

A New Horizon: Abudu's Journey to Inclusive Leadership



Mr. Nyanzi Abudu, Chairman of LCI Kyewanula Cell, Lyantonde Rural Subcounty.

At 58 years old, Nyanzi Abudu, the chairperson of Kyewanula village in Lyantonde District, lived by a traditional belief in patriarchal authority. Married with seven children; six girls and one boy, Abudu made decisions unilaterally, convinced that as the head of his family, his word was final. His wife, despite running her own poultry business, faced restrictions on managing her resources, and his family had little say in matters affecting their lives.

This narrative took a turn when Abudu began participating in training sessions organized by the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE) under the Advancing Women's Engagement: Strengthening Opportunities to Mobilize for Equality (AWESOME) project. These sessions opened his eyes to the importance of inclusive decision-making and the rights of women.

"Before the training, I never involved my wife and children in our family planning," Abudu reflects. "I didn't realize how much my actions were affecting them. I learned that working together as a family is crucial because everyone has valuable concerns that need to be addressed. This brought a sense of peace to our home."

The shift towards collaborative planning and transparent spending has also improved their life economically. *"We now plan and spend together as parents. This change has allowed me to expand the poultry business, providing a steady income that supports my family's needs, including school fees for my children."* Abudu shares with a smile.

The knowledge Abudu gained didn't just reshape his home life; it also transformed his role as the LC I chairperson. He started holding regular village meetings, creating a space where every voice is valued, regardless of gender. This change in leadership style has fostered a more inclusive and engaged community.

Perhaps the most profound change has been Abudu's attitude towards women's and girls' rights. He now actively encourages their participation in decision-making processes.

FOWODE's efforts are making a meaningful impact beyond individual stories, working to shift negative mindsets and promote gender equality at every level, starting within families. Nyanzi Abudu is a shining example of this transformation, representing a growing number of male allies who are now advocates for women's leadership. With 18,528 men so far engaged in similar initiatives, these male champions are increasing awareness on gender equality and promoting positive masculinities.