

# Enhancing Gender Capacities of Isis-WICCE Staff in Feminist Knowledge, Analysis, Planning and Advocacy

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## Welcoming guests (protocol)

### Introduction (Overall, I think you have to re-orient this speech towards appreciating the role of UN Women)

The School of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University is one of the Iconic institutions shaped around building gender analytical capacities through unique feminist methodologies of teaching, research, policy engagement and collaborations. The School is the leading institution in sub-Saharan Africa in advancing the discipline of Women and Gender studies geared towards building knowledge and skills necessary for informing equitable development, and narrowing social inequalities particularly those of a gendered nature. The School, born out the women's movement struggles, draws its mandate from the government of Uganda's commitment at the national, regional and international levels to address gender inequalities and promote equitable and sustainable development of the country.

Established in 1991, the School of Women and Gender Studies offers world-class teaching, research and outreach in the subject of gender. The school has a highly trained staff with intellectual and analytical skills on how gender intersects with other social relations to create inequalities. One of these fields on analysis is armed conflict and displacement.

Today we gather here to celebrate the school's effort to reach out to critical actors outside the university in championing issues of social equity, respect of human rights and gender equity and equality. In this tailor made programme, one of its kind in the life of the SWGS, the School set out not only to respond to Isis-WICCE's desire to strengthen their capacities in feminism and gender analysis but also to take Makerere University nearer to the people - in the community. As a university unit, the school is guided by the strategic pillars of Teaching & Learning; Research and Innovation and Outreach.

### On the partnership

The School of Women and Gender Studies (SWGS), Makerere University in Partnership with Isis-Women International Cross Cultural Exchange (Isis-WICCE) launched, implemented and successfully completed an outreach training programme for Isis-WICCE members of staff. The programme was aimed at *Enhancing Gender Capacities of Isis-WICCE Staff in Feminist Knowledge, Analysis, Planning and Advocacy* to enable them execute their organisational mandate of promoting women's leadership in conflict and post conflict settings. Isis-WICCE is a feminist organisation with a focus on enhancing women's leadership in conflict and post conflict settings. Isis-WICCE programming is grounded in social and gender justice with a strong commitment

towards igniting women's leadership, amplifying women's voices, and deepening women's activism in peace building.

This outreach training programme was a tailor-made programme designed and offered by the School of Women and Gender Studies, Makerere University. The programme lies at the heart of the School's outreach programme with an aim of creating a formidable force of intellectuals with the ability to comprehend gender dynamics, plan and advocate for gender equality from an informed position. This partnership accentuates collective efforts between the academia and the civil society in shaping the discourse around gender and development.

### Target of the training Programme

This was a demand - driven training programme. As a feminist organisation that has been in the thick and thin of research, documentation, policy development and advocacy, Isis-WICCE sought to re-tool itself amidst shifting discourses on gender. Isis-WICCE approached the SWGS given its wide range of human resources grounded in feminist knowledge, Research, and analysis. Through the institutional needs assessment, a unique programme was developed to offer;

- a. Critical reflections on the concept of gender, how the concept has evolved over time,
- b. Essential insights into feminism, and contemporary feminist engagements in conflict and post conflict contexts;
- c. Rethinking the place of gender in global development discourses, the State, and policy analysis;
- d. As well articulating the role of CSOs in feminist research, advocacy, documentation and policy influence.

All these concerns were reflected in the four themes of the training - The Question of Gender and the Feminist Theory; Gender and Development Practice; Gender, the State and Policy Analysis and Feminist Research, Documentation and Advocacy. The entire training course took 66 contact hours.

Our take home as a school from this training Process

- The training offered us a space to engage with the actors outside the academia - to perform our rightful role as actors in the women's movement.
- Provided an opportunity for sharing, learning, unlearning and relearning not only amongst the trainees but also on the side of trainers.
- It was an opportune moment of reflection on the gains so far registered in the promotion of women's rights as well as critical thinking around emerging discourses - on what they offer for gender justice and the possible threat they carry along.
- Creative methodologies of teaching

Testimonies from the trainees will help us understand broadly what it is that this programme offered to them as individuals and as a collective - feminist organisation

**Moving forward**

- We would like to congratulate Isis-WICCE staff for their commitment to the course and urge them to use the knowledge and skills acquired to transform communities they work with
- We would like to thank our partners in the struggle for gender equity and equality for the commitment to the struggle and request that we constantly do re-focus our energies, re-tool as the discourses on gender are ever changing. As we embrace the sustainable development goals, we need to reflect on the new debates, new strategic directions and commitments.
- As a school, we reiterate our readiness and commitment to work with the women's movement to achieve sustainable gender equity and equality, *as we build for the future.*