



SOLIDARITY UGANDA ANNUAL REPORT

2018

SOLIDARITY UGANDA

Solidarity Uganda was established in 2012 as an informal network of activists and political education trainers. Over the years, Solidarity Uganda has evolved into a high-impact, decentralized organization focused on training and organizing communities to wage nonviolent resistance against authoritarians, corporations, and other oppressors to achieve social and political change. We are a collective of trainers and consultants that teach nonviolent strategy, movement building, and social change. We are a "capacity-building" organization that helps Community-Based Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, activists, grassroots groups, and marginalized communities affect change in their contexts through nonviolent strategies. Our niche is training people to achieve peace and justice, whatever that means in their context: protecting their land from being grabbed by multinational corporations, documenting human rights abuses and corruption, campaigning for an end to economic exploitation, etc.

In the past year, trainees have developed strategies and action plans for their campaigns and movements. They have developed and engaged in strategies including protests, public arrests of corrupt officials, occupations, and closure of public offices while fighting oppression. Through the trainings, organizing, solidarity visits, coaching, and mentoring the trainees' and trainers' skills and knowledge of civil resistance has been strengthened. This is evidenced by the improvement of campaigns launched by the trainees. There has been remarkable improvement in the campaigns organized by the trainees leading to more success stories (and better insights from shortcomings) as compared to before.

Political repression and militarization of the state has drastically increased this past year. We witnessed an increase in police brutality and arbitrary arrests and detentions of activists and community organizers. A number of activists were arrested around the country, Dr Stella Nyanzi being one of them. Many more activists around the country were arrested and they continue to face repression.

Our Vision:

"A liberated Africa where people exercise their power"

Our Mission:

"To support the oppressed in building their collective power to achieve social and political change."

Our Values:

- Human and Environmental Freedom
- Civil Resistance
- Constructive Alternatives
- Intersectional Organizing
- Solidarity
- Transparency and Accountability
- Shared Leadership and Personal Discipline

Communication from the Executive director

Dear Friends

2018 has been a year of power. Since the *Togikwatako (hands off the constitution)* campaigns of late 2017, which saw our offices raided by security personnel and many staff and allies arrested, we have been in communities all across Uganda, waging resistance against state and corporate elites who continue to make the daily living conditions of Ugandans deplorable.

We have set up new chapters and expanded all across Uganda. In every region, we can point to the power of common people defeating land grabbers, kleptocrats, and other abusers of human and environmental rights. Our trainees and organizers have blocked land grabs, curbed military violence, and strengthened the power of workers and their unions. The poor and oppressed wield enough power to present a viable threat to those who afflict them. Prior to 2018, I couldn't say this about Uganda with much confidence.



Our support to African movements has reached Swaziland, South Sudan, and beyond. Our training facility - Wii Otem Center for Resistance and Alternatives - has contributed to the ability of thousands of students, unionists, organizers, activists, farmers, youth, and women to make social change. It has provided a secretariat to numerous movements our team has formed and incubated, including the National Land Defense League (which with the help of others organized a one-month, 234-person occupation at a UN office in Gulu resulting in reduced violence and increased land protection in northern Uganda).

We do all of this with an incredibly slim team and meager resources offered by friends within and beyond Uganda. Every year since our inception, Solidarity Uganda has multiplied its breadth, depth, and impact. As our national forum of organizers consolidates its power across the 14 original kingdoms of Uganda, we expect 2019 to be no different.

In the words of one inspiring female farmer from eastern Uganda, "We won't stop until all our land and people live in freedom."

**Yours in solidarity,
Phil Wilmot
Executive Director**

2018, ANOTHER YEAR OF IMPACT

2018 was yet another year of empowering the oppressed with skills for strategic non-violence and Movement Building. At Solidarity Uganda, almost everything we do can be described as training, coaching and consulting people. We help others discover their power, and how they can leverage it non-violently for social change. We are a "capacity-building" organization that helps Community-Based Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, activists, grassroots groups, and marginalized communities affect change in their contexts through nonviolent strategies. Our niche is training people to achieve peace and justice, whatever that means in their context: protecting their land from being grabbed by multinational corporations, documenting human rights abuses and corruption, campaigning for an end to economic exploitation, etc.

2018, was yet another year of change and transformation in Uganda, in regards to advocacy and the fight against corruption and other forms of oppression. Solidarity Uganda facilitated a number of trainings, support visits, mentorship sessions and associations/affiliations and exchange visits. These have helped nurture the culture of non-violence and civil resistance in Uganda. A lot of people across the country have learnt from these. Many solidarity chapters and pressure groups have been formed in different parts of the country to demand and fight for a just and fair Uganda. There have been a number of demonstrations, citizen arrests, office occupancies, leadership censures, petitions, marches, hearings and court cases as people demand for better communities and accountability from their leaders.

Northern Region

While we have always had various security threats in the course of our work, this year was a little different with limited security interference on our staff in the northern region except for the government brutality in the Apaa region, Amuru District. Many activities and actions were undertaken in the Northern region among which are the following. The National Land Defense League was formed and launched in Awei, Alebtong District, this saw women mobilize and successfully they chased away land grabbers in the name of professors who wanted to illegally establish a university on their land. We had an opportunity to expand our network to West Nile Districts of Northern Uganda. Currently, we do have vibrant groups/ allies in over four districts of West Nile sub region. We look forward to strengthening the capacity of the already identified allies in different corners of West Nile and to even recruit more. We have also remained committed to the Apaa community in regard to the persistent land grab by the government.

Acholi and Bunyoro unite against oil and Sugar



For some time now, Uganda has been branded by massive cases of land disputes that are characterized by unjust evictions, killing of innocent lives among other atrocities across the country. Solidarity Uganda considered different strategies through which different communities can come together to scale up their efforts in fighting land grabbers anywhere in the country and here the ***National Land defense league*** was born.

This is an umbrella coalition that exists to resist land grabs and land grabbers- businesses, politicians, military men and the government who steal land from Ugandan people. It also brings together rural Ugandan women to fight against unjust land evictions and grabbing. The NLDL brought together different communities from across the country unified under one struggle. The National Land defense league was launched in Northern Uganda- Aleptong with people from various regions coming together. Under this umbrella, we had a solidarity exchange visit between the people of Kijayo (Hoima district, Western Uganda) and Apaa (Amuru district). The two communities stood in solidarity and jointly burnt sugar crystals to show their frustration towards the land grabbers in Bunyoro region- Hoima sugar Limited which is owned by Indians. This was also to denounce investors and other land grabbers who have successfully made their lives miserable. The theme of this particular action was ***“Acholi and Bunyoro unite against oil and Sugar.”***



Hoima community shares Karo as a sign of solidarity against land grabs



Hoima Apaa communities mingle Karo during a solidarity visit in Apaa.

APAA LAND GRAB

We have remained committed to supporting and standing with the people of Apaa to resist the government’s intention to take away their land. We have played critical roles before, during and after the popular UN occupation in Gulu.

Despite the brutal massacres, beatings, torture and forceful evictions as well as burning of houses, destruction and looting of crops and livelihoods by the Uganda People’s Defense Forces (UPDF), Uganda Police forces and Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the people of Apaa have continued to fearlessly resist the land grabbing meted upon them by the government, the very government that is meant to protect them.

The Apaa community has not only proved their determination to resist land grabbing but they have also proved they have more experience with civil resistance and nonviolent action, staying united

towards their objectives and goals. The community has had several direct actions that have leveraged them into a position of power has inspired other communities to take similar subsequent actions throughout Uganda.

For all these years, The Apaa community has restrained themselves from using violence, they have stayed peaceful so that they are not discredited and limit propaganda that could be developed against them to justify any repression. Their inspiring persistence and nonviolent discipline continues to confuse and shame their opponents to date.

In this past year, many activists have joined hands and supported the community's struggle. We have seen several activists and communities join the community in the struggle. The Hoima community, which is similarly facing land evictions paid a solidarity visit to Apaa to not only learn but to also encourage each other.

Western Region

Western Uganda is hinged on cultural values which define the way people react towards different issue. For a very long time, the people of Western Uganda embraced dialogue, lobbying and advocacy to advance their grievances and complaints concerning the service delivery system and political decisions. Nothing was ever tackled. A number of issues built up. This pushed the people to seek for better ways of holding their leaders accountable. They needed answers so they embraced civil resistance and that marked the beginning of our struggles together with the communities in western Uganda. Solidarity Uganda facilitated a number of trainings, support visits, mentorship sessions and exchange visits in the western region this year. Through these, the concept of Nonviolence and civil resistance were introduced to the communities and social movements in the region. People have learnt a lot from the exposure and they are forming groups towards fulfillment of the concepts in different Districts. A number of demonstrations, citizen arrests, office occupiers, leadership censures, petitions, marches, hearings and court cases have been witnessed as people demanded for better services and a just, fair society for everyone. Pressure groups have been formed in different Districts to keep their leaders in check and demand for a fair and just society. These include, MBUGA (Make Bushenyi Great Again), Citizens' Report Card, Rwamwanja resettlers Group, Kamwenge Town Council Group, MANRUIA – Kyenjojo Group, Save Bwindi Impenetrable park group in Kanungu, Ikamiro and Nguruwe pressure groups in Hoima District. Women's groups that are fighting against patriarchal and gender limitations affecting their participation in governance and development have been formed (the Rukararwe women Riders association is an example). This women riders association gave birth to the Women Bicycle Ridding Caravan in western Uganda

Women Bicycle Ridding Caravan

Western Uganda is hinged on cultural values. These values, define their reactions towards different circumstances, for example, it is shameful in Western Uganda to reproach your leaders or elders as a younger person. It is considered disrespectful and can only be done in extreme conditions – the elders are always right. It is also shameful for a woman to ride a bicycle or motorcycle in this culture.



Women in Bushenyi (Western Region) prepare for the bicycle-riding caravan

There are very many patriarchal issues and gender limitations affecting women participation in governance and development issues in their communities. To

address some of these, a women ridders caravan dubbed **Rukararwe women Riders association** was formed in Bushenyi. This is being nurtured into a gigantic **women movement**. Here women defied some of the cultural norms limiting them by joining this caravan in a competition to empower them. Much as there was resistance from some of their husbands, they went ahead and participated. Today, they are more empowered and are more actively involved in issues pertaining their societies and wellbeing. They now have a voice.



A training of Flower farm workers on their labor and health rihts

Working with Flower Farm Workers

This project aimed at promoting labor and health rights in the floriculture industry in Uganda exposing the health rights violations at the flower farms, documenting stories of victims of health rights violations, ensuring workers harmed during service receive health services from service providers of their choice at the cost of the employers, mobilizing and capacitating workers to participate in organized labor.

This project helped the flower farm workers recognize their own power and they were equipped with tools, skills and confidence through a series of trainings that opened up the way to deeper stake in the campaign, future involvement and engagements.



Activists from across the country stand in solidarity with the flower farm workers in Bushenvi



Flower farm workers at one of the trainings conducted by Solidarity Uganda

We conducted an intensive three-day students' training on movement building at Wii Otem center in Lira. The training comprised of student leaders from both private and public universities plus tertiary institutions in Uganda. We also had representatives from the Farmers' union and two proactive flower farm workers who are members of the flower Union (UHISPAWU).

“As student leaders we have very insignificant differences that have hindered our roles in building a strong student community country wide.”

Students were introduced to concept of civil resistance and nonviolent. From the training a student movement was formed. The students demonstrated a very strong and willing spirit to plan and execute actions in fighting for their rights as students and also other oppressed people's rights in their communities and country at large.



Student leaders at Wii Otem center



The student leaders undertake some activities during the training



Some of the student leaders that attended the students' training



Women's intensive training at Wii Otem Centre

Wii Otem Community Center

The community center has enormously grown over the past year. A lot of community members, students and other organizations have used the space for meetings and training. The resource center has been so helpful with people accessing the great books in the library.

We have also trained a great number of activists and organizers from across the country and beyond the borders at the center. In 2019, we envision greater things happening at the center. The center has a business wing, which has restaurant, and accommodation services at a very friendly cost. Feel free to visit and enjoy the great services in Northern Uganda

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31ST DECEMBER 2018

ACTION ALLIANCE LTD STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION FY 2018		
	2018 (Ushs)	2017 (Ushs)
ASSETS		
Non Current Assets		
Property & Equipment	26,131,950	27,927,200
Current Assets		
Receivables	186,291,561	226,242,700
Prepayments	5,004	14,491,464
Cash and cash Equivalents	96,601,891	25,242,675
TOTAL ASSETS	309,030,406	293,904,039
EQUITY & LIABILITIES		
Equity	41,914,344	66,415,919
Non Current Liabilities		
Deferred Income	8,414,600	7,786,800
Current Liabilities		
Current Deferred Income	252,362,709	210,953,170
Payables	6,338,753	8,748,150
TOTAL EQUITY & LIABILITIES	309,030,406	293,904,039

WHAT ABOUT CIVIL RESISTANCE?

Civil disobedience is the public and ethically motivated breaking of a law in order to challenge either the legitimacy of the specific law you are breaking or a greater injustice committed by the state.

Civil Resistance is a powerful way for people to fight for their rights, freedoms, and justice without the use of violence. When people wage civil resistance, they use tactics such as strikes, boycotts, mass protests and many other nonviolent actions to withdraw their cooperation from oppressive systems. Throughout history and in the present day, civil resistance movements have forced change to happen, even against powerful opponents who are willing to use violence. They disrupt business as usual, shift the behavior and loyalties of a system's defenders, and cause bystanders to side with the movement.

In the face of widespread nonviolent defiance—and the social, economic, and political pressure that it creates—an oppressive system becomes too costly to maintain and ultimately unsustainable. Many civil resistance campaigns and movements have created these dynamics and changed history as a result. (Source» *International center on Nonviolent Conflict, ICNC*)

One of the most important concepts associated with civil resistance is that nonviolence must be maintained to avoid giving the oppressor an opportunity to react in a hostile manner like beating up the people in the struggle. Protestors refuse to be aggressive or harmful even when the oppressor is aggressive and violent. While the people are resisting, they maintain order and they strive to remain within their ethical boundaries. Civil resistance often relies on the ability of protestors to gain the sympathy of the public, and violent tactics generally undermine this goal.

We would not have achieved much without the consolidated efforts of all our partners; at the grassroots and beyond. We look forward to a more fruitful 2019 with greater people power. The Struggle Continues.

Do you desire to support our struggles?

Grassroots organizations thrive on support from the grassroots. Here are the top three ways you can help most in this moment

- ✚ Pledge a monthly contribution of any amount at www.solidarityuganda.org/give-2 Email us at info@solidarityuganda.com about your contribution so that we can confirm receipt – or about getting involved in other capacities.
- ✚ Collect new and used books, films, and gadgets (laptops, phones, cameras, tablets, etc.) for the development of Wii Otem Center.
- ✚ Form your own chapter of Solidarity Uganda and practice nonviolent direct action. Learn how by getting in touch with us via Facebook, Twitter, or email