

CONCEPT NOTE
SIDE EVENT – CSW 67th SESSION
“The power of mobile technology:
Uganda's experience of making digitization work for women and markets”

ORGANIZERS: CARE International

CO-SPONSORS: Uganda and Austria

WHEN: March 13 at 8:15-9:30am

WHERE: Conference Room A - UNHQ

BACKGROUND:

Mobile phones present tremendous opportunities for women’s and girls’ empowerment and well-being. Access to internet and mobile communication holds huge potential for economic, social, and political inclusion as well as for better access to quality health services. Against this backdrop, donor funding for digital activities more than tripled globally between 2015 and 2019 (OECD-DAC report 2021) and they play an increasingly prevalent role in national development policies. The COVID 19 pandemic underlined the power and relevance of digital technology even more. However, it also demonstrated the risk that digital technology can increase existing gender inequalities, exacerbate gender-based violence and security risks, and exclude women and girls who were not already using technology.

The lesson the pandemic made clear is that the goal of digital inclusion requires us to apply an intersectional lens. Otherwise, the most marginalised groups risk being left behind, particularly the elderly, rural populations, refugees and displaced people, people with disabilities, or migrants. For example, in Uganda the urban gender gap in mobile ownership rises fivefold to 22 percent in rural areas.¹ Mobile money is a key driver for financial and digital inclusion.²

Empowerment programs must address these inequalities and target those groups most at risk of being further disadvantaged. CARE’s digital care package, for instance, provides marginalised women and girls with the opportunity, training and products to use mobile technology to make savings and safely onboard the digital ecosystem. It enables their greater financial activity while also creating lucrative opportunities for the companies involved such as mobile phone or service providers. Digital technology also gives marginalized women and girls the opportunity to access new channels of communication and support, which provide them with more information, skills and independence. Mobile Money transfers are used to provide cash transfers in a safer and more flexible way and to allow for new ways of doing business. However, such promising digital programming modalities also need to mitigate the various risks and challenges that they can present such as increased gender-based violence risks at the household level, lack of relevant digital skills or limitations in accessibility of mobile services. Programming needs to consider and address these issues in particular when targeting remote and very marginalized population (rural and urban poor). This can be best achieved by mainstreaming gender and working strategically with partners across the public, private and civil society sectors.

¹ GSMA, The Mobile Gender Gap Report 2020

² GSMA. Uganda: Driving inclusive socio-economic progress through mobile-enabled digital transformation 2019



Drawing on direct experience in Uganda, this event brings together representatives and experts from government, civil society and private sector to share good practices and provide concrete recommendations on how to advance women's and girls' financial and digital inclusion and empowerment, whilst mitigating the risks.

OBJECTIVES:

- Stimulate dialogue between digital and gender practitioners from government, donors, civil society and the private sector, to draw on their insights to harness the full, inclusive and safe potential of mobile technology so that no one is left behind.
- Showcase promising practices between the private, public and civil society sectors in Uganda that are creating the best conditions for marginalised women and girls to safely use mobile phone technology to make savings (saving groups), spend (cash transfers) and connect (support services / networks/markets).
- Provide practical recommendations for gender transformative digital inclusion programming that closes the digital divide while managing risks and advancing broader development and empowerment outcomes for marginalized women and girls.

SPEAKERS AND PARTICIPANTS:

Participants will include experts on either or both gender equality and digital inclusion: political decision makers and UN Member States, representatives of international organisations, civil society representatives from women-led grassroots and national organisations, international NGOs and the private sector.

Moderator: Adekemi Ndieli, Deputy Country Representative of UN Women Uganda

FORMAT:

This side event will be an interactive panel discussion. Drawing on direct experience, speakers will share good practices and provide concrete recommendations on how to promote gender equality and women's empowerment by using mobile technology in a safe, effective and inclusive way.

A video on digital VSLAs in Uganda will set the scene and present the issue for discussion before the panel discussion.

A Q&A session will allow the audience to put their questions to the speakers.

CARE Austria will organise a follow up webinar with WAYREP's project team (incl. partner organisations) and project participants to share more first-hand insights and consider the best practices and recommendations from this side event.



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AGENDA:

TIME	SEGMENT	CONTENT	SPEAKER
3	Opening	Welcome and Introduction	Adekemi Ndieli, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Uganda
6	Co-sponsors' welcome	Welcome by Uganda and Austria	H.E. Amb. Robie Kakonge, Ambassador of The Republic of Uganda to Washington H.E. Amb. Alexander Marschik, Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN
5	Video	A video on the use of digital tools in CARE Uganda programming will give a voice to community members and set the scene	
30	Panel	The panellists will discuss benefits and challenges of digitalisation for women and girls, and provide practical recommendations on how to make digitization work for women, households and markets in the Ugandan context, and beyond	Chris Baryomunsi, Minister of ICT, Uganda Lauren Hendricks, KEIPhone Beatrice Mawemuko, MTN Uganda Lillian Ssenkooba, CARE International in Uganda Facilitator: Adekemi Ndieli, Deputy Country Representative, UN Women Uganda
20	Question and Answer	The audience will have the opportunity to ask questions and join the discussion	
6	Closing reflections	Outlook, key takeaways and recommendations from a feminist perspective, based on the discussions	Representative of FEMNET
2	Closing		



SPEAKERS AND PARTICIPANTS:

Adekemi Ndieli LL.B., B.L., M.Sc.



Akademi Ndieli is Deputy Country Representative of UN Women in Uganda. She joined UN Women Uganda Country Office in March 2020 and was Head of Office *ad interim* in Uganda, for about a year while a new Country Rep was being recruited. She has chaired several inter-agency platforms and contributed extensively to the work of the UN in Uganda. Her professional background spans 13 years of law practice as an Attorney and over 22 years in social justice advocacy and international development practice. “Kemi” has worked in several roles in MSF, Oxfam, and the UN System. With the UN, Kemi has served in Nigeria, Uganda, USA, and Papua New Guinea, where amongst other things, she supported efforts aimed at addressing women’s vulnerabilities in fragile contexts; strengthened women’s movement to drive national and global action on gender equality; fostered intergovernmental peace and development processes; and led efforts to advance women’s participation at all levels for gender justice. She holds a Bachelor of Laws Degree and a Master of Science Degree in International Economic Development from Southern New Hampshire University in the US.

Dr. Chris Baryomunsi



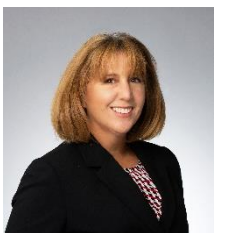
Chris Baryomunsi is the Minister for ICT and National Guidance in the Cabinet of Uganda since 2021. He is a Ugandan physician, public health specialist, demographer, and politician. He served as State Minister of Health for General Duties and State Minister for Housing. Baryomunsi is the elected member of Parliament for Kinkizi County East and a member of Uganda's ruling party, the National Resistance Movement (NRM). He was also elected president of the African Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development. While in Parliament, he served on the Social Services Committee, as a Parliamentary Commissioner for NRM and serves on the Health and HIV/AIDS Committees to date. He has served of various public and private sector boards for over ten years. He is a feminist and an activist for women and girls and works selflessly to see them realised their full potential.

Beatrice Mawemuko



Beatrice Mawemuko currently works at MTN Uganda as the manager of strategic partnerships & Business Development. With a wealth of experience in the finance space she joined MTN, Africa's largest mobile network operator, and has been a focal point in exploring and developing strategic partnerships that work to bring MTNs services to the masses. Her passion for building out sustainable pathways that allow women from rural communities’ access to the quickly growing digital economy has not only influenced her work but has allowed her to build strategic partnerships with the Development sector to build products that meets communities where they are. She is an ACCA member and a graduate from Oxford Brookes University.

Lauren Hendricks



Lauren Hendricks is the CEO and Co-Founder of KEIPhone. The mission of KEIPhone is to provide women in developing markets with smartphones, paid for through an innovative advertising-based revenue model. She previously served as the CEO of Equity Group Foundation International, the US arm of Equity Group Foundation. Lauren Hendricks was the Executive Vice President of Grameen Foundation and currently serves on the Board of Directors and Investment Committee for Grameen Capital India and on the board of the Fair Trade Access Fund. A global expert in international development and financial inclusion, she works to engage



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technology and private sector to address the critical challenges of our time. She has partnered with banks, microfinance institutions, mobile network operators, and others in the private sector to adapt products and services to meet the needs of the poor, and to ensure that participants benefitted from new, digital financial services. She was previously Executive Director for the Access Africa initiative at CARE and also served as Director of the Economic Development Unit for CARE USA.

Lillian Ssenooba



Lillian Mpabulungi Ssenooba is Program Manager of the Gender Justice Program at CARE International in Uganda. She represents CARE International on National Gender and Child Protection technical working groups, at the International Conference of Great Lakes Region and in the CSO Forum in Uganda. Before joining CARE, she was the Head of Programs for SOS Children’s Village in Uganda for 6 years, supporting over 100,000 children and youth in alternative care to realise their full potential. Lillian is an activist and advocate for women, children, and youth empowerment, with over 20 years’ experience in gender equality and Sexual Reproductive Health Rights. She is a mentor and coach to many Ugandan youth, and member of the International Society on Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect. She has 10 years’ experience in policy analysis, evidence-based advocacy and legislative research, contributing, among other things, to the review of key national and regional legal and policy frameworks on gender equality and women and youth empowerment.