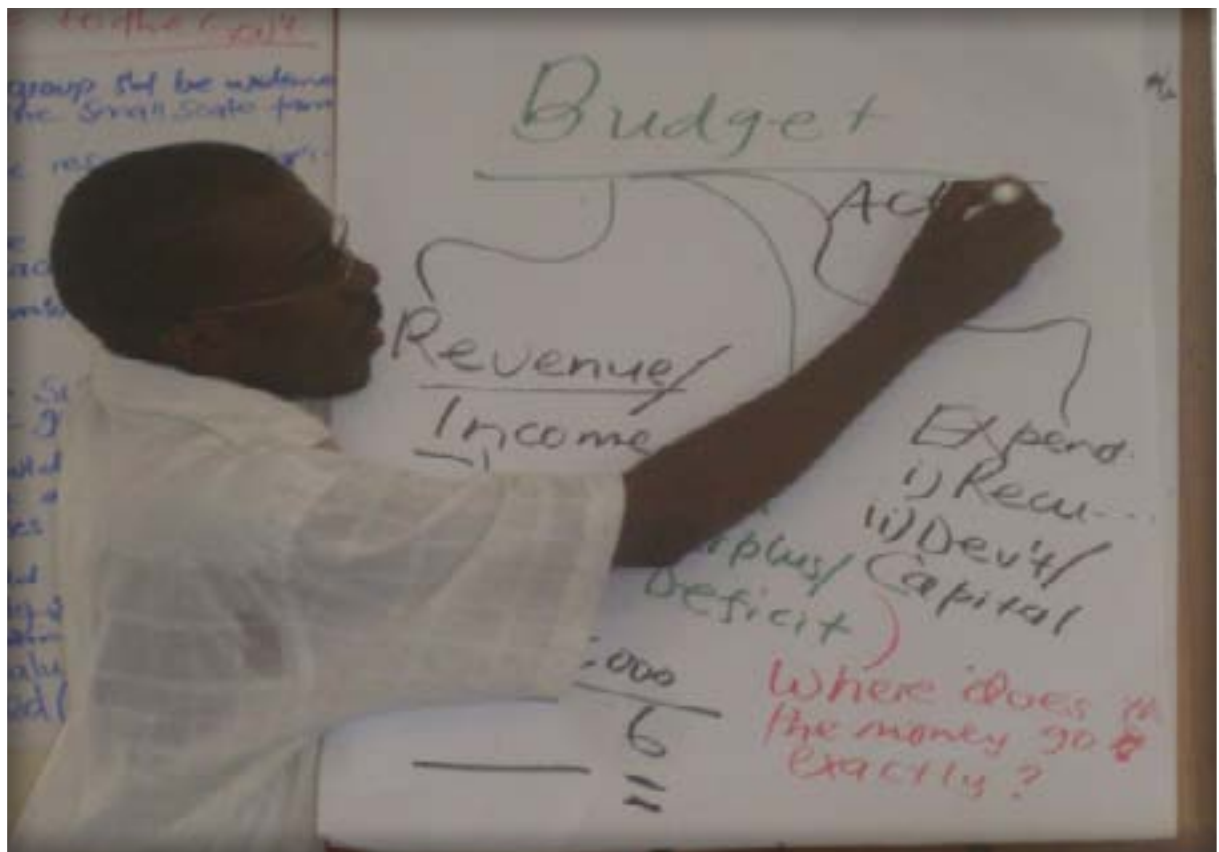


RWENZORI PEOPLES' VOICE



ENHANCING CIVIC COMPETENCE FOR SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

RO EA 1002681



Julius Kapwepwe facilitating a Pro-Poor Budget Analysis Workshop for RWECO Partners at Kasese Catholic Social Services Hall from 11th August 2011 to 13th August 2011.

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RWECO COORDINATOR SPEAKS OUT ABOUT THE ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS

Rwenzori People's voice talked to the Coordinator RWECO Mr. James Mwirima and this is what he had to say about the organization's programs.

QN: What is RWECO and what is it tasked to address?

ANS: RWECO stands for Rwenzori Consortium for Civic Competence. It is a coalition of four Civil Society Organizations within the Rwenzori region. The organizations are: Karambi Action for Life Improvement [KALI], Good Hope Foundation for Rural Development [GHFRD], Integrated Women Development Program [IWDP] and Rwenzori Information Centers Network [RIC-NET].

RWECO was founded in 2008 and incorporated in 2010. We aim at strengthening the civic competence of the people in the region. By this we mean working to give ability to citizens to participate and influence decision making in Local Governments; making citizens able to influence the implementation of Government policies with a cardinal aim of alleviating poverty. The other issue we are addressing is to give ability to citizens to participate in elections and to ensure that their votes count and are counted. RWECO is also there to enable citizens hold their leaders in the region accountable.

QN: What is your area of coverage and target groups?

ANS: We cover the seven Districts that form the Rwenzori region; Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Kamwenge, Kabarole, Ntoroko, Bundibugyo and Kasese Districts. Within these Districts, we operate in 80 sub-counties which reflects an 80% coverage of all the seven Districts.

We target poor women and men at the grassroots who are the core beneficiaries of the Government's poverty alleviation programs. We also target elected leaders from Local council one to local council five, religious and cultural leaders, civil servants and boards that govern and oversee Government institutions and projects.

QN: How are the people you are serving responding?

ANS: The response from all the target groups is positive. However for poor women and men, it is like awakening a sleeping giant. For the elected leaders they are happy that

they have a strong ally [RWECO]. Also Civil servants believe that we complement their work. Since we started training them in gender budget analysis, civil servants have started developing credible annual budgets that have earned their Local Government's bonuses from the Central Government.

QN: What are the challenges you are encountering while offering these services?

ANS: We are facing many challenges in regard to the work we do. Some of our cases are 'killed' by partners like police, even after Court giving bail to the accused corrupt officials; the investigations are interfered with and are eventually the suspects are acquitted. For instance our partner, Rwenzori Anti Corruption Coalition, in 2010 investigated a case in Bundibugyo District where District officials who include a District Education Officer embezzled District funds worth millions of shillings but the case was not handled properly and the culprits are still at large.

Another challenge is failure by both citizens and politicians to use the access to Information Act that gives them powers to access all the information in the hands of the leaders and for a basis for queries.

There is also a problem among the people we work with because they are not able to use modern ICT tools [information communication technology] to facilitate information sharing between the citizens and the Local Governments. Similarly among the Civil Servants, only a small percentage is computer literate. This motivated RWECO to an ICT Center at Kasese District headquarters code named E-Society to solve this big problem. In Kamwenge, each sub-county has a computer but honestly, they are being used as type writers only! None is connected to internet.

QN: Who are your funders and how much in total have they disbursed to you?

ANS: We have many funders and of recent they have disbursed to us reasonable amounts of money to enhance our projects. In May this year, we received 650,000 Euros worth 2.3 Billion Uganda shillings from HIVOS, a Dutch NGO, to run a 3 – year project on Social Accountability. We also received 470 million Uganda shillings from the European Union through Oxfam Novib for democratic governance and accountability program. This is to be undertaken

between July 2011 to July 2012 to strengthen the capacity of citizens to demand political accountability from elected and appointed leaders. Another project worth 800,000 Euros or UGX 2.7 billion, to be funded by Hivos and the European Union through RWECO, is in the offing and is to enhance social accountability in the Rwenzori, West Nile, Acholi, Teso and Buganda sub regions. RWECO also received 1.5 billion shillings from HIVOS and OXFAM NOVIB between October 2010 to June 2011 to facilitate citizens to monitor and report on the electoral process in the 4 regions of Uganda (Rwenzori, West Nile, Acholi and Teso sub regions). Earlier on between 2009 and 2010 RWECO received 460,000 Euros [1.6 billion shillings] from the European Union and HIVOS to strengthen the competence of citizens to influence planning and feedback processes in 3 Districts (20 sub counties) of the Rwenzori region. We also register our appreciation to the District Local Governments of Kasese, Kabarole and Kyenjojo for co-funding some of the RWECO activities for instance the Kasese District e-society Facility.

QN: What shows that these grants have been put to proper use?

ANS: There are a lot of achievements that we have registered to prove that the grants were properly used. To begin with, there is a social movement on social accountability that has taken shape that include 220 trained public expenditure monitors, 1500 election observers, School Management Committees of about 200 primary schools, Health Unit Management Committees of 60 Health Centers and Water User Committees of at least 75 water delivery points/facilities all over the Rwenzori region. These have formed a formidable force that is providing oversight on service delivery and in the process saving billions of public funds that would be misused in those sectors.

Through the media and other channels such as forum theatre (drama) at least 30% of the population in the region has been reached with messages on how to participate and influence decisions on service delivery and policy implementation. This has increased civic consciousness, interest and ownership of publicly delivered services. This can be exemplified by the number of citizens who RWECO mobilized to register and turn up for electoral activities such as campaign rallies, face the citizens' campaigns and actual voting in this year's general elections due to our vigorous sensitization. We managed to deploy an election observer at each of the over 1500 polling stations in Rwenzori region.

This helped deter electoral malpractices and increased the credibility of the electoral process in the region and hence contributed to deepening electoral democracy in the country.

We also opened up a National Data Center and a Website- www.uchaguziuganda.co.ug to report and display election results in real time thereby deterring fraud and lending credibility to the 2011 General Elections.

QN: Any new projects coming up?

ANS: In 2011 we started implementing a UGX 2.3 billion Social Accountability Program through the application of modern ICT tools. This is aimed at empowering Local Governments on sharing information on poverty alleviation with the citizens and service providers. We are going to make public a short code where citizens will be able to report on the state of service delivery in Government facilities like health units, water points and schools. The reports will be made using SMS and displayed on a web platform which will be accessed by authorities in Government and citizens as well. This platform is called Huduma which is a Swahili word for service delivery and is being piloted in Kenya and Nigeria. The platform will be implemented in accordance with the Clients' Charter which District Local Governments are expected to make known to the public. According to statistics available over 40% Ugandans have mobile phones therefore reports would be made easily.

These SMS reports will be shared with Chief Administrative Offices, District Chairpersons together with the District Information Officers. On the other hand these messages from the public shall first be verified by the RWECO staff and monitors.

We shall set up 7 ICT centers in all the seven Districts and equally train District key staff on how to use them to implement the Huduma sub component of the project. We shall also carry out live public radio debates in the communities during which the citizens will engage the elected leaders and Government officials on service delivery issues.

QN: Do you and your staff in any way fear for your lives since you deal with sensitive people and matters?

ANS: We are not at all worried for our dear lives because we conduct our business in public and involve all the stake holders like the community, local leaders, police, and office of the Resident District Commissioners [RDC].

On the other hand, we are not confrontational; we use peaceful means (dialogue) to address raised service delivery challenges. This can be manifested by how some of our colleagues have been elected to political positions like Fort Portal municipality MP, District speaker for Kamwenge, District woman MP Kyegegwa. All these and others have been Civil Society activists in the Rwenzori region.

QN: What is your last word?

ANS; I pray that our stake holders (Local Government staff, elected leaders, citizens, religious and cultural leaders plus members of boards) embrace the use of ICT so that work becomes easy for us. This is ultimately the bottom line.

Citizens use ICT in Social Accountability

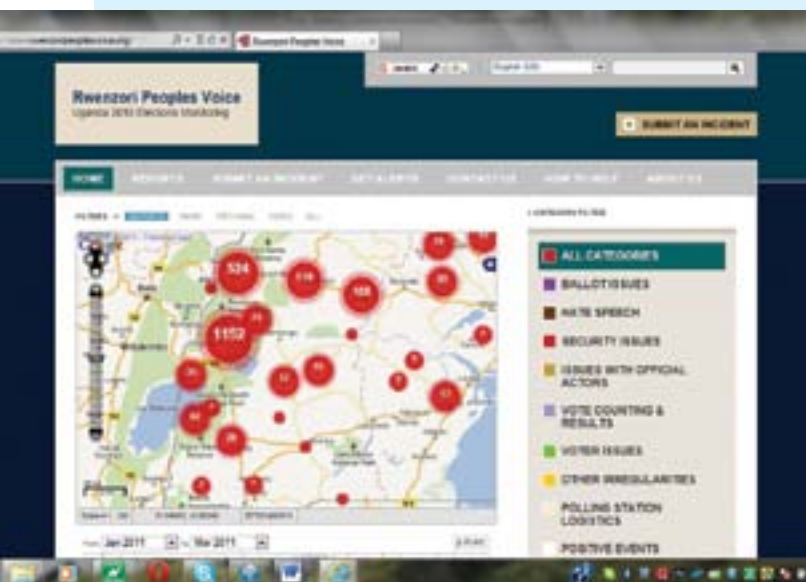
John M.Silco, Executive Director - RIC-NET

“Every citizen is a Reporter and a Monitor”. This is the slogan used to describe how Technology for Social Accountability (TSA) is poised to change service delivery tracking in the Rwenzori region.

Luckily enough, nearly in every home in the Rwenzori region, there is a mobile phone and a radio or at least one of the above. RWECO with technical support from RIC-NET and funding from HIVOS has or is to establish platforms that allow every citizen to report incidents on service delivery in real time to those in authority and to the CSO fraternity by sending an sms to 6333. The citizens' reports are aggregated and amplified to the local authorities to respond, hence exert influence in the decision making process. On the other hand the response of the authorities is relayed back to the citizens by means of the bulk sms.

Between January 2011 and until December 2013, RICNET will implement actions that focus on **Enhancing Civic Competence for Social accountability, application of web based platforms to track the implementation of the Citizens Manifesto**, use of ICT tools to enhance **access to Information on Social Accountability and Voicing the Silence**. To implement these programmes e-society Centres will be established in each of the Seven Districts (within the headquarters) in the Rwenzori region.

An e-society centre will be a one stop centre for information sharing among different stakeholders in the District. It will be equipped with computers connected to internet with links to all district heads of department, the District Council, Development Partners in the District and CSOs. It will have both electronic and physical libraries equipped with publications on district and national topical issues. It will also have photocopying and scanning services so users can download , print out and photocopy key documents. The e-society will also comprise a virtual discussion group (d-group) that will be moderated to discuss topical issues within and outside the district. The e-society is meant to facilitate easy and fast information sharing between the district local government and the citizenry e.g. Public Service application forms can or should be accessed, filled and or returned online hence saving citizens unnecessary costs of travel. An e-society room attendant will be retained for the project period. For each District its website will either be developed or redesigned updated and activated.



The sms-web based platforms, Rwenzori people's voice and Uchaguzi, developed in 2010 allowed citizens in Uganda to report incidents on the election process. Over 34,000 sms messages were received on www.rwenzoripeoplesvoice.org and www.uchaguzi.co.ug. About 7,000 election related incident messages were verified, approved and displayed on the Uganda map. Some of these were used as a basis for action to avert some of the reported electoral malpractices.

To facilitate information sharing between the citizens and the Local Authorities platforms for bulk sms and for monitoring service delivery will be established. The service delivery monitoring platforms, namely, www.citizensvoice.ug and HUDUMA which is still under development, will provide a forum for citizens to report any issue of human rights abuse or poor service delivery in real time and receive feedback from those in authority by means of



The E- Society Centre at Kasese District Headquarters - Rukoki.

sms or email. The community will also report on how the citizens' manifesto is being implemented, thus "Manifesto in Action".

RIC-NET will also conduct radio programmes, citizens' assemblies and roundtable meetings to facilitate information sharing and engagement between the communities and the Local Authorities. The radio programmes will have live call – ins which will attract on average 15 people who will successfully make telephone calls during the radio programme. This will boost citizens' participation in governance of their communities.

GOODHOPE FOUNDATION DIGS DEEP INTO THE UPE AND NAADS SUB-SECTORS IN BUNDIBUGYO DISTRICT

By Sinamakosa Isaac - RWEKO Focal person

"NAADs can never fight poverty and hunger, because it targets the very poor and lowest earners, who usually do not have the patience to rear goats or grow crops till they are ready when they do not have what to eat from day to day" asserted Mr. Bisolo, the LCIII Chairperson Nyahuka Town Council. This was during an interview with the Good Hope staff who were conducting a baseline survey in August 2011 in Bundibugyo District.

The baseline survey is one of the activities Good Hope Foundation, with support from Hivos through RWEKO carried out in Kasese, Kabarole and Bundibugyo Districts to establish the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery in the Education and Production and Marketing (NAADs) sectors. Two sub counties of Bubukwanga and Nyahuka Town Council were sampled for the survey.

Eight NAADs beneficiaries were visited in both Sub Counties:(Kabasinguzi Margaret, Kirongozi William, Augustine Akorabirungi, Kandole Blasio, Tabutona Mangada, Bukanjerela Consilant, Augustine Kituku, Katusabe Eleanor).

During this exercise Good Hope team comprising Paddy Bireo, Kidima Margaret, Masereka Earnest, Sinamakosa Isaac and Alice Mbayahi from RIC-NET interacted with the CAO, DEO, District NAADs Officer, 2 Sub County Chiefs, 2 Sub County NAADs Coordinators, 2 LCIII Chairpersons, District Planner, LCV Vice Chairperson, 2 Sub County farmers forum Chairpersons, 1 NAADs supplier and 1 Chairperson Parish Procurement Committee.

A number of service delivery issues in both sectors were established, for example in the NAADS sector top on the list was lack of co-funding towards the NAADs program by both beneficiaries and the Sub Counties. According to the Bubukwanga Sub County NAADs Coordinator Mr. Wachurawa Maate, Sub Counties are expected to co-fund 6% of the years' Sub County NAADs budget, while the farmers are expected to co-fund 3% of the same budget. However, it's not always met, he emphasized. Some beneficiaries claim they do not have money and that NAADs/Government services are free so why pay for them. In cases where all the co-funding is not raised, the number of beneficiaries is reduced to only those who have met their co-funding obligations.

The other challenge is the unrealistic/inadequate supply of enterprises like delivering only either male or female animals to the farmer. The team learnt from all the 4 livestock beneficiaries visited that they had received only female goats and pigs and were hence finding it difficult to breed the animals. Blasio Kandole a market oriented farmer of Bundimagwara¹ who had received 5 female goats noted thus "i am not sure of where to find a male goat, I fear I might be forced to move them up to the market in Bundibugyo town on a market day to find a male goat. However, I am still trying to find a neighbor with a male goat who is also likely to charge me between Ushs 1000 – 2000 for each goat". While Bukanjerela Consulata of Bundikahungu¹, received only 3 goats out of the expected 5; "my wife was given only 3 goats in June 2011 and told that she would get the other 2 as soon as they are procured, but unfortunately todate (August) we

have never received them despite the frequent follow up visits to the officials at the parish and Sub County”.



Husband to Bukanjerela Consilant grazing their goats they recieved from NAADs.

The team also established that the number of beneficiaries is still inadequate (out of a group of 25 members only 1 member benefits at ago per financial year), all the 8 beneficiaries visited appealed for increment in the number of beneficiaries; “more beneficiaries like 5 per group should be targeted if great and faster impact must be achieved”, asserted Tabutona Mangada, a food security beneficiary.

In addition the other challenge was late disbursement of NAADs funds. This greatly affects service delivery in the sector. Commenting on this, the Nyahuka Town Council NAADS Coordinator, Mr. Dokotera Samuel, exclaimed that “until today 15.08.11 funds for this 1st quarter are still on the District account yet the quarter is left with one month to end, everything is at a standstill”.

Conservativeness and lack of cooperation by the beneficiaries was also established during the survey. According to the District and Sub County NAADs Coordinators, some beneficiaries eat or sell the enterprises while others have continuously stuck to the traditional methods of farming despite the training they have had while others still prefer growing traditional crop species even when they know that they don’t yield much on the market.

Another challenge cited was the high taxes charged on suppliers which eats into their profit margins. For instance one Humya parish supplier spoke to during the survey noted that in his recent contract of 2m he was taxed 130.000 yet the balance was to be inclusive of his profits and

travel costs as well as money to buy the goats. “It was so inconveniencing I made no profit at all that I have even pulled out of the business of supplying”, the supplier asserted.

It was also noted by the farmers that the enterprises supplied were overvalued allegedly due to the tax levied on them. This has presented both farmers and suppliers a challenge which, inter alia, means farmers feel they are being fleeced on the one hand and on other the supplier has a fear of the items delivered being rejected by the beneficiaries.

This also affects the payback whose percentage is too high for the farmers e.g. food security beneficiaries give back 100% while market oriented give back 70-72% of the inputs received. According to the beneficiaries spoken to, this percentage is too high given the natural calamities like diseases, thieves and poor climate that affect the enterprises. Kandole Blasio a market oriented beneficiary who received 5 goats noted that “with 72% that I am expected to give back to my group, I think it will take a while for me to benefit from this project because it seems I will only keep working to pay back and not to benefit”.



GoodHope and RIC-NET team interacting with Mr. Kandole Blasio

Other challenges affecting the sector are influence peddling in allocation of enterprises and selection of beneficiaries, politicizing the program by some leaders, inadequate monitoring of beneficiaries by NAADs officials and inadequate knowledge on the NAADs program by the community. Approximately 90% of the beneficiaries interacted with revealed that they had never been visited by any NAADs officials or Local leaders, the same also displayed ignorance on the details about the program.

Budgetary response to the issues identified in Agriculture (NAADs) sector.

From the survey Good Hope Foundation generally learnt that, the allocation of resources is not pro-poor. More than 74% of poor men and women in Bundibugyo District derive their livelihood from Agriculture. However, less was budgeted in the Agriculture sector compared to other sectors. For the current FY, 2011/2012 for example, Ushs 277,165,300/- was allocated to Agriculture where as Ushs1,252,295,000/- was allocated to District Management Support, 985,325,000 to Human resource management. NAADS was allocated 1,313,834,500 shillings only. This is quite a good figure for service delivery. Important to note is that some of the issues raised during the survey are catered for in the 2011/2012 District budget like monitoring and supervision of NAADS activities allocated 41,500,000 and training farmers on improved farming methods allocated 183,750,000.

However, over 50% of the budget's finances are administrative costs thus making the budget not pro-poor/development.

Prior to this exercise a number of other activities had been conducted/participated in, like training in pro-poor budget analysis which equipped staff with skills in pro-poor budget analysis and also guided the participants on what to look out for when conducting a survey about the same.

Another activity was conducting inception meetings with different stakeholders (LCVs, RDCS, CAOs, Sub County chiefs, LCIIIs, CDOs, and the District planners) in the 26 Sub Counties spread in the Districts of Ntoroko, Bundibugyo, Kasese and Kabarole where Good Hope Foundation operates. The purpose of the meetings was to introduce the new project "**Civic Competence Social Accountability**", to the different leaders and to also share information on service delivery sites that would be taken on during the implementation of the project.

During this exercise the team also collected District and Sub County budget estimates for the Financial years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 and Development Plans. Good hope Foundation intends to use these documents to guide her implementation of the project especially in tracking public expenditure.

A number of lessons were learnt from this exercise ranging from building rapport to creating understanding and awareness about the project amongst the leaders.

Finally, the team learnt that there is still limited participation of local citizens in the Local Governments planning and feedback processes and this has affected pro-poor budgeting-leaving out most of the citizens' concerns in the budgets.

KYEGEGWA DISTRICT EMBRACES CSO ACTIVISM IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR

Kahunde Erina - RWECO Focal Person

Kyegegwa District was carved out of the greater Kyenjojo district and it opened its doors to the public in July 2010. CSOs have rushed to the newly created district to contribute to its nurturing. Among these is Integrated Women Development Programme which is a member of RWECO. IWDP, with funding from Hivos through RWECO, conducted a baseline survey in August 2011 in Kyegegwa District to establish the effectiveness of service delivery in the education (UPE) sector in two Sub Counties of Mpara and Kakabara. Six primary schools of Mpara, Nyakasaka, Kisambya (Mpara Sub County), Kakabara, Kyaisaza and Kyarwehuuta in Kakabara Sub County Kyegegwa District were visited.

The team that participated in the baseline survey exercise included Kahunde Erina, Rukidi Sam, Nyaika Robert, Kabanywani Shamim and Kyomuhendo Joselyne from RICN-ET.

During the exercise the team interviewed the CAO, DEO, two Sub County Chiefs, two LCIII Chairpersons, one CDO at Sub County, thirty teachers, a District Planner, member of six School Management Committee Chairpersons, two PTA Chair persons, and twelve pupil representatives.



IWDP and RIC-NET staff sharing with the CAO Kyegegwa during the baseline survey.

Issues Raised in the Education Sector

“Abaana batulemere, ekaa etaine engeso, kusoma kuke” exclaimed Mr. Asiimwe Douglas the DEO Kyegegwa District during the survey, which loosely translated means “we have failed to manage children at school, a family which doesn’t disipline its children, there education is limited”.

Whereas the DEO mentioned that the Government of Uganda had done great work in making education accessible to all citizens of Uganda, he however noted that there is generally poor performance in PLE in the District. He appealed for concerted efforts by all stakeholders in the District to ensure that there is improvement in UPE performance in the District. A glimpse at the 2010 PLE results indicated that out of the 2064 candidates that sat for PLE only 70 passed in Division one and 913 in Division two with fewer girls in those grades.

In addition to the above, the team interviewed the head teachers of the six schools visited. It was observed that for the last five years in some schools (Mpara and Kyaisaza

primary schools) no pupil had ever scored any Division one. **Performance trends at Mpara primary school over the years**



Another observation made was on the high pupil absenteeism. This was partly attributed to the new religious movement of Bisaka that has set aside the 2nd, 12th & 22nd days of every month as mandatory worship days where no other work can be done including going to school. Pupils who are followers of this cult miss school on those days. Other reasons were attributed to market days, planting seasons and at times domestic chores.

Table illustrating pupils absenteeism, percentages and reasons at Kyaisaza Primary school.

Date	Attendance	Day	Numbers missing	Percentage	Remarks
11 th	268	Monday	95	27%	
12 th	206	Tues	157	44%	Bisaka day
13 th	236	Wed	127	33%	
14 th	230	Thursday	133	37%	
15 th	226	Friday	137	38%	Market day
18 th	288	Monday	75	21%	
19 th	252	Tues	111	31	
20 th	263	Wed	100	28	
21 st	267	Thursday	96	10%	
22 nd	178	Friday	185	51%	Bisaka day and the day when pupils remain home preparing things to take to the market on Saturday (two factors are at play)

Understaffing was also observed during the survey. The DEO Kyegegwa Mr. Asiimwe Douglas revealed that the teachers' enrollment at the District is 549 (male 343, female-206) instead of 710 teachers and that the teacher-pupil ratio in the District is 1:68 contrary to standard 1:53. This also is said to be contributing to the poor performance of pupils in schools.

The team also learnt inadequate and delayed release of UPE funds was frustrating the smooth running of school activities. At Nyakasaka primary school with a total enrollment of 312 pupils for the period of October-December 2010 the school received only shillings 620,593 as UPE capitation grants. This is said to be the highest amount ever received. This implies that each pupil was facilitated with 1989 shillings that quarter.

In addition to this, is the inadequate infrastructure. According to the Kyegegwa District Development Plan 2011/2012- 2015/2016 the District has 297 permanent and complete classrooms, 117 other category, 7 staff houses, 569 VIP Latrine stances, 68 stances of pit latrines and 52 plastic water tanks.

During the baseline survey, it was also discovered that some school management committees were non functional

because they had never been trained on their roles and responsibilities.

Finally the team learnt that in some schools like Kakabara, Kyarwehuuta, Nyakasaka and Mpara primary schools, parents had tried to make contributions to improve learning of their children through construction of class rooms though some were not yet complete. Commenting on this, the DEO said despite the fact that parents were doing their best to support their children in school the children themselves are undisciplined and therefore responsible for their poor performance.



A two classroom block at Mpara primary school put up by parents but left incomplete due to inadequate capacity.

Budget Analysis

Kyegegwa District's sources of local revenue include land fees, application fees e.g. on tenders, animal and crop husbandry fees, market/gate fees, licenses on retail businesses (Kyegegwa DDP 2011/2012- 2015/2016). However these taxes are not pro-poor since most of the tax burden is borne by the poor men and women. Additionally these taxes don't translate into service delivery that benefits the majority poor people.

The planning process is participatory and consultative for example during the development of Kyegegwa District Development plan 2011/2012-2015/2016 the process started from Sub County level and the people involved were the LCs at Sub County level, technical staff at Sub County level and the planning unit of the District (Kyegegwa DDP 2011/2012-2015/2016). However from the Sub County technical staff interacted with revealed that the process has a number of challenges that include:

1. Low community participation, majority of the community members do not turn up for village planning meetings because according to them it's a waste of time since there is no transport refund and refreshments given to them in return for their time.
2. The budget conferences are attended by few community members and the one day given to participants to analyze the budget is too short a time given their limited analytical capacities.
3. Poor attitude of the communities towards the whole planning process.

KALI'S GROUND BREAKING IN KAMWENGE DISTRICT

Kalengyo Sedress & Muhesi Nicholas - RWECO Focal Persons

After ten years of consistent advocacy in Kasese District, KALI in July 2011 scaled up on her area of operation to include Kamwenge District as the adage goes “*a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step*”. At KALI we believe in venturing into what other people say is forbidden land. Once in 2001, Hon. David Biringirio a Councilor in Karambi Sub County Kasese District reprimanded KALI when he asserted thus “*go and teach people how to plant beans instead of wasting time talking about pro-poor budgeting*” but the story was different in Kamwenge District, a warm welcome by the District leadership, exchange of files, and words of encouragement ... “*the sky is the limit*” for the warm welcome by the office of the Kamwenge District Chairman Hon. Robert Kamasaka.

KALI later unveiled its package to the District Leadership that included community sensitization and mobilization on social accountability, strengthening the capacity of elected and appointed leaders in pro-poor planning and budgeting, monitoring and reporting on service delivery with the help of ICT based tools and facilitating engagement actions between citizens and leaders. It was agreed by both parties that KALI first conducts inception meetings with the leadership of the identified sub counties and a baseline survey to establish the status of participatory budgeting and service delivery in the district.

KALI with support from HIVOS is implementing a three years project on Civic Competence for Social Accountability in Kamwenge and Kasese Districts. During this project KALI intends to work in 27 sub counties; 17 in Kasese and 10 in Kamwenge respectively.

In its inception of the project which aims at raising the voices of the citizens in democracy and accountability process, KALI in July 2011 conducted inception meetings in her areas of operation (Kasese and Kamwenge) to share the upcoming project with the leaders and to also identify the project sites. During this exercise District and Sub County budget estimates for the financial years 2010/2011 and 2011/2012 and development plans were collected to guide KALI's interventions in monitoring and tracking the implementation of these budgets.

During the inception meetings KALI interacted with the LCVs, RDCS, CAOs, Sub County Chiefs, LCIII, CDOs, and the

District planners, and some community members.

A number of things were observed and learnt during the inception meetings; most Sub County budgets were in place but duplicated; that is the same information that a Sub County had in the previous year would still be the same in the current year; examples of this were in Bwera, Muhokya, Kyondo (Kasese District) and Buhanda (Kamwenge District) sub counties. According to the Sub County chiefs spoken to, this is attributed to the inadequate resources that hamper full implementation of projects thus forcing them to roll on the budget to the next year. However, KALI faults incompetence or lack of seriousness instead.

KALI also learnt that most of the Sub County budgets reviewed neglected the cross cutting issues (Gender, HIV/AIDs and Environment issues) a practice that tantamount to poor performance during assessment of LGs in monitoring and evaluation exercises. A glance through the budgets of Karambi sub county Kasese district revealed that shillings 300.000 was allocated to women projects for the financial year 2010/2011, while administration took a whopping Ushs28,500,000 shillings. In Kamwenge District a similar scenario was observed in Kicheche Sub County shillings 200.000 was allocated to sensitization of community about HIV/AIDs, shillings, 150.000 to the youth, shillings 150.000 to women, shillings 150.000 PWDs for the financial year 2010/2011 out of the total budget of UShs163,391,848.



KALI team in a meeting with the Ag. Deputy DEO Mr. Asaba

P. Samuel

Following the inception meetings, KALI sampled two sub counties from Kamwenge District; Kicheche and Kamwenge Town Council in which a baseline survey was conducted to establish the quality and effectiveness of service delivery in relation to the budgets in the education KALI team in a meeting with the Ag. Deputy DEO Mr. Asaba P. Samuel (UPE) and Production and Marketing (NAADs) sectors. The survey also aimed at establishing the level of participation and involvement of the beneficiaries' development programs.

Three primary schools were visited in each Sub County (Kitagwenda junior, Mirembe K, Rwemigo and Kamwenge Railway, Kimuli Kidongo, Kyabyoma primary schools in Kicheche and Kamwenge town council respectively). Key District officials that were interviewed during this exercise included; CAO, DEO, Sub County chiefs, Sub County, LCIII Chairpersons, teachers, District Speaker, District planner, LCV, School management committee Chairpersons, and pupil representatives.

The Status of Education in Kamwenge District

Kamwenge District fully benefits from the Government Universal Primary Education that was started in 1997. The district has 147 Government aided primary schools, 1284 Teachers with a teacher-pupil ratio 1:55. The education sector was allocated shillings 5,697,678,308 which takes 32.8% of the total budget in the fiscal year 2010/11. While reviewing the District and Sub County budgets, KALI found out that the education sector was dependent on Central Government transfers, thus other than the conditional grants from Government, Kamwenge District council stands at a loss if Government releases are paralyzed by the current financial crisis and hyper inflation. Below are some of the issues that were established during the survey:

Inadequate and delayed release of UPE funds, for instance at Kamwenge railway primary school KALI learnt that the school had received funds for the 2nd quarter in July towards the end of the quarter instead of May. Similar cases of this were discovered in the other schools visited. Speaking to the head teacher of Kitagwenda Junior primary school, Mr. Atulinda David, noted that the delay in release of UPE funds frustrates the smooth operations of the school programs and also forces them to use their individual past savings or borrow to meet the day to day running costs of the school activities.

High teacher and pupil absenteeism especially in the case of pupils like on market days was also noted. It was learnt that in Kicheche most pupils miss school every Tuesday because they have to help out their parents in the market. Teacher absenteeism at Kimuli Kidongo primary school was attributed to the long distances to and from the school, according to the chairman school Management committee, teachers travel between 20-50 kilometers a day.

Understaffing, according to the Ag. Deputy DEO Mr. Asaba P. Samuel Kamwenge District is expected to have 1313

teachers to the district staff teacher ceiling but at the time of the survey in August 2011 it had only 1284 teachers.

Other issues included lack of support from the parents towards education of their children. Speaking to the SMC Chairperson of Kimuli Kidongo Mr. Baguma Edward he revealed that parents do not attend school meetings even if they are called upon and they equally do not support their children with the basics like exercise books, uniforms and packed lunch .

High school dropout rates: at Rwemigo primary school, the team learnt that out of the 56 pupils who started P.1 in 2005 only 9 were in P.7 class at the time of the survey. According to the Acting Deputy DEO Mr. Asaba P. Samuel the school dropout rate per year is 10.4%.

While Government has invested in infrastructure development in primary schools, Kamwenge District still registered inadequate infrastructure; specifically 60% of the people interviewed reported inadequate desks, classrooms, latrines and staff houses; at Kyabyoma primary school the head teacher Mr. Edward noted that P.1 class had 121 pupils with only 40 desks implying that the rest sit on the floor, at Rwemigo primary it was learnt that there are only 3 permanent classrooms which only house P.5 to P.7 classes, while P.4 uses a semi-permanent classroom put up by parents leaving P.1 to P.3 studying under trees in the school compound, the latrine pupil ratio at Kimuli kidongo primary school is 1:231. The same semi-permanent latrines are used by the teachers.

It was generally observed that there were no staff houses in all the 6 schools visited. Commenting on this, the SMC Chairperson of Kimuli Kidongo primary school Mr. Baguma Edward noted that the general lack of staff houses affects the performance and daily attendance of teachers. He

appealed to the Government to consider construction of staff houses at schools in Kamwenge District.

Other issues included lack of/inadequate text books, non functional School Management committees, limited access to safe and clean water, and, lack of monitoring and school inspections by the District Education Officers and inspectors of schools.



KALI staff in a meeting with the SMC at Rwemigo primary school

IS ACCOUNTABILITY A BUZZ WORD

Jimmy Baluku Odyek - M&E Officer- RWEKO

In the recent past accountability was perceived by many to mean presentation of receipts for goods and services. However, accountability is beyond receipts, it also includes giving reports to all stakeholders right from the household level to the public sphere. Accountability was construed as being limited to the public sector but in actual sense it requires one to be responsible for and report on their 'actions'. Put differently accountability is about giving feedback to those in authority or those one is responsible for. In other words accountability is both vertical (i.e. one reporting to those above or below him or her in hierarchy) and horizontal (i.e. one giving account of oneself and actions to peers). I, therefore, wonder when I hear that it's only in the public sector where accountability is demanded. From the foregoing it can be noted that instead accountability is needed every where: firstly to self, secondly to family, thirdly to the immediate community, fourthly to superiors and finally to peers and charges.

In society, there are a number of watch dog institutions and individuals. One of these is the civil society. The emergence of Civil Society as watch dogs (hands off, eyes on) on Government is a new trend of social accountability that has emerged lately. Erstwhile civil society organizations were addressing government and market failures in service delivery. In fact civil society, alongside the media, is being taken as the fourth arm of the state whose specific task is mobilize the citizenry to demand accountability from politicians, policy makers and service providers. Other crusaders for accountability in Uganda include elected leaders in local councils and parliament and specialized government agencies that provide oversight to the government.

The accountability crusaders, wherever they are, are expected to live a life that is beyond reproach. However, in Uganda this seems not to be the case. Take the example of our MPs in the 9th Parliament of Uganda. A few months ago, the media was awash with headlines that the MPs had locked themselves behind doors to award themselves exorbitant salaries and posh cars each costing shillings 192M amidst the biting poverty and hunger bedeviling the electorate in the country. Some of them have even been faulted for dipping their hands in the till as they solicit for or receive huge bribes and kickbacks from all sorts of sources including the Executive and the Private Sector. Because of these bribes and kickbacks they have passed obnoxious legislation that is against the citizenry.

It seems like these MPs have reneged on their cardinal oversight role and have swallowed their own words of accountability!! This is in spite of the fact that every elected leader had as their key message zero tolerance to corruption and ensuring accountability for public resources. When I scan through manifestos of some elected leaders they have 'accountability' as a catch word. However, even before the MPs can settle in parliament and Councilors in the Local Councils talk is rife that they have fallen short of the expectation of the electorate particularly on accountability. Citizens have responded to this by staging demonstrations like the famous walk – to – walk, sit – down strike by teachers and staff of Makerere University, protests by Kampala City Traders and Taxi Operators, among others. This is one way the public is venting its anger against the impunity with which public resources are being squandered by a few blue – eyed Ugandans. The citizen only hopes that the Executive awakens to the people's outcry for Accountability in the

Public Sector. The common citizen is amazed at how Government fails to provide a living wage to its poorest civil servants such as teachers and police officers while at the same time it gives Members of Parliament and selected officials (like the Kampala Capital City Authority boss) huge paycheques. The same citizen, in spite of the pronouncements of the Finance Minister Maria Kiwanuka in her budget speech of 2011/12 of reducing taxes on sugar, has instead been faced with escalating sugar, food and fuel prices. No one from government has come up to satisfactorily account for these prices increases.

We demand the Hon. Minister of Finance and Members of Parliament to explain the escalating commodity prices. As civil society activists we will take the next most logical step, which is to mobilize fellow citizens to exercise their democratic right to demand accountability from every stakeholder.

RWECO UNDERTAKES MEDIA CRUSADE ON SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

RWECO recognizes the fact that at least every household in the Rwenzori region has access to a radio set. The most listened to are local FM radio stations. Therefore, RWECO intends to use radio to mobilize, inform provide citizens a platform to engage with their leaders on a number of governance and service delivery issues. In view of this RWECO has signed Memorandum of Understanding with Kasese Guide Radio, Life FM in Fort Portal and Voice of Kamwenge FM in Kamwenge to run a number of community based radio programmes including talk shows, live radio debates (Bimeza), radio drama and spot messages for the next three years (2011 to 2013). In this MoU RWECO has moved from paying for air time to forming strategic partnership with the radio stations that includes investing in the sustainability of the radio stations. For instance RWECO will support Kasese Guide Radio to design, host and stream its programmes through the website for three years. On the other hand RWECO will support Life FM and

Voice of Kamwenge FM to invest in its Human Resource so they are able to carry out investigative journalism and report on service delivery in the Rwenzori region.

The radio programs will host guests from the Local Government, Central Government agencies, Civil Society and Community Members. The topical talk shows will target the citizenry, elected and appointed leaders, religious and cultural institutions and youths in and out of school.

Besides the radio programmes, RWECO will also work closely with the print media and television to keep Ugandans abreast its crusade on social accountability.

Some of the topical issues to be presented in the media crusade are presented in the table below:

TOPICS FOR THE RADIO TALKSHOWS

RADIO PROGRAMME	TOPIC / THEME	PROPOSED PANELISTS
1	RWECO profile and its work in the Rwenzori; Introduction to social accountability. The role of citizens in ensuring social accountability	RWECO Staff
2	The local government budget process. Emphasise the role of citizens in this process. Local experiences and practical timetables of the budget process in the local governments	RWECO Staff; CDO and Sub County Chief
3	The local government budget process. Local experiences and practical timetables of the budget process in the local governments	RWECO Staff; CDO and Sub County Chief
4	The District Development Plan – presentation of planned and executed projects in the district(s); RWECO presents its findings on the executed projects.	RWECO Staff; LCV Chairman, CAO; Community Process Facilitators
5	Overview of the New NAADS: Governance issues; monitoring findings.	RWECO Staff; DNC; Farmers' forum members
6	Governance issues in NAADS: Emerging issues	RWECO staff; DNC; LCV Chair; Farmers forum member
7	Overview of the Education sector policy: the minimum standards for delivering UPE and USE; emphasize the role of the stakeholders.	RWECO Staff; DEO/ District Inspector of Schools; LCV Chairman
8	District and sub county interventions in promoting access to and quality of UPE and USE. Presentation of independent monitoring findings by the CSOs	RWECO Staff; DEO/ District Inspector of Schools; LCV Chairman
9	Overview of the District basic health delivery system	District Health Officer, RWECO Staff; Secretary for social services
10	District (and sub county) interventions to promote access and quality health delivery; independent monitoring findings	District Health Officer, RWECO Staff; Secretary for social services
11	Panel discussions on emerging issues	RDC, CAO, RWECO; CPFs; Religious leaders; community based monitors

RWECO ACTIVITY PHOTOS



Participants in a group discussion during the pro-poor budgeting training in August 2011 at Kasese SSD.



Erina an IWDP staff buying some oranges from Asimwe a NAADs beneficiary farmer in Kakabara SC during the survey exercise in August 2010.



The Bubukwanga Sub County farmers former Chairperson explaining the NAADs processes and operations to Isaac of Goodhope Foundation during the baseline survey in August 2011



Sedress of Kali in an interview with the Head girl Kamwenge Railway Primary school



A pit latrine (shared by both pupils and teachers) at Bundimbela Primary school in Bundibudgyo.



RWECO partners during a report sharing meeting at International Hotel - Kasese in Septmeber 2011



RWECO partners attending a Pro-Poor Budget Analysis training at SSD Kasese in August 2011.



KALI staff interviewing Musiime Vicent a Coffee farmer and NAADs beneficiary in Kamwenge district during the space line survey in August 2011.

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