

October – December 2024



Uganda Network of Sex Worker-led Organizations (UNESO) Newsletter

This 4th Quarter's Newsletter Includes:

Highpoints

Mental Health Training for Leaders

Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

Executive Directors Forum

Support Supervision for Seed Grantees

5th Annual General Meeting

Advocacy Media Engagements

**Dialogue Meeting on the Human Rights
Situation of Sex Workers**

International Engagements

Partner Engagements

Dear Friends,

As we set off for 2025, UNESO would like to share with you the highlights of our remarkable programs for the 4th quarter of 2024 (October – December).

At UNESO, we continue to amplify sex workers voices and play a role in driving change across the country. The year ended with no progress in the laws that criminalize sex work in Uganda which was a significant obstacle in achieving decriminalization of sex work.

We recognize that there is still so much more work left, and we remain committed to pushing boundaries for equality, justice and decriminalization of sex work

During the quarter, we engaged in various activities mostly in enhancing the capacities of organization leader heads, engaged in various advocacy engagements dedicated to advancing human rights and amplifying sex workers voices and attending partner meeting and conferences.

Keep scrolling to learn more about what UNESO has been doing for October – December 2024.

Happy Reading!

Month of October

Mental Health Training for Leaders.

17th October 2024

During the early days of the quarter, we held a mental health training for organization leaders at Skyz Hotel Proteia trained by Awesome Minds. One of UNESCO's thematic Areas is; To advance the wellness and well-being of leaders. And it's through this that we aimed to equip member leaders with knowledge on causes and how to manage mental health issues.

During the training, leaders were able to understand the effects of mental health issues, early detection of cognitive problems, how to prevent them, and referral linkage/referral pathway for mental health issues among the members. At the end of the training, leaders appreciated UNESCO for prioritizing their mental health but also pledged to fundraise and hold similar training for their staff and members on the ground.



Group photo for leaders during the training.



Leaders going through problem isolation game

Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy

22nd October 2024



Group Photo for the 1st Cohort of leaders



Group photo for the 2nd Cohort of leaders

Under the UNESCO Project of “Advocacy to improve sexual reproductive health rights of sex workers in Uganda”, we conducted Two training sessions on Policy Analysis and Policy Advocacy among our members. The training aimed at equipping leaders with Policy analysis skills to understand different

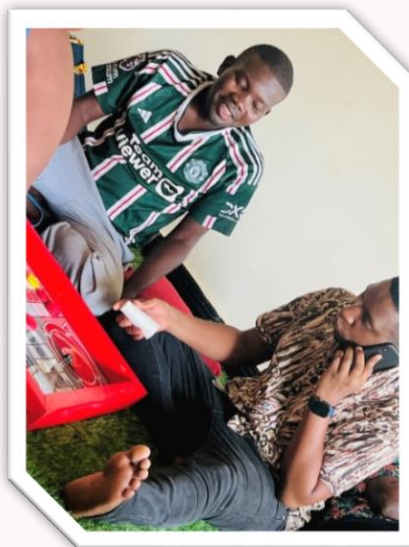
approaches on how policies may inform their advocacy and strengthen their capacities to enable effective advocacy for policies that can lead to improvements in exercising human rights among sex workers. During the training, leaders were able to learn how to identify key advocacy issues and connect them to the legal frameworks, conduct policy mapping, and learnt how they can engage at different decision-making levels of influence.

Executive Directors Forum

25th October 2024



Action photos during sharing sessions



ED's playing board game.

We hosted the Executive Directors for the ED's forum at the UNESO Healing Center. The space created a platform for EDs to initiate a discussion on how to promote their organizational sustainability and accountability. The conversations were guided by a motivational speaker who was very enthusiastic about encouraging professionalism and development among leaders. Also during the meeting, leaders had an opportunity to discuss their leadership challenges and shared their limitations and opportunities for personal and organizational growth.

The forum also created a safe space for leaders to care for their mental wellness, regenerate, rejuvenate, re- energies and support collective healing among leaders.

Month of NOVEMBER

Support Supervision for Seed Grantees

18th November 2024

Under our Sub-granting strategic area, we conducted support supervision visits to all eight seed grantees implementing Advocacy initiatives in their areas of operations. The purpose of the support supervision was to help grantees improve their work performance in key areas of finance & administration, programming, and advocacy



OWEC – Isingiro



OUTFITS – Malaba



BYMI- Bundibujjo



ACIHEWE – Mbarara



YEM – Ntungamu

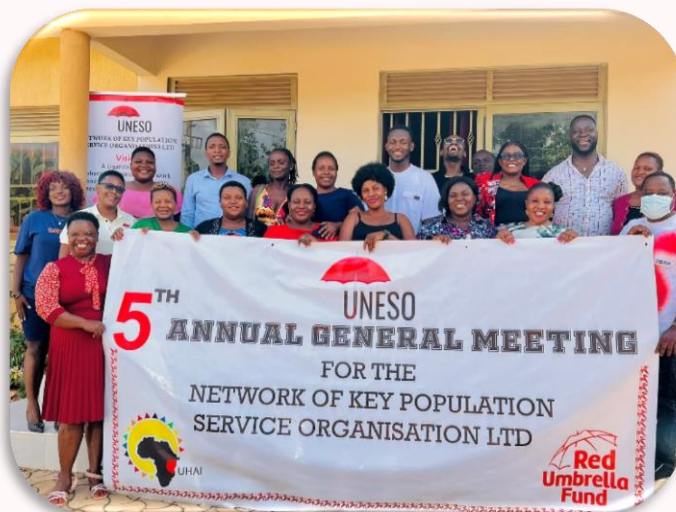


GIVE A Hand Foundation - Wakiso

Month of December

5th Annual General Meeting

11th December 2024



During the last month of the year, UNESO was pleased to host the 5th Annual General Meeting 2024 at our new home in Kasanagati, Masoli. The AGM provided a platform for our members to come together, reflect on our progress, achievements, and engage in meaningful discussions and contributions to shaping the future of the Network.

Below are some of the Key Highlights:

- The AGM featured a comprehensive review of our annual report, highlighting our accomplishments, challenges, and financial performance.
- The AGM provided an opportunity for members to engage with the Board and staff, ask questions, and provide feedback on the future plans of the network.

Advocacy Media Campaign

15th – 19th December 2024

With support from the Commonwealth Foundation, UNESO conducted a series of regional Radio talk shows commemorating the 17th Dec International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers under the theme “End Violence against women in their diversities”. The radio talk shows aimed at calling the community to eliminate all forms of violations impacting women in their different diversities.



Rupiny FM – Gulu District



UBC West – Mbarara District

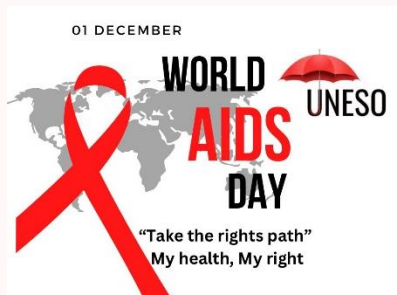


Time FM – Mbale District



VOB FM – Bundibugyo District

Social Media Advocacy Posts



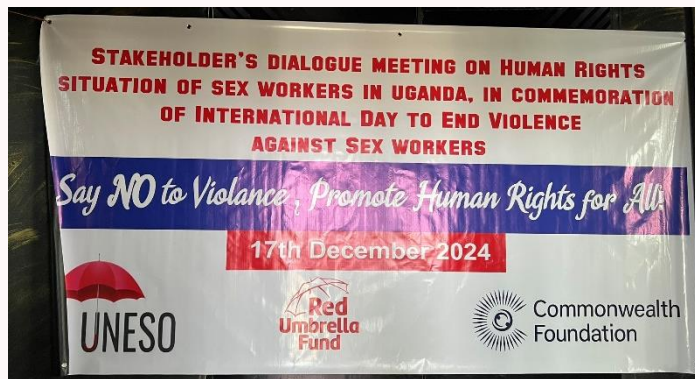
Dialogue Meeting on the Human Rights Situation of Sex Workers

17th December 2024

In commemoration of the Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers -17th December, UNESO convened stakeholders for a National Dialogue meeting on the Human Rights situation of Sex workers in Uganda. The dialogue aimed at showcasing how sex worker-led organizations, stakeholders, and partners are responding to the prevention of human rights violations, and the progress achieved. But also provide a platform for exchanging lessons learned that could further inspire and support ongoing interventions addressing human rights violations committed against sex workers. At the end, we held a press conference with a statement calling for hate crimes committed against sex workers in Uganda.

To read the Statement Tap [HERE](#)

Local media Link: Capital online [HERE](#) , UBC TV [HERE](#) and NBS TV [HERE](#)



International Engagements

EASWA SDGs Training – Kenya

2nd November 2024



Our advocacy office Stellah was able to attend the EASWA training on SDGs for sex worker leaders in East Africa hosted in Kenya. The training aimed at equipping sex worker-led organizations with knowledge on SDGs and how they can integrate them into their programming.

AHEA Conference 2024

5th – 9th November 2024



Two UNESCO staff members were able to attend the Appreciation for Activists and HRDs in East Africa Awards and Conference in Kenya. The conference brought together activists across Africa to steer conversations around acknowledging community milestones and fostering partnerships within the continent to help bridge the gaps in our movement.

Also, during the Awards, Ms. Namakula Nakato Daisy the National Coordinator was awarded the Best Human Rights and Activists in Uganda 2024 Award and Nassuna Stellah was awarded Hall of Fame Activist & HRD of the Year 2024.

Partner Engagements

At UNESCO, we believe in the power of collaborations and partnerships in the journey to the realization of sex workers' rights. Over the quarter we have been able to attend different partner engagements as listed below.



UNESCO attended the WONETHA reflection meeting to review a position paper on the influence of the legal regime on the work and lives of female sex workers in Uganda. The paper was to show the position stand of WONETHA and the sex worker movement on the criminalization of sex work and its impact to the live of workers.

UNESCO attended the National CLM Dialogue for Key Populations organized by the CLM consortium. During the meeting, CLM team got to share with us the key findings from the recently completed DIC monitoring exercise and held a panel to deliberate on the best practices adopted by key population organizations in response to DIC operations amidst the challenging context.





UNESO was presenting at the National Dissemination and Data Utility of the findings of the Bio-Behavioural survey among Female Sex Workers in 12 districts in Uganda.

One of the key findings was - Overall HIV prevalence among sex workers of all age

groups is at 33% - 54% Mbarara - 45% Masaka 44% Fortportal.

The National Coordinator of UNESO attended the Defend Defenders Interactive Dialogue Meeting with the United Nations Special Procedures and the African Commission on Human and People's Rights Special Mechanisms. The meeting aimed to strengthen the synergy between Ugandan HRDs and the regional and international Human Rights systems to enhance access and the ability to engage effectively.



UNESO was part of the Bi-Annual Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) Movement Retreat convened by CEHURD to evaluate progress and strategize advocacy efforts for the future.

UNE was part of a 2-day Training on MPOX organized by the World Health Organization through MARPI Mulago. The training aimed at equipping KP leaders with key knowledge and information on MPox Disease and finding strategies on how to minimize the risks among KPs.



You can follow us on our social media and see the programs we are implementing:



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