Greetings from Straight Talk Foundation (STF). We are pleased to share with you our most recent newsletter. It highlights key achievements made during the earlier part of 2017. In this issue; we will tell you about the recent change of guards at STF along with some new initiatives the organization has embarked on in the past six months. These include the Prevention of AIDS among Communities in Karamoja (PACK), Better Life For Girls (BL4G) and the Irish Aid Bursary Program. We trust you will find the newsletter insightful.

New Board Chair elected

At the end of 2016, Mr. Robby Muhumuza was elected the new Board Chair. He replaced Mr. Aggrey David Kibenge whose term as Chair of the Board had ended.

Mr. Kibenge joined the STF Board in 2003 as a Director and was elected Chair in 2008. During his time serving the STF Board, Aggrey made outstanding contributions to STF as the longest serving Board Chair. He provided valued counsel to STF throughout his tenure.

The Board, Management and staff congratulate and extend a very warm welcome to Mr. Robby Muhumuza; who with effect from January 2017 commenced his term as the Chair of the STF Board of Directors. Mr. Robby Muhumuza has served on the STF Board since 2012.

STF ED receives Golden Jubilee Medal

On 8th March 2017; Uganda joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International Women’s day. The celebrations themed “Women’s Empowerment in the Changing World of Work” were held at Dokolo Technical School in Dokolo district. Ms Susan Ajok, STF Executive Director was among over 60 women who were honored for their contribution to the development of the country. The celebrations were presided over by the President of the Republic of Uganda; His Excellency the Yoweri Kaguta Museveni.
SRH and Business

The Youth Enterprise Model (YEM) funded by UNFPA seeks to integrate SRH information in business through targeting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), Vocational Training Institutes (VTIs), banks and other financial institutions. The YEM is implemented in Kampala and Mubende and has been operational for the past 5 years. A key highlight of the project to date has been equipping youth with skills to develop fundable financial proposals that can attract funding.

“How I wish I had started doing this like two years ago, by now we would be monitoring the progress of their businesses.”

Hassan Sekajolo, STF Project Officer in charge of the YEM project reports that currently 90% of the 125 young people from vocational Institutes and those in business have presented their business proposals as one of the requirements to participate in YEM program. Some beneficiaries of YEM share testimonies of the impact of the program as follows:

“I didn't know that I would save and even build my own house, but here I am, now a landlord in my own right,” “by the way I feared to test for HIV because of the reckless lifestyle I led but after attending several trainings with STF I took the decision to go and test and you can imagine the relief I felt when I found out that I was HIV negative. That was my turning point. I made a decision to take care of my life and also be a good example to my Suleiman Tumusiime, 28 years old taxi driver in Mubende.

On 23rd June 2017, STF convened 50 students and pupils to present a petition against underage age alcohol consumption to the Speaker of the Parliament of Uganda; Honorable Rebecca Alitwala Kadaga. Meeting with the Speaker; the students in their petition called for:

- The use of national identity cards to minimise the sale of alcohol to minors.
- Banning of alcohol sachets.
- Sensitization of opinion leaders about liquor regulations so as to involve them in the control of non-compliance.

The Speaker of Parliament in her remarks recognized underage consumption of alcohol as a great challenge to the country and pledged to support STF in its endeavors by serving as a Red Card Ambassador. Following this engagement; on 27 June 2017, she presented this petition on the floor of parliament paving way for future discussion of a bill to regulate alcohol use in Uganda.
Better Life for Girls (BL4G) is a UNFPA funded program implemented by STF in 14 districts. The multi sectoral initiative focuses on strengthening efforts to prevent teenage pregnancy and underage marriage so as to reap the girl effect dividend. The thrust of BL4G is girls’ education and health. The program works towards strengthening national capacity to deliver improved sexual and reproductive health outcomes and socio-economic empowerment for adolescent girls.

In implementing this project; STF has enjoyed thriving relationships with the District Local Governments in the 14 target districts through work specifically with 160 local government staff drawn from directorates of health, staff supported through capacity building include health workers (nurses, midwives and clinical officers) from HC IV, and HC III in the provision of SRH for adolescents and youth friendly services thereby supporting referrals of adolescents.

STF has embarked on work with male action groups (MAGs) initially piloted in the districts of Katakwi and Amuria resulting in increased local government and community engagement in the BL4G programme (Up to 244 men). In the coming period; this will be extended to Karamoja.

The successes registered in the BL4G program are based on a model that triangulates district efforts and technical capacities, conducive adolescent environment created in schools and community involvement through structures such as the Male Action groups.

At the end of 2016, STF received a grant from the Embassy of Ireland to implement the Irish Aid Bursary Program. It supports bright but disadvantaged young people from Karamoja in pursuing post primary, vocational and University education. The 5 year program will support up to 200 beneficiaries annually. The program addresses poor access to, retention as well as quality education and training in Karamoja region.

**Current distribution of bursary recipients by district**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>University</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abim</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amudat</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaabong</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kotido</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moroto</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Napak</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grand total</strong></td>
<td><strong>37</strong></td>
<td><strong>64</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
<td><strong>26</strong></td>
</tr>
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Ongoing support to the program includes life skills education and other psycho-socio and emotional support to scholarship beneficiaries; parents and care givers. The program provides scheduled learning visits to institutions, group talks; individual and group counseling sessions addressing various issues of concern among the bursary beneficiaries.
STF joined the rest of the country in commemorating Menstrual Hygiene Day celebrations that took place at Kitante Primary School on 27th May, 2017. Graced by the State Minister for Higher Education, Honorable John Chrysostom Muyingo, STF followed up the advocacy issue of implementing the Menstrual hygiene Guidelines in schools. Feedback from some schools indicate that the guidelines were not being implemented because of resource limitations. To support the commemorations, STF provided 15 minutes of airtime during the YEM radio talk shows on CBS and KFM as well as photo coverage.

This initiative is funded by Irish Aid and implemented by a consortium of partners working in Karamoja. These include; AMICAALL, NAFOPHANU, STF, TASO and UNASO. The goal of PACK is to contribute to reduction of new HIV infections amongst adolescents and young people (10-24 years) in the Karamoja sub-region over the period 2016-2020. The primary beneficiaries of the project are adolescents and young people aged 10-24 years, while the secondary beneficiaries include; couples, parents and guardians of adolescents and young people, political, technical, cultural, religious and community leaders, people living with HIV, with disability and community members, civil society organizations and community structures engaged in HIV and AIDS response as well as the private sector partners.

STF participated in the commemoration of the Day of the African Child held in Iganga District; at Bulamagi Sub County headquarters on 27th June, 2017. The event was graced by the Minister for Education and Sports, Honorable Janet Kataaha Museveni.

The children through their representative commended government and its development partners for the universal education and immunization. They, however, urged government to fight acts of child sacrifice, child marriages, and child labor among others that ruin their lives. STF exhibited the different IEC materials developed to ensure that children enjoy healthy and productive lives.