

RWENZORI PEOPLES' VOICE

ENHANCING CIVIC COMPETENCE FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

RO EA 1002681



Members of Nyankwanzi Peoples' Voice Neighbourhood Assembly during one of their Community Parliament sessions in Nyankwanzi Sub County

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EDITORIAL NOTE

The editorial team welcomes you to the third ISSUE, Volume I of the Rwenzori People's Voice Magazine of 2011. This year, we have witnessed political and economic transformation in Uganda and world over.

Every other day, citizens have seen change in their livelihoods that is driven towards building a strong foundation in the people's lives. At the beginning of the year 2011, citizens of voting age exercised their constitutional right to vote for their leaders which was followed by swearing in ceremonies. Eight months down, we are witnessing a vibrant Civil Society that has challenged the leaders to account for their time in office. While, we might be raising our eye-brows to the leaders, what about our neighbors who are swimming in abject poverty because they cannot afford a meal or even get access to medical services because the Health Centers do not have drugs.

Immediately after the new Government took power in May 2011, the clamor for salary increment by the civil servants became everybody's concern including the 9th Parliament apportioning themselves big chunks of tax payers' money in closed doors. Inflation hit double digits, and Government was tasked to explain to the public after the citizens hit the road in form of 'Walk to Work'. All came to pass, but what has remained is the biting poverty, poor state of roads, bridges being washed away all over the Country, deteriorating health services, scarcity of water due to power workmanship, and collapsing classrooms and continued loadshedding.

A new wave of corruption has also hit the Country in the recent past, including theft of Uganda Broad Casting Mast, save for the Police who intervened, the Oil sector is under question by the 9th Parliament, unaccounted for tax payers money supposedly paid back to the Government of Burundi, inflated compensations to the business elites, this if unchecked is likely to breed a new product of leaders who are immune to corruption. Civil Society is there to raise the 'red flag' and demand for accountability.

As we celebrate end of year 2011 with success, our leaders are busy holding District Council meetings, and Parliament is in progress proving its might in holding those who poked their hands in the public jackpot. RWECO and its partners presented a communiqué to the LCV Chairperson, Kabarole District demanding for action by the District Council.

In this ISSUE of Rwenzori People's Voice, we bring you a wrap up of the actions RWECO members and partners delivered to the citizens. In the same vein RWECO has expanded its partnership to Computers for Schools Uganda, Christian Partners Development Agency-Kenya, and Farm Africa-Kenya. RWECO proudly wishes all Ugandans a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year 2012

1. *Alice Mbayahi*
2. *James Mwirima*
3. *Jimmy Baluku Odyek*
4. *Robert Nyaika*
5. *Isaac Sinamakosa*
6. *Sedress M. Kalyengyo*

CITIZENS ELECTION WATCH – IT (CEW-IT) ACQUIRES NEW NAME

The RWECO editorial team talked to the RWECO Coordinator Mr. James Mwirima about the structures and new developments in the Consortium. RWECO is the lead agency for CIWIT, a National Consortium of five (5) regional organizations in Uganda. Below are the highlights of the interview;

The Citizens Election Watch - IT (CEW-IT) consortium has changed name to Citizens Watch It (CIWIT). According to the National Coordinator, Mr. Mwirima James, this change was necessitated by the increased demand from CEWIT's constituency to broaden its mandate from election monitoring to strengthening civic competence on democratic governance, social and political accountability, human rights monitoring, and advocacy and constitutionalism. Therefore, the new mandate means Citizens Watch It (CIWIT) is to become a citizenry watch dog on electoral democracy, good governance, accountability, human rights and constitutionalism.

In order for it to play its watchdog role more effectively CIWIT is finalizing the process of incorporation as a company limited by guarantee. This means that the consortium will now become a legal entity in its own right other than deriving its legality from its membership. However, the Coordinator emphasized the independence and autonomy of the member organizations. He argued that CIWIT will continue being a national forum for CSOs to lobby and advocate on policy issues that require national attention.

In the same vein the Coordinator reported that in a bid to fulfill its new mandate CIWIT had received funding from the European Union and Oxfam Novib worth about three hundred eighty thousand Euros to implement an action on strengthening political accountability by ensuring that the Citizens Manifesto is put in action. According to Mwirima, this action is meant to enhance a social contract between the citizens and their leaders. It will be implemented in the 10 regions of Uganda including Rwenzori (by RWECO), West Nile (by CEFORD), Acholi (by ACORD), Teso (by PAC Uganda) and Bukedi, Busoga, Buganda, Ankole and Kigezi (by DENIVA).

If well implemented the action will contribute

to the National Development Plan (2010/11 - 2014/15) Objective (g) which is 'to ensure good governance, security and defence' by raising the voices of citizens in the democratic governance process in Uganda through empowerment of citizens and strengthening of civic organizations' capacity to demand political accountability. The action will also have two immediate objectives, namely; firstly to create awareness among citizens, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and elected candidates from local to national levels on the Citizens' Manifesto (CM) by popularizing its socio-economic and political priorities that address marginalized citizens, and secondly, to strengthen capacities of citizens and CSOs/Capacity Based Organizations (CBOs) representing them to actively follow-up on their elected leaders' promises by demanding participation in the public planning and budgeting processes and to be translated into socio-economic and political priorities as summarized in the CM.

The action will also ensure that CSOs and the CBOs active at the grass roots level will have enhanced their capacity in CM and civic education to promote political empowerment within local communities. It will also target 100,000 citizens who will be aware of the CM and are able to identify issues related to their socio-economic and political priorities as expressed in the CM. On the other hand the action will also ensure that elected leaders in 29 Districts are aware of the priority needs of the citizens as stated in the CM. The action is also expected to help CBOs to establish sustainable participation mechanisms (people's Parliaments, citizens' platforms) that will allow continuation of dialogue and mutual accountability between citizens and the elected leaders. Lastly it will ensure Citizens appreciate the CM and are able to demand its implementation from the elected and appointed leaders.

When tasked to shade more light on when all this was going to take place, the Coordinator explained that the action started effectively in August 2011 when Oxfam Novib inked the contract with the National Authorizing Officer (Uganda's Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development). He added that since then CEW-IT had organized a proj-

ect inception meeting to have a deeper understanding of the action and the expected deliverables. He also informed the editorial team that CEW-IT together with the UGMP secretariat at the NGO Forum had embarked on simplifying the Citizens' Manifesto and was to translate it into five national dialects (Runyakitara, Lugbara, Acholi, Ateso and Luganda). This is meant to ensure that the CM gets down to the last person in the communities.

The Coordinator also revealed that he had led a team of twenty five (25) Ugandans to western Kenya and Rakai in Uganda to learn about the concept of alternative citizens' Parliaments which is seen as one of the key means through which the citizens are to engage their leaders on accountable leadership and community development. He also added that a lot of preparation was taking place to have the project stream into action. These include identifying and signing contracts with 150 Community Based Organizations, establishing alternative people's Parliaments in 29 Districts, developing a training manual and design of information, education and communication materials. He also reported that the project had been launched within Kampala by Deniva and the Coordinating Unit, in Rwenzori, West Nile, Acholi and finally in Soroti.

The Coordinator concluded that the action is expected to end in July 2011 before which time it will have seen more copies of the Citizens' Manifestos in the hands of more than one million Ugandans including the youth, people with disabilities, the youth and women as special interest groups. Before he signed off the Coordinator informed the team that as the project on political accountability gains tempo another one on social accountability was also in town. He intimated that this new project is expected to start latest early January 2012 and is to be funded by the European Union, Hivos and Oxfam Novib to the tune of about eight hundred thousand Euros (800,000) for two years. With that final remark he slithered into his offices on Spear House on Jinja Road in Kampala.

RWECO PLEDGES TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE PUBLIC PROPERTY AND TO COMBAT CORRUPTION!

Civil Society activists are demanding District Local Governments in the Rwenzori region to stem corruption by acting on the recommendations contained in the reports of the Auditor General and Public Accounts Committee. This was contained in a communiqué that was presented to the LCV Chairman of Kabarole District, Hon. Rwabuhinga Richard at the end of a three days' workshop on Social Accountability which was organized by the Rwenzori Consortium for Civic Competence in November 2011 at RACA Resort in Fort Portal. The communiqué was generated by the workshop participants who included one hundred nine (109) community process facilitators and staff of RWECO members (KALI, IWDP, Good Hope Foundation for Rural Development and RIC-NET). The participants also demanded District Local Governments to adopt and implement client charters as a way of fostering transparency and account-

ability to the citizens in the process of service delivery.

In response Hon Rwabuhinga invited RWECO to present the communiqué to the Kabarole District Local Council which on the 16th of December 2011. He also advised RWECO to seek audience with the rest of the District Councils in the Rwenzori region because the issues raised in the communiqué were so pertinent and needed action by all District local Governments.

While Officiating over the closure of the workshop the Chairperson LCV Kabarole District appreciated the commitment of CSOs especially RWECO in advocating for social accountability which he said is a prerequisite for the achievement of the social goal. The Chairperson noted that he looks forward to developing and maintaining close relations

with CSOs as partners in development but also called upon CSOs to reciprocate and look at Local Governments as partners and also be positive in their monitoring/reporting. He was excited about the development of the Kabarole E-society Center being spearheaded by RWECO, which he noted was going to enhance the feedback process and interaction with the wide populace and act as a platform for enhancing social accountability an information sharing in the District.

Media houses including all FM radios in the Rwenzori region and Mbarara as well as Bukedde Newspaper published the communiqué as a news item in their bulletins. Here below are excerpts of the communiqué.

RWENZORI CONSORTIUM FOR CIVIC COMPETENCE (RWECO)
P.O. BOX 539, BWERA-KASESE
MOB: 0772986345, Email:rweco2009@gamil.com

November, 24 20

**A Communiqué on the Training of Community Process Facilitator held fr
22-24 November 2011 at RACA Resort, Fort Portal Municipality**

Preamble:

We the members of Rwenzori Consortium for Civic Competence (RWECO) which is a membership organization comprised of Karambi Action for Li Improvement (KALI), Integrated Women Development Programme (IWDP), Goc Hope Foundation for Rural Development (GHFRD) and Rwenzori Informatic Centres Network (RICNET) founded in 2009;

Cognizant of our major aim being to enhance the civic competence on social accountability in the Rwenzori region and beyond;

Aware that we can only deliver on our mandate by working with community based structures including government;

Recognizing the need for enhancing capacities of citizens, community process facilitators and local governments; and

In exercise of our constitutional rights as citizens of Uganda;

Do hereby commit ourselves to:

Participate in community driven actions and government flagship programmes aimed at reducing poverty;

Protect and preserve public property and to combat corruption and misuse or wastage of public property;

Contribute to ending endemic poverty, abuse of human rights, and promotion of the rule of law;

In pursuance of these commitments we now ask our district and sub county local governments to:

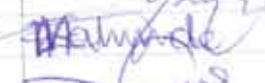
1. Implement with immediate effect the policy on clients charters in all district departments and other lower local governments;
2. Provide space for civil society organizations, particularly RWECO, to input and inform the planning and budgeting processes;
3. Make public and act on the Auditor General's opinion and recommendations as made from year to year (as required in the law);
4. Implement the recommendations of the District Public Accounts Committee, and the Public Accounts Committee of Parliament;
5. Use the monitoring reports by the CSOs to inform action by the sub county and district local governments. RWECO is already applying standard and approved Public Expenditure Tracking Survey Tools as approved by Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the World

Bank.

6. To take punitive actions against civil servants who are implicated in corruption and related scandals e.g. those that either knowingly or unknowingly, directly or indirectly certify ghost, incomplete or shoddy works;
7. To ensure that all public works and projects being executed by local governments are officially launched, have site meetings, and commissioned as required by the law (PPDA, LG Act.);
8. Make NAADS a pro-poor flagship programme by targeting the very poor instead of the active poor as is the practice now, also increase funding to farmers other than spending most of it on administration and overheads.

Aware that the local governments in the Rwenzori region espouse constitutionalism we now demand that they commit themselves to prioritizing enhancing civic competence to create wealth, end poverty and strengthen food security.

Now we the several persons named below do hereby sign on behalf of the 109 participants attending this 3 – day workshop who include staff of RWECO member organizations and Community Process Facilitators (CPF) hailing from Kasese, Kabarole, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko, Kamwenge, Kyegegwa and Kamwenge.

NAME	ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
1 Mwirima James	RWECO Coordinating Unit	Coordinator	
2 Baluku Jimmy	RWECO Coordinating Unit	M&E Officer	
3 Kyomuhendo Joselyne	RICNET	Programme Manager	
4 Rukidi Sam	Executive Director	IWDP	
5 Kahunde Erina	Programme Officer	IWDP	
6 Mainuka Paddy	Executive Secretary	GHFRD	
7 Sinamakosa Isaac	Programme Officer	GHFRD	
8 Kidima Margaret	Programme Officer	GHFRD	
9 Muhesi Nicholoas	Programme Officer	KALI	
10 Masika Sedress	Programme Officer	KALI	
11 Oluka Emmanuel	Programme Officer ICT	RWECO CU	
12 Rev Mucunguzi Isaiah	Chairperson Board	RWECO	

RWECO DYMSTIFIES ICT- E-PLATFORMS IN UGANDA

Yosia Baluku- ICT Officer RIC-NET

The use of ICT based platforms has remained a challenge to many people in Uganda, including Civil Society activities; this is partly due to the negative attitude towards ICT as an expensive and less user-friendly tool. This has affected easy access to and sharing of information amongst the community. In the bid to enhance timely access to information and increased participation in social accountability, RIC-NET with support from Rwenzori Consortium for Civic Competence (RWECO) conducted several trainings for their members and stakeholders on the use of the various e-platforms like Blogging, Skyping, Twitter, and D-group among others. Trainings were conducted in the Rwenzori, Eastern and Northern regions of Uganda.

D-Group training in Kasese

The Kasese D-group (dgroups@kasese.org) or simply the online Discussion group, which is administered by RIC-NET, is one of the online platforms that RWECO is popularizing across Uganda. It allows members who have signed up with it to initiate, respond and receive messages or discussion topics.

RWECO has been conducting training workshops targeting key District staffs, CSO activists and members of the private sector. One such training workshop was held on 15th November 2011 at the E-Society resource center Kasese. It attracted a number of participants from Kasese and Kabarole Districts Local Governments, members of the CSOs and RWECO focal persons. The training was facilitated by the RIC-NET Executive Director and ICT officer.



ICT Officer- Yosia facilitating at the d-group training in Kasese.

During the training participants signed up with the D-group and were approved as members. Most of these have since remained active members on platform, generating and also responding to topics under discussion. Prior to this training the online Discussion group (D-group) was nearly inactive but it is realized that after the training the platform is more active with a number of hot issues in the region being discussed.

Other training workshops have been conducted for the members of the Citizens watch -IT (CWIT) in West Nile, Acholi and Teso sub regions. To keep the ball rolling, under its demystification of ICT agenda, RIC-NET also trained staff from PAC, CEFORD and ACORD in ICT based platforms that included;. Uchaguzi (<http://www.uchaguzi-Uganda.blogspot.com>) platform that was used during the election process, <http://rwecovoice.blogspot.com>), CEW-IT (<http://cewit.or.ug> , <http://www.uchaguzi.co.ug> and other information sharing platforms like the Skype and Twitter. Members signed up and started using some of these platforms.

Participants were also taken through sessions on computer repair and maintenance.

Since then more people have come on board; more have signed up with the d-group and Skype and not only signing up but putting it into use. Besides other members have started posting stories on the blogs like PAC Uganda have posted a story on the CEWIT blog. I am optimistic that this is going to facilitate easier and faster information access and sharing. I appeal to all the other members who have not yet started using these platforms to develop a positive attitude towards them.

NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSEMBLIES; FOR WHAT?

Jimmy B. Odyek- M&E RWECO

During my school days, I was told by my Professors not to be a copycat but acknowledge the authors to avoid being penalized and reduce on Court battles over Intellectual Property Rights. This did not come to pass; after joining the Civil Society, I was bombarded by another catch word “**Neighbourhood Assembly**” (NA). Before I could complete my Google scholar search for the catch word and its authors, I received an email inviting me for a learning visit in the name of Neighborhood Assembly to Kakamega in Western Kenya. On 1st, Nov 2011 I was a member of a team of twenty five (25) Civil Society activists from RWECO, PAC, CEFORD, DENIVA and ACORD who were introduced to the concept of neighborhood assemblies. Our Host Mr Elizaphan Ogche from Christian Partners’ Development Agency (CPDA) indicated that Neighborhood assemblies whose sole aim is to mobilize communities for development originated in Greece in the early C19th.

The whole idea of Neighborhood Assemblies was so exciting and educative, from the different places visited in Kakamega, Chavakali, Gimomoi, Seremi and Mbale - my “Kadodi” friends in Uganda don’t jump on me I am talking about Mbale in Western Kenya. I person-

ally learnt a number of things for instance I learnt that Neighborhood Assemblies are local initiatives meant to identify local problems, local solutions and actions; and that if they are integrated into development programs poverty will be history. You might ask me, was it a replica of MDGs in Kakamega, never mind, what I saw was more than a UN Conference in Seremi questioning how the medical staff spent their time, where the drugs went, what about the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) and what about the compensation for the Seremi road? Unfortunately all these discussions were in Kiswahili, only my colleague Elizaphan could interpret for me some coastal Kiswahili jargons. True the Neighborhood Assembly in Seremi was a real one; woman after woman, man after man all demanded for the sacking of the corrupt Health Staff who had become anti-hills to push. One of the senior citizens confessed to the assembly how a pregnant woman was tossed up and down for interfering with one of the doctor’s sleep!! I found this testimony so unbelievable in this Century. Having citizens assemble together to discuss issues that are affecting them and finding local solutions to them is what Neighborhood Assemblies precisely means in the East African context.



One common argument that appeared all through the Neighborhood Assemblies that I attended in Kenya “ Kazi kwa vijana pesa kwa wazei”; as usual I rushed for my Google search to get the meaning of this, but before I could find it my colleague whispered to me that it’s about the Youth Fund, which the Kenyan Parliament had allocated the youth but with a condition that the youth must work for that money. Surprisingly the discussions indicated that the youth had actually worked for the money but the “big fish” in Government had paid the money to themselves! I still can’t help wondering, how can a youth work and the “big fish” pocket the money?

While in Kenya I listened to a live Parliamentary session on radio where the implicated big fish were explaining how they used the youth fund. This experience brought me to believe that until citizens hold leaders accountable we shall continue receiving lip service from the Government.

A similar visit was conducted to Kasesero landing site and Mutukula in Rakai District, Uganda, and from these two learning visits I realized that Neighborhood Assemblies are called different names depending on the circumstance. In Rakai, NAs are called “People’s Parliament”, while in Kasese, they are called “Ekyaghanda Ekyabataaka”- Community meetings. Whichever way NAs are referred to, I learnt that they (NAs) are meant to mobilize the communities to seek local solutions to local problems in a participatory way.

RWECO STAFF REVIEW PROGRESS OF THE SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROJECT

Mbayahi Alice Mushenene -Information Officer- RIC-NET

Biblically noted that “do not give up the spirit of meeting together”, RWECO as well upholds this practice to strengthen collaboration between the partner organizations, create a platform for experience sharing about the different activities being implemented by partners and to help partners keep abreast/track on the progress of the project under implementation by the different partners (KALI, IWDP, RIC-NET and GoodHope Foundation for Rural Development.)

RWECO on 21.10.11 held its second staff meeting at Kasese SSD. The purpose of the meeting was to bring partners together to review the progress of the project and to also share on key upcoming activities; how and when they will be done.

During the meeting the partners shared reports indicating that a number of activities ranging from conducting staff meetings, radio programs, conducting of inception meetings and a baseline survey in the project ar-

reas, trainings, mobilization and selection of monitors, and in - putting to the production of the recently published RWECO Newsletter were some of the activities that had been conducted.

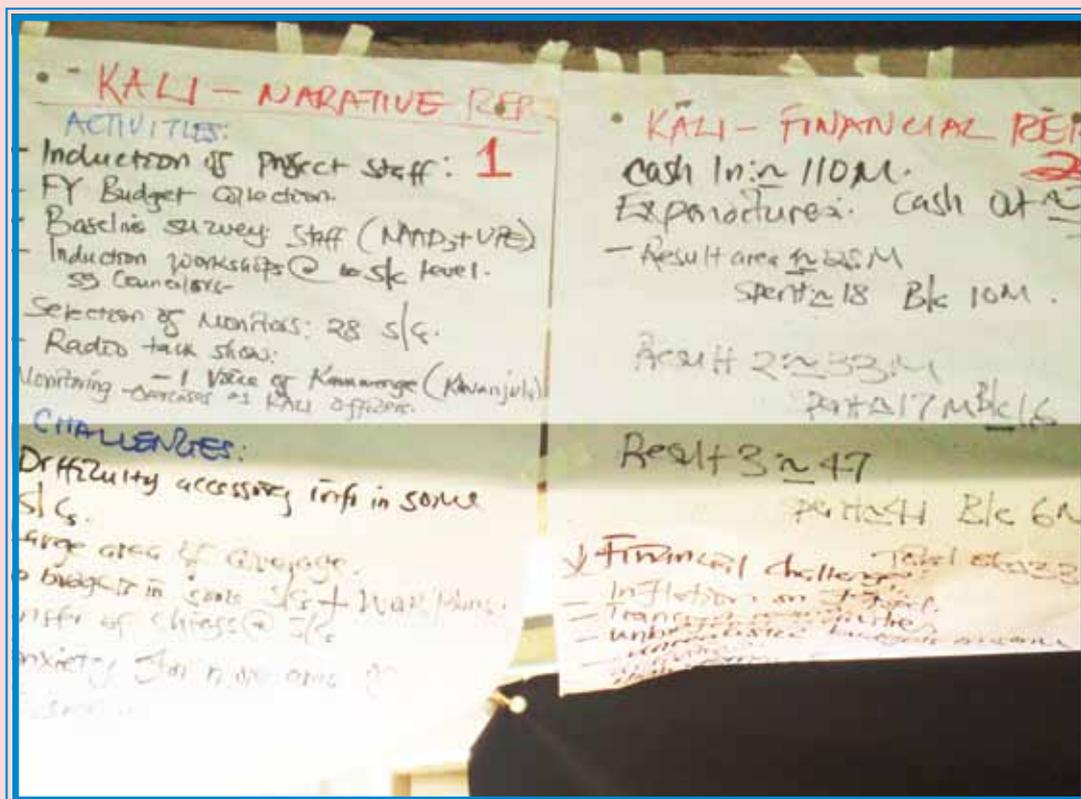
Reports indicated that most of the partners had accomplished 90% of what they had initially planned to do at the inception of the ended quarter (August-October 2011).



Making her presentation the IWDP RWECO focal person Kahunde Erina revealed that “at IWDP we achieved all that we had initially planned to do then”. According to Erina, amongst other achievements registered was the establishment and strengthening of rapport between IWDP and the Local Governments in the project areas especially in Kyegegwa District, and the ability of the new RWECO focal person Kabasinguzi Margaret to cope and also perform her job so well.

In addition to this, RIC-NET she also noted that she had been able to enhance her visibility locally, Nationally and Internationally, had built and also tested the Bulk Sms platform, enhanced staff capacity and skills in pro- poor budget analysis, revamped the functionality of the E-Society Center in Kase and the D-group among others.

On its part KALI also indicated that it had strengthened rapport with the District Leadership in Kamwenge which even offered KALI office space when it effectively starts implementation of the project in the District and also been able to mentor 280 monitors in their different areas of operation. In a related development Good Hope Foundation noted that it had been able to form/establish project structures in its areas of operation and to also strengthen rapport with Bundibudgyo District Local Government which recently invited them to attend the District quarterly NAADs meeting as key stakeholders in development. Finally, speaking for RWECO CU- Jimmy B. Odyek highlighted that the Coordinating Unit had also been able to maintain, sustain and strengthen the consortium and also enhance the Consortium’s Networks with other partners like Oxfam Novib.



A quick scan through the three areas under M&E; Weak institutional linkages within CSOs and LGs, Low and ineffective engagement of citizens and the LGs and Inadequate access to and utilization of reliable information by the citizens indicated that; under linkages with LGs, RWECO had been able to work with 81 Sub Counties and 7 Local Governments. This is evidenced in the LG’s willingness to share District information/reports, offer office space, and also pledge provision of equipments to the initiatives started by the partners like the E-Society Center in Kabarole and Kasese Disticts.

About linkages with other CSOs, members agreed that the pledges from other CSOs to offer equipment to E-society Centers and to also jointly implement the project with them is an indicator of the established linkages with other CSOs. Some of the CSOs include Unite and Link in Kamwenge, Toro Development, RAC, KIC and KANCA in Kabarole District, Partner-

ship with Computers for schools Uganda, Aljazeera, UNICIEF, VSO, SNV, and CARE International in Uganda among others.

Commenting on the area, Citizen's engagement of LGs, members reported increased Community vigilance on reporting of service delivery challenges.

However, members also highlighted a number of challenges which were encountered during the implementation of the activities; it was generally noted that some project Sub Counties were too large, distant and therefore hard to reach and adequately work in given the inadequate resource envelope and the difficulty in accessing secretarial services, and mobile phone network.

During the meeting a number of recommendations were made, these included;

1. *More fundraising should be done by the Coordinating Unit and member organisations to cater for the inadequacy that might hinder effective implementation of the project in the hard to reach sub counties.*
2. *Routine engagement with monitors should be considered to ensure full ownership and conceptualization of the project by the monitors.*
3. *Quick establishment of E-society Centers in the District where they are not should be considered to answer the impatience of the District officials and to also confirm the seriousness of RWECO towards working with the respective District LGs.*
4. *An official launch of the project should be done to cement the already established rapport.*
5. *RWECO should train District Leaders in the project areas on issues of Social Accountability before effective implementation of the project begins, similarly radio programs should be conducted to introduce the project to the stakeholders in the project areas.*
6. *Finally, members agreed that in future T-shirts should be given to the monitors for purposes of identification and motivation.*

INSIDE IWDP

LOCAL LEADERS VOW TO FIGHT INSECURITY IN THE REGION

Kahunde Erina, RWECO-IWDP

As the festive season draws near, there is a lot of social unrest in the Rwenzori region characterized by stealing, domestic violence, accidents and recklessness. The police, RDCs, Chair person LC Vs and LC IIIs in the Districts of Kabarole and Kyegegwa have put up measures to fight insecurity in the Districts. This message was communicated

by the same leaders during a radio program sponsored by RWECO under the invitation and coordination of IWDP (soon to be called RIDE AFRICA).

Three radio programs were held on Life FM radio by different leaders from the Districts of Kyegegwa and Kabarole. The sensitization campaigns started in September/November 2011 to discuss the strategies for improving

the security situation in the two Districts. Strategies to improve the situation include;

1. Revitalizing security committees at District, Sub County and LCI so that crime can be detected early and prevented.
2. Establishment of Police Posts in trading centers with high crime rates such as Nyabagahya in Kakabara Sub County, Kyegegwa District.
3. Conducting of police patrols with vehicles and foot to arrest evil doers.
4. Conducting community policing to sensitize communities on how to live peacefully, people's rights and the legal process.
5. Sensitization on how to prevent crimes and corruption especially among traffic police officers.
6. Local Leaders especially LC I to report cases of bad behavior to relevant authorities before they yield crime.
7. Encouraging all drivers to service their cars to avoid accidents
8. Encouraging the individuals to stop moving at night.
9. Holding village meetings to sensitize and warn communities to avoid bad behavior.



CPFS SPEAK OUT ON SERVICE DELIVERY IN KYEGEGWA DISTRICT

ALARMING EDUCATION STANDARDS IN KAKABARA SUB COUNTY

*Kakooza John- CPF Kakabara Sub County,
Kyegegwa District*

“The poor attitude towards education and the ever declining standards in Kakabara Sub County are partly due to the high level of illiteracy among the adults” asserted Mr..... According to him, the parents do not feel compelled to send or encourage their children to stay in school because they do not really see the importance of education since they are in a way managing life without the so called education. This has seen many children dropping out of school before completing either the primary or secondary cycles of education. Research carried out by Kyaka students Association in 2009 shows that out of every 100 pupils who enroll in primary one only 40 pupils complete primary seven. High dropout rates are seen amongst the girl child.

On the other hand, illiteracy accounts for the limited ownership of not development programs in the areas. Many programs have not been fully embraced because most of the people are either illiterate or biased about them as these programs are associated with the elite class who in most cases spearhead or introduce them to the community. This kind of scenario has frustrated Government and development partners’ efforts who have continued to inject resources in the community to facilitate development with little success.

From the various monitoring exercises, IWDP has come to learn of some of the outstanding problems in the education sector. These range from lack of active parental involvement in the education sector, high teacher: pupil ratios, pupil absenteeism, lack of washrooms for the girl child making the girl child vulnerable and uncomfortable at school, to limited or lack of staff houses. These among other challenges have undermined good results and standards of education in the Sub County.



Overview about the Sector

Kakabara Sub County has got 13 Government aided primary schools and over 25 private primary schools though others have not registered with the ministry of education. The total enrollment in these schools varies from year to year. The current pupil population in the Sub County (for Government aided primary schools) is 6090 pupils which are manned by only 96 teachers. Pupils who sit PLE exams range from 400-500 pupils every year. It is unfortunate to note that out of over 450 pupils who sat PLE exams in 2010 only 03 passed in division one. In 2011 pupils equally did not perform well in mock exams at primary level, for instance, out of 354 pupils who sat for mock exams, only 04 passed in Division one. Below is the performance of Kakabara Sub County in mock exams 2011. Summary is as follows; Div one- 04, Div 2- 24, Div 3 - 27, Div 4 - 74, Div U- 225, **Total = 354**

This is alarming and calls for massive intervention of all stakeholders under the education sector in the Sub County to change the trend.

Proposed Approach to Solve the Problem

After realizing that most of the problems above are societal and can be addressed with the involvement of all stakeholders, the Sub County Local Government, the education department and community leaders have organized consultative meetings with education stakeholders; teachers, head teachers,

school management committees, PTAs in various parishes, community members and civil society to participate in the upcoming education conference that will take place in December 2011 at Kakabara primary school where solutions to the challenges faced in the education sector will be drawn and followed up for implementation.

NON-FUNCTIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEMS CLAIM INNOCENT LIVES IN KAKABARA SUB COUNTY

By Kakooza John, CPF Kakabara

Just Like any other Sub County, Kakabara Sub County has all the administrative systems; LC I, LC II, Sub County chief, parish chiefs, CDO, GISO, Police and LC III which is the head of security in the Sub County. All the structures mentioned have a role to play in ensuring the security of the people, unfortunately the story seems to be different in Kakabara Sub County; the community in Kakabara can't help wondering why people routinely are being killed in Kakabara in the presence of the leaders.'

Since July 2011 to November 2011, 12 people have lost their lives while two are still nursing serious injuries. The first incident happened in Nyabagahya, Migongwe parish where a group of young people led by one commonly known as 'Makanika' claimed lives of eight people including a church leader. Another incident was in Kiryabyoma, Kijaguzo parish where one person commonly known as 'Binasu' Byaruhanga picked a panga and killed two children belonging to a Catholic Church leader. [My observation as a citizen is](#) that there is a lot of laxity and negligence by the leaders to enforce laws. This laxity has seen many people doing as they please and also facilitated many children to drop out of school leaving them with no option but to fend for their survival through all dubious ways like stealing and in extreme case through murder. The same laxity to enforce laws accounts for the continued and increasing gambling and drug abuse practices in the community; many people both youths and the elderly are engaged in alcoholism and smoking marijuana all through the week

from 8:00am till late in the night. It defeats logic why and how these evils and detrimental acts can keep going on in the presence of the various religious, Civil Society, public servants, police, cultural, community and political leaders right from LCI to LCIII levels.

I ask; "what are we doing as members of society?" I appeal to my fellow citizens to stand up against this laxity and negligence by the leaders, let's hold them accountable because we are the victims of all these circumstances. Let us also learn to report suspects to the relevant authorities, do follow up and hold our leaders accountable.

Lastly to Local leaders remember that you promised to protect us and we expect you to help us realize our social goals. A leader is not known just by the title but by the way he handles the challenges affecting his people. We don't expect to continue seeing darkness at Noon!

KALI MOBILIZES THE COMMUNITY AGAINST CHOLERA OUTBREAK IN KASESE DISTRICT

Muhseni Nicholas- RWECO Focal Person

In an attempt to curb cholera outbreak in Kasese District, Karambi Action for Life Improvement (KALI) in conjunction with Bwera Hospital mobilized volunteers in November 2011 to disseminate information on cholera to the communities.

The upsurge of cholera cases is attributed to the lack of clean water and proper sanitation facilities coupled with the current heavy rains and high population movement from neighboring countries.

This effort intended to support the already established Cholera task force and the Kasese District medical team in sensitizing the communities on the outbreak of the epidemic.

Cholera first hit Kayanzi landing site in Nyakiumbu sub-county Kasese District and later spread to some other parts of Mpondwe Lhubiriha Town Council and Busongora County.

The Cholera task force revealed that over four people had died following the recent outbreak of this epidemic in the District. According to the In-Charge Kayanzi Health Centre II Mr. Balinda Simon the death of the four people was enhanced by the ignorance of the residents who delayed the patients and kept attributing their illness to witchcraft instead of taking the affected for treatment. He noted that those who died did not visit the HC in time and ended up being dehydrated.

Karambi Action for Life Improvement was among the Non-Governmental Organizations in Kasese that came up to empower stakeholders to sensitize the masses on the outbreak of cholera in the already affected areas of Kayanzi and Mpondwe Lhubiriha Market.

The Cholera task force moved to Mpondwe Lhubiriha market sensitizing the market vendors selling juice, sugar canes, and some other food stuffs to halt their business until the disease ends.

The same team went to Bwera Hospital where they met the Hospital Administrator and laid modalities to boost massive sensitization of the communities. During the visit the teams observed that the isolation unit allocated for cholera patients was in a sorry state in terms of hygiene.

In Kayanzi, the team visited the landing site and Kayanzi HCII where Cholera patients were being admitted. The team established that latrine coverage at the landing site was alarmingly low, and that the water points used by residents are not safe. Residents in Kayanzi drink and use lake water which some lake some residents use to dispose off their human waste, under such circumstances, an epidemic is inevitable.

Commenting on this situation the Kasese District LCV Chairman Lt. Col. Mawa Muhindo noted that the District leadership had created a treatment centre in Kayanzi such that the disease doesn't easily spread to the rest of the parts in the District. He also revealed that modalities to construct the road to Kayanzi are underway such that Cholera patients are not delayed on the way in case there was need for them to be transferred to Bwera, Kaganjo and Kilembe hospitals.

Besides the field sensitization exercise, Karambi Action for Life Improvement offered radio airtime to the District Medical team on Kasese Guide radio to sensitize the masses on the epidemic and how the disease can be prevented.

WITH ONE VOICE WE SPEAK

Masika Sedress Kalengyo -Program Assistant-Gender

Dear colleagues, for a very long time in Uganda citizens have been electing their representatives at different levels as their voice, but for a very long time still the same citizens seem not to have changed because the melody of their cry has remained the same.

It excites the citizenry when leaders are making promises by words during campaigns and in their written manifestos, looking at the faces of the citizens cum voters, outright relief is read on their faces. Worries become nightmares when listening to political orators promising heaven on earth; maternity wards, roads, water, bridges, and now another vocabulary is promotion of women's rights, and youth employment, but what do we see nine moons down the road, only the 'owl' can tell.

I don't know about you, but for some time now I've come to realize that these leaders have not come back to the grass root - the electorate at that, to listen to their melodies and be able to interpret the different sounds of those who voted them into power. Hmm, it is clear that their absence from the ground has deprived them of information about the reality of the situation their voters are going through and consequently explains why there is limited participation in development, social and political foras (village meetings, Council and Parliamentary sessions) by some of these leaders; say moving and supporting motions, and deliberating on issues that concern the grass root people's welfare.

For heaven's sake! How on earth can you fight an enemy (citizens' problems) without the fighting gadgets (community concerns) at your finger tips? Prove me wrong or right, this is the basis for the deepening cycle of miseries of the masses just because the blow has not reached the enemy.

Down in the villages and Sub Counties citizens are lamenting of the poor road network, and the poor conditions in the health facilities. For example if one took a walk through the access roads of Kyanzi-Kasanga, in Mpondwe Lhubirira Town council, and Kalongoyire-Kyaminyawandi in Nyakiyumbu sub county,

Kasese District, you will at the end of the day agree with me that we have a sleeping lot in the Councils.

A glance through the manifestos of our local leaders all indicates beautiful pledges to have road network improved, it's unfortunate that all that at the moment seems to have been nothing but just "hot air", because not even a single Kilometer has been opened or even drainage worked upon. As if this is not enough, the citizens in Bwera witnessed a shameful scene recently when the leaders in Mpondwe-Lhubirira Town Council sat back instead of supervising the contractor one..... that was working on the Katodoba-Kighandu, CoU Kyanduli road. If it wasn't for the vigilant community that petitioned the District Council to take action that too would have been another waste of public resources. As I put pen and paper together, the contractor in question was summoned and tasked to re-do the drainage and leveling of the road at his own cost. Big Ups, to the citizens of Kyanduli for their vigilance and efforts that has seen 75 million shillings tax payers' money saved!!

In a similar development, a look at other social services in Kasese District reveals that things are still the same or even worse than before! And to this, the bottom line remains how they can be addressed when the leaders are even not aware of them. Now that our representatives have become in-ward looking, should we sit back and watch ourselves being dragged into everlasting miseries?

Now listen carefully! Let us wake up and join the fight; it is about time we the citizens embraced and took advantage of the different existing platforms that have been put in place by CSOs and Government to voice out our service delivery challenges and also hold our leaders accountable. Lets us strengthen our competences and build a vibrant communication web through which we can echo our voices as one and out-do the unfulfilled promises of the leaders. By this I swear to you that we shall fight our own war and get what belongs to us instead of waiting for the sleeping giants.

RWECO AND COMPUTERS FOR SCHOOLS ROOT FOR INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR EDUCATION (ICT4E)

Joel Kamba & Stella Nekesa

In Uganda, most of the sectors like banking, health and revenue collection have embraced technological advancement; it is unfortunate that the same cannot be said about the education sector. Teachers, especially the elderly are still stuck to the traditional rudimentary means of teaching and that the few who use ICTS are using them for their personal amusement rather than bettering their services as teachers.

Over time research has indicated that the education system is so teacher centered it does not allow room for the student to play an active role in the learning process. It is mainly “talk and chalk”, with little emphasis on application of the lessons learnt in real life situations.

RWECO has partnered with Computers for Schools to implement a project on ICT4E (Information and Communication Technologies for Education). This is a three year project that starts January 2012 and is financially supported by IICD and implemented by Computers for Schools Uganda and RWECO.

Computers for Schools Uganda is a non-Governmental organization registered under the Uganda Non-Governmental Organizations Act. Its sole purpose is to maximize performance using emerging Information and Communication Technologies for the development of society, focusing on the education sector. Computers for schools has been implementing the ICT4E project since January 2010 to address the issue of integration of ICTS in the education sector. The project targets both arts and science secondary school teachers.

Workshops in which teachers are exposed to the use of ICTS to solve the day to day school challenges; for instance computing student results using the spreadsheet application, making presentations using the Power Point tool and Word processor tool for word documents.

Since inception the project ICT4E has so far been implemented in 13 secondary schools spread throughout the Country. These schools were selected on the basis that they already had a basic ICT laboratory with minimum conditions acceptable for maintaining a healthy computer lab.

The pilot schools are expected to serve as models, cascading the project to the rest of the schools. Mbarara High School in Mbarara District of western Uganda was the first school to be trained and it therefore acted as the center for coordinating the project.

In the implementation of this project, Computers for Schools Uganda, has been able to organize and conduct sensitization workshops and trainings in ICT initiatives for heads of schools, teachers and the community members, provision of preventive maintenance services to all educational institutions that are beneficiaries of the project, and to create partnerships between the rich and poor schools, private and the Government-aided schools in the Country among others.

With this project in place, Computers for Schools Uganda is optimistic that the capacity of many teachers in using ICTs is going to be enhanced and the education sector is equally going to match with the current trends and also end the challenges in the sector like poor information sharing, documentation and the taxing chalk and talk traditional method of teaching.

Aware of the need for strengthening the integration of ICT in the education sector Computers for schools Uganda contacted RWECO to work together to enhance the use of ICT tools in schools in the Rwenzori region. The duo has signed an MoU to work together from 2012 to 2015.

PERSONAL IMPRESSIONS FROM THE EAST AFRICAN HIGH LEVEL WORKSHOP ON ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN AFRICA

By James Mwirima – Coordinator, Citizens Election Watch – IT (Uganda)

The MS - TCDC organized a high level seminar that interrogated the relevance and effectiveness of electoral democracy in Africa. The three day seminar (7th to 9th November 2011) attracted more than 90 participants from a wide spectrum of society including National Parliaments, Political Parties, National Electoral Commissions, the academia and the Civil Society from mainly East Africa although other participants came from Egypt, Zambia, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Lesotho.

Uganda was represented by six members of the Uganda Governance Monitoring Group (UGMP) headed by the sitting Chair Prof. Jassy Kwesiga including two from CEW-IT. Perspective papers and Country specific experiences on electoral democracy were presented by celebrated academics, Political Party leaders from both the ruling and opposition sides, Parliamentarians including leaders of the National Assemblies of Kenya and Zanzibar,

National Electoral Commissions of Kenya and Lesotho and the Civil Society. All presentations interrogated the concept of neoliberal democracy and its relevance to the modern state.

Academicians like the renowned professor Shivji of the University of Daresalaam described neoliberal democracy as an imposition of the West on the Rest. He argued that democratization is an organic process and has not been known to be effective anywhere as it promotes individualism over collectivism and has its powerbase on capitalism where the haves oppress the have-nots. He qualified his arguments by citing the expensive electoral processes involved in the neoliberal democracy that marginalizes the poor from competing for political office.

He concluded his arguments asserting that electoral democracy has no balance sheet to show gains and losses. In other words, he argued, since it is organic, there is no blue print for electoral democracy anywhere in

the world. It is not a fit-all concept but rather should be adapted to the local circumstances and realities.

Other speakers interrogated the process of social and political mobilization in neo-liberal democracy. Interesting case studies of political mobilization were presented from the ruling Chama Cha Mapenduzi (CCM) and opposition Chadema parties in Tanzania; others were presented from Zambia citing the recently held general elections and then Egypt citing the past and upcoming elections following the Taharir Square events that led to the deposition of the Hosni Mubarak dictatorship in that Country. In all cases it was observed that voter turnout has drastically reduced to less than 50% of the registered voters almost in all the countries, and in Egypt, to less than 10% of the registered voters.

This questions the legitimacy and representativeness of the neoliberal democracy contrary to its key tenets of representativeness, regular free and fair elections, popular participation and competition for political space among others. Also questioned was the issue of special representation e.g. of the women, youth, the army, presidential nominees, etc.

While the practice was generally believed to right wrongs against certain classes of people, its relevancy in the modern times was highly questioned. Civil society organizations gave their own perceptions on political and social mobilization citing examples of the citizens' manifesto in Uganda, the constitutional reforms in Kenya and the women movement in Zambia. However, it was generally observed that civil society has for long been shying away from the rigorous political waters instead preferring the comfort of service delivery and relief thanks to the unfriendly legal and policy framework as is the case of Zimbabwe, Tanzania and Uganda.

However the experiences from Kenya and Uganda showed that in fact civil society can and ought to do more in social and political mobilization in order to ensure the citizenry effectively influence the electoral democratic process. In Kenya civil society was reported to have pushed constitutional reforms that had largely been adopted in the Country's

new constitution. In fact Kenya presented a number of reforms that ought to be studied closely.

The new political reforms in Kenya include increased citizens participation in the decision making process as opposed to the representative neoliberal democracy where citizens role is reduced to only electing their representatives and hoping that they (representatives) will in turn consult and represent their views.

Among the reforms in Kenya is one where citizens participate in vetting appointees to sensitive offices like that of Chief Justice and Electoral Commission; other reforms are in devolution of resources and powers to ensure equitable distribution of the national resource envelope. This was seen as very important for the deepening of democracy since you cannot talk of democracy when citizens are sleeping on hungry stomachs.

Indeed a huge debate ensued on whether we need to adopt other ideals for the democracy other than the ones in current use such as good governance, transparency and accountability which do not make much sense to the unsophisticated citizenry of Africa. New indicators of democracy proposed would include simple things like happiness and satisfaction of the citizenry, togetherness, freedom and economic prosperity.

It was observed that the current neoliberal democracy with its inherent dictatorship of the majority over the minority was in fact fomenting oppression especially of the opposition and people with divergent views and was described as promoting "state terrorism" over the citizens. Examples were cited from Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe where citizens belonging to the opposition were being terrorized by the state. This begged questions from a number of presenters, including Arthur Larok of the Uganda National NGO Forum, who proposed a revisit to the traditional African version of democracy.

Lessons learnt from the workshop

1. Electoral democracy is alien to Africa. It is an imposition of the west on the rest. It was meant to perpetuate imperialism and neocolonialism. There is need to question and revisit its key pillars and indicators in order to make it more relevant to the African situation.

2. Electoral democracy is a process, not a blue print, not a balance sheet of gains and losses. Democratization is a process. African states ought to develop their own road maps to democracy.

3. The legitimacy of electoral democracy is greatly questioned especially on account of popular participation in the process as indicated by the low voter turnout, the huge number of unelected or special representatives in the Parliaments and the limited consultations between the elected leaders and the constituents.

4. Inadequacies in electoral democracy were promoting oppression of dissenting voices and state terrorism against citizens.

5. The question of social and political mobilization ought to be revisited to ensure it is based on "issues" and ideology other than populism. In fact lessons from Uganda indicated that the so-called opposition was not ideologically any different from the ruling party.

6. Political corruption was a huge dent to any gains made in the democratization process in most of the countries in Africa. Some of this was being fomented by the so-called investors who were only interested in robbing and raping African resources - cases were cited from Libya, Uganda and Tanzania among others.

In conclusion the seminar shed a lot of light on electoral democracy and its status in the post independence African states. However, no clear conclusion was made on whether and how electoral democracy can be made more effective.

While some schools of thought proposed a return to the "African" form of democracy others argued that this form had failed to unite and galvanize Africans against foreign domination in both the colonial and neocolonial epochs.

Therefore, what is needed are reforms in the democratization process in African states that see more power divested to the citizenry other than in the political elite. Africa ought to develop its own definition and version of democracy that should be home grown and adoptable to local realities without the undue influence of the west.

A SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY MONITORING FRONTLINE FORMED.

By Sinamakosa Isaac- Good Hope Foundation

Good Hope foundation for rural development in a bid to ensure transparency, accountability and good governance in the public sector has identified project monitors in twenty six sub-counties of Kasese, Bundibugyo, Ntoroko and Kabarole Districts. This is intended to create a critical mass of citizens at sub-county level motivated to volunteer in monitoring service delivery, mobilize communities for positive social actions and occasionally compile reports to responsible stakeholders to take citizenry focused actions.

The sub-counties include; Rukoki, Hiima Town Council, Karusandara, Bugoye, Maliba, Kitswamba, Kyabarungira, Buhuhira and Bwesumbu in Kasese District, Rubona Town Council, Katebwa, Kisomoro, Rwimi, Buhesi and Kabonero in Kabarole District, Bubukwanga, Ngamba, Nyahuka Town Council, Ndugutu and Bubandi in Bundibugyo, and Rwebisengo, Karugutu, Kanara, Rwebisen-

go town council, Kibuku town council and Kanara town council in Ntoroko District. The sub-county chiefs, Local council three chairpersons and Assistant community development officers of most sub-counties were involved in the selection of the project monitors and a total number of two hundred eighty six monitors (286) were selected in the four Districts above of which 60% are males and 40% females. Each sub-county is now represented by a team of eleven people selected from all parishes of each sub-county. The ten monitors are led by a community process facilitator (CPF) elected by themselves.

The selected monitors will under go a training before beginning the monitoring role at service delivery points. For effective work, they need special skills like; basic skills in evidence based reporting and taking actions, information sourcing, packaging and dissemination among others. The training is scheduled for next quarter (early 2012).



CPFs and project staff posing for a group photo.

WESTERN UGANDA GRAPPLES WITH FISTULA

Increasing Fistula Cases: A Governance Problem

Mothers and medical facilities in western Uganda are grappling with the increasing cases of fistula. This was revealed to Good Hope by the Medical Superintendent of Kagando Hospital who reported that the hospital was choking on the increasing number of mothers reporting to the facility with the condition.

According to medics obstetric fistula is the result of obstructed labor. The muscles of the pelvic floor facilitate birth by forcing the fetus to rotate during contractions. If for some reason, the infant cannot go through the birth canal due to position, cephalo-pelvic disproportion, or other cause for obstruction, the pressure of the fetal bony skull against the woman's bony pelvis cuts off the blood supply to the tissue in between, causing hypoxia (lack of oxygen to the tissue) resulting in necrosis (the tissue physically dies). Hence fistula tears or small holes develop disrupting the naturally formed barrier between the bladder or the rectum and the vagina resulting in constant leaking of urine and or feces through the vagina. Long term fistula can lead to ulcerations, infections, damage to the nerves in the legs, kidney diseases, depression, and even early death including suicide. This prolonged pressure and obstruction; however this is preventable during birth by providing emergency medical care, usually through cesarean section.

A woman who develops fistula endures a long and arduous labor commonly to end in the birth of a stillborn child and incontinence. She is then at a risk of ostracism from her community due to her offensive smell.

The effects of fistula as a gender issue leads to family breakdown since the marital role of the woman of sexual satisfaction to the man is no more, she becomes a social reject to the community members due to stigma and bad smell and is isolated due embarrassment.

In some cases the victims might face the challenges of coping with situation that may lead to separation or divorce by the husband for the inability to procreate and decreased

ability to carry out her work or activities. Fistula is linked to governance in the following ways: behaviors of the nurses or midwives who have inadequate skills in handling clients of patients of that natural need to be addressed; the low pay and morale of the medical personnel makes the situation difficult where the medical staff cannot withstand the smell instead do other activities.

There are only few hospitals in this Country that handle fistula cases, a case in point people move all the distance from Rukungiri District up Kagando hospital for services.

Due to understaffing experts for fistula are imported personnel from developed countries that come periodically and you can imagine what happens in their absence.

Government has not fulfilled its pledge of providing a health facility in every sub-county; this is an appeal to Government to put in more efforts in the fight against fistula among the women folk.

In an interaction with the medical personnel at Kagando hospital, this is the statistics (provide the statistics on fistula).

RWECO ACTIVITY PHOTOS



About RWECO