Walanga Civic & Gender Empowerment Training

Final Report, 2025

Strengthening women's and children's voices in rural Uganda.

A joint initiative by the European Initiative for Gender Inclusive Democracy (EIGID) and the NSETTE Foundation Uganda

EIGID

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2025, the European Initiative for Gender Inclusive Democracy (EIGID), in partnership with the NSETTE Foundation Uganda, implemented a multigenerational civic education and gender equality program in Walanga Village. The intervention served three cohorts: school-age children, young mothers, and grandmothers, through participatory sessions on (i) governance and civic participation, (ii) voting sensitization, and (iii) gender equality and shared responsibility. Delivery was community-anchored, co-facilitated in local language, and designed for rapid replication.

Why this matters now.

As Uganda approaches the 2026 elections, rural women and girls still face barriers to information, voice, and safe participation in public life. Strengthening civic literacy and confidence ahead of the polls is critical to inclusive decision-making at family, school, and community levels. This program offers a practical pathway to translate rights into everyday action, especially in settings where access to services and safe spaces is limited.

What the project achieved:

- **Participation & Reach:** Three tailored tracks engaged children, young mothers, and grandmothers, building a shared vocabulary around rights, responsibilities, and constructive dialogue.

- **Knowledge & Confidence:** Participants reported clearer understanding of how local decisions are made, why voting and record-keeping matter, and where to seek help; facilitators observed greater willingness to speak up in group settings.

Community Uptake: Teachers and caregivers expressed interest in extending the modules and adapting activities for school and women's group meetings.

Foundations for Scale: Session plans, activities, and simple monitoring tools were refined during delivery; these now inform two practical Toolkits (one for children; one for women) to standardize replication.

Learning and adaptation.

Pre/post feedback and facilitator observations led to adjustments in pacing, examples, and visual aids. The most requested elements for follow-up were: (1) continued voting sensitization, (2) referrals and pathways for addressing family and community concerns, and (3) leadership skills for women and girls to sustain participation beyond election cycles. Potential for scaling.

The model is cost-efficient, modular, and designed for Training-of-Trainers (ToT) roll-out with community facilitators and schools. With targeted support, it can expand to neighboring communities, include complementary modules (economic empowerment, GBV referral awareness, record-keeping for civil documentation), and track outcomes through light monitoring of knowledge, confidence, and participation.

Acknowledgments and invitation.

This work was made possible by the Walanga community, local educators and facilitators, donors and the teams who contributed with time and expertise.
We welcome collaboration from donors and institutional partners to:

1. **Finalize** and pilot the Walanga Toolkits;
2. **Implement** a community-based Training-of-Trainers (ToT) program; and
3. **Scale** delivery to additional rural communities beyond the 2026 elections.

Together, we can turn civic knowledge into durable, gender-inclusive participation where it is most needed.

2. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

This training program is strategically situated within Uganda's national development agenda and is aligned with key international frameworks for gender equality, human rights, and democratic governance. The initiative derives its authority and relevance from a multi-layered structure of national policies and global commitments.

2.1 Alignment with National Strategies and Policies

The project functions as a direct implementation vehicle for Uganda's national strategy for gender equality and democratic participation. This framework is operationalized through several key policy instruments:

· **The National Gender Policy (2007)**, initially developed in 1997 and revised in 2007, serves as the nation's comprehensive framework for fostering a society informed and conscious of gender and development issues. This policy formally acknowledges the role of gender equality in sustainable development and calls for the full and equal participation of men and women in all spheres of development.
· **The Third National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAP III) 2021–2025** emphasizes women's critical participation in peacebuilding, conflict prevention, and governance structures.
· **The UNDP Uganda Gender Equality Strategy 2022–2025** further supports the government's concerted efforts to reduce persistent gender inequalities.

While Uganda has achieved significant progress, including high female labour force participation and one of the world's highest rates of female entrepreneurship, patriarchal attitudes and stereotypes continue to impede full equality. The Walanga training program was specifically designed to address these challenges directly by empowering women in rural areas to claim their space in civic and political life, thereby supporting the nation's broader objective of accelerated socio-economic transformation.

2.2 Contribution to Global Frameworks and Commitments

Globally, the underrepresentation of women in political and civic spaces remains a substantial barrier to equality. This initiative forms part of a broader movement to advance gender-inclusive governance as a foundation for sustainable and democratic development. It is designed to contribute to the following international commitments:

1. **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): The program provides direct support to:**
   • **SDG 5** (Gender Equality), specifically Target 5.5, by ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels.
   • **SDG 16** (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions), through its promotion of inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making processes.
   • **SDG 4** (Quality Education), by delivering non-formal, community-based civic education.

2. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC):

By including children in its outreach and by modeling gender-equitable behaviors within families and communities, the program contributes to the creation of a protective environment that upholds the rights of every child.

3. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW):

Uganda ratified CEDAW in 1985 without reservations, obligating the state to modify and eliminate discriminatory stereotypes and practices. Over the years, the Government of Uganda has demonstrated its commitment to the provisions of CEDAW through the submission of periodic Country Status Reports. In 2020, the Government produced its 8th and 9th periodic reports, detailing advancements in the representation and participation of women in national politics.

These advancements are reflected in recent statistics: women in Uganda hold 46 percent of local government positions, 33 percent of parliamentary seats, and 43 percent of cabinet positions. The Global Gender Gap Index score for Uganda improved to 0.7249 in 2022 from 0.717 in 2020. Despite this progress, gaps persist in the economic, political, and social inclusion of women in the development process, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In effect, while Uganda has a relatively high representation of women in political leadership, the women's level of influence is not commensurate with their number. Moreover, the high level of political inclusion is not yet reflected in women's economic empowerment at the sub-national level, due to structural barriers including entrenched social and cultural norms and gender policy implementation gaps.

The Initiative and resulting training program in Walanga, Uganda, operationalizes Uganda's CEDAW commitments by challenging harmful gender norms and empowering women to participate in public life, directly addressing the Committee's concerns regarding women's disadvantaged status in decision-making.

2.3 Programmatic Integration

The European Initiative for Gender Inclusive Democracy (EIGID) integrated the objectives of these national and international frameworks into the design of the three training modules of the training program. Module 1 of the training tackled "Governance and Civic Participation," building on the foundation for inclusive institutions (SDG 16) and women's participation in decision-making (SDG 5, CEDAW).

Module 2, "Voting Sensitization," sufficiently addressed women's constitutional right to vote, fostering accountable institutions (SDG 16) and preparing them for informed participation in Uganda's electoral processes. Lastly, Module 3, "Gender Equality and Shared Responsibility," explored discriminatory practices and stereotypes at the household and community level (CEDAW, SDG 5), thereby promoting the transformed social norms that are essential for sustainable development.

3. THE IMPLEMENTERS

3.1 European Initiative for Gender Inclusive Democracy (EIGID)

EIGID is a Europe-based, France-registered non-profit dedicated to placing a gender perspective at the heart of democratic life so that institutions, workplaces, schools, and communities become more inclusive, accountable, and trusted. Its mission is to translate rights and policy commitments into day-to-day practice through civic education, gender-responsive governance, and practical tools that enable meaningful participation and leadership by women and girls.

The organisation works through a "practice-to-policy" approach. Programmes are co-designed with local partners and delivered in local language and context, while safeguarding and data-protection standards follow European best practice, including GDPR-aligned processes for consent and data minimisation. EIGID designs multi-audience curricula and facilitator guides, creates toolkits that are easy to deploy in low-resource settings, and uses light, context-appropriate monitoring and evaluation to capture learning gains and inform continuous improvement. Training-of-Trainers models are used to build local capacity and leave skills and ownership with communities and institutions.

EIGID's operating structure combines a lean core team anchored in the Geneva region with a wider network of volunteers, practitioners, and advisors across Europe and partner countries. Core functions cover programme design and coordination, partnerships and development, research and content, monitoring–evaluation–learning, and communications.

The active team includes dedicated leads such as Training Officers and a Partnerships & Development Manager, alongside research and social-media contributors, enabling rapid prototyping, documentation of effective practice, and codification for replication at scale. EIGID currently comprises [insert number] core staff and [insert number] regular volunteers.

Its portfolio spans three complementary arenas of work. At community level, EIGID develops civic-education pathways for children, youth, and adults that connect rights awareness with everyday participation in family, school, and local decision-making. In the public-sector arena, it collaborates with government counterparts to train gender focal points and to integrate gender and civic empowerment into existing curricula and services. Within the corporate arena, it supports enterprises to assess workplace culture and adopt practical changes that remove barriers to inclusion and strengthen participatory decision-making in everyday organisational life.

Beyond the Walanga initiative, EIGID maintains several programme lines that illustrate this practical orientation. The Gender-Responsive Corporate Engagement Program pilots workplace-culture diagnostics and action workshops with businesses. In partnership with counterparts in the Caribbean, the organisation contributes to training for gender focal points and to the integration of civic empowerment and governance into life-skills programmes.
A knowledge-exchange stream convenes small and mid-sized NGOs to share workable methods for gender-inclusive democracy, while public-facing activities, including international webinars on gender mainstreaming and advocacy within the United Nations, connect global standards to concrete, implementable actions

Within the Walanga programme, EIGID led overall design and coordination, co-developed modules on governance and civic participation, voting sensitisation, and gender equality, and produced facilitator materials adapted to local context and language. It supported local delivery, established a simple monitoring framework to collect feedback and results, and is consolidating the approach into two practical toolkits (one for children and one for women) to enable replication in additional rural communities ahead of, and beyond, the 2026 elections. EIGID's added value lies in turning normative commitments into usable practice, building local capacity through participatory pedagogy, and pairing community-anchored delivery with light but consistent evidence, positioning the organisation to scale responsibly with partners while maintaining quality, inclusion, and accountability.

3.2 NSETTE Foundation Uganda

NSETTE Foundation Uganda: Nsette Foundation Uganda is a legally registered non-profit organization (Registration no. 80020003867201) in Uganda. Nsette Foundation Uganda is non-denominational at the point of service provision and without political affiliations. It was founded in 2017 by Waiswa Cyprian and Balondemu Ivan. Both are social workers. Ivan Balondemu initiated the idea and shared the vision. He grew up as a vulnerable child with his late grandmother, Naigaga Janet, who paid his school fees and ensured that Ivan and other children had access to food, clothing, and other necessities. Despite the harshness of her life, she was also taking care of children whose parents died of HIV.

When Ivan excelled in his studies, he got an opportunity to move to Europe and build a life there. Instead, he chose to stay in Uganda, so that he could help other orphans and vulnerable children to get the opportunities they deserve and fulfil their potential.

This desire, this story full of courage and self-determination remains the driving force behind Nsette Foundation Uganda.

The Foundation is located in Bugweri District, in Uganda's Eastern Region. National census figures estimate Bugweri's population at 168,300 in 2002 and 191,600 in 2014. From this local base, NSETTE maintains strong relationships with schools, caregiver networks, and community leaders, including Walanga Primary School.

NSETTE is dedicated to promoting the education of orphans and vulnerable girls, empowering teenage mothers and grandmothers as primary caregivers, nurturing youth talent through sports, and conserving the environment. Within the Walanga programme, NSETTE led community mobilisation and needs assessment. Its field team engaged grandmothers and young mothers, the day-to-day caretakers of orphans and vulnerable children, and coordinated with Walanga Primary School to include the children under their support. Staff and volunteers conducted household visits, speaking directly with caregivers about their priorities, and worked with school management to survey children in advance of the workshop so that the training content could be tailored to real needs.

Together with EIGID, NSETTE co-organised a two-day workshop at Walanga Primary School. Turnout among children, young mothers, and grandmothers was high, sessions were facilitated in local language to maximise participation, and practical activities encouraged dialogue across generations. Following delivery, NSETTE conducted monitoring and evaluation to capture feedback. The surveys confirmed strong relevance of the content and a clear request from participants for additional workshops and continued support.

3.3 South–North Collaboration Model

The partnership between the European Initiative for Gender Inclusive Democracy (EIGID) and NSETTE Foundation Uganda is built as an equitable South–North collaboration that centres local leadership while leveraging complementary technical capacities. From inception to reporting, the programme cycle is co-owned: needs are identified in Walanga by NSETTE's field team through household visits and school engagement; curricula and materials are co-designed with EIGID; delivery is led locally with coaching support; and monitoring, learning, and external reporting are jointly produced to ensure accuracy, accountability, and usability.

Decision-making follows a shared governance approach. A jointly agreed workplan defines roles, milestones, and review points, with regular coordination meetings to adjust pacing, content, and logistics based on community feedback. Community voices, particularly those of grandmothers, young mothers, teachers, and school leadership, inform adaptation throughout delivery, ensuring that the programme remains relevant and culturally grounded.
Safeguarding and data protection standards guide every step, with informed consent, age-appropriate facilitation, and data minimisation practices aligned to European norms and local ethical expectations.

Resource use is structured to privilege local delivery and sustainability. Direct costs for mobilisation, facilitation, venues, translation, and participant materials are prioritised in the field, while EIGID's contributions focus on curriculum engineering, facilitator support, toolkit production, and a light, context-appropriate monitoring and evaluation framework.

Financial oversight, procurement, and documentation are handled with joint transparency so that donors can trace how funds translate into community-level results.

Mutual capacity strengthening is a core feature of the model. NSETTE brings trusted access, cultural fluency, and operational agility; EIGID contributes training design, governance and gender expertise, and results-based management.

Each cycle intentionally transfers know-how in both directions: local teams gain additional skills in participatory pedagogy, facilitation, and MEL; the European team deepens contextual understanding and refines approaches that resist extractive or one-off project dynamics. The output of this exchange is codified in practical toolkits, facilitator guides, and simple feedback instruments that remain with the community and can be taken forward without external dependence.

This collaboration is designed for responsible scale. A training-of-trainers pathway, anchored in NSETTE's networks, allows new facilitators to be developed locally; materials are modular and adaptable to nearby communities; and evidence generated through monitoring informs continuous improvement. The model aligns with AU–EU funding priorities by advancing gender equality and civic participation through localisation, co-ownership of data, and durable capacity at community level. In practice, it demonstrates how a South–North partnership can convert global commitments into everyday change while building the structures needed to sustain and replicate that change over time.

4. PROJECT DESIGN AND OBJECTIVES

4.1 Project Goal

The project aimed to empower participants of the training, as well as the Walanga community at large, in governance and accountability. Specifically, the goal was to equip women and children in Walanga with the knowledge and skills to lead, advocate, and participate fully in governance and community life. The initiative was grounded in the belief that communities can only claim their constitutional right to development when they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and tools to hold duty-bearers accountable. Ultimately, the project sought to foster a culture of transparency, civic responsibility, and effective advocacy, thereby contributing to the village's long-term social and economic development.

4.2 Target Groups and Rationale

The project focused on two groups: women (young mothers and grandmothers) and children. This selection was deliberate.

• **Children** in rural Uganda face significant challenges such as limited access to education, high dropout rates, early marriage, and child labor. Reports indicate that seven in ten children drop out of school prematurely, while four in ten girls marry before the age of 18 (Save the Children Resource Centre). By engaging children early, the project aimed to foster awareness of rights, responsibilities, gender equality, and governance, while equipping them with practical life skills.

• **Women** (especially mothers and grandmothers) are often excluded from decision-making spaces, despite being central to family and community well-being. Mothers were targeted to build awareness of governance frameworks, gender equality, advocacy, and the importance of voting. Grandmothers, as community custodians, were equipped to support intergenerational learning, advocate for social services, and model inclusive leadership.

Walanga village was chosen because it reflects both the structural challenges and opportunities present in many rural Ugandan communities.

Despite barriers such as entrenched gender norms and underrepresentation in leadership, the community has demonstrated resilience and an eagerness to embrace civic education initiatives.

4.3 Project Activities and Training Modules

The training program was a two-day gender-responsive civic education workshop, reaching over 40 women (mothers and grandmothers) and 30 children. Sessions were designed to strengthen participants' understanding of governance, rights, gender equality, and community leadership while fostering intergenerational dialogue.

The modules were tailored to the local cultural context and participant realities:
• C**hildren** (Ages 8–14): Basic civic education, rights and responsibilities, gender inclusiveness, and community involvement through storytelling, role play, and games.
• **Young Mothers** (Ages 18–35): Governance frameworks, advocacy, voting sensitization, financial literacy, and legal awareness through workshops, peer groups, and guest speakers.
• **Grandmothers** (Ages 50+): Civic duty, community leadership, access to health/social services, accountability mechanisms, and gender inclusiveness through discussions, practical demonstrations, and collaboration with local leaders.

The use of participatory and interactive methods ensured accessibility across literacy levels and encouraged active engagement.
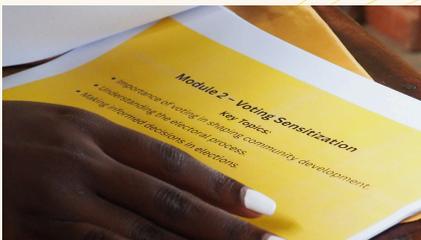
4.4 Needs Assessment and Contextual Adaptation

The program design was guided by a comprehensive needs assessment carried out jointly by EIGID and NSETTE Foundation. This process combined:

• Baseline **surveys** and M&E tools with 29 children (19 girls and 10 boys) to map their knowledge of rights and governance, their participation in community life, and their perceptions of gender equality, as well as parallel tools for young mothers and grandmothers to capture their specific priorities.
• A **field visit** by the EIGID team, which included consultations with NSETTE staff, school visits, meetings with community leaders and prospective participants, and logistical assessments.

The children's baseline data showed that around 90% reported knowing what children's rights are, and almost all had heard of the term "government", yet a number of them were still unsure who actually makes decisions in the village.

Just over half of the children said they participate in community activities, but a clear gender gap emerged: while most boys felt that their opinions are listened to, almost half of the girls reported that their views are not taken seriously in these spaces.

These findings, together with the priorities expressed by young mothers and grandmothers (including financial insecurity, heavy caregiving responsibilities and limited access to services), were used to tailor the content, examples and methodologies of each module to Walanga's context.

This participatory process ensured that the training content was locally relevant, community-driven, and adapted to Walanga's realities.

Children's perceived voice in community activities
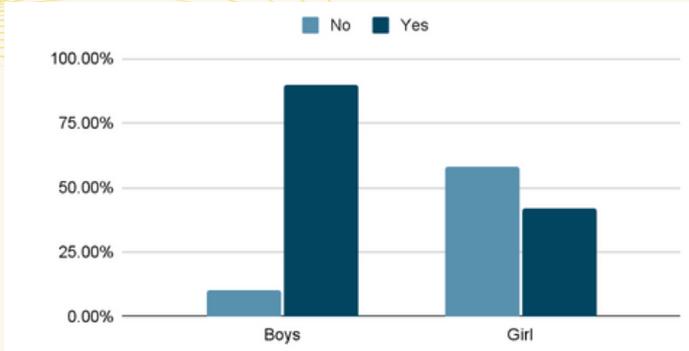
The chart shows that, based on our needs assessment prior to our trainings, 90% of boys felt that their opinions are valued in community activities, compared to only 42% of girls.

Women's participation in community leadership

The chart indicates that only a single participant reported making active contributions to community governance before the training. Post-intervention, 29.3% have taken on leadership roles, and 33.3% have developed leadership skills, demonstrating a significant shift from observation to active participation.

4.5 Ensuring Inclusiveness

Inclusiveness was a cornerstone of project implementation. Recognizing the barriers that often prevent women and children from participating, the project put in place deliberate measures to remove obstacles and promote equity:
• Provision of meals during training sessions to support participants' well-being.
• Transportation support to enable women from remote areas to attend.
• On-site childcare services to allow mothers to participate fully.
• Flexible scheduling that accommodated caregiving and household responsibilities.
• Use of translators to ensure language did not hinder participation.

These measures created a supportive and enabling environment where participants felt respected, valued, and empowered to contribute actively.

4.6 Methodology and limitations

Data were collected through pre-session prompts, facilitator observation sheets, endline reflections, and short oral surveys administered with translation support.
Participation in data collection was voluntary; consent was explained in plain language; names were not recorded on analysis forms; and image use followed consent. Risks identified (low literacy, time/market pressures, potential politicisation, and caregiving constraints) were mitigated through local-language delivery, pictorial materials, neutral framing of electoral information, provision of meals and transport stipends, and on-site childcare.
No safeguarding incidents were reported; referral contacts and a focal point were in place throughout.

5. IMPLEMENTATION & PARTICIPATION

The training was delivered over two consecutive days at Walanga Primary School, using two classrooms and a shaded outdoor space to allow occasional intergenerational moments. A registration table at the entrance managed sign-in and consent confirmation; a clearly marked help point handled queries about transport, childcare, and any incident requiring attention.

Each morning opened with a short welcome and a light breakfast for all participants, followed by a review of shared norms, listening without interruption, the right to step out at any time, and confidentiality, so participants felt ownership of the learning environment from the outset.

5.1 Number and profile of participants.

Across the two days, a total of 82 people took part: 36 children (approximately between 8 and 12 years old), 24 young mothers, and 22 grandmothers. Attendance remained constant between Day 1 and Day 2, supported by reliable transport arrangements, on-site childcare, and meals provided for all participants.

Teachers and selected community leaders attended the opening and closing segments as observers, signalling institutional support while keeping the learning space centred on participants.

5.2 Training content and methodology.

Delivery followed the three-module spine and was split by cohort: Day 1 focused on children; Day 2 on young mothers and grandmothers.

On the children's day, the rights & responsibilities / gender-equality session opened with the short story "A Day Without Responsibilities", used to show what breaks down at home and school when no one does their part. Facilitators then introduced rights through a simple Rights Tree drawn on a flipchart, after which each child created a personal tree of rights. This fed into a "Rights Around Us" game where children matched everyday scenes to specific rights (for example, school → right to education; water container → right to water). Linking rights to behaviour, the group discussed practical ways boys and girls share tasks fairly and treat others with respect. Each child chose one small change to try that week, practiced saying that commitment aloud in the closing circle, and then helped produce one large poster capturing everyone's commitments.

The governance & leadership block for children used a full mock village council. Pupils nominated and elected a council leader, selected a chair and a note-taker, and held an assembly to tackle a realistic problem: insufficient water in the village. They set an agenda, heard short interventions, weighed options (for example, repairing a borehole, organising a rota for collection, or raising the issue at a community meeting), and voted on a plan, practising respectful turn-taking, clear requests, and simple record-keeping along the way. The exercise made concrete how decisions move from a classroom discussion to school leadership and into wider community forums.

On the women's day, the same three pillars were adapted to adult realities and local decision spaces.

The governance and civic participation block opened with a plain-language walk-through of how the locality is organised and what the village council actually does. Facilitators modelled how to request a meeting with a council member or head-teacher, how to be clear about the outcome sought, and how to keep brief notes of what was asked and agreed so that follow-up is orderly and respectful.

The voting sensitisation block then covered the full polling sequence from arrival to exit and clarified which documents are useful to bring. To make the process tangible, the group ran a short mock-voting exercise using pictorial "ballots" and a privacy station, and built a simple care plan for election day so participation would not clash with children's needs or market work. To deepen this, participants nominated three volunteer candidates. Each "candidate" prepared a brief, issues-based message (often linking to water access, school attendance, or market-day care), delivered a short speech, and answered questions from peers.

The room then held a calm, secret ballot, counted votes openly, and reflected on what made certain messages persuasive, why respectful campaigning matters, and how to evaluate promises against community needs. The gender-equality and women's rights block worked with scenarios the women themselves raised: division of chores on busy days, budget choices that affect girls' schooling, and the tone of family discussions when problems arise.

A structured role-play asked pairs to act as "husband" and "wife", with the "wife" practising how to convince the husband to share responsibilities using clear requests, time-trade examples, and appeals to children's wellbeing.

Experience-sharing and small-group problem-solving turned these rehearsals into specific adjustments the women felt able to try at home and in community spaces.

5.3 Cultural and language adaptation.

Content and examples were localised through prior consultations with the partner organisation, NSETTE Foundation. Terminology for governance actors and venues matched local usage, and activities deliberately avoided partisan references while remaining accurate on electoral basics. An interpreter supported participants who were more comfortable in the local language; facilitators used plain terms and visual materials to ensure access for participants with low literacy. Timekeeping respected caregiving and market rhythms so that attendance did not require forfeiting income or childcare.

5.4 Logistics, materials, and safeguarding.

Session plans, facilitator scripts, and activity cards were printed on durable paper to withstand repeated use; flipcharts and markers supported group work.

Lunch and snacks were locally catered; drinking water was available throughout the day. A dedicated childcare area offered supervised games so mothers could focus while remaining close to their children. Transport stipends were disbursed quietly at the close of each day against the attendance list to protect privacy.

5.5 Session flow and facilitation roles.

Each cohort was supported by a lead facilitator, a co-facilitator, and an interpreter. A safeguarding focal point remained available throughout, and a logistics lead coordinated meals, stipends, and the childcare area. Day 1 focused on the children's cohort; Day 2 focused on the women's cohorts. Both days closed with a reflection circle in which each participant named one thing learned and one practical action to try over the coming weeks. These closing commitments were photographed as flipchart notes for later analysis.

6. RESULTS AND IMPACT

6.1 Participation and Learning Gains

The programme generated clear learning gains across cohorts, reinforced by its intergenerational design and steady attendance over both days.
Women received a certificate of completion, and children received a storybook created by EIGID and printed in Kampala, telling the story of a girl in Walanga who discovers her rights and finds her voice in village decision-making. These take-aways helped anchor pride and recall beyond the sessions.

Among children, understanding of rights and participation pathways deepened markedly. The Rights Tree activity grounded abstract ideas in their own drawings, while the "Rights Around Us" game connected daily scenes (school lessons, fetching water, the playground) to the rights to education, water, and protection from violence. In the mock village council, pupils elected a chair and a note-taker and kept a simple record of the water-shortage problem and proposed options, modelling documentation that teachers later described as "rare but very useful."

These tangible take-aways (certificates for women and the Walanga rights storybook for children) were cited by teachers and caregivers as practical prompts to sustain discussion at home and at school after the training.

6.2 Confidence and Early Behaviour Change

Confidence shifted visibly within sessions. Children who were silent in the opening circle read their commitment sentences aloud in the closing circle, and several practised respectful phrases for asking questions at school. For young mothers and grandmothers, the plain-language walk-through of village–parish–county structures, combined with rehearsed meeting requests, demystified who to approach and how. The mini-campaign and mock vote provided low-risk practice in issue-based messaging, calm balloting, and transparent counting, while the husband–wife role-play gave women language to negotiate shared responsibilities without escalating conflict. By the end of Day 2, many had drafted concrete actions. Early behaviour signals appeared even within the two-day window: families reported trying small adjustments at home overnight, and children co-authored a large poster of commitments that teachers referenced the next morning.

6.3 Qualitative Stories and Survey Signals

Facilitator notes captured stories that give texture to these gains. A grandmother explained that the governance session clarified the difference between a classroom issue and a community issue, and that she would accompany her granddaughter to speak first with the class teacher rather than going straight to a local leader.

A young mother who had never voted said the mock polling sequence "took away the fear,", while in the children's closing circle, one pupil committed to use the phrase "I have a question; can you explain?" when unsure of a task, while another promised to help a younger sibling finish homework before evening chores.

Short oral prompts and endline reflections, delivered with translation support, showed directional improvements consistent with these stories: more children could name appropriate school-level venues for raising concerns, and more caregivers accurately recalled key polling steps. Observation sheets noted that contributions broadened over time, with fewer voices dominating by the final sessions.

6.4 Unexpected Outcomes and Enabling Conditions

Unexpected outcomes were largely positive. The documentation and record-keeping element of voting sensitisation, planned as a brief segment, drew sustained interest and practical questions, indicating the value of allocating more hands-on practice time.

The mock mini-campaign proved a strong confidence builder; participants highlighted the difference between respectful, issue-based messages and overheated political talk, and several said they would evaluate promises more critically.

Demand for intergenerational "bridge" moments exceeded expectations, with both children and adults asking for additional joint activities to rehearse a shared script for raising school concerns.

Crucially, inclusion measures (transport stipends, meals, on-site childcare, local-language delivery, and pictorial materials) translated directly into participation outcomes by removing the most commonly cited barriers for women and ensuring low literacy did not exclude anyone.

These operational choices, modest in cost, kept the room full and engaged and are now embedded as non-negotiables in the emerging toolkits. Together, the stories, observation notes, certificates and children's books, and short survey signals indicate that the programme is achieving its aims: increasing accurate knowledge, building the confidence to speak and ask questions, and seeding concrete behaviours that make local institutions more accessible and responsive, forming a sturdy base for replication and a Training-of-Trainers pathway.

7. MONITORING & EVALUTATION

To ensure the training was effective, responsive, and grounded in participants' lived realities, a variety of participatory and reflective tools were employed. Beyond formal surveys, facilitators used discussion-based and observational approaches that aligned with the toolkit's philosophy of accessibility, dialogue, and co-creation.

7.1 Tools and Methods Used

1. **Pre-Training Surveys and Needs Assessment:**

The pre-training needs assessment revealed a community where women and children are systematically marginalized, yet demonstrate remarkable potential for empowerment. Across all groups (young mothers, grandmothers, and children), a shared exclusion from community decision-making emerged, driven by limited knowledge, low confidence, and entrenched gender norms. Young mothers faced acute financial insecurity and expressed a strong desire for business and self-empowerment skills.

Grandmothers carried heavy caregiving burdens with minimal access to healthcare and support systems. Children, though aware of their rights, reported food insecurity and unequal household expectations, with girls already feeling that their voices were less valued. Across all demographics, significant gaps were found in awareness of rights, civic processes, and leadership opportunities, underscoring the need for civic education, leadership training, and practical empowerment tools tailored to each group's vulnerabilities and strengths.

2. Monitoring and Evaluation Reports:

Post-training monitoring captured growth in knowledge, confidence, and leadership among participants as the tangible outcomes of the sessions. Facilitators observed stronger intergenerational communication, the emergence of peer mentorship networks, and an increase in collective action on local challenges.

3. Reflection Circles:

At the end of each session, participants gathered in reflection circles to discuss what they learned, how they felt, and what could be improved. These sessions became safe spaces for honest dialogue, validation, and shared growth.

4. Facilitator Notes:

Facilitators maintained logs after each module, noting which activities resonated most, which presented challenges, and recording memorable quotes or breakthroughs. These notes helped shape iterative improvements in both facilitation and content.

5. Pre- and Post-Session Questions:

Simple yet revealing questions were asked before and after training sessions to qualitatively gauge shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and self-confidence.

6. Observation:

Facilitators closely monitored engagement levels, body language, and non-verbal cues, especially from quieter participants, to ensure inclusivity and psychological safety throughout the sessions.

7.2 Participant Voices

The post-training surveys and reflection sessions/interviews revealed a remarkable sense of transformation across generations, from children discovering their voices to women reclaiming theirs. Their feedback paints a vivid picture of empowerment in motion.

Women's Reflections:
Among the women, there was a palpable rise in confidence, agency, and leadership. On a scale of 1 to 5, most rated their confidence in achieving personal and professional goals at 4 or 5, and nearly all reported feeling more empowered to make decisions in their personal lives.

One participant reflected, "I gained confidence as a lady," while another proudly shared, "Now I want to advocate for community change."

Women described immediately applying their new skills, from working towards launching small businesses, to mediating family disputes, mentoring others, and speaking up in community meetings.
The most strengthened areas included communication, entrepreneurship, advocacy, and leadership, with many emphasizing the power of networking.
Nearly all expressed eagerness for future training, especially in practical entrepreneurship, crafts, and environmental conservation. Four in five women said they would be willing to mentor others, signaling a powerful ripple effect of empowerment.

Still, women highlighted enduring barriers: limited education, cultural restrictions, gender-based violence, and economic exclusion. Yet optimism prevailed, as one woman concluded:
   "We need more mentorship and practical training so we can keep changing our communities."

Children's Reflections:
The children's voices, though younger, carried the same tone of confidence and curiosity. Nearly all could recall what human rights were, agreed that "boys and girls should have the same rights," and felt that their voices mattered at home and in school.

When asked what makes a good citizen, many responded simply, "Helping others," or "Listening and speaking up."
Their favorite moments were the interactive games, stories, and creative activities that made learning about rights and leadership enjoyable. Every child said they felt "happy and safe" during the sessions, and most had already shared their lessons with family or friends. One proudly said, "I taught someone what I learned."

Almost all wanted to attend future trainings, requesting "more games, drama, and stories." For many, the sessions sparked curiosity, fairness, and self-expression. One child proposed, "My rule would be that everyone must respect each other."

Across all age groups, the participants' voices reflected a shared awakening: confidence, curiosity, and commitment to building inclusive communities. The training went beyond imparting knowledge, building bridges across generations and nurturing transformation from within.

7.3 How Feedback Shapes the Future of the Toolkit

The feedback from the Walanga Training Program is not an endpoint but the foundation for the toolkit's continuous evolution. The lessons learned directly inform its next iterations through three guiding principles:

- **Adaptation for Context:**
The toolkit is intentionally flexible. Facilitators are encouraged to use participant feedback to "adjust the language to fit community context," "swap examples to reflect local realities," and tailor activities based on what resonates with specific groups.

- **Continuous Improvement:**
The monitoring framework invites facilitators to "reflect on what worked (and what didn't)" and adapt approaches for future communities. The insights from Walanga have already shaped facilitation tips and refined activity designs throughout the guide.

- **Local Ownership and Replication:**
Each implementation is documented and shared, creating a growing repository of experience that strengthens the toolkit's relevance. Facilitators are invited to contribute back, ensuring that future adaptations continue to reflect grassroots realities.

8. SUSTAINABILITY & NEXT STEPS

The replication toolkits are the core sustainability mechanism.

The Women's Toolkit is complete and formatted for community facilitators; the Children's Toolkit is in development, incorporating Walanga's strongest activities (Rights Tree, mock council, respectful-speaking scripts) and the visual materials already tested in low-literacy settings.

The next step is a Training-of-Trainers (ToT) roll-out anchored in NSETTE's networks, pairing short facilitator coaching with mentored field delivery in neighbouring communities. Each new site will run the same light monitoring used in Walanga (opening prompts, observation notes, endline reflections), generating comparable snapshots and feeding a shared learning loop.

Subject to funding, the programme will expand with complementary modules requested by participants (economic empowerment for women, GBV referral awareness, and practical record-keeping for school and civic interactions) so that the civic/gender core is reinforced by skills that sustain participation between elections.

9. CALL TO ACTION

Support is invited to (i) roll out a ToT programme with community facilitators, and (ii) replicate delivery in neighbouring rural communities ahead of (and beyond) the 2026 elections.

Partnerships and co-funding aligned with SDG 4, SDG 5 and SDG 16, AU Agenda 2063, and UN Charter principles are particularly welcome.