

## Nurturing women leaders with courage and conviction

Having been part of a history that paved the way for women to have a voice in the public space, FOWODE continues to build women's leadership to navigate the political landscape and to elevate the impact of their leadership.

Devina Nagwanyi is a 32-year-old District Woman Councilor representing Nandere Sub-County on the Kibuku District LCV Council. She happened to attend a session, facilitated by FOWODE, on empowering first-time council members, particularly women leaders, with essential knowledge and skills for effectively managing council proceedings. This marked the beginning of her own self-discovery and the transformation of her leadership practice. Before the training, the councilor was too shy to speak in public and confesses that it was because,

"Men with loud voices always overshadowed my contributions in council." After the training she learnt to speak with confidence and articulate matters effectively. Devina learned a formula to level the ground while in council meetings. The secret was in grounding her points with evidence.

"I started referencing the Local Government Act and with evidence, not just shouting like how my male colleagues were doing in council."

This has since earned her respect among fellow councilors. The rewards are so energizing! She now has a voice and can debate confidently in council meetings. Reflecting on her experience, Devina recognizes the profound impact the capacity enhancement has had on her ability to represent the wishes and aspirations of citizens in the community, especially at the district level.

*"This newfound confidence enabled me to advocate for gender-sensitive motions, particularly addressing issues affecting women and youth. Consequently, my visibility and popularity in the district increased, leading to my election as Vice Chairperson of the district women's caucus,"* she



added.

Devina further emphasizes that the representation skills acquired also empowered her to effectively implement her political manifesto.

She expresses gratitude to FOWODE for significantly boosting her political career as a transformative leader. Recognizing the importance of her political roles, she has embraced a commitment to amplify community advocacy actions for gender equality.

Devina is among the pool of bold and value-driven women leaders with requisite knowledge to push boundaries and incorporate gender issues in plans and policies. To date, over 21,000 women leaders have been nurtured by FOWODE to promote gender equality as they effectively play their legislative oversight and representative functions.