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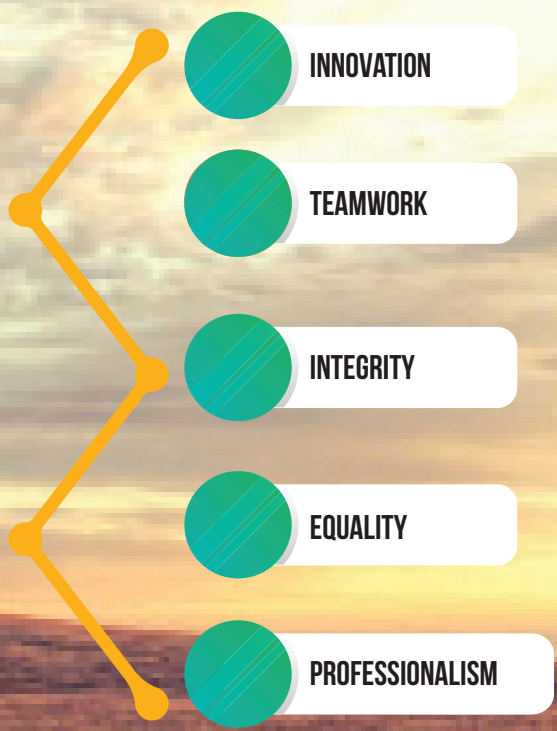
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Vision
A Society where People Value and Enjoy Socio Economic and Gender Justice

Mission
IST strives to develop the capacity of women and youth to champion gender justice and equality, transformational leadership and learning through capacity building, innovation and advocacy.

Goal
To Support People to Take Action that will transform their Situations through Questioning the Status Quo




APPRECIATION

IST appreciates all its partners and all others who made this work possible; UN Women, Korea Hope Foundation, Women Situation Room, African Women’s Development Fund-AWDF and Urgent Action Fund.

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A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with a humble heart and warm regards that I welcome you to the second issue of the Institute for Social Transformation newsletter. And before diving in, allow me to convey our heartfelt appreciation to all our esteemed partners, Transformational stakeholders and the entire IST family, right from the Board of Directors, Management and Staff. You have unfailingly been a powerful driving force in our journey towards the positive transformation of Women and the youth, who are less privileged but with a desire to see their livelihoods change for the better. Thank you so much.

Having thanked the wonderful people behind IST, I wish to say that the year (2020-2021) has not been a walk in the park on many fronts. We all remember how at the very beginning of the year, the whole world was thrown into turmoil by the COVID-19 Pandemic. The advent of the Corona Virus led to a sudden and drastic change in the way the world operated which led to things being done in “The new Normal”. In order to curb the disease, lockdowns and travel restrictions were enforced and the livelihoods

of women in the informal business sector were greatly affected. As we all recall, in Uganda, those who wished to continue working in the markets had to remain there the whole period of the lockdown.

Secondly, it was during this same year (2020), that we were holding our General Elections and times like these are usually rife with political and security tensions, which all again present unique challenges to women in general.

However, with the support of our partners and the resilience of the market women, together with the dedication of the IST family, we have some major highlights that we realized in the trying moments. To begin with, in that year we were blessed to hold the First Ever Market Women Graduation Ceremony, to commemorate the achievement of Adult Literacy training by Market women under the theme; “Adult Learning for Improved Business Management.”

Thirdly, in line with boosting women’s access to markets and customers during the pandemic. Women were trained to be tech

savvy and a number of them received smart phones to assist them utilize the Market Garden App which was developed in partnership with UN Women to serve women in the markets to boost their business and remain afloat during the pandemic. It is also worth noting that through the revolving fund model, financial support was secured to help the women get back on their feet after the effects of the pandemic on businesses.

Lastly but not least; Through the Election period, we worked hand in hand with the Women Situation Room to train youths and women in peacekeeping and peacebuilding to ensure peace before, during and after elections. And in this issue we bring you the voices of the trained Election observers who actively took part in the election process.

We thank you for walking with us and continuing to believe in our effort towards transformation. Stay safe, and be blessed.

MOUREEN WAGUBI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

THE FIRST EVER MARKET WOMEN'S GRADUATION

Celebrating the resilience and participation of Market Women in adult Literacy for better business management and sustainability.

8 Market women and 2 men of Nakawa, Kalerwe (Freedom and Bivamuntuuyo) markets awarded with certificates of completion for level one of adult literacy.

Institute for Social Transformation (IST) with support from Korea Hope Foundation (KHF) organized a graduation for 88 Market women and 2 men of Nakawa, Kalerwe (Freedom and Bivamuntuuyo) markets who were awarded with certificates of completion for level one of adult literacy. The first ever market women's graduation under the theme **“Adult learning for improved business management”** event that took place on 25th March 2021 at St. Jude grounds Naguru was officiated by the KCCA Executive Director, Dorothy Kisaka. Over

120 participants including the market women as the main graduates, market leaders, Civil society organizations (CSOs) and media fraternity honored the ceremony. The graduation drive was to motivate more adult learners to consistently participate in Adult literacy classes to be able to apply the knowledge in management of their business. The classes have not only helped in women in learning how to read, write and count but also improved their social life, business management through keeping records, women are able to write their names and read a newspaper which has improved their discussions of issues that exist within their markets and come up with solutions.

KCCA's Executive Director Dorothy Kisaka appreciated the gesture saying, “I am pleased to learn that market women accepted to sacrifice some time off their business to go and study. I promise IST that we are going to have a partnership together because we need to train more women because education is knowledge.”

She said, “I am especially delighted to hear that now Market Women are able to count, take records and interact in English with their customers. I believe this will significantly improve their customer relationships.

Thinking Beyond.

The KCCA Executive Director, called upon the Market women to come up, form groups and properly utilize their efforts. She advised the women to start self-help projects to further lift themselves.

The IST Founder and Board Member, Dr. Thelma Awori who was also among the key speakers applauded the market women for their efforts and having been resilient during the lockdown amidst all the challenges they faced.

Through playing different educative skits, market women expressed the challenges they face in their day to day operations in the markets how they have managed to solve them. One of the ladies repeatedly encouraged the women in markets to learn English, Kiswahili and other vital languages that are widely used in Business to communicate so that they can increase their sales and

interaction with customers and retailers during the transactions.

KCCA's Executive Director, Ms Dorothy Kisaka giving her remarks during the graduation ceremony.



Some of the graduates showing off their certificates of completion for level one of adult literacy.



The IST Founder and Board Chair, Dr. Thelma Awori (Middle) enjoying the dance moment with the graduates during the first ever Market Women graduation ceremony.



Kalerwe-Freedom graduates presenting a skit on gender based violence in families during the graduation ceremony.

LIFTING MARKET WOMEN VIA THE MARKET GARDEN APP

Earlier this year, the market women of Kalerwe and Nakawa markets left their stalls and took to the streets of Kampala to advertise the Market Garden App through an activity dubbed. “Market Garden App Activation.” This was an effort geared towards making the App popular to potential customers around Kampala.

Amidst the partial internet shutdown on social media, market women took to the streets of Kampala, holding placards and with several messages requesting people to download and use the

Market Garden App. Having been in operation since March 2020, the market women spearheaded the activation saying that the Market Garden App has helped them to get customers beyond their stalls and it was therefore high time, they combined the on-going marketing efforts to attract more customers to use the App to purchase products.

The App has over 300 market women enrolled and 120 products which are mostly sold by the market women. Nevertheless, there are still challenges being faced by the women especially

low literacy levels and little or no access to affordable smartphones or data bundles for those with smartphones. IST continues to lobby and engage with several partners, the government and the private sector to enable women to use technology for business.

The Market Garden App can be downloaded from Play Store for Android users and is set to launch the iOS version within the next few months. Support a market woman by downloading the App and placing an order for groceries from a market nearest to you.



Nanzige Catherine from Nakawa Market uses the Public address system to highlight the benefits of the App and also encouraged people to embrace and use it to shop for both fresh and dry groceries from the market



With a safe, reliable and convenient delivery system, the market women said that they assure all their customers security of their products which are delivered to their doorstep



Market women in Nakawa in the small Nakawa Taxi popularizing the App to different customers



A market woman from Kalerwe checks her phone to see if there are any orders which have come through the Market Garden App

Cooperatives Unifying Market Women to combat the effect of COVID-19

“Through the group lending and borrowing model of the cooperative, I was able to borrow money which has supported my business to grow after COVID 19,” said Nancy Aloyo, the Vice Chairperson of Gulu Main Market Saving and Credit Cooperative Group.



Nancy and 50 other people in the cooperative share their stories of pain, triumph and success from the group cooperative. The Cooperative started in 2018 as a CBO but has over the years grown into a cooperative with an agenda to support the group members economically, socially, emotionally and in all other spheres of life.

Elected in 2019, the leadership of the cooperative has been the pillar for its growth. It is made up of 9 women leaders who have been in charge of the growth and development of the cooperative. Through the strong leadership,

the group members have managed to keep collecting up to 2,000,000 shillings monthly in group savings.

However, the cooperative has not only saved but also created a social fund for the group members where each member contributes 2000 shillings weekly for any other social issues like parties, bereavement, and in case a member is sick.

Josephine Abwono confessed to have been a beneficiary of the fund saying, “When the lockdown was lifted, I returned to the market but my health was not good as I was in and out of the hospital. This affected my business but our

cooperative gave 200,000 shillings for medical bills which is interest free.”

The cooperative has also benefited from a Revolving fund given by the Institute for Social Transformation (IST). This is a fund that was given to the group to help them in revamping their businesses but also to help the group achieve their goals and objectives at an affordable interest rate. Whereas the Revolving fund is given at a very low interest rate, the group gives out loans to its members at only 5% which is lower than any commercial bank or money lending institution.

Jennifer Makeba, the treasurer said that the goal of the cooperative is to see their members succeeding in business and other spheres of life which is why they opted for a low interest rate. She said, “When you go to the bank, they will ask you for so many things in order to give you a loan. Besides having high rates of up to 15%, the bank requires you to have proper documentation and collateral. In fact, sometimes, the bank asks for evidence of spousal consent.” According to Jennifer, this hinders the ability of women to secure loans for their business there by making hindering their progress.

Nancy Aloyo is one of the members who acquired a loan from the cooperative and this is her story, “When we received the fund, I applied for a loan because my stall was almost empty and dry without produce. I sell Irish potatoes, onions, rice and beans. I was able to purchase sacks of rice, Irish and onions yet I was previously buying in basins. When you purchase in bulk, you get a higher profit margin compared to when you buy in small quantities. I have been able to grow and expand my business but I am also able to support my family and pay school fees for my son who is in Senior 3.”

Although Nancy has achieved immense success from securing the loan, she said that there are members who borrow money for business purposes but end up using it for other expenses like school fees and clearing debts from other groups. She explained that several women are carrying a heavy financial burden and the survival of their families is on their

shoulders. Nancy therefore called upon IST to conduct more financial literacy trainings and financial management at individual levels to help the group members who have failed to balance their finances.

Tasked to explain what happens to the group loan defaulters, Makeba the treasurer said that the reason why the cooperative is based in the market is because the members know themselves and have been working with each other for a long time so they are patient with one another, “Helping each other to grow as a group is our aim. We understand that some people may not always clear their loans on time. There is a small fine which is charged for all the defaulters but nothing drastic.”

The leadership of the cooperative recognises the fact that they are saving tirelessly but need more help in terms of money and any other resources. The leaders said that they applied for the Uganda Women

Entrepreneurship Programme but have been on the waiting list for 2years now and have not received feedback from the district although they met all the requirements.

With a strong leadership, the hope of the cooperative lies in doing group projects. Betty Atoo one of the leaders said that the cooperative wants to venture into outside catering, growing and selling of cereals where they will conduct joint marketing efforts to get customers and make money to improve their livelihood. They also aspire to transfer the skills they have to other women in the markets while encouraging them to join the cooperative.

Gulu Main Market Vendors' SACCO leaders having an ad hoc meeting in the market about the financial situation of the cooperative



MOMENTS OF FEEDBACK WITH THE WSR TRAINED WOMEN AND YOUTH PEACE ADVOCATES.

Their exciting voices!

Batoole Aisha, from the time I joined the trainings, I gained self-confidence. I can now freely engage in peace building conversations with friends and the community. I recently held a conversation with my children and assured them that they can both become peace advocates.

Akwi Sarah, my relationship with my husband has changed. Before, we could not sit together to plan as family especially towards the elections since he supported a different party from mine. But when I joined this initiative we were trained on how to “hold our parties at heart” where I can support a party and let no one get to know about it. And I can now testify that there is peace both at individual and family levels.

Nelson Kunya, for the first time ever, I networked with police Officers while I was observing the 2021 elections

Kato Andrew. I was approached to offer technical support to the team on the ground because of the clothes that I was putting on as an election observer.

“It was a good platform to enforce women’s rights and give women a voice because i was able to get the attention of the police and the elections body,” said Sarah Akwiadding, “It can be useful if put in place once again for the 2026 general election.”



“PEACE IS OUR HANDS”

Beyond expressing how this initiative has up lifted them, women and Youth Peace advocates band observers also suggested possible strategies on how they can keep the momentum through creating a sports club which was dubbed as WSR Women and Youth sports Gala. It was revealed that through this sports gala, they will keep united as election peace advocates 2020-2021.

Earlier this year, IST held follow up sessions with the trained peace advocates in the three districts of Iganga, Jinja and Bugiri intended to generate feedback, document good practices and draw strategies to sustain the grass

root momentum for peace by the trained peace advocates.

The Institute for Social Transformation (IST) with support from Women Situation Room (WSR) trained over 450 Women and Youth as election peace advocates from the three districts of Jinja, Iganga and Bugiri. The WSR is a peace-building project that empowers women to be the leading force for democratic and peaceful elections. The concept was first introduced by Yvette Chesson-Wureh, the coordinator for the Liberia-based Angie Brooks International Centre, an NGO on women’s empowerment.



The trained Women and Youth Peace advocates during feedback sessions



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