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HER EXCELLENCY MRS. JANET MUSEVENI AND BUILDING AN AGRICULTURE PROGRAM

A Case Study of the George W. Bush Institute's First Ladies Initiative

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INTRODUCTION

The George W. Bush Institute's First Ladies Initiative engages and supports First Ladies from around the world to effectively use their unique platforms to advance pressing issues for women and children in their countries. This case study examines how the First Ladies Initiative is supporting an innovative agricultural project led by Her Excellency Mrs. Janet Museveni, the First Lady of Uganda.

THE FIRST LADY AS AN ADVOCATE

Over the past 28 years, Mrs. Janet Museveni has made a significant impact on Ugandan society. Along with serving as an elected government official as both a Member of Parliament and a Cabinet Minister for the past five years¹, Mrs. Museveni has used her platform as First Lady to establish many social service initiatives which work to improve the lives of vulnerable communities in Uganda, especially women and children.

- As a Member of Parliament for Ruhaama County, she has gone beyond her responsibilities to discuss and elect laws, and has focused on the community development of her constituency. Mrs. Museveni has supported education programs through promoting scholarships, training teachers, and providing support to rebuild classrooms in primary and secondary schools. Additionally, Mrs. Museveni has supported health initiatives by providing resources to medical centers and hospitals, and building the capacity of the staff. Mrs. Museveni has also placed value in environmental development and has worked with the United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) to plant 150,000 trees on some of the hills throughout Ruhaama County.
- As the Cabinet Minister for the Karamoja region, Mrs. Museveni has emphasized agricultural growth because of its potential for community development. Addressing the farming challenges posed by a lack of water in the region, Mrs. Museveni has invested in providing dams, both for animals and to increase agricultural yields, and provided the region with hand and ox plows to assist with production. Additionally, Mrs. Museveni has put a focus on ensuring that girls stay in school by providing them with dormitories, mattresses, basins, and solar lighting in dormitories. She has also initiated school feeding programs.

¹ "Hon. Janet K. Museveni." *The State House*. The State House of Uganda, n.d. Web. 13 Sept. 2014.

- As First Lady, Mrs. Museveni has launched and supported a number of programs which aim to address pressing issues for citizens, including initiatives focused on women, young people, and orphan and vulnerable children. In 1986, the year her husband took office, Mrs. Museveni started the national nongovernmental organization (NGO) Uganda Women’s Effort to Save Orphans (UWESO). UWESO’s initial mission was to tend to the needs of children who were orphaned by civil conflict and HIV/AIDS. UWESO has since expanded its focus to empowering entire communities to help orphans and vulnerable children. In addition to advocating for child protection and education, UWESO supports communities through village savings programs, access to banks, and providing business management skills. Mrs. Musevani also founded Uganda Youth Forum (UYF), an NGO which works to empower and engage youth on topics such as livelihood, sexuality, nutrition, gender equality, women’s empowerment and employment. UYF’s main focus is on HIV/AIDS education and prevention to meet its vision of a “healthy, empowered youth.”

FINDING INSPIRATION: THE FIRST LADY AND AGRICULTURE

Mrs. Museveni holds a deep-rooted appreciation of agricultural communities. The First Lady spent her childhood in Irenga in the district of Ntungamo in southwestern Uganda. She comes from a family of pastoralists, and has fond memories of her maternal grandfather working with cattle at their home. As a child, Mrs. Museveni would participate in agricultural and pastoral activities such as raising cattle and processing milk.²

“We were very connected to nature and enjoyed a simple, yet rich lifestyle... Cattle are not merely a symbol of wealth; rather they are regarded as treasured members of the family... The importance of having cattle was etched into the psyche of our people.”

—H.E. Janet Museveni

The First Lady saw great value in her childhood experiences, and was able to apply her passion for agriculture as the founder of the National Strategy for the Advancement of Rural Women in Uganda (NSARWU). NSARWU works to promote new skills, the implementation of technology, and building resources such as high yielding seeds and organic fertilizers to increase production.³ The organization educates women on topics

² Museveni, Janet Kataaha. *My Life's Journey*. Kampala: Fountain, 2011. 4-5. Print.

³ "NSARWU Projects." *NSARWU*. National Strategy for the Advancement of Rural Women in Uganda, n.d. Web. 29 Sep. 2014.

such as gender balance, family health, HIV/AIDS, and nutrition. In addition to skills and education, NSARWU also provides microfinance and other resources to support non-agriculture enterprise to empower rural women.

AFRICAN FIRST LADIES SUMMIT: INVESTING IN WOMEN: STRENGTHENING AFRICA

On July 2-3, 2013, in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, the Bush Institute, in partnership with ExxonMobil, convened an African First Ladies Summit, *Investing in Women: Strengthening Africa*, to highlight the critical role First Ladies play as advocates for women and girls. The Summit put the spotlight on success stories and best practices, and provided an opportunity to discuss public-private partnerships that have the power to advance women's health, education, and economic opportunity in Africa.

Mrs. Museveni and seven other African First Ladies joined President George W. Bush, Mrs. Laura Bush, First Lady Michelle Obama, and more than 200 leaders from corporations, foundations, government agencies, and NGOs at the Summit. Emphasizing the connections between the inclusion of women in all areas of society and the stability and prosperity of countries, panel discussions engaged experts, practitioners, and First Ladies to provide examples of successful interventions for women and girls that could be adopted and replicated to transform communities. A Networking Village spotlighted successful programs—created by both NGO and private corporations—that are advancing opportunities and the overall welfare of women and girls.

BUILDING ON A FIRST LADY'S PLATFORM

At the African First Ladies Summit, Mrs. Museveni made it clear during an interview with the Bush Institute that she wanted to expand and scale her agriculture programs. She expressed an interest in pursuing a national, holistic agriculture initiative with an emphasis on women.

The First Lady envisions a program that provides Ugandans with an agricultural system through which they can financially support themselves and their communities. The program will go beyond increasing crop yields; it will impact a number of Ugandan social and economic issues including youth unemployment, limited market access for farmers, and women's role in agriculture.

Although Uganda's economy is based on agriculture, the sector is underdeveloped in terms of techniques, resources, and access to markets. To update the farming system, there is a need for modern machinery, organized farming associations, and improved transportation infrastructure such as roads. Farmers need an outlet to access markets as well as to produce goods which are up to market standards.⁴

⁴ Timbiti, Watuwa. *What Is Killing Uganda's Agricultural Sector?* New Vision, 12 Oct. 2012. Web. 13 Sept. 2014.

Estimates reveal that 72 percent of all Ugandan women, and 90 percent of all rural Ugandan women participate in agricultural work.⁵ Typically, women in this sector are responsible for sowing, harvesting, head loading produce, crop-drying, winnowing, seed selection, and caring for small livestock like pigs and poultry.⁶ In terms of the breakdown of agricultural labor, 85 percent of planting, 55 percent of land preparation, and 98 percent of food preparation are performed by women.⁷ Although Ugandan women have a strong work ethic and make tremendous contributions to the agricultural sector, they are often at a disadvantage when it comes to profiting from their hard work. In Uganda and many other developing countries, women often have limited access to education and training, capital resources, and markets to sell their crops, and it is even less common for women to own the land on which they work.⁸ Farmers who do not own land, especially land of a substantial size, find it difficult to create a commercial farming system.⁹ Although Ugandan women farmers have an entrepreneurial spirit, they often allocate their harvest to food consumption rather than distribution. Women have a difficult time accessing key markets and often do not have the necessary resources to promote their products.¹⁰

“[W]e knew that in order to build women’s capacity...we had to address the fundamental issues affecting women such as social and economic inequality, inability to access financing, cultural barriers, and so on.”

—H.E. Janet Museveni

A Summit panel on innovative technologies in sub-Saharan agricultural programs caught Mrs. Museveni’s attention and she reached out to the Bush Institute’s First Ladies Initiative for support. In assisting with Mrs. Museveni’s request, specifically in creating public-private partnerships, the Bush Institute provided the First Lady with an agriculture-focused proposal detailing 15 potential partners to make her concept a reality. The First Lady and her staff members reviewed the recommendations and selected six organizations. In June 2014, Mrs. Museveni, team members from the First Ladies Initiative, and leaders from the selected organizations participated in a meeting in Uganda to discuss mutual program interests and prospective collaboration. To build on the outcomes of these introductions, the First Ladies Initiative is working with the

⁵ *Gender Policy Brief for Uganda’s Agriculture Sector*. Forum for Women and Democracy (FOWODE) with Support from the United Nations Joint Programme on Gender Equality, 2012. Web. 13 Sept. 2014.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

First Lady and her staff to create a program roadmap for this holistic agriculture initiative.

Mrs. Museveni's holistic agriculture program has the potential to improve techniques and skill sets, increase production outputs, and expand access to markets, especially for women farmers.

MOVING FORWARD, TOGETHER

The First Ladies Initiative has provided support to Mrs. Museveni as she advances the agricultural program. Mrs. Museveni is assisted by 10 staff members, including Advisor Irene Kauma Kisaka who has served for four years as Principal Assistant Secretary. Mrs. Kisaka primarily serves as Chief of Staff for the First Lady's role as Cabinet Minister for Karamoja Affairs. She provides technical and supervisory support to the First Lady's NGOs and initiatives, as well as manages her schedule for public engagements.

In order to inform the First Ladies Initiative's support of First Ladies, each principal and her staff are directly asked about their needs via a targeted Needs Assessment. According to the 2013 Assessment completed by Mrs. Museveni's staff, the following were identified as core needs: training in office structure and management, public-private partnership strategy development and implementation, communications strategy development and implementation, fundraising strategy and financial management, and in-country knowledge exchanges with other African First Ladies' offices. With the aim of addressing these and other support needs identified by First Ladies' Senior Advisors across Africa, the Bush Institute's First Ladies Initiative is convening conferences, meetings, and trainings for First Ladies and their Senior Advisors.

Recent support includes, but is not limited to the following activities in 2014:

- ***Investing in Our Future at the U.S. - Africa Leaders Summit***
As part of the U.S. – Africa Leaders Summit, the Office of the First Lady, the George W. Bush Institute, and the U.S. Department of State hosted *Investing in Our Future at the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit*, a day-long spouses forum at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts. The forum brought together First Lady Michelle Obama, Mrs. Laura Bush, African First Ladies from nearly 30 countries, leaders from nongovernmental organizations and nonprofits, private sector partners, and other leading experts. The forum emphasized the critical role first spouses play and focused on the impact of investments in education, health, and public-private partnerships, further growing the First Ladies' robust network.

- **First Ladies Initiative Luncheon**

Mrs. Bush hosted a luncheon in New York City for African First Ladies and several corporations and NGOs that are working on the African continent to support women and girls. The luncheon highlighted the work of Pink Ribbon Red Ribbon and the impact First Ladies can have on improving women's health in their respective countries.

- **First Ladies Roundtable**

The First Ladies Initiative convened First Ladies, Senior Advisors, and select private sector organizations for a roundtable discussion in New York City. To help foster introductions and identify mutual areas of interest, attendees briefly shared the main initiatives and areas in which they work. The group dialogue was followed by break-out discussions to provide First Ladies and organizations with an occasion to meet and determine if there are potential opportunities for partnership.

- **Advisor Training Program**

Capacity building enables First Ladies' staff members to support the First Ladies' agenda and platform. In 2014, the Bush Institute's First Ladies Initiative launched the Advisor Training Program, hosting inaugural sessions for First Ladies' senior staff in Washington, D.C. and New York City. Welcoming the participation of advisors from seven countries across Africa, recent curriculum focused on "Strategic Planning for Effective National Programs" and "Creating a National Plan for Cervical Cancer."

The First Ladies Initiative has supported Mrs. Museveni's agricultural efforts specifically through:

- Outlining a continuum of service approach to both addressing challenges and leveraging opportunities in the agricultural sector as determined by the First Lady's Office;
- Identifying organizations in the finance and agriculture sectors in Uganda with established track records of success for consideration as program partners;
- Facilitating introductions to prospective partners that could effectively assist in the development and execution of the First Lady's program; and
- Providing support to the First Lady and her staff as they seek to establish and implement a comprehensive program road map for the holistic agriculture initiative.

In working together to support a new agriculture initiative, the First Ladies Initiative looks forward to engaging with Mrs. Museveni as she continues to make strides to empower women and girls in Uganda.

FIRST LADIES INITIATIVE

The George W. Bush Institute's First Ladies Initiative is a program that supports First Ladies from around the world, with the initial focus in Africa, to effectively use their platforms to promote issues and programs that improve the lives of women and children in their respective countries. The First Ladies Initiative helps prepare First Ladies' senior advisors and staff through training sessions that build capacity and skills to effectively manage a First Lady's office. Additionally, the First Ladies Initiative fosters public-private partnerships by connecting First Ladies with funding partners, corporations, and NGOs.

Objectives of the First Ladies Initiative:

- **Convene** First Ladies to promote best practice sharing and create a robust network
- **Partner** with First Ladies to advance pressing issues for women and children, including health, education, and economic opportunity in their respective countries
- **Prepare** their senior advisors by providing training sessions and the relevant tools to build capacity and develop effective First Ladies' offices, identify the most critical policy initiatives for their respective First Lady to adopt, and help their principal become an effective advocate for pressing issues
- **Foster** sustainable public-private partnerships by initiating introductions and access to potential partners, opportunistic matching guidance, and a network of internal and external relationships

The George W. Bush Institute is providing this case study as an educational public service to explore how First Ladies use their unique platforms to impact the lives of women and children. While the Institute strives toward this public service purpose in producing the case studies and focuses on specific works and activities, it does not necessarily endorse all of the methods, views, or opinions expressed by the First Lady or her country's government. Thus, this publication and the content discussed is intended solely for information purposes and is not to be construed, under any circumstances, by implication or otherwise, as an endorsement of national policies or government actions in Uganda.