

A TRIBUTE TO RITAH NANSEREKO

"I never knew my father. He died before I was born in the conflict in Uganda. When I was six years old, my mother realised she could not look after all seven of her children. She took me, the last born, to live with nuns, a family of women.

The nuns trained me to take care of people -poor people, the elderly and the vulnerable. This turned me into a strong woman with leadership skills. It shaped my upbringing and showed me that a woman can do it all in whatever circumstances.

I have been a humanitarian worker for seven years. I want to see a strong women's movement that will mainstream gender issues into humanitarian responses." **Ritah Nansereko**



#RealLifeHeroes



Rita Nansereko

A teacher by profession and a human rights advocate, Ritah is the Executive Director of the local humanitarian organization African Women and Youth Action for Development (AWYAD), and the Chairperson for Charter4Change Working Group in Uganda.



With deep sadness, Ritah Nansereko (RIP), Executive Director of African Women and Youth Action for Development - AWYAD is no longer with us. She passed away from COVID-19 on 25th June 2021.

Ritah was many things. She was a human rights advocate working on the protection needs of refugee women and Children, Executive Director for AWYAD and importantly, a strong, passionate, and [vocal advocate](#) of localisation and Charter4Change in Uganda and globally.

To honour her amazing contribution, Ritah was celebrated as a real-life Hero by Oxfam during the 2020 World Refugee Day – A Day she spent sharing her views on various webinars about local humanitarian leadership.

'From the first time I met Ritah in 2017, I was inspired by her passion and determination to empower refugees to overcome the barriers that they face. Ritah was a joy to work with and as Street Child Uganda we felt lucky to work so closely with such an inspirational person. Not only was she a fantastic Executive Director for AWYAD but she was a key player in the humanitarian and localisation sector, and she will be sorely missed by all.'

Ellen Fitton, Street Child, Uganda.



OXFAM



Her strong leadership led her to the chair for Charter4Change working group in Uganda from 2019 to 2020. She promoted inclusivity and diversity to the working group and [influenced](#) International NGOs, UN agencies, Donors at local and global spaces on localization.

She was a member of the Grand Bargain Localisation Work-Stream, a member representing local actors on the Inter-Agency Standing Committee- Result Group 3 on collective advocacy and a Steering Committee Member of the National Platform.

Without doubt she contributed to progressive changes in the humanitarian system in Uganda.

Ritah’s work has been an inspiration to many of us here in Uganda and many beyond our shores. Her work, contributions and spirit will live on, and we will continue to honour her values in our work.

Ritah’s untimely death is a reminder of the devastating impacts of COVID-19- impacts that will continue to feel for years to come. **Rest in Peace Ritah Nansereko.**



“The demise of Ritah Nansereko (RIP) was not only a loss of a friend but a loss to the CSO sector in Uganda a loss to the nation, women leadership movement, C4C fraternity and fellow development actors.”

Dr Bagambe Steven (Post Doctorate)
 Country Director/LIPRO Uganda
 Vice Chair/C4C Working Group

“Ritah was a passionate, intelligent and committed leader. I recall her statement during the recent Charter 4 Change meeting in Kampala– that she is an example of how Oxfam has empowered local actors in Uganda; Oxfam’s funding to AWYAD did not only generate interest from other partners to consider her organization as credible to be funded, but she benefitted from the different platforms provided to make her a solid advocate of localization of humanitarian actions in Uganda and globally.

Her legacy should live on to inspire more young feminist leaders in Uganda.”

Francis Shanty Odokorach.
 Country Director, Oxfam/Uganda.

FARE-THEE WELL - RITAH NANSEREKO

Dear Ritah,

To us, you were our localization champion, but you were also a daughter, wife, mother, co-worker, and a friend.

The untimely news of your departure left us heartbroken, robbed and we will miss you deeply. We feel blessed to have been under your mentorship and excellent leadership as the First Chair and an advisor of the Charter for Change (C4C) Working Group in Uganda. We hope that we shall emulate your unwavering commitment towards achieving the localization dream in Uganda.

Dear Ritah,

You were a strategic thinker, a visionary leader, brilliant, innovative, and creative and generously shared your knowledge. You were the “go to” person in difficult times because you never run out of ideas, your calming persona, humility, and friendly approach to those around you united us as a team. Your strong networking skills made us achieve milestones that seemed impossible.

And today we remember and honor the bright fire, resourceful and instrumental individual you have been in pushing for the success of the C4C working group.

You were a true definition of a leader, and your legacy is not only carved in our hearts but is our inspiration to carry on your good works. The memories of you will forever live on. You have gone too soon.

Thank you for sharing your life with us.

Rest in Power our Localisation Champion -Ritah.

C4C Working Group – Uganda.

Rita's loss has robbed the humanitarian sector of a very powerful voice and visionary women rights advocate. Her death devastated all of us who have worked with her.

Ritah demonstrated how committed local organisations can lead local responses and deliver impact at local, national, and international levels. She has been a true outcome of our local humanitarian leadership agenda. By the time of her death, Rita was representing Uganda humanitarian actors on various platforms at Global level.

Rita spoke truth to power and was very well known at higher levels of Government and UN. She has led the struggle that continues. For those of us living, we should do what is in our power to fight the injustices and inequality in our midst.

Edward Mwebaze,
Head of Programs/Oxfam, Uganda.

Indeed, this is a big loss to all who care for what Ritah stood for. A heartfelt condolence from the Ethiopia team. May the Almighty stand behind her family at this very difficult time.

Gezahegn Kebede Gebrehana (PhD)
Country Director. Oxfam International in Ethiopia

This is such sad news! Ritah was an activist for gender and for the continent. We will remember her more recently for being very vocal on local humanitarian leadership and her sharing her views as part of the 2020 World Humanitarian Day.

As the COVID-19 pandemic rages on, we continue to be reminded that its impact will be felt for years to come, especially for the continent.

We join the Uganda, RIC and many other Oxfam teams that worked with Ritah in mourning her passing on and pray for strength to her family. May her soul rest in peace.

Pavin Ngala.
Regional Director (Interim)
HECA/ Oxfam International