

The Power of Civic Engagement

Adak Village in Gulu District was synonymous with poor service delivery, lack of civic awareness and instances of vote rigging, particularly during election periods. These issues contributed to widespread dissatisfaction and apathy among the community members.

Oroma Nighty, a 38-year-old resident, for a long-time harbored fears concerning the voting process. She refrained from attending campaigns, aware of the violence that typically accompanied election periods. Nighty perceived voting as a futile exercise, believing that no real change could result, especially in presidential elections.

Nighty has been attending FOWODE's Civic Education sessions since November 2022. The trainings have opened her eyes and changed her perception of the electoral process. There has been a notable shift from political apathy to active participation in decision-making. For instance, she participated in the mini audit of the 2021 general elections, where achievements, challenges, and recommendations were thoroughly examined. Furthermore, she participated in citizen consultations on constitutional and political reforms.

None of these engagements left Nighty the same; she has since realized her leadership potential and has declared her intention to contest for the upcoming election as the councilor of LC3 Adak parish, Owoo Sub-County. With her strong charisma and support from the village, Nighty is optimistic about winning.

"I have taken interest in contesting for LC3 councilor for Adak Village in Owoo Sub-County because, through the group meetings, I was empowered to speak in public. I am now able to follow up with elected leaders who don't come back to give feedback to the community. I am going to contest against them come 2026." Nighty says.

Civic education is vital in enabling communities understand their civic responsibilities and duties so as to demand for the promotion and protection of their rights. This in turn propels their participation in development and governance processes. FOWODE's work of raising citizens' consciousness has contributed to building an active and empowered citizenry with amplified voice and agency demanding change and holding leaders accountable.



Nighty Oroma shares her story during an interview session with one of the SCENE project conveners for Owoo Sub-County, Samuel Ayella.