



“Enhancing women’s empowerment using culturally-defined rights in selected communities in Acholi”

Cultural structures, practices and systems are often perceived as reinforcing gender inequalities and abetting the oppression and subordination of women and girls, yet women have been traditionally recognised and respected for the important role they play in decision-making, nurturing families, as integral actors in cultural institutions, and leading some spiritual and cultural practices. The human and women rights movements have attempted to address social injustices women suffer from, although their prescriptions have often failed to explore or build on culturally-defined women’s rights, which remain largely unheard of and attempts to secure social justice for women through legal means have often met with only fleeting success.

With support from Diakonia, the Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU) is embarking on a new initiative to “Enhance women’s empowerment using culturally-defined rights” project in selected communities (Gulu, Kitgum and Lamwo). The project will put targeted women, girls and cultural leaders at the centre of implementation, provision of cultural knowledge, participatory monitoring and evaluation as well as the use of the project outputs. Different perspectives on women’s rights, on the part of women and girls themselves, on the part of cultural leaders and on the part of human rights activists will inform implementation, with emphasis on culturally rooted perspective.

Through the project, we anticipate that women and girls will develop their ability to use cultural values and practices in private and public spaces to defend their rights and relevant cultural institutions are expected to increase their use of cultural values and practices in decision-making and conflict resolution fora to defend the rights of women in their area of jurisdiction. This initiative will result into a research report on cultural practices and values that define women’s well-being in selected areas, a bilingual booklet on culturally-informed strategies for use by cultural leaders in selected areas and pilot projects on the use of culturally defined rights for women and girls.

CCFU is a registered, not-for-profit NGO dedicated to promoting the recognition of culture as vital for human development that responds to Uganda’s national identity and diversity. The Foundation is based on the belief that the positive aspects of culture can be harnessed to bring about social and economic transformation. CCFU attempts to find ways to capitalise on cultural wealth and to turn this into opportunities for harmony, and for sustainable and equitable development.

Keep posted on the progress of this initiative;

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