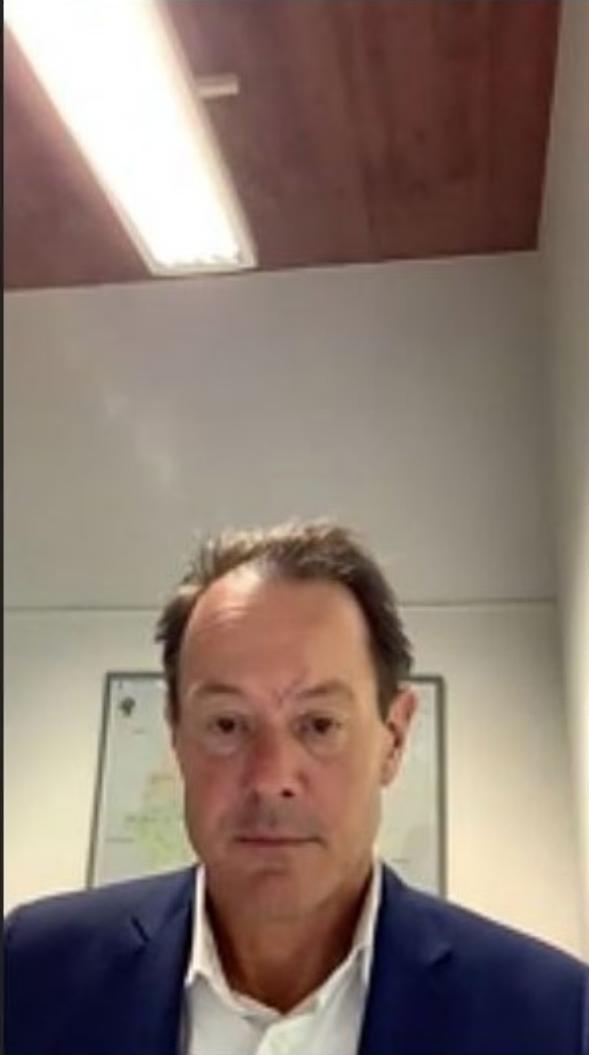
with astute observations on areas to improve and innovate. Each and every alumnus is in turn an ambassador of their alma mater, and in our case, the Dutch knowledge institutes and the Dutch education field. In turn, local partners from the Netherlands learn as well. They are given insights in how to adjust their curricula to be more inclusive, and become attuned to the hunger for new skills and knowledge from our visiting scholars. Integrating their experience in short courses, masters, and research, is the final step in keeping education on offer up-to-date and relevant. From our end, we sincerely hope that this reaps mutual benefits, strengthening education systems and fostering knowledge simultaneously.

But as we all know, education is a means to an end. For us, the end is creating sustainable positive impact for communities. Economic, environmental, social sustainability to be more precise, with a focus on alignment with labour market needs and working towards resilient societies. Strengthening the capacity of people, notably women and youth, through education and skills development can unlock the potential that is yet untapped in many parts of the world. Exchanging best practices and sharing knowledge are essential in this regard. This goes beyond the halls of universities and colleges, but extends well into the world beyond.

This is why alumni are important. Not just for us, but also for each other. Some of the reflections often given on a study abroad is the vast network of peers that come into existence. People with the same motivation, drive and interest as you, working towards a common goal. New job opportunities, or carving possible new careers, these are but a few of the reasons why alumni stay in touch. One of the most essential arguments of staying involved is to remind one another that we are all connected. Even in times of a global pandemic, we find inspiration and gain new insights by keeping the conversations going. And at times, invite new partners to the table to enrich the discussions.

With the design challenge for the Horn of Africa, this is exactly what we aspire to do: creating a new discourse on and with alumni by engaging with new partners. Though keeping a firm eye on our policy objectives, and having Security and Rule of Law at the heart of the design challenge, we strive to enrich the narrative. And we hope to do so by rooting this design challenge in a process of co-creation. Traditionally, alumni events were propelled by Nuffic staff in The Netherlands or active alumni associations in their respective home countries. As the youth would say, we switched it up. The subthemes were suggested by the alumni. The design challenge concept was inspired and enriched by the input of the alumni. Experts and knowledge institutions were invited by alumni. Netherlands embassies and business communities were involved in the ideation and creation process. And to ensure the longevity of this concept, current alumni will repeat the process for the next batch of alumni, creating communities of practice on their own.

So hopefully, in about a year's time, the winners of today will be the leaders of tomorrow and steering the discussions on new themes and new ideas. I wish them the best of luck and would very much like to see how our horizons expand together.



# Scholarships as stepping stones for future leadership

Keynote speech

Thijs Woudstra

Being Deputy Head of Mission and Head of Development Cooperation in Ethiopia is a very challenging job. Especially in these times, with a situation that is very volatile. We all hope that the situation will soon improve in Ethiopia. Because this affects the future of our students.

What I see at this moment, is that my colleagues complain about the amount of applications for Nuffic scholarships. That means that Nuffic scholarships are very, very attractive to Ethiopians and also very important to Ethiopia. We do want to stress the importance of joining the Nuffic programme and reaching out, extend your experience and become an ambassador of the institution where you were educated.

What I see in the Nuffic scholarships and in my personal work, is that usually if I'm talking to a high ranking official or business partner their reaction is: "Oh, the Netherlands. I studied there!".

At ISS, Wageningen, Delft; they all have been part of the Nuffic scholarship programme. We have state ministers and ministers, who all have participated in the Nuffic programme. It also establishes good relationships, a strong network and better understanding. Because what I do believe is that understanding each other starts when you get to know each other. And we are here at the Dutch Embassy and the Dutch Cooperation as partners and mutual friends. So having friends that have studied in your country and also know your country, that helps to increase the understanding of our policies and views. So Nuffic scholarships indeed are a stepping stone for the future leadership of the country. And we are very happy to have you being part of that.

Regarding the design challenge, I think it is very good to have the alumni from the Horn of Africa pitch their ideas and for us all to see their designs and challenges. Especially in these times, when we are not in the most stable phase. You are the future leaders who have to drive and steer your country in the direction for more prosperity and equality.

Therefore I am very glad to be here and I hope you will have a very fruitful discussion. Networking is very important. Unfortunately we cannot have any physical alumni activities at this moment, but when it's possible again we will certainly participate in physical meetings with alumni. To strengthen the networks, to strengthen the knowledge and also to strengthen our insights. I wish you all the best.



# Efforts in the Great Lakes

Keynote speech by  
Adrine Atwiine

NL alumna Adrine Atwiine delivered the third keynote address. Adrine is the IT, Research and knowledge coordinator at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region - Regional Training Facility (ICGLR-RTF) on Prevention and Suppression of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in the Great Lakes Region.

As she describes herself, she is a results-driven female of Ugandan origin with a global perspective on gender and humanitarian issues. With a burning passion for bridging the gender digital divide, she has over ten years of experience in designing, implementing, and supporting social development through the use of technology to enhance knowledge management, research, and learning. Besides an extensive and successful track record in Information Technology and Knowledge Production, she is also strongly involved in a Nuffic-funded project which she would like to spotlight at the event.

## **The ICGLR-RTF**

The ICGLR-RTF (based in Kampala Uganda) is part of the ICGLR secretariat, which is based in Bujumbura, Burundi. It is an institution of 12 member states, its mandate is to train and sensitise relevant professionals in managing cases of sexual and gender

based violence. Police, judicial officers, social workers, and medical officers are prioritized. NUFFIC has been instrumental in facilitating its operations and mandate since RTF's inception in 2014.

There have been two major projects under NUFFIC, both with tremendous impact to the institution as well as to the alumni:

1. Institutional Strengthening of RTF to deliver training Programs in the prevention and mitigation of SGBV (otherwise known as NICHE-GLR-258) from 2016 – March 2021
2. End Impunity Project, from 2019 to date

With technical support from NICHE, the cascading model of training was developed and adopted by the ICGLR-RTF. According to this model, trainings on a particular subject matter are usually preceded by a training of trainers that become Master Trainers; these are further equipped to train National Trainers that are further tasked to train other professionals handling SGBV in their various fields.

Master trainers carry out research (formative research), design training curricula, develop course materials, train and monitor trainers. Their role is cross cutting to all 12 member states. National trainers refine general training curricula and course materials customising the materials to national realities and needs. They also cascade the training of professionals at respective national levels.

### **SGBV during COVID-19 pandemic**

The ongoing pandemic in more ways than one is disruptive and detrimental for at-risk groups. Over the course of the last months, the training facility has researched the impact in the 12 member states. This was done in two phases, the findings were used for further training and sensitization, and a training on management of Online meetings was conducted.

This project was developed and implemented in response to the Covid-19 pandemic in the Great Lakes Region. It aimed at conducting research, documenting and disseminating evidence-based information to guide professionals at national and regional level in handling increased violence during the COVID-19 period in the specific Member States. From this project, 18 Experts were engaged in conducting research and sensitization on Covid-19 and SGBV in their specific member states. This was done during both peaks of the outbreak in early 2020 and mid-2021. Research reports from the different member states were analyzed and compiled into a consolidated report that was disseminated to key stakeholders. Information from this informed further training and sensitization in the 12 Member States of the Great Lakes Region.

### **General Impact to Institution and Alumni**

Being a Nuffic alumna, exposed and engaged in several Nuffic programmes and working at the training facility has positively influenced the professional and personal experience of Adrine. "I experience an attitude change in regards to the cultural norms, beliefs and values that often instigate the perpetration of sexual violence. Understanding interplay between the gender roles and complex power dynamics in field has enabled me soar through my professional and personal life with a gender lens.

Further engagement with the program evoked my innovative aura, the skills and tactics acquired through the training programs enabled me adapt easily to change. Case in point the training on leveraging online platforms to conduct workshops enabled me spearhead the digital migration of our training programs amidst the restrictive environment instigated by the Covid-19 pandemic. It is safe to say that the facility remained on course and achieved its set results planned for during the year.

It's cardinal to note that, through the continuous participation and implementation of NUFFIC programmes, I improved my training competences and project management skills. It increased my awareness on key diplomatic and global issues. Exposure and networking gave me new insights. In addition, in the last few months more than ever, I acquired additional skills in online training." Overall, being involved in Nuffic projects also influenced institutional development through interventions such as:

- Improved leadership competences through the strategic leadership courses at Maastricht School of Management. Several RTF staff engaged in these, which enhanced the ability to visualize, plan, lead and make the best out of the resources, availed to execute strategies efficiently and successfully.
- Institutional Awareness rising: boosting of over 2000 trained professionals and 1500 sensitized duty bearers in the Great Lakes Region, the foundation put in place by the NUFFIC programmes have had profound contribution to the vibrant image of the facility. With guidance from the NICHE project leadership, the facility has become a household name in governments, civil society and other training institutions.
- Enhanced collaboration and synergies between and among institutions to combat SGBV: this has enabled the professionals share knowledge, best practices and experiences for effective case management & institutional development. A consortium of the Police Senior Command and Staff College, JTI and RTF fundraised EURO 750,000.
- Improved service delivery through application of the multisector approach in managing cases of sexual and gender based violence.



### **Conclusion**

"I would like to thank NUFFIC for the opportunity it has given me to improve on my skill set and explore global gender and humanitarian issues within my professional and personal experience. In addition, I would like to thank NUFFIC on behalf of RTF, for the technical & financial support offered, over the previous years. This has formed a firm foundation not only for myself but also for all beneficiaries of the programme such as the RTF staff, trainers, key stakeholders and the Great Lakes Region at large. The impact is long-lasting. It is through the support of NUFFIC that other funding partners have been attracted to the RTF, ensuring a continuation of our work. This will aid in combating sexual and gender based violence by means of awareness and training.

This is to further encourage all alumna to apply the information and knowledge from NUFFIC through creating projects in your different fields. Keep on building, testing, changing and iterating!"

# A product of collaboration

**This Alumni Challenge is a coproduction by Nuffic and the Netherlands Alumni Associations (NAA) of Kenya and Uganda. We are very proud of this coproduction.**

## **NAA Uganda**

The Netherlands Alumni Association of Uganda (NAAU) is an umbrella network of people from Uganda who have completed a study programme in the Netherlands.

NAAU's strategic activities include mentorship of self-driven individuals who are passionate about making a difference in their communities. NAAU also guides applicants in their application process for scholarships offered by the Dutch government for study in the Netherlands. Success stories have demonstrated that fellowship awardees go on to make significant contributions to the sustainable development of Uganda and professional networking relationships upon return from their studies in the Netherlands.

The other important strategic goal of NAAU is to profile these beneficiaries to ensure they fast track their impact on the Ugandan Society thus our website is an online membership registration capturing the profiles and success stories of alumni. NAAU is working on this with Nuffic who is keen on this goal.

A unique key output of this profiling is that these alumni can be positioned to enter into business partnerships with potential Dutch Investors in Uganda and notably through the Association's collaboration with the Netherlands Uganda Trade and Investment Platform (NUTIP).

**“Congratulations to ALL the winners. May you impact the Horn of Africa for the betterment of humanity.”** - Irene Awuor Owuor

NAAU has the vision to become the largest alumni network in Uganda enhancing Uganda-Netherlands relations and prioritizing business lineages and social interventions to positively impact sustainable development efforts in Uganda.

**More information about NAAU: <https://www.naaug.org/>**

## **NAA Kenya**

Established in 2004, The Netherlands Alumni Association of Kenya (NAAK) is a non profit membership organisation for Kenyans who have participated in either short or long-term education programs (OKP, NFP, NICHE, Erasmus) in the Netherlands. They organise various academic and social activities, and also provide a think-tank which engages in various developmental, intellectual and scholarly projects.

Since 2014, NAAK has organised a host of activities, including refresher courses, regional seminars, receptions for visiting Dutch Government dignitaries, pre-departure briefings for prospective fellows of the Netherlands Fellowship Programmes, celebrating the Queen's and Kings Birthday and supporting various charities across the country.

The association is registered by the registrar of societies in Kenya also with the county government of Kajiado county where its operations are based. NAAK is supported by the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and The Netherlands Organisation for International Cooperation in Higher Education (NUFFIC). The activities of the association are funded by its members who pay an annual fee and project partners.

**More information about NAAK:** <https://naakenya.wordpress.com/>

## **NAA Alumna spotlight**

To take our co-production from behind the screens to literally on the screen, alumna Nancy Onyango took center stage as moderator of the event. She is a PR and communications expert. For the past 15 years, she has worked and travelled extensively across the African continent. She has held senior roles as a communications manager, chief editor, media development consultant and has worked for organisations such as RNW Media, UNFPA, One Campaign and Frontline AIDS. Nancy is passionate about youth development and she

**“What is the most important reason for alumni to stay connected? For me to build and enhance professional networks, build my skills but also the upcoming youths through mentorship programs and staying updated.”** - Rachel Nakitare, Kenya

firmly believes that Africa's greatest assets are its young people. With Nancy helping the conference, we got a glimpse of what alumni with a passion for their profession can do.



# In conversation with Nigest Haile

At the age of 60, Nigest Haile, is still very healthy and has all the energy in the world. She is even an Executive MBA student at the moment, planning to graduate in February 2022. After this, she would like to do a PhD. As she puts it: *"I don't think I will ever retire."* According to Nigest education never ends and just like Nuffic she believes in lifelong learning. Read on to learn what Nigest - as driven and active as she is - already achieved during her life.



## From working for a boss to being her own boss

Nigest has worked for the Ethiopian Ministry of Trade and Industry for 23 years in various positions. In the last 13 years she was running the Women's Affairs Department, where she was able to work on proposing policy ideas and recommendations for the creation of a conducive and women entrepreneurs friendly business environment. Within those 23 years of working for the government, Nigest was offered an NFP scholarship - the predecessor of the OKP, a scholarship and capacity building programme funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs - to study at the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) in the Hague. Even though several colleagues of the Ministry - including her boss - had studied at ISS before, Nigest would have preferred to have a mentor to prepare her for studying abroad. She thinks this is one of the perks of having a network of alumni, where you can share knowledge and experiences with fellow and future alumni. But even without someone else providing advice about studying in the Netherlands, she committed herself to leave her home, husband and 3 children for 3 months. She went to the Netherlands from April to June 2002 for the Postgraduate Course in Globalisation and Development.



After returning to Ethiopia and her job at the Ministry of Trade and Industry for 2 more years, she started her own organisation in May 2004. At that point, Nigest had been working for the government for 23 years and she believed it was time to do something else. To be her own boss gave her the liberty to do what she wanted to do: to fill a gap. Nigest felt she needed to provide service to women in export. That is why she founded the Center for Accelerated Women's Economic Empowerment (CAWEE).

## CAWEE

CAWEE is a non-profit organisation, providing promotional and capacity building support service targeting women exporters involved in small & medium enterprises. The organisation - with 80 members - provides different kinds of support, e.g., training, policy dialogue and advocacy forums, organising trade missions and trade fairs, as well as mentoring and information sharing. The women exporters are operating

## “Education never ends”

in 6 different sectors at different levels: agribusiness, textiles/garment/hand-weaving, leather, gemstone & jewellery, furniture manufacturing and services. The Postgraduate Course at ISS played an important role in seeing the possibilities for an organisation like this: to help women in export. Nigest remembers that the knowledge she gained during the course opened her eyes. Being exposed to globalisation during her time at ISS, she gained a lot of knowledge to determine what could and should be done to fill the earlier mentioned gap. In the meantime, the organisation has managed to successfully organise trade missions to many other countries and to boost inter-African trade. Currently partnering with the Netherlands Embassy in Ethiopia, CAWEE is - with the help of Tailor-Made Training funding by Nuffic - preparing a delegation of women in business for a trade mission to the Netherlands.

### Personal and professional achievements

Nigest is very proud that she has founded this organisation, to help women in export and to give back to her country in this way. She is happy to be able to create employment opportunities and possibilities for women in Ethiopia. Next to that, Nigest is very proud she is one of the promoters and founders of the first women’s commercial bank of Ethiopia named “ENAT Bank”. Besides all the important work Nigest has done for her community and country, Nigest was also able to stay in good health and to stay active. Even at the age of 60, Nigest manages to be a student and wants to do a PhD in the future. She considers ISS in the Hague for this, because she had a great experience there in 2002.

### Alumni network

Nigest believes it is very important to have a strong network of alumni - and of course, with a lot of active Netherlands Alumni Associations in different countries we totally agree with her. She thinks it would be great to have a strong network of NL alumni in Ethiopia, because there is so much knowledge and experience to share with each other. Nigest knows about the possibilities, because she is also a US alumna, and there is a strong network

available for US alumni in Ethiopia and Africa in general. Nigest mentions regular meetings, joining hands where possible, working together, sharing knowledge and speaking at (alumni) conferences are important elements of a strong alumni network. She would really encourage to let the network of NL alumni in Ethiopia grow and join forces to achieve more together.

**Are you an NL alumnus from Ethiopia and do you want to have an active alumni network as well? Please reach out to us at [alumni@nuffic.nl](mailto:alumni@nuffic.nl).**

# The story of NL Alumna Jackson Odong

Growing up in Kumi Municipality, Uganda, Jackson Odong dreamt of becoming a pilot. Confronted with post-war conflict issues, Jackson rerouted his path to that of a development academic and social justice activist. Read on to learn what motivates him to push for change in his community, and how his study abroad has helped shape his future.



## From Kumi, Uganda to The Hague, the Netherlands

Becoming an academic was never the goal for Jackson. High quality education was not easily accessible, but fortune, network and hard work brought the boy from Kumi to the Netherlands. As is often the case with life in Uganda, this was not a straight line. Jackson recalls fondly how the help of his family and other Nuffic alumni proved indispensable to his journey, which emphasises strong social networks to open up education opportunities in Uganda.

It is within his work at a refugee law project that he felt challenged in terms of skills and knowledge. Advocacy and research for vulnerable groups, such as child soldiers who are denied access to their parents' land, fuelled Jackson's ambition to increase his own leadership skills. As he puts it: "If I want to help the people of Northern Uganda better, I have to be better and do better. In order to become better, I seek for the best. So I looked for people who are instrumental in the development of this region." This mindset brought him in closer contact to NL alumni from Uganda that received a Nuffic scholarship in the past, many of whom are

employed in civil society organisations or government. With their assistance, Jackson applied for an NFP scholarship and eventually enrolled at the Institute for Social Studies in the Hague. His employer saw the benefits the master's programme would bring Jackson and the organisation. The knowledge and experience gained would be fed into their work, impacting many more people than just Jackson. So reassured by a secure job position upon return, Jackson took leave of his family and headed to the Netherlands.

### Studying in the Netherlands: the good, the bad and the ugly

The transition from Uganda to the Netherlands was not necessarily an easy

one. With many differences in social, cultural and educational aspects, Jackson had quite an interesting experience. "Engaging formally and informally with fellow students from all over the world was beyond wonderful. The communal kitchen was the great leveller, where everyone, regardless of their profession or age, had to take care of themselves. But also, it was a place for discussion, to learn from each other beyond the space of the classroom." The classroom in itself and the education received, is something Jackson describes as "the good" part of studying in the Netherlands. Besides the high quality of education, the interaction with other students and being able to share and learn from other countries was an invaluable part of his education. With institutions such as the Peace Palace and the International Criminal Court at an easy distance, the learning process continued

**"Peace is a course that you don't preach, but have to practise"**

to take place beyond the halls of the ISS as well. These “living libraries” opened up new worlds of knowledge. Jackson did not shrink from the challenge of putting theory into action, and volunteered for civil society organisations during his stay in the Hague. The way Jackson sees it, “peace is a course that you don’t preach, but have to practice.” One thing that Jackson could have done without though, is the Dutch climate, something many alumni (and locals) wholeheartedly agree with.

### “The whole world summarised in one classroom”

With students coming from all continents, it was not necessary anymore to travel around the world to get to know more about what was going on in other countries. To have different perspectives put together really enriched the knowledge of the students. Jackson: “It was the whole world summarised in one classroom.” He himself could share information and experiences about the effects of the war in Northern Uganda, governance, peace and justice issues in Uganda. He did not even realise this at first, but by sharing his experience with others, Jackson was of great added value to his classmates and was a resource in the classroom. It could help other students interested in advancing international

justice and researching these issues. On the other hand, Jackson became more aware of governance issues raised by different students from other countries. Even by students from “neighbour” Kenya, which were topics Jackson took for granted before.

### Advice to future scholarship holders

The logistics of applying and receiving a scholarship can be quite challenging. Everything from arranging the required visa to dealing with family issues back home can cause significant delays. For many aspiring students, studying abroad means leaving their financially dependent family behind for a period of 12-24 months. These are not easy decisions to make, even if the outcome might be better for all. To make this time worthwhile, Jackson advises the following:

- Stay focused: it is good to dream big, visualise what you want to achieve and focus on what you want to accomplish.
- Be flexible: living in The Netherlands, possible in a shared home, can be very different to what you are used to. Adjust to what is normal in The Netherlands.
- Budget your time well: there are so many interesting things to do and see, but you need to plan ahead and use your time well as it goes by before you know it.



### Jackson’s vision

Jackson developed a vision towards social healing, economic empowerment and transformative justice. He aspires to see people who are healthier and socially relate to one another. In his view economic empowerment is what is needed to get to the point of social healing. According to him, the best way is to empower the youth economically. Show young people you can make it. You can actually make a difference. A great vision according to us, which we can only encourage.

# The design challenge in a nutshell

## Co-creating small scale impact

**Alumni are an indelible part of the knowledge exchange programmes of Nuffic. Our alumni have been very active in creating networking and career events, catering to the needs of their peers and communities. The physical distance has not always allowed Nuffic to take part in these events, but as digital meetings have become more or less the standard, the alumni conferences often mirrored this move to online platforms.**

To further make use of the possibilities of linking to one another, the alumni design challenge set out to deepen the links even further. Together with alumni from the Horn of Africa, the Nuffic team developed a three tiered design sprint to create small scale impact by alumni and their communities.

The first tier consisted of creating engagement. A bottom-up approach to explore the needs, wishes and ideas on engaging events that would pique the interest of alumni. And that would actually have some tangible outcome. The thematic focus of the event naturally aligned with the policy focus of the Orange Knowledge Programme, meaning all designs should be geared towards Security and Rule of Law in the Horn of Africa. The sub-themes and methods of intervention were also designed in unison with the alumni. Land rights, economic empowerment of marginalised groups, professionalising media, and gender based violence made the final bill. A call for proposals was launched, scorecards were made and decision making models conveyed to the jury in each country to ensure an objective assessment of all proposals. Some alumni managed to crunch out more than one proposal or team up with fellow alumni to increase their potential. Over 75 proposals were received, not counting the proposals submitted after the deadline had passed!

Six countries, with their respective alumni associations and embassies were approached for the second tier. Alumni, business hubs, knowledge institutions from Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South-Sudan, Sudan and Uganda and their Dutch counterparts agreed to be part of the design challenge. Their role would be to provide feedback on the proposals received, upping the quality of the interventions and establishing or strengthening networks and relations. This masterclass is part and parcel of the design challenge, along with a budget to implement the winning design.

The last tier is where the learning loop really comes into play. The knowledge gained from this experience, and also from implementing a workshop or online campaign, is worth sharing over and over. As part of the challenge, the winning alumni (or alumni team) has to organize a 'pay it forward' session for the next cohort of alumni. In this session, the experience on how to create small scale impact can be passed on to new alumni who in turn can organize these events themselves. The result is a community of practice, creating local impact one alumni at a time.

The winning and shortlisted proposals are collected in the pages to follow. The proposals, even though vetted on quality and policy alignment, express the personal perspectives of the alumni.

# Winning proposals



1. Ethiopia
2. Kenya
3. Somalia
4. South Sudan
5. Sudan
6. Uganda

## Subthemes

Together with the alumni associations, the following subthemes were chosen:



**Economic empowerment of marginalized groups**



**Professionalising media**



**Land rights**



**Gender based violence**

1 Winner Ethiopia

# Nigest Haile

**Type of intervention:** Workshop

**Target group:** Marginalized young women returnees from the United Arab Emirates (UAE)



The issue of focus is “Economically Empowering Marginalized Women Returnees from the UAE”, through the provision of marketable skills and facilitate full-time employment so that they generate sustainable income. The intended beneficiaries of this project are Ethiopian women returnees that are unemployed and living illegally in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The beneficiaries are women that hope to return to their country and have a stable life but are unable due to many factors. These factors include lack of financial resources to return home, being afraid of what might happen after their return, unemployment, etc. The direct beneficiaries of this project will be 5 marginalized young women returnees, aged 18 – 35.

## “Economically Empowering Marginalized Women Returnees from the United Arab Emirates”

They are expected to secure marketable skills to generate sustainable income, to support themselves and their families. Those women will develop their self-esteem, become assertive, empowering them to serve as role models to fight for their rights as well as for the rights of other women. This project/intervention will be considered as a show-case for replication and scaling-up so that more marginalized women returnees can be reached.



## 2 Winner Kenya

# Julius M. Huho and Bernard Gichimu

Type of intervention: Workshop

Target group: Male survivors of Gender Based Violence



While nearly all interventions in Kenya concentrate on women survivors of gender based violence, we focus on male survivors of gender based violence in order to create positive changes that will promote peaceful coexistence of communities. About 44% of men are gender based violence survivors in Kenya. They are often demeaned and neglected, driving them into alcoholism, extreme poverty and are generally at risk.

Culturally, men are mentors and symbol of peace. Our 4-days workshop will be a good platform where men survivors will be provided with psychosocial support and counselling to overcome social stigma, build networks and sense of responsibility. We aim to raise awareness and understanding of men's rights and deter gender based violence by mobilizing the formation of peace champions and self-help groups. We also aspire to engage in tree seedling business for income.

**“Empowering gender based violence male survivors: creating positive changes for peaceful communities in Nyeri and Muranga’s counties, Kenya”**

This intervention builds up on the innovative approaches to emerging challenges in the field of security and rule of law and creates networks with experts from the Netherlands and the Horn of Africa.



3 Winner Somalia

# Abdirahman Mohamud Abdi

Type of intervention: Workshop

Target group: Women



In Somalia land access and management is a male dominated sector, whereas women have limited access to land due to cultural barriers. Lack of access to legal, limited justice system participation and gender based violence; these factors contribute women to remain as a disadvantaged and marginalised group.

My intervention is to organize a workshop that empowers women for their right on access to a land and property. The objectives of my intervention are:

- To raise the awareness on the women's land rights
- Better understanding of the land governance system
- To facilitate the understanding of the land conflicts issues and security
- To encourage women for a land financing opportunities from the real estate firms and local banks
- To promote gender equality

**“Women's right to access  
a land in Somalia”**



4 Winner South Sudan

# James Kunhiak Muorwal Muorwel

Type of intervention: Workshop

Target group: Women soldiers and their male commanders



South Sudan has been at war just after its independence on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2011. The civil wars have led to loss of lives and wreaked havoc the economy. There are many lingering causes to civil unrest today, army reform is often cited as one of them.

The 2018 revitalized agreement on the resolution of conflict in South Sudan (R-ARCSS) provided for the security sector reform (SSR) in the country. It also provided for the 35% Affirmative Action (having over 35% women representation in all the transitional institutions) - a gender equality approach. There are no reliable statistics but it is estimated that women representation in South Sudan's uniformed forces is below 5% despite that fact that it is a highly militarized country.

## "Gender sensitivity training among uniformed forces in South Sudan"

The proposed gender sensitivity training is in line with the R-ARCSS SSR initiative and also the push for gender equality across all the institutions in the country. The training will target middle- and high-ranking security officials who will act as champions of gender equality in their respective institutions. The officers will also have more knowledge about gendered issues and be responsive to gendered needs in units under their responsibility.



5 Winner Sudan

# Hassan Timase

**Type of intervention:** Workshop

**Target group:** Daju, Nuba and Messiryia tribes in Lagowa - West Kordofan State



Lagowa is characterized by long disputes between settled farmers and nomads. Each year during the beginning of the rainy season in June and at time of harvest during January, the area witness some conflicts.

In order to solve such disorder the communities needs more enlightenment and awareness to reach a consensus treaty for the tribes to live in a peaceful era for the prosperity of people and economic empowerment.

## “Land rights in Lagowa, West Kordofan State”

With this workshop, I want the different stakeholders to be more aware about the land rights and discuss with them how such aroused issues can be addressed by applying the rule of law.



6 Winner Uganda

# Jacque Karungi

**Type of intervention:** Workshop

**Target group:** Humanitarian actors including UN Agencies, government and non-governmental organizations



In contrast to other refugee sub-populations, men are the least forthcoming about Gender Based Violence risks they and their sons face as urban refugees. There needs to be much greater awareness of gender based violence against men (as well as boys) in conflicts and crises. In order to meet its obligations to all survivors, there is a need for the humanitarian community to develop comprehensive guidance and programming that affirms the rights, needs, and dignity of male survivors.

Therefore, a two-day capacity-building workshop that provides hands-on tools on working with male refugee survivors will be conducted for humanitarian actors. Following the workshop, participants will be required to identify skilled and vet referral points for male survivors within the communities where refugee men can access care.

**“Orienting humanitarian agencies to working with male refugee sexual gender based violence survivors”**



# Honorable mentions

Although we had a limit of one winner per country, there were many great proposals that deserve a spotlight. Please meet our nominees and read their interesting ideas.

## Honorable mention Ethiopia Ephrem Taye Wallelegn



**Type of intervention:** Workshop  
**Target group:** Journalists working in mainstream media outlets, bloggers and vloggers

### “Journalism for peace and coexistence”

The main objective of the training/workshop, will be to create an understanding and appreciation to conflict sensitive journalism and reporting. It is also the objective of the training to create an understating and consensus on journalists’ (both as mainstream journalists and bloggers and

vloggers) role in promoting peace and prevention of conflicts. Through this trainings we will be aiming to create awareness among journalists and media outlets about conflict sensitive reporting and develop standard procedure on conflict coverage. The intervention will be held into two rounds, targeting to bring in 20 participants in each.

## Honorable mention Kenya Millicent Ngicho



**Type of intervention:** Interactive platform  
**Target group:** Women and Youths

### “Equal land rights but unequal access & use of land among women?”



In Kenya, land ownership and land rights security are important factors determining stability and socioeconomic status for women and youths. Women's rights to property access, use and inheritance (especially for widows) remains a challenge even though Kenya has comprehensive laws which protects women's land rights. Women's land rights has been hindered majorly due to complex cultural, legal and social factors that prevents them from having equal property rights. These obstacles have led to women being abused and therefore becoming impoverished from lack of access to land. Insecure land rights contribute to domestic violence, underemployment, and rural poverty among women. Land ownership increases women's power and control within marital relationships and reduces exposure to domestic violence.

With my project, I want to create an interactive platform for various stakeholders to discuss land rights and access led by youth and women. To increase community dialogues through inter-community land champions, to enhance fallback position in case of being widowed, to enhance peaceful coexistence within communities and to increase number of economically empowered women who know their land rights.

## Honorable mention Kenya **Josephine Karani & Racheal Nakitare**



**Type of intervention:** Workshop  
**Target group:** Journalists

### “Digital Footprints”

IAWRT Kenya (The International Association of Women in Radio and Television) will hold a one-day training on Election reporting: Online safety for women journalists. The training is open to all members of IAWRT Kenya. It will be facilitated by a Digital safety expert, a political reporter from Media Council of Kenya (MCK) representative from the Independent

Electoral and Boundaries Commission of Kenya (IEBC), a media manager and seasoned journalists.

The outcomes of the training are:

- Equip our members with digital safety and election reporting skills
- Encourage women journalists to embrace online platforms for professional engagement
- Share and document online experiences of women journalists. This will inform the areas of focus in our subsequent trainings as we prepare for elections
- Mentor upcoming journalists towards the upcoming elections
- Build a network of digital security experts among our members



Honorable mention Kenya

## Gerald Muriithi



**Type of intervention:** Social media campaign

**Target group:** Voters and Politicians

### “Let me speak my mind”

During campaign period in Kenya, the media is always instrumental in determining the outcome of the elections. It is the time to professionalize our media by embracing true reporting of sensitive matters that touches our lives.

Through music, social media campaigns, online conversations, discussions and civic education, we can let the world know that we care for our own country by sharing

common principles. We can share our ideas irrespective of our tribal and political affiliations and form a generation of true and genuine leadership of our country Kenya.

My idea is about bringing an everlasting solution to a problem that has chocked our development for decades by influencing the media to be at the forefront in the healing of our country forever. “LET ME SPEAK MY MIND” is the wake -up call for all Kenyans, as we strive for positive leadership.

Honorable mention Ethiopia

## Irene Awuor Owuor



**Type of intervention:** Community engagement

**Target group:** Nomad girls who are

vulnerable to child marriages or teen pregnancies in Marsabit County, Northern Kenya

### “Nomad girl-child empowerment”

The community still upholds harmful and retrogressive cultural practices that negatively impact girls and impede local development e.g child marriages, teen pregnancies and female genital mutilation.).

We plan to hold meetings with local community leaders (traditional, religious and local administration) with the aim of “getting their blessings” to support the launch of “Nomad Girl-child Empowerment, Kenya”, a local Community-based Organization that will work in the grassroots to:

- 1) Mobilize and sensitize the community members to initiate open dialogues among elders, men, women, boys and young girls to accelerate the abandonment of child marriages and female genital mutilation as a cultural practice in Marsabit County among the pastoralist community. This will in turn give the girls equal opportunities to access education, achieve their full potential and eventually participate in the development of their community.



2) Once the organization is launched, the targeted nomad girls will be trained on gender issues, HIV/AIDS, human rights, leadership and confidence building as a way of empowering them to take charge of their lives for their betterment and their society at large.

Honorable mention Kenya

## Hassan Ahmed, Zuleikha Yusuf & Aisha Sebit



**Type of intervention:** Online media campaign

**Target group:** women and young adolescent aged from 4-50 years

### “Speak up”

The WHO organization declared the COVID-19 outbreaks a global pandemic in March 2020. As a result countries around the world implemented various quarantine measures, economic insecurity and unemployment rates soared, and concern surrounding domestic violence and other forms of sexual and gender based violence escalated. Fuelled by a combination of confined living conditions, economic insecurity and food insecurity there has been an alarming increase in physical and psychological sexual and economic form of domestic violence against women and girls in Kibera and across Kenya.

According to Health Chief Administrative Secretary Mercy Mwangangi at least 5,000 cases have been recorded since mid-March, many of them involving girls aged under 18 years.

The intervention aims at creating awareness to the community so that victims can open up and seek justice. It also aims at helping

victims restore their dignity, to educate the community on the legal process and to end stigma in the community.

Honorable mention Somalia

## Ahmed Ali Farah



**Type of intervention:** Workshop

**Target group:** HIV/AIDS positive people and drug abusers

### “Improving health and human development in Somalia”



Drug use and trafficking of drugs pose significant challenges in Somalia. Heroin especially contributes to healthcare crises in the country.

HIV and AIDS Prevention and Care Activities in this sub-programme are targeted to prevent drug abuse and strengthen drug dependence treatment services, and to reduce instances of HIV/AIDS through drug use, trafficking and in prison settings through targeted prevention, treatment and care activities.

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Honorable mention Somalia  
**Mohamed Muse**



**Type of intervention:** Workshop  
**Target group:** Self-Help Entrepreneurial Women Groups in Somalia

**“Empowering Women and Girls’ Local Economic Development Initiatives in Somalia”**

I would like to organize and deliver training for survivors of gender based violence. Women and girls face different challenges, especially when they try to access finance for their start-ups and local economic development initiatives. They hardly receive necessary trainings or opportunity to skills development needed to start their own local economic development initiative.

I plan to facilitate 4-day training to a group of girls in Somalia to equip them with skills and knowledge they need to establish successful and sustainable local economic development initiatives in Somalia. This training will equip groups of women and girls with necessary economic development start-up initiatives and basic numerical and business operation skills. With this approach, I can be part of realising Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) especially SDGs 1(No poverty), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 8 (Decent work and Economic Growth).

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Honorable mention Uganda

**Rebecca Kiconco,  
Pius Zzimbe,  
Garace Namusoke,  
& Jackson Odong**



**Type of intervention:** Workshop  
**Target group:** Self-Help Entrepreneurial Women Groups in Somalia

**“Addressing gender gaps in land rights and ownership”**



Land is the biggest resource for every undertaking and currently attracting a series of tensions around land access, land use and land acquisition. The region is considered a hotspot because of conflicts between pastoralists and settled farmers, ethnic land conflicts, discovery of mineral deposits and speculative acquisition of land by individual members of the Karamajong agro-pastoralist people who have acquired large chunks of land in anticipation of finding investors to whom they can lease or sell the land.

The intervention is aimed at promoting formation and strengthening of Community Land Associations (CLA), and inclusion of women on land governance committees. The strategy will ultimately lead to changes in attitude at family level of land ownership, thereby narrowing the gender gap and reducing conflicts within families and communities.

Expected to positively impact all levels right from household, to community and regional level.

## Honorable mention Uganda Lapoti Richard



**Type of intervention:** Workshop  
**Target group:** Key Stakeholders at different level for better service delivery

### “Ending child marriage and teenage pregnancy in the Acholi Sub Region”

Child marriage practice has persisted amidst legal and social economic transformation in my country, Uganda. Uganda’s progress in addressing adolescent girls’ and women’s’ vulnerability to harmful practices

and violation of human rights cannot be underestimated. This has been possible through establishment of a supportive legal and policy framework for promoting children and women rights and expanding education opportunities with interventions across the different sectors of development including health, education, social development and justice, law and order sector.

However, child rights violations and harmful practices such as child marriage remain a major challenge for my country. The practice of child marriage which has contributed to teenage pregnancy is at its highest peak especially during this lockdown period and yet the decision makers are quite and not taking any action to tackle the challenge. So this implies that a number of adolescent girls are denied their childhood and their rights to exploit the expanded education opportunities and many may not return to school when schools open. It also inhibits girls’ and women’s’ general personal capability and career development as many are trapped in a cycle of poverty due to the limited opportunities for employment.

This advocacy intervention will challenge the law, policy and decision makers to take action to implement and enforce the already existing legal and policy framework and



also formulate more safeguarding policies to protect and promote the rights of girls and women. If this is done, then girls and women will be equipped to know and claim their rights, and meaningfully contribute and participate in public life in the Acholi sub region. Hence, Acholi Sub Region will see a society where every girl and woman knows and claims her rights; makes informed and empowering decisions for herself and society.

Honorable mention Uganda  
**Anna Odur & Jackson Odong**



**Type of intervention:** Workshop  
**Target group:** Women in Acholi, local

organizations working on relevant issues; cultural institutions/clan leaders, and civil society

**“Energy Security and Environment Justice (ESEJ) - dialoguing on Uganda’s looming biomass crisis”**

After decades of internal armed conflicts and a series of reconstruction efforts, northern Uganda’s future trajectory remains uncertain more so with the pronounced land conflicts currently. Energy security is one of the biggest emerging conflict dynamics in the region with a looming biomass crisis. Primarily because people must eat and to eat one has to cook and to cook you need either firewood or charcoal or both because 98% of the cooking is done either by firewood or charcoal. Methods of extraction of this energy resources are generating conflicts as a lot of violence is meted on the environment in the process of extraction of biomass for charcoal production.

Energy Security and Environmental Justice (ESEJ) Project seeks to demonstrate the extent to which energy security crisis and specifically charcoal trade is a national problem and to facilitate a national dialogue and social media campaign so as to catalyse development of a Biomass Energy strategy for Uganda.

Honorable mention Uganda  
**Nalubega Fatuma Matovu**



**Type of intervention:** Workshop  
**Target group:** 20 Fit persons (religious leaders, local council members) from Soroti District

**“Protecting land and human rights for the vulnerable through strengthening fit persons mediation capacity”**

As a person working with stakeholders in the Justice System, it was not hard to realise that there are many cases arising out of



land wrangles in Uganda and specifically Teso region. Actually, the majority of all criminal cases in the statutory courts have some relation to land, This is because most of the land is owned customarily. These land wrangles have led to violation of other human rights e.g. the right to life.

With my intervention I want to strengthen Clan Leaders and other people (i.e. local councils, religious leaders) capacity to engage and promote protection of land and other human rights in Teso through improving their mediation skills.

The expected outcomes of the workshop are:

- Equipping people with mediation skills
- Increased utilisation of the informal justice structures at the grassroots levels
- Decreasing wrangles over land
- Reduced cases at court
- Reduced violence that arises out of land wrangles
- Increased number of cases mediated
- A decrease in the violence against women and children

**“Congratulations for such a wonderful event and Congrats to all winners, this was awesome!”** - Gerald Muriithi

# Colophon

## Images

All images of alumni are provided and owned by the alumni themselves

We warmly thank all NL alumni, stakeholders and partners for their input and cooperation.

## Design

Osage

## Credits coverphoto

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