

"We then started talking to them- [women]- every Sunday, assuring them that family planning was regulatory and not about stopping to have children as many of them feared. That was another way of becoming a part of FPAU [Family Planning Association of Uganda, now Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU)]"

Owekitibwa Joyce Mpanga, those words, you said many years back, will always remain in our heart. They will always remind us at RHU of the passion, the zeal and the love you had for women's wellbeing.

Owekitibwa, Mpanga, to us you have been a remarkable individual who dedicated her life to the betterment of women's health and empowerment; and we pay tribute to you- our long-serving member of the Board of Trustees and Patron of Reproductive Health Uganda (RHU), formerly FPAU.

It was during your tenure as the president of the National Council for Women that your path intertwined with the work of Alice Mugunga- the first African executive director of RHU, in 1986. Together, you embarked on a journey to address the needs of market women in Namuwongo by establishing a day care centre. It was through this initiative that you- Owekitibwa, witnessed first-hand the struggles faced by these women, particularly in the realm of family planning.

With your empathy and determination, Owekitibwa Mpanga, you took it upon yourself to educate the women about the importance of family planning. You dispelled misconceptions and fears, assuring them that it was about choice, spacing and starting, rather than stopping the joy of having children. Your words resonated, and gradually, you became an integral part of RHU- and we shall forever be indebted to you Owekitibwa.

Throughout your tenure on the board of trustees of RHU, you were a guiding light, providing invaluable insights and strategic direction. Your wealth of experience and unwavering dedication played a pivotal role in shaping the organisation's mission to champion, provide and enable universal access to rights based sexual reproductive health and rights information and services to vulnerable and underserved communities especially young people.

Owekitibwa Mpanga's impact extends far beyond her role as a board member of RHU. Her legacy lives on in the countless lives she touched, the women she empowered, and the communities she transformed in her other capacities. Her unwavering commitment to the cause of reproductive health and her relentless pursuit of gender equality serve as an inspiration to us all.

Today, as we honour Owekitibwa Joyce Mpanga, let us not only celebrate her remarkable achievements but also pledge to carry forward her torch of compassion, resilience, and unwavering dedication. Let us continue the work she started, ensuring that every person has access to comprehensive reproductive health services and the ability to make informed choices about their own bodies and lives.

Owekitibwa, we express our gratitude to you for the selfless service, your unwavering commitment, and your indomitable spirit. Your legacy will forever be etched in the annals of reproductive health advocacy in Uganda, and your impact will continue to shape the lives of countless people for generations to come.

At RHU, we commiserate your family, the Kingdom of Buganda and the nation as a whole- May your soul rest in eternal peace