

**Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> October, 2023

**Appeal for support towards Relocation and Remodelling of AWAC Kampala Drop-in Centre (DiC)/Safe Space in Mengo to ensure continuity of health, economic, social and protection services for Sex Workers with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities.**

## **Introduction**

In response to the growing demand for low-cost -high-impact community service delivery models, AWAC established her first Drop-in Center (DiC) in Katwe Slums in January 2018. Two years later, the unmet need for tailored services in separate safe spaces of different sex worker sub-populations including SWs who use and inject drugs, and SWs with disabilities dictated that AWAC DiC/safe space be relocated to a more spacious, accessible and secure area. It was not easy to find a place to locate the DiC due to the societal stigma and discrimination against Sex Workers. Most of the Landlords and Land Ladies are dis-inclined to accept a sex worked organization as their tenants, let alone the establishment of a DiC which would lead to a significant inflow of sex workers seeking services. By good luck, AWAC secured rental premises in Mengo along Nabulagala road, which is not only spacious but also safe and easily accessible to many sex workers with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities in hotspots of Mengo, Nakulabye Buyinja, Bakuli, Kakajo, Luby, Kasato, Kyabakade, Kayiwa, Bukesa, Kisenyi, Nateete, Kasubi, Nabulagala, Luzaze and Munakku to mention but a few. In the past 8 years since its inception AWAC has served 32,000 SWs with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities.

The AWAC Model Drop-in Center (DiC) has been operating in the current rented premises in Mengo Nabulagala Road since Jan 2020 where it serves sex workers on a range of services. Annually, the centre serves 8,254 SWs on PrEP, 452 SWs on ART, 108 SWs who use and inject drugs with mental health & psychosocial support services; 300 SWs with contraception & Post Abortion care



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services, 82 SWs access livelihoods and economic resilience services & 35 SWs with Psychosocial support for cancer. The DiC is now threatened with eviction following the landlord's offer to sell the premises arising out of pressure from his relatives castigating sex workers of immorality and their linkage to the LGBTQ community. AWAC and the sex workers community are profoundly worried this important work might be no more, yet it is the lifeline for many sex workers and LGBTQ persons living in this area. We therefore urge you to support us by coming to our rescue to secure multi-year rent, shifting of our items, erecting necessary structures and remodeling the AWAC new safe space for service delivery and continuous work.

### **Background to the incident**

On Friday 15<sup>th</sup> September 2023 at around 8:30pm an old woman who identified herself as the Auntie to our current Landlords of the DiC section and Secretariat wing showed up at the entrance of AWAC DiC premises demanding that she meets the head of AWAC. At the facility access check-point, she was welcomed and directed into the Executive Director's (ED) office. As soon as she stepped into the office, she declined to take a seat stating that she was in hurry and didn't mind communicating while standing. "I am so shocked to find that my nephews decided to rent out our family house to serve sex workers and homosexuals which tarnishes the image of our family ... Its a shame to see the walls of the only family legacy my brother left full of messages on sex work" she spitefully remarked. She then added; *"mbu sex workers deserve rights.... sex work is work, outlaw poverty, not sex work... really? It clearly shows that this house now turned into a hotspot"* she went on; "I fail to make sense why of all things my nephews chose to degrade the family respect by renting the family premises to sex workers" and concluded that the premises are no longer worthy to keep.

The ED clarified that having family premises rented for a cause that contributes to building hope and making the world a better place for the less privileged in the community translates to a brick added to the family legacy. The ED further explained that; "AWAC DiC is like a mini-clinic supported by KCCA facilities and other partners to provide basic health care and social economic empowerment services for women and young women who are less privileged or marginalized in multiple and intersecting ways". Unfortunately,

her explanation seemed to have fallen on deaf angry ears. The Landlords' Auntie had become even more enraged, shouting on top of her voice. When the ED tried to calm her down by suggesting they call another family member- the Landlord in charge of the DiC premises (Mr. Kiggwe Douglas) so as to tone down the tension and have an amicable solution to the issues at hand, the Landlords' Auntie gave a venomous response on top of her voice saying “ Tombulira, Tombulira Tombulira.. literally translated “Don't tell me anything. Don't tell me anything “

Overwhelmed by tension and frustration the ED decided to end the interaction with bold humility pointing out her disappointment with the Landlord's Auntie's use of offensive and disrespectful language to AWAC DiC clients and said;

*“I've never seen you, I respect you and I am not arguing with you anymore because you are like my Mum and indeed you could be my Land lady too but the way you've handled this issue with emotions using bad and provocative language while referring to us and our clients as BAMALAYA n'a BASIYAZI, is not right'.* In reaction to the ED's remarks, the Landlords' Auntie angrily walked out without adding a word.

When she left, our ED thought it was just a disappointment from her and that it would end to that and that perhaps they would get it resolved with Douglas and just let us continue with our usual operations. However, just a day after the incident (16 Sept 2023) AWAC woke up to the shock gripping news that a signpost had been fixed at the entrance of the DiC premises indicating that the premises were up for sale. Attempting to make sense of this heartbreaking and shock-gripping incident, the ED asked the DiC Landlord why AWAC would be served with such a threatening and humiliating treatment yet AWAC had paid rent covering up to February 2024 and Why AWAC had not been informed about the imminent sale before fixing such a signpost at the AWAC DiC entrance. The landlord said that he was getting tired of family issues and that although it had crossed his mind to sell previously and decided eventually not to, this time he was super serious about it and that the argument he had with his aunt had made him feel extremely tired of all that. Also, Mr. Douglas brought to our attention that our car parking space which we were paying for together with the DiC space actually belongs to that aunt and that she had told him that she was embarrassed that 'bamalaaya (sex workers)'



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are the ones renting the premises and she said that she would rather sell it off as well. Mr. Kigwe mentioned that he too wants to disconnect with her and the only way they can do it is by selling it off so that each parts with their share. He said “Madam Macklean, I am tired of these whole family accusations that I am supporting bamalaaya by allowing you people to use the family house, that’s why I have decided to advertise this place’. He added that he would wish to sell to AWAC first if we had money right away but the decision is so quick and it doesn’t matter anymore who buys it because all he wants now is to detach and part properties with his aunt. Initially, among them as a family they had agreed to only sell amongst themselves to keep the ‘family house legacy’ and not to sell to anyone else. But right now he said he wants to detach from this house completely as he was tired beyond reasonable doubt and for him it didn’t make sense anymore if it causes them trouble and fights amongst them for who to rent the house to and who not to. He said he is not ready to walk on tenterhooks due to his aunt’s values and that he would not mind letting any person rent his properties as long as they are not criminals but moreover people who support the rights of others. We requested him to take off the sign post from the gate and asked to hold a meeting with him further about this issue after our internal meetings with management and board, which he accepted.

While his views and post event actions were appreciated by AWAC, his and the aunt’s abrupt decision to sell the premises immediately, bring more trouble to AWAC. Losing the current DiC/safe space premises implies critical interruption in services by the sex workers, and severe levels of emotional distress for AWAC’s service users who utilize the DiC/Safe Space at the secretariat and stretching to our multiple districts of operations countrywide.



In the photos above, the sign post that was fixed on the AWAC DiC premises entrance indicating that the premises are on sale

### **AWAC Drop-in Centre (DiC) and its impact**

The DiC/safe space has contributed to enhanced case finding, linkage, prevention, uptake and continuation in care, treatment and support in context of HIV, mental health, protection; reduced levels of stigma and systemic exclusion and reported cases of human rights violations; Increased number of Sex Workers able to read, write, understand, use basic sign language for those with speech and hearing impairment and safely exercise their rights and obligations; positive behavioural change in response to risk reduction messages; enhanced capacity to prepare business plans, read and comprehend police statements. Additionally, there has been Improved documentation, monitoring and reporting of security concerns and human rights issues including cases of sexual gender-based violence (SGBV), Increased Sex Worker participation in Community Health Livelihoods Enhancement Groups (CHLEGs) saving and investment activities; functioning, social participation and quality of life, sense of dignity, confidence, self-esteem, productivity and well-being of Sex Workers and their children. To the National and regional entities in key population programming,





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AWAC DiC/safe space has earned widespread recognition as an “excellent hub of learning in context of grassroots Key population programming with an intersectionality lens including; hosting CDC Africa team from Addis Ababa, South to South Learning Network (SSLN) from Nairobi, CREA Kenya, MoH and UAC Technical Working Groups (TWG), Key populations led organizations, Universities eg fellows/interns from the Medical School of Wisconsin(MCW), Mahidol University from Thailand, Law students from the Public Interest Law Clinic -Makerere University, Global fund- Geneva, Crane survey-Makerere university, Implementing Partners (IPs) and other Sex Worker leaders, human rights defenders and activists majorly from east African countries including Uganda, Congo, Kenya and Tanzania and LGBTQ organizations such as Ice Breaker Uganda. AWAC has equally made formidable investment in social cohesion, goodwill and relationship between local leaders, police and general community through dialogues and community service rendering the local community environment safer and supportive to the Sex Workers with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities and their significant others including their children.

### **AWAC response plan**

In consultation with AWAC management staff, AWAC SW grassroots CBO leaders, AWAC Board Members and after assessments by our partners from human rights organizations, it was resolved that the best option was for AWAC to purchase the property to avoid any future threats from the landlords.

**Albeit, upon engaging the landlord – Mr. Kigwe to sell the premises to AWAC, he accepted but had to consult with the aunt so that they can sell to us. In a twist of events, the moment the aunt heard that the current tenant (AWAC), intends to buy the premises, she objected and swore not to touch ‘haram monies’ from ‘prostitutes’ and that she cannot sell to AWAC.**

Such a twist of events, left AWAC with no option but to relocate to another suitable location in the vicinity. This places AWAC in a situation that we must consider a detailed relocation plan which includes shifting and reinstalling of all our security systems



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including biometrics, CCTV cameras and shifting containers and other semi-permanent structures for economic empowerment of SWs.

Following that bad news from the landlord, AWAC embarked on a rigorous search for suitable rental premises which will eventually serve as the AWAC model DiC/Safe space. The rigorous search led us to a space which is very suitable for becoming the new AWAC model DiC/Safe space. The AWAC team approached the landlord of the space and expressed interest in a multi-year tenancy of the premises, to which the landlord has no objection. AWAC shall remodel the identified premises to ensure privacy, safety & security, confidentiality and friendly services by installing semi-permanent structures including the containers that are currently at AWAC and procure two more to ensure enough rooms for continued work and services to our clients. We shall also install some temporary structures eg tents to compliment the semi-permanent structures, build a perimeter wall and make fresh installation power back up, access control systems and infrastructure. To minimize eviction threats, AWAC will secure a multiyear tenancy contract after making lumpsum payment of two years. The total cost of relocation and remodeling is **USD 208,100 (UGX 749,160,000)**.

### **Appeal for Support**

Given the above background, we appeal for support from all our esteemed beloved staff, board members, development partners and grassroots members, well wishers among others to make any form of financial and in-kind contribution to secure emergency support **for the relocation and remodelling of AWAC DiC to continue serving our clients at the model AWAC Drop-in Centre (DiC)/Safe Space. The identified space that AWAC shall relocate to, is in the same vicinity as the current AWAC DiC/Safe space.** This will enable us to continue impacting the community of grassroots Sex Workers with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities through challenging stigma, discrimination and multiple facets of criminalization of all forms; strengthening the capacity of SWs in feminist leadership & grassroots feminist movement building; acceleration of sustainable development goals (SDGs) including mitigating

climate change; providing integrated quality HIV/SRHR/GBV/Mental Health & Psycho-social well-being services; conducting research/documentation; addressing socio-economic deprivation & shrinking civic space across the country.

We need up to USD208,100 / UGX749,160,000 for emergency support for the relocation and remodelling of AWAC model DiC/Safe space.

### AWAC Budget for relocation

ALLIANCE OF WOMEN ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE (AWAC)						
PROPOSED BUDGET FOR EMERGENCY SUPPORT FOR THE RELOCATION AWAC DROP-IN CENTRE SAFE SPAFE AND REMODELING OF THE NEW SPACE TO ENHANCE SAFETY AND SECURITY.						
TOTAL AMOUNT USD;			208,100			
EXCHANGE RATE			3,600			
TOTAL AMOUNT UGX;			749,160,000			
Budget Items	Unit Type	Units	Unit cost	Amount UGX	Amount USD	
<b>A Relocation and remodifying AWAC DiC Safe Space Office Structures</b>						
A1	Rent for 2 Years as we stabilise	House Rent	24	7,600,000	182,400,000	50,667



A2	Labour costs to facilitate the shifting AWAC 40ft Container and fitting it and other office structure items to the new safe space eg replacement of the container rooming, re-construction of the temporary social economic resilience safe space among others	Office structures	1	12,800,000	12,800,000	3,556
A3	Procurement of a 2 more 40ft Container and partitioning it.	New 40ft Container	2	52,000,000	104,000,000	28,889
	<b>Subtotal</b>				<b>299,200,000</b>	<b>83,111</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>Security Strengthening for AWAC DiC Safe Space</b>					
B1	Alarm system	Lumpsum	1	5,000,000	5,000,000	1,389
B2	Alarm monitoring	Months	24	600,000	14,400,000	4,000
B3	Installation of CCTV cameras	Lumpsum	1	9,000,000	9,000,000	2,500
B4	Security Guards for Night and Day Services	Months	24	3,200,000	76,800,000	21,333
B5	Standby Generator for power backup 5KVA	Lumpsum	1	77,000,000	77,000,000	21,389
	Solar purchase and Wiring	Lumpsum	1	38,000,000	38,000,000	10,556

B6	Security lights	pieces	15	750,000	11,250,000	3,125
B7	Motion Sensors	pieces	4	500,000	2,000,000	556
B8	Installation of Razor wire	pieces	9	2,500,000	22,500,000	6,250
B9	Automatic locks	pieces	10	2,000,000	20,000,000	5,556
B10	4 Fire extinguishers 9Kg	pieces	4	680,000	2,720,000	756
<b>B10</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>278,670,000</b>	<b>77,408</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Erecting of 9x9 parameter wall around the 29 Decimal space</b>					
C1	5000 Pieces of 9x9 Blocks	Blocks	10000	2,900	29,000,000	8,056
C2	30 Trips of Hard-Core stones	Stones	100	210,000	21,000,000	5,833
C3	200 Bags of Cement	Cement	500	34,000	17,000,000	4,722
C4	Water	Water	1	2,500,000	2,500,000	694
C5	30 Trips of Sand (Nyanja)	Lake Sand (Nyanja)	50	220,000	11,000,000	3,056

C6	26 Trips of Sand (Plaster)	Sand (Plaster)	50	190,000	9,500,000	2,639
C7	18 Rolls Payan	Payan	35	52,000	1,820,000	506
C8	Labour	Labour	1	15,000,000	15,000,000	4,167
<b>C</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>106,820,000</b>	<b>29,672</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>Finishing of the 9x9 parameter wall round the 29 Decimal space</b>					
D1	Sekanyolya Barbed wire	rolls	1	9,900,000	9,900,000	2,750
D2	Burglar-proof in Windows and Doors	burglar-proof lumpsum	1	18,400,000	18,400,000	5,111
D3	Pad Locks	pieces of Padlocks	15	100,000	1,500,000	417
D4	Conduits	Conduits lumpsum	1	1,620,000	1,620,000	450
<b>D</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>31,420,000</b>	<b>8,728</b>
<b>E</b>	<b>Other Security Items</b>					
E1	3D Sign Post for easy location of our new location	3D Sign Post	1	7,750,000	7,750,000	2,153
E2	10,000 Litre Black Water Tank and placement	Tank	1	3,900,000	3,900,000	1,083

E3	Askar Shelter at the Gate	Askar Shelter	1	5,800,000	5,800,000	1,611
E4	Metallic Gate	Gate	1	9,600,000	9,600,000	2,667
E5	Metal Detector	Detector	1	1,500,000	1,500,000	417
E6	Car Mirror Detector	Mirror Detector	1	1,000,000	1,000,000	278
E7	Car Barrier	Car Barrier	1	3,500,000	3,500,000	972
<b>E</b>	<b>Sub Total</b>				<b>33,050,000</b>	<b>9,181</b>
	<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>				<b>UGX 749,160,000</b>	<b>USD 208,100</b>

For support, kindly use the below **AWAC BANK DETAILS:**

**Bank Name:** Absa Bank Uganda Ltd

**Bank Physical Address:** Plot 2/4 Hannington Road Kampala, **Postal Address:** P.O. Box 7101 Kampala, Uganda

**Account Name:** Alliance of Women Advocating for Change (AWAC) Ltd

**Organisation Address:** Off Balintuma Road, On Nabulagala Road, Plot 10, 1st Black Gate on your left. P O BOX 31762, Uganda

**A) AWAC USD Account Number:** 6007782924 (Currency, USD), **B) AWAC UGX Account Number:** 6007782940 (Currency, UGX)

**SWIFT Code:** BARCUGKX

**For US Dollar Transfers Correspondent Bank:** CITIBANK New York, Swift Address: CITIUS33 ABA; Routing Number:021000089.



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Note: For any contribution, kindly include the Hashtag: **#SaveAWACModelDiC** or subject: **Emergency Contribution to Save AWAC Model DiC**; because all funds contributed during this process will be audited by the external auditor.

### **Conclusion**

Due to the sensitive work that AWAC does, the imminent sale of the current DiC premises, the associated safety and current threats to service continuity, AWAC had to identify new spacious safer rental premises where AWAC model DiC/Safe space can be relocated. Moreover, the identified premises are in the same vicinity as the current DiC, providing ample space and convenience for sex workers and LGBTQ allies to access services. Whereas the need for relocation to the new premises is a matter of surpassing urgency, AWAC lacks the needed resources to undertake the DiC/Safe Space relocation and secure a multiyear tenancy agreement. AWAC is equally afraid that just in case another prospective tenant takes over the identified premises, it will be so hard to find other premises in the same vicinity, let alone landlords and landladies willing to offer their premises for rent especially in the current legal environment to an organization like AWAC that serves sex workers. We therefore appeal to all our partners for support.

**Below are photos of some of the semi-permanent and temporary structures and security systems that we need to relocate**



## Brief about AWAC

The Alliance of Women Advocating for Change (AWAC) is a feminist umbrella network of grassroots Sex Worker (SW) led groups/organizations and collectives in Uganda. It was established in 2015 to promote the voices and work of SW with multiple and

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intersecting vulnerabilities to realise a resilient feminist SWs movement that advocates for equitable and sustainable universal Healthcare, promotion of human rights and social economic resilience in Uganda.

Since her inception, AWAC has reached over 32,000 SWs with services. AWAC prides in herself & continues impacting the SW community through challenging stigma, discrimination and multiple facets of criminalization of all forms; strengthening the capacity of SWs in feminist leadership & grassroots movement building; acceleration of sustainable development goals (SDGs) including mitigating climate change; providing integrated quality HIV/SRHR/GBV/Mental Health & Psychosocial wellbeing services; conducting research/documentation; addressing socio-economic deprivation & shrinking civic space in 57 districts of Uganda.

AWAC's core target are SWs with multiple and intersecting vulnerabilities especially: SWs with disabilities; SWs in & out of the Settlements; Migrant SWs; SWs using and injecting drugs; Aging SWs; SWs living with HIV& AIDs; SWs in hard-to-reach settings – such as (Islands, landing sites, plantation and quarries areas) among others in Uganda. [www.awacuganda.org](http://www.awacuganda.org)

**Thank you very much**