

The Northern Uganda Watch

2nd Edition, November 2016

Impact of Corruption on Social Service Delivery

Editorial

Welcome to this edition of the quarterly Northern Uganda Watch Newsletter focusing on “Reject and Report Corruption: Your Responsibility for Improved Service Delivery” - a theme that we have adopted as a country for this year’s anti-corruption week!

Through this bulletin, we bring to you voices of the people of Northern and North Eastern Uganda on corruption and its impact on service delivery in post-conflict northern Uganda. In the following pages, you will hear and read about corruption and how it is affecting service delivery.

You will also connect with voices and stories of triumph and success as well as failure and despair. We do all this, not just to expose the bad but most importantly inspire the belief that all can be better. Ugandans in northern Uganda, like everywhere else deserve better and duty bearers can certainly do better.

Corruption threatens the very existence of humanity as it kills more people across the globe than terrorism and should be dealt with as such. The battle against evil starts with an individual. It’s the will of the citizens that will deliver political will against corruption and not the vice versa.

Enjoy!

Arthur LAROK
Country Director
ActionAid Uganda



CORRUPTION IS A MONSTER, SILENT GENOCIDE, says Archbishop Odama

By Francis Emorut

A palatial kind of board room where several meetings have been held be it UN delegations, Ambassadors,

government officials, the Juba Peace talks which collapsed in 2006 is a place the chairman of Uganda Episcopal Conference, Archbishop John Baptist Obama aired his views

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and referred to corruption as a monster and silent genocide.

In short the spacious boardroom is called Gulu Archdiocese Nebbi Arua Lira (GANAL) established in 1999. "You are grabbing everything and eating alone, its selfishness and greed and this affects social service delivery," Odama points out.

Odama says the simplest way to address corruption is to arrest the culprits while emphasizing the need to address the route cause. "Corruption is a monster which is hiding many evils and is silent genocide," he says.

Odama was speaking to journalists who were on a field tour sponsored by ActionAid Uganda (AAU) in partnership with the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) to assess the level of service delivery in northern Uganda and how corruption has impacted on it.

Acholi Sub-region so far has eight districts and these include Gulu, Amuru, Nwoya, Agago, Pader, Lamwo, Kitgum and Omoro. The Archbishop is particularly disturbed by the endemic corruption which has affected social service delivery in health, education, agriculture and road sectors and calls upon the citizens to go back to God and show love for one another and share the resources the Creator has endowed Uganda with, equitably.

He singled out the reports he receives about shortage of drugs in health facilities and doctors and nurses diverting the medical supplies to their private clinics. "I have been hearing of the disappearance of drugs, some doctors and nurses taking medicine to their clinics," he states.

Odama was categorical and government should borrow a leaf from it that the Catholic Church doesn't encourage doctors to own private clinics. "We want them to concentrate on public hospitals to

"We need courage. Some people may assault you. We need to remind each other including the President to be harsh on corruption,"



Archbishop John Baptist Odama, Gulu Diocese

avoid tendencies of concentrating on their clinics," he explains. The Archbishop observes that what fuels corruption among other factors is lack of concern for others, lack of love for one another and even love for your enemy as the Bible commands love your neighbour as you love yourself.

To address corruption Odama advises Ugandans to love God. "Each of us is the image of God and have a right to exist and therefore, every means of living should be shared, the poorest, the rich, the children and babies need support. If we get to that level, then Uganda is one family," says Odama.

He points out that each person right from the President, religious leaders, political leaders, lawmakers, parents and teachers have a role to combat corruption and ensure that resources are shared equitably. "We need common consensus. God has endowed us with resources, riches and therefore, all of us should benefit

from it. And therefore, don't cheat your sister or brother," he explains. On the way forward, the Archbishop implores legislators to make laws for the good of the people, the executive should implement the laws, the judiciary should dispense justice, teachers to guide students on good values and the Police and the Army should not be greedy or misers. "When we act honestly God blesses us," he says.

Odama offered recommendations to tame the vice and among these, were; to form accountability and transparency watchdogs, having organized systems of announcing when funds are released to ensure the public knows such that they can demand for accountability, sensitizing the public on the sense of responsibility and the services given to them and fear of God is fundamental. "We need courage. Some people may assault you. We need to remind each other including the President to be harsh on corruption," he states.

Acholi Cultural Institution Takes a Bold Step to Combat Corruption in the Region

By Andrew Ssenyonga

Cultural institutions in Uganda have for so long been the custodian of values and righteousness. They have imparted values and norms to their members for the good of development and well being. For some time now Uganda has been grappling with a number of issues that includes civil wars and unrest, the scourge of HIV/AIDS, poor infrastructure, corruption among others.

In the Northern region it has been mainly civil wars that have affected the development of the region for over to 20 years. Notwithstanding

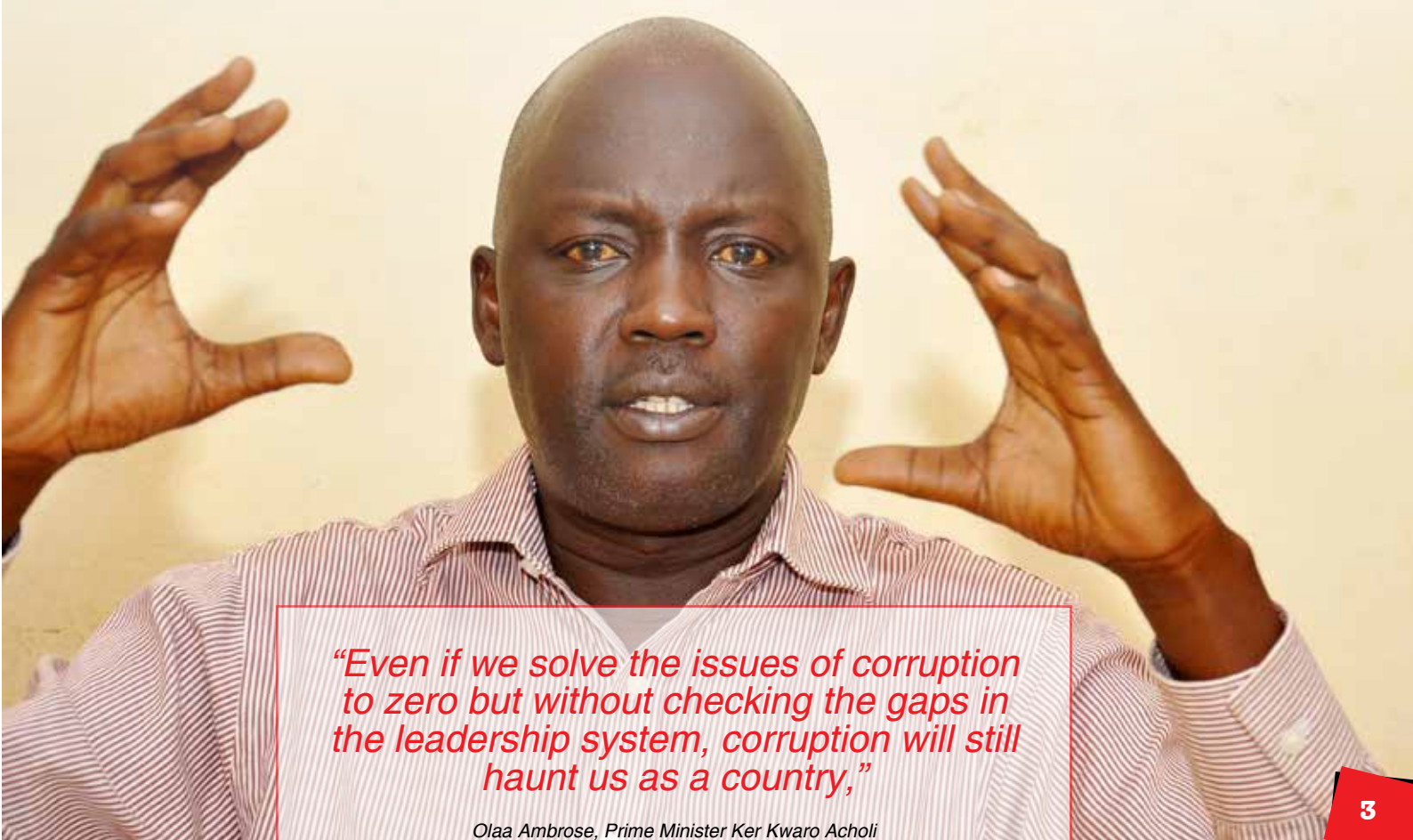
the factor of the war that was toppled in the recent years by the current regime, the region just like the country, is also faced with the vice of corruption. Speaking to The Northern Uganda Watch, a quarterly magazine on issues affecting the region that is sponsored by ActionAid Uganda (AAU) in partnership with the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), the Prime Minister of the Ke Kwaro Acholi, Ambrose Oloo explains how the institution is helping in the fight against corruption.

Oloo explains that corruption is an act where a person gives or is given something in order to get or execute business. He argues that corruption

is part of the broader governance problem that the country is facing at the moment. "Even if we solve the issues of corruption to zero but without checking the gaps in the leadership system, corruption will still haunt us as a country," he adds. Oloo contends that the current systems in the country where by everyone is after catering for individual needs also fuels corruption.

"The importations of foreign laws that are not based on our local experience and culture have supported criminals to continue with the vice," he explains.

He notes that in the past corruption



"Even if we solve the issues of corruption to zero but without checking the gaps in the leadership system, corruption will still haunt us as a country,"

Oloo Ambrose, Prime Minister Ker Kwaro Acholi

was an abomination in the cultural setting but now people steal in the name of human rights.

“Theft was an abomination in our culture but now people have stopped seeing values in humanity. Some express it as democracy and human or individual rights,” he says. On how the institution is fighting corruption, Olaa explains that among the many steps they have improvised as the cultural institution is to suspend charges on people who have complained to the institution. “There are a number of disputes among the people of this region including land wrangles, gender based violence, property rights among others,” he says.

He adds that the institution in the past was charging the locals a fee to mediate in their issues. This has since stopped because it was also fueling corruption.

“We know that through this system, many locals could pay extra moneys to our volunteers to fasten or take side during the mediations. This had made the subjects loose trust in the institution hence keeping their disputes at home,” he reiterates.

According to Olaa, they could pay a fee not less than UGX200,000 to the institution to settle their cases. “Since suspending that people are pouring to Acholi cultural institution installation to report their cases and have now lost confidence with the police and courts of law where the cases drag on for a long time while they are spending,” he explains. Other measures taken by the institution include sensitization and awareness where the public is urged to demand for accountability from the leaders. “Lack of civic competence to hold leaders to account for what they have provided was a major problem among the people in this region but through regular workshops, citizens can now task their leaders to explain,” he says.

***“The infrastructure government put in place to fight corruption are aimed at polishing the state’s image but not to fight the vice.*”**

He continues saying that the locals have also been told to elect leaders with integrity and those who love their country. “A number of local leaders used to dupe people that it was their effort for the people to have services something which is not true. It’s their work as leaders not otherwise,” he says. He says there is an urgent need to mobilize, sensitize and empower citizens to demand for transparency, accountability, and value for money from their leaders. He adds that citizens should be sensitized to appreciate that their leaders are voted or appointed in public offices to serve them not to use public resources to fund their personal luxurious life style. “This approach should target the masses but with special emphasis on the young people especially those in school and those who have left school.

We should use their numerical advantage, flexibility and dynamism to be in position to lead the demand for good governance without being violent,” he explains.

Gulu Archbishop John-Baptist Odama says there should be a deliberate intervention aimed at increasing citizen participation in monitoring utilization of public resources.

He says that this should be coupled with increased interface and dialogue between duty bearers/ leaders and the people they serve to share experiences and ideas on how best to improve service delivery in their localities. “Pressure should be exerted by communities on their leaders to demand their leaders to be more responsive and sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the communities they lead,” he explains.

He adds that all actors i.e. citizens, civil society organization, NGOs, development partners should work together to exert pressure on top leadership of the country to decisively act against those implicated in corruption scandals. “Political will is critical in this fight; this has been demonstrated by the success that has been registered in Rwanda where the President has come out and acted on the corrupt, dismantled patronage and impunity that facilitates corruption,” he notes.

The ActionAid Country Director Arthur Larok contends that corruptions can not be fought legally because it’s inflexible to gather evidence. “The infrastructure government put in place to fight corruption are aimed at polishing the state’s image but not to fight the vice. A number of cases have been reported by parliament, Inspector General of Government (IGG) and other institutions but no case has been conclusively settled,” he notes. Larok maintains that anti-corruption Civil Society Organizations and public oversight institutions should be adequately facilitated to execute their mandate of mobilizing citizens to demand for accountability and transparency from their leaders as well as holding those acting contrary accountable.

“Civil Society Organizations and other actors should be supported to institute public interest litigation against those implicated in corruption but using their connection to avoid justice,” he adds.

ActionAid Uganda, Partners, Speak out on Corruption

By Andrew Ssenyonga

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) operating in the northern region of Uganda including ActionAid Uganda (AAU) have come out strongly on the issue of corruption in the country.

Many Ugandans are concerned about the high levels of corruption, the effectiveness of the anti-corruption laws and institutions and wonder if the government has political will to fight the vice.

These and other concerns came up during several interviews conducted by The Northern Uganda Watch team sponsored by the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) in conjunction with ActionAid Uganda. In a recent tour of the CSOs operations in the region, they all asked the government to ensure that all those implicated in the mismanagement of development funds in any office are brought to justice.

In an interview with the Country Director ActionAid Uganda while at their Cluster offices in Gulu district;



Larok says that although a handful of individuals implicated in corruption scandals are facing justice, the majority of those named seemed not to be facing the law. “We reiterate the need to bring to book all the actors that are involved in corruption scandals. We also implore our development partners to consider other alternative financing options based on the strengths of each mechanism,” he adds.

Larok points out at the failures by the Government to prosecute high-level corruption cases in Uganda. He says anti-corruption laws and institutions had been largely effective in dealing with petty corruption but not grand scale pilferage.

“In some anti-corruption cases involving well-connected individuals, senior officials have directed prosecutors to delay prosecution or prematurely try a case with incomplete or weak evidence. Investigators, prosecutors, and witnesses involved in such cases have been the targets of threats and requests for bribes,” he notes.

He also cites the lack of expertise and inadequate resources for detecting and combating fraud. “The anti-corruption human resource does not have wide presence across the country. Resources are meager and instead of an all-out war against the corrupt, we are forced to prioritise,” he explains.



David Moses Okello, the Gulu Cluster Coordinator says the poor state of roads; health facilities and education infrastructure were their biggest concerns of the region adding corruption was a contributing factor.

“If the Government can minimize corruption, Uganda will develop. Roads are in bad shape and health workers are poorly paid because of corruption. We get fake seeds because of corruption,” Okello states.



John Okidi, the Project Officer Advocates for Research in Development (ARiD) says corruption is prevalent in lower levels of governance and he proposes radical changes in management and stiffer penalties for the corrupt. "Local governments are rotten and officials are not transparent while executing their duties. Corruption is a daily menu. I request the Government to punish corrupt officials," he adds.



Samuel Acellam, Program Officer ActionAid Amuru District Local Rights Programme says, "You cannot work on roads when corruption is high. A lot of emphasis should be put on ending it. The Government needs to check all its departments to end the cancer which is killing the whole nation."

In the wake of the several graft scandals, key donor nations like Germany, Norway and Ireland withdrew aid from the East African nation. The UK and Denmark also suspended their financial assistance to Uganda then.

Agnes Aol, the Program Coordinator of Partner for Community Development (PCD) says the persistence of corruption is largely because the political will to fight it at the higher levels of governance does not exist.

"It is only at the highest level of leadership that the will to fight corruption can be exercised. Then, the lower levels will emulate it," Aol states.

She maintains anti-corruption efforts will only succeed when culprits are convicted and proceeds of fraud recovered. "Some people have squandered public resources but have not been brought



to book, and this has bred a culture of impunity. We must empower citizens to track funds for service delivery," she says.

The chairperson Uganda Episcopal Conference, His Grace Archbishop **John Baptist Odama**, calls on government to give hope to the people of northern Uganda who have suffered from the effects of the war that took place in that region.

"It has been discouraging to note that the funds given to help the people who are suffering in the north are stolen by people in high offices.

Government should make sure the stolen money is returned and government should deliver services to the people," Odama appeals.

He notes that thousands of people were displaced in northern Uganda when the country's army fought the Joseph Kony-led Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).



While many were taken captive and consequently introduced into the rebel group, others were ruthlessly killed. Since the government drew out a resettlement plan after forcing the LRA out of the country, many people have returned to their communities.



Daniel Opio Okumu, Community Activista from Nwoya district says implementation of the anti-corruption laws has been ineffective. "The laws and institutions to fight corruption are in place. That is commendable. But the challenge is on their enforcement; that is where the gap is," Okumu says

Gulu LCV Chairman **Martin Ojara** says the cutting of donor aid to northern Uganda has affected many development programmes. He adds that similar budget cuts to local governments in the north have negatively impacted on the delivery of services.



Acholi Sub-region Farmers get a Raw Deal from Operation Wealth Creation

By Francis Emorut

Farmers in Acholi sub region have no reason to smile as they were supplied seedlings past the planting season saying this is a form of corruption.

The Amuru LC5 Chairperson, Micheal Lakony, Amuru and Pader farmers resolved to reject the seedlings distributed by Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) to alleviate poverty at household level saying they got a raw deal.

This follows a visit by The Northern Uganda Watch sponsored by the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) in partnership with ActionAid Uganda (AAU) to assess the level of social service delivery in the areas of agriculture in the districts of Amuru, Nwoya, Gulu, Agago and Pader. Following the rejection of seedlings such as citrus, coffee among others by farmers, The Northern Watch team witnessed piles of seedlings at Amuru Town Council and at Ogom sub-county headquarters in Pader District.

The farmers also advanced other reason such as farmers were not consulted whether they needed citrus seedlings which take three to five years before one harvests the fruits.

“NAADS system worked better than Operation Wealth Creation which is crowded by soldiers who don’t have any agricultural knowledge and hence compromising results,” Lakony states. Lakony was interfacing with journalists of The Northern Uganda Watch who were



on a field tour in northern Uganda to assess the social service delivery and corruption related cases.

The LC5 Chairperson also pointed out that the seedlings are brought abruptly without informing the district leaders and farmers are called to pick them after filling forms which he

referred to as absurd.

“If we want the country to achieve the middle income status by 2020, then we need to decentralize agriculture sector and not to come up with a slogan Kisanja Hakuna Muchezo,” he says.



“How do you supply seedlings in September, October when the dry season is setting on November and December?”



“How do you supply seedlings in September, October when the dry season is setting on in November and December?”

The Gulu LC5 Chairman Martin Ojara Mpenduzi also wondered whether the slogan Kisanja Hakuna Muchezo which means no jokes implies that President Yoweri Museveni was joking for the last 30 years he has been in power. “President Museveni came up with the slogan Kisanja Hakuna Muchezo. Does it mean that we have been joking in the past years?” Mpenduzi asked.

On the late distribution of farm inputs the coordinator of Operation Wealth Creation in Pader district, Maj. Charles Okumu Ojona refused to take the blame saying the procurement process is to blame which caused the supplier to distribute seedlings late. “The procurement process takes long at the Ministry of Agriculture headquarters. The mangoes seedlings are drying and the community has refused to pick them but if it were beans, they would have

come here faster,” Ojona points out as he was distributing farm inputs at Ogom sub-county headquarters.

Farmers also raised concerns among them the selection criteria for the beneficiaries was questionable, for both crops and animals as corruption was involved, lack of training, insufficient seedlings and animals and weather conditions which don't favour the keeping of heifers and planting of citrus in Acholi sub-region.

Mary Auku, a farmer from Lamogi sub-county in Amuru District says that she rejected the seedlings because they were not supplied at the planting season.

The Northern Watch also discovered that maize seeds were also rejected and were kept in one of the rooms at Amuru Town Council and yet agriculture is the backbone of the economy.

The World Bank Country Director Christina Malmrerg Calvo while launching the World Bank Poverty

Report 2006-2013 recently said investment in agriculture is crucial for the attainment of a middle income status.

“Increasing investment in agriculture will help the country to achieve middle income status, there is also need to reduce income poverty gaps through fiscal policy programmes,” Clavo stated.

On beneficiaries selection criteria, the Ogom sub-county Chief Alice Ajok Okello points out that it is the LC1s who are in charge of selecting and the system is transparent according to her and denied any corruption in the process.

About non-consultation of farmers the Pader Chief Administrative Officer, Canon George Adoko disagrees with the farmers saying that it was agreed that northern Uganda should benefit from citrus farming. Adoko advised farmers to change their mindset and embrace positive attitude towards government programmes

Splitting of Districts FUELS CORRUPTION

By Andrew Ssenyonga

The Acholi cultural, political, religious leaders say that the split of sub region to a number of districts has fueled corruption in terms of service delivery in the region.

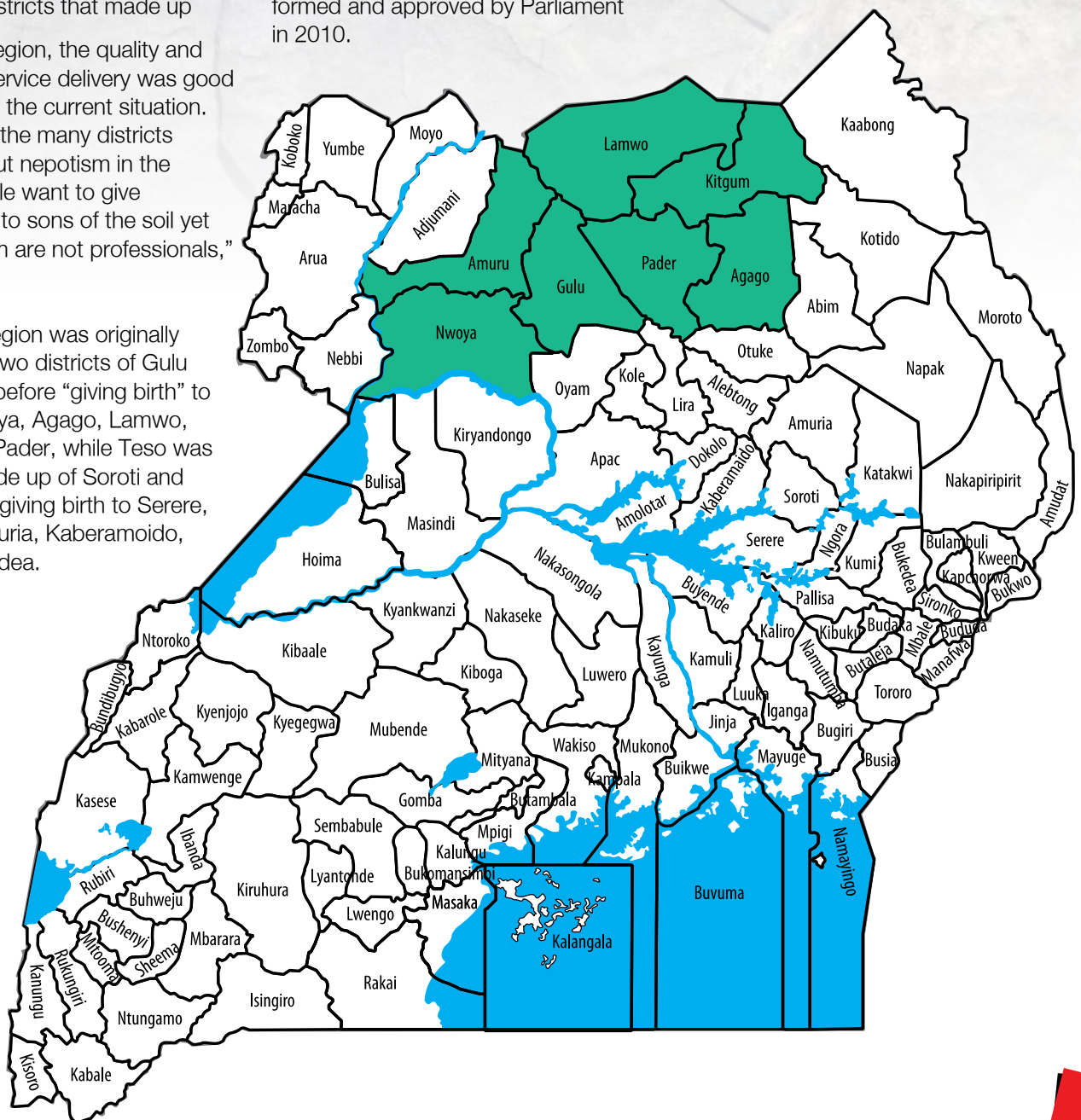
The Prime Minister Ke Kwaro Acholi Ambrose Oloo says before splitting of the two districts that made up

Acholi Sub region, the quality and quantity of service delivery was good compared to the current situation. "The birth of the many districts brought about nepotism in the region. People want to give employment to sons of the soil yet many of them are not professionals," he explains.

Acholi sub region was originally made up of two districts of Gulu and Kitgum before "giving birth" to Amuru, Nwoya, Agago, Lamwo, Omoro and Pader, while Teso was originally made up of Soroti and Kumi before giving birth to Serere, Katakwi, Amuria, Kaberemaido, Ngoma, Bukedea.

In 1986 when NRM took power, Uganda had 33 districts which increased to 81 districts by 2008. The districts increased to 116. There has been agitation for creation of more districts. This agitation has been fuelled by local politicians and ethnic communities seeking autonomy. In the run up to the 2011 elections, 25 new districts were formed and approved by Parliament in 2010.

Oloo adds that this has consequently hindered the quality and quantity of service delivery in the northern region. "Some of the sons of the soil lack the experience and expertise to deliver quality to the people of Acholi. While others will tend to enrich themselves hence giving less to the locals," he notes.



He adds that for instance level of performance in schools in the newly created districts for the past five years is worrying simply because of lack of supervision and quality of the staff attending to schools.

“When the districts were split, most of the quality staff remained at the mother district leaving the new with no options but taking on the poor quality staff who under performed at the mother district,” he says. He notes that, “in the sector of education most schools in the new districts have gone for five years without a first grade due to the poor quality of teachers posted in the schools.”

He adds that most of the staff posted in the new districts stays in mother districts of Kitgum and Gulu hence making it difficult to arrive at the duty posts on time. “Most staffs from Amuru District sleep in Gulu. This means that they will work less in a day hence cheating the tax payer. They cannot monitor works in the district because they are always in and out of the district,” he says.

The Agago District Vice Chairman Moris Ocheng explains that the costs of living in the new districts are high forcing them to seek refuge from the mother districts. He however notes that this has made supervision of health centres, schools and other government projects difficult because they have no time. “This has greatly influenced the quality of services delivered to the communities,” he says.

Grace Layet a resident of Toro-kal village in Amuru Town Council says at Amuru Health Centre III health workers report after 10 am and leave at 2pm. “This means that they don’t stay in the district and they cheat our time and government through working for fewer hours,” she explains.

Pius Okot, an Activista from Lamogi Sub County in Amuru District says Oluuel Health Centre II in Ayira



“The government suspended creation of new districts. But each time elections come close, we see new districts coming back yet Uganda has a weak economic base because of few revenue sources,”

village, Gigira Parish in Lamogi Sub-County has spent over two years without staff since its construction in 2014.

“After sensitizing the locals on how to demand for services from the leaders; the residents demanded for the workers in the Centre through barazas and workers were installed,” he says.

Gulu District Chairperson Martin Ojara Mapinduzi blames the government for poor services delivery in Acholi sub region saying that they wanted to create jobs for supporters of the regime.

“Because they had failed to get jobs for the people who supported them to cling to power, they created more districts in the disguise of decentralization,” he explains. He says that it speaks volumes that government that borrows to fund its priorities, especially roads and railway, would create additional administrative units. “The government suspended creation of new districts. But each time elections come close, we see new districts coming back yet Uganda has a weak economic base because of few revenue sources,” he says.

He however notes that district creation may be bringing public services closer to citizens.

“This new evidence may provide a strong case for district creation since it is seen to improve service delivery in previously marginalized areas,” he adds.

Gulu Archbishop John-Baptist Odama says as is the case in many other developing countries, Uganda’s decentralization programme was designed to promote grassroots democracy and participatory development.

“Creating too many districts may disrupt the realization of socio-economic rights,” Odama adds. However, the Gulu district deputy Chief Administrative Officers Anslem Kyaligonza maintains that creation of new district is not a mere political pronouncement but meant to take development closer to the people. “Government is using politics as a means to provide services and goods to the people especially the poor in order to improve their livelihood, generate employment for the unemployed and thereby putting more money in their pockets,” he adds.

Community Monitors Point out Shoddy Work on Ceke Bridge as Storm Blows Roof of new Omot Subcounty Administrative Block

By Francis Emorut

Community monitors of Nwoya have raised concern of shoddy work regarding the repair of Ceke Bridge saying floods are beginning to wash away stones that are supposed to support the Bridge. According to them this is part of corruption and yet Shs120m was injected.

The bridge located near Anaka town council was destroyed during the insurgency caused by Lord Resistance Army (LRA) under the command of rebel chief Joseph Kony.

When the Northern Uganda Watch

visited the area recently the residents said the bridge was repaired during the election time meaning government was prompted to repair it in order to win votes.

According to residents of Owat village the bridge became a death trap after some children and women were injured and rushed to Anaka referral hospital which has now also been refurbished.

The sorry state of the bridge also attracted thugs who would waylay residents and robbed them. "Government was prompted to repair the bridge so as to get votes,"

Daniel Opio a youth Activista with ActionAid Uganda said. The Nwoya District Community Development Officer, Geoffrey Akema, refuted the allegations and said the money was from the central government channeled through the Peace, Recovery Development Plan (PRDP).

He said the bridge was repaired in March this year after the elections. On whether there was corruption involved regarding shoddy work by the contractor, the Community Development Officer declined to comment and referred the Northern Uganda Watch to the District Engineer who wasn't available.



According to Akema, the Ceke bridge repair has increased productivity as the agricultural community is able to trade their produce in Anaka Town Council.

“The bridge connects the community to the town council and it has helped to boost productivity and trade,” Akema told The Northern Uganda Watch.

Susan Atto the Programme Officer of Forum for Community Transformation noted that the repair of the bridge was a sigh-of-relief to residents who used to suffer a lot. In another development, the local leaders of Omot subcounty have complained of shoddy work regarding the newly constructed administrative block which roof was blown by storm.

“There was corruption involved because the contractor did shoddy work and that’s why the storm blew off the roof and yet the old structures of the administration block built in 1986 remained intact,” Hellen Akello the LCIII vice chairperson states.



*Below: Blown off roof of Omot Sub-county Administrative block
Inset: Ojara Kam, the Deputy Sub-county Chief*



Ogom Health Centre III hit by shortage of Drugs, Lacks Pit-Latrine for Patients



By Francis Emorut

As early as 9:00am patients had already flocked to Ogom Health Centre III in Pader District waiting to be attended to, but to their surprise only three health workers and a porter were present to attend to them.

Of the three health workers present were a laboratory technician, nursing assistant and the in-charge.

According to the in-charge of the health facility Joyce Lanyero, the facility is grappling with the shortage of health workers to the extent that a porter (cleaner) and an askari (security guard) have to give a hand. "We are understaffed. Out of 19 health workers only 10 are available and we are overwhelmed when a big number of patients turn up," says Lanyero.

Lanyero explains that their problem is compounded by lack of pit-latrines and drugs stock outs as well as having broken windows which has resulted to the loss of the health facility records when it rains. "We don't have pit-latrines for patients. When nature calls, they just go into the bush and others just control it until they go back to their homes," Lanyero states.

The in charge was briefing officials of

ActionAid Uganda (AAU) who were on a field tour to assess the social services delivery and corruption related cases in the Districts of Amuru, Nwoya, Gulu, Pader and Agago.

Among other challenges the health workers are grappling with are lack of maternity ward, in-patient unit and microscope to detect malaria. "We use rapid test to detect malaria," the in charge explains.

To address some of the challenges they are faced with especially understaffing, Lanyero said she is forced to use an Askari to do records work since the facility was opened in 2012.

A community monitor, of Corom village in Ogom sub county, Bosco Dagama Oryem notes that sometimes the health workers do report late to work and during weekends the health facility is closed.

Prossy Laker, 22, of Lalela West, points out that some health workers are rude and this scares away patients.

Responding to the outcry of the community and health workers the Pader LC5 Vice Chairperson, Patrick Obua admitted that there

is shortage of health workers, drug stock out and the district leadership is addressing gaps of absenteeism and late reporting.

"We made a big promise leading by example and the reporting time is 8:00am while the technocrats report at 8:30am and this should happen at all health centres," Obua explains. He said that an on spot check was carried out in some health centres and it was found that some staff had adhered to time keeping while others were still struggling.

On other challenges he said the district leadership since they are new, was trying their level best to solve the problems with line ministry. Meanwhile in Anaka and Gulu Regional hospitals and Otwee Health Centre III shortage of drugs and understaffing have caused untold suffering to patients.

According to Suzan Atto, Programme Officer of Forum of Community Transformation a partner to ActionAid Uganda, patients in Anaka hospital are asked to pay money for drugs such as Hepatitis E which is costs Shs130,000 and to her this is corruption. "A peasant can't afford such amount," Atto points out

Lack of Agriculture Extension Workers Hampers Operation Wealth Creation Program in Pader

By Andrew Ssenyonga

Thomas Affa, 31, is a youth of Talela East village, Ogom Sub County in Pader District with a family of four children, the youngest being one- year-old. He is grappling with demands of tilling the land to feed his family. Throughout the two- decade insurgency caused by the Lord Resistance Army (LRA) under the command of the rebel chief Joseph

Kony, Affa's family had left 50 acres of land unattended to.

The land remained under fallow and developed into a forest and tapped the best of nutrients and regained its spoilt virginity.

To find a source of livelihood for the family, Affa decided to open up part of the land.

"It is perplexing to bring up children in this part of the country. I am just trying to get back to my feet. I decided to start farming because government had given us a helping hand with the provision of inputs," he says.

He adds that recently different farming inputs have been distributed through Operation Wealth Creation



(OWC) programme to a number of locals in 12 sub counties and town councils that make up Pader District. The sub counties include Agagura, Pajule, Puranga, Ainere, Ogom, Pader, Latanya, Lapul, Acholibur, Laguti, Atanga and Pader Town Council.

The inputs, Affa says they have been receiving include heifers, beans, maize, simsim, soya beans, citrus among others.

“We appreciate the government efforts to avail us with the agricultural inputs but we face challenges of lack of extension workers in our districts to give us advice on the management of the inputs,” he says. However, Santo Opira a farmer in Coorom East Ogom Sub County says that many members of society have ridiculed the inputs saying that the cows were only given to a selected few and the seedlings come late.

David Okello, the coordinator here, says they have tried to sensitize communities that not everyone can benefit from government programmes due to limited funding. “We ask them to wait for future projects while others can benefit from projects by development partners,” Okello says.

Samuel Okot, 21, a youth Activista in Talela West Ogom Sub County says records shows, one acre of land produced 1,000kgs of rice, 800kgs of beans and 500kgs of groundnuts in the last season as the soils are fertile in Pader.

The problem is that people have not embraced the use of storage facilities that the district put up to enhance safety of produce and enhance group marketing.

“We have two satellite storage and marketing centres which can take 20 metric tons each but you cannot force people to store their produce. We are trying to sensitize them and cure the perception that their



Community Monitors from Amur

produce will be tempered with when they store in the district warehouses,” he states.

Hope is not lost as a good fresh life for the people of Northern Uganda is resurrected through Government programmes such as Peace Recovery and Development Plan

(PRDP), Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) and now Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) has been promising to deliver.

However, some districts in the region show that is far from being achieved.

Bosco Oryem, for example struggles to get agriculture inputs. He believes their supply through the newly-named Operation Wealth Creation is politically influenced.

Pader District leadership has resolved to petition government demanding for the recruitment of the agriculture extension workers at sub county level following the poor performance of the Operation Wealth Creation programme in the District. Mid 2014, President Yoweri Museveni suspended the NAADS Programme over mismanagement of the programme funds and replaced it with Operation Wealth Creation, entrusting it into the hands of the Uganda People's Defense Forces (UPDF), to oversee the distribution and supervision of the technologies to the disappointment of communities.

During ActionAid Uganda's (AAU) visit in different parts of the district to review the impact of corruption on service delivery, the leaders and locals observed that OWC has failed to make impact due to lack of agriculture extension workers to educate farmers on improved methods of farming and disease and pest control.

The District Operation Wealth Creation Coordinator Maj. Charles Okumu says the District has only three extension workers which are just a drop in the ocean of problems the agricultural sector in district is facing in its service delivery. Maj. Okumu adds that the biggest problem is the lack of extension workers to train and prepare farmers on what and how to produce productively.

"There is a big problem with the implementation of Government agricultural programmes. At Sub County level, there is no proper farming knowledge given to farmers because we lack extension workers and the Operation Wealth Creation people lack the necessary training," he says.

“Government should give priority to the recruitment of extension workers. Many animals given to famers are dying because of lack of technical advice on treatment and care,”

Maj. Okumu also blames the Operation Wealth Creation Secretariat for the delayed distribution of inputs. “We who supply inputs to the district are always on time but the procurement exercise at the secretariat delays, this causes us to deliver the inputs late,” he explains.

Ogom sub-county Chief Alice Ajok says the selection of the beneficiaries is done at the village level by the LCI Chairpersons who know their residents.

“The process is transparent and it is done by the LC I chairpersons who know the residents in their areas. Then the lists are forwarded to us for verification and to distribute the inputs,” she adds. She calls for strengthening of coordination and team work by all the leaders if the programme is to yield fruits of wealth creation and improve household incomes.

The District LC5 Vice Chairperson Patrick Obua recalls that NAADS programme had created impact among the famers improving

household income and standards of living. Obua says: “Three years after the inception of Operation Wealth Creation, the impact of this programme is becoming invisible due to lack of agriculture extension workers to educate farmers. We're going to demand that government embarks on a nation-wide recruitment of agriculture extension staff to run the programme effectively.”

“Government should give priority to the recruitment of extension workers. Many animals given to famers are dying because of lack of technical advice on treatment and care,” he adds.

Obua underscored the importance of extension workers. “If the programme had the extension staff to monitor and evaluate its performance, the suppliers and UPDF officials would not be dumping the technologies at Sub County without the sub county leaders consent,” he states

The District Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Canon George Adoko explains that extension workers under the agriculture department are supposed to offer technical advice to farmers on crops, veterinary and fish farming to enable them increase their yields.

However in nine out of the twelve sub counties in Pader, there is no single extension worker, while in the other sub counties, the workers are not providing adequate services to farmers because of lack of resources.

Among other recommendations, the leaders said the Operation Wealth Creation Secretariat should fund the annual review stakeholders meetings, plan for monitoring and operational costs for sub county leaders and technocrats should have improved coordination at all levels, engage the sub county authorities in distribution of items, timely delivery of items and early preparation of farmers



Community in Arms Over Poor Road Network in Acholi Sub-region

By Andrew Ssenyonga

Despite tremendous growth in Uganda's Information Communication Technology (ICT) sector, the uptake of new technologies is hampered by poor infrastructure, low literacy levels, high access costs and lack of local online content, particularly in rural areas. 80% of Ugandans live in rural areas and have very little access to information and decision-making about local service delivery and information about the performance of their leaders.

Raphael Owani 27 a local resident Omot village in Omot sub county Agago district says: "Our districts face regular service delivery problems, such as impassable roads, bridges that have been washed away, absentee school teachers, low quality building construction at schools, and lack of medicines at our health centres. ActionAid Uganda

gives us a way to handle and report these problems, as well as corruption issues."

Wheeled with pangas, hoes and slashers residents of Omot village in Omot sub-county Agago District cleared and opened an 8.9Km Ateek- Awonodwe community road. Owani says the locals decided to work on the road after numerous calls to the district without response.

"We wrote letters to sub county and the district to work on this road but there was no response. So we decided to open it ourselves," he explains.

Owani says that the road was used by the pupils attending Awonodwe Primary School and it boosted trade among the communities along it. The Vice Chairperson LC III Omot sub county Hellen Akello explains that the sub county is faced with the challenge of poor road network.

"After assuming office recently, we found out that the main challenge ahead of us was inaccessible roads in the sub county," she says. She adds that the trouble is mainly the community access roads where by 90% of these roads are bushy and dilapidated.

"Many of our access roads in the community are bushy and dilapidated to the extent that they are risky for our community to use," she adds.

She also notes that most of them are used by pupils going to school which poses a danger to their young generation.

"This has led to communities forming up committees to see that the locals work on the roads other than waiting for the sub county or the district," she says.

Rocky Menya, a resident of Palongo

Town Council says most businesses operating in the area had suffered a huge setback due to the poor road network.

“We could not trade with other sub counties or even export our produce to the neighbouring districts due inaccessible roads the district had,” he says.

John Ochen an Activista from Lapono Sub County says most of the sub county and community roads were in a very sorry state and almost impassable.

“This triggered us the Activistas aided by the ActionAid Uganda to mobilise the locals to demand services from the leaders,” he adds. He continues saying that when this failed the communities decided to take matters in their own hands and started working on a few roads.

Like Agago, communities in Pader, Nwoya and Amuru districts have not also folded their hands in this sector. Many have formed committees that help communities demand for services and others have also engage in community driven works such as opening roads and maintenance.



Thomas Affa, an Activista in Pader Districts explains that waking up the community to demand services has led to improved service delivery in the sector.

“From this pressure a number of central and district roads have been upgraded and working with the communities and donors a number of community access roads have been opened and maintained,” he explains.

Daniel Opio Okumu also an Activista from Pajaa village Labyei ward Anaka Town Council says the district has tried to maintain the roads after demands from the public.

“We appealed to the district leaders through our community meetings with the locals to temporarily work on our roads to make them accessible,”

he says.

Acholi sub region districts leaders acknowledged the challenge of poor roads in the region but attributed the problem to poor funding from the central government.

Moris Ocheng the Vice Chairman Agago District says the district has three types of roads that include central, district and community access roads.

“The district roads cover a total of 1333.9 km including 202 km that are maintained by central government, 293.9 km that are worked and maintained by the district and 838 km that are maintained by the lower councils and the communities,” he says.

Ocheng adds that since the district was created in 2000, the National Roads Authority (UNRA) only opened a few roads but it has never come back for maintenance.

“The problem is that UNRA offices for Acholi sub region are found in Luwero and Kitgum which makes it difficult for them to supervise the road works in the region,” he explains.

The Agago District Vice Chairperson also notes that lack of financial and technical capacity is hindering the road sector in the district. Ochieng says the district’s



inadequate budget cannot enable procurement of services such as technical personnel to facilitate road works.

“We have only one road engineer who works on a part-time basis with no equipment and funds to open and maintain roads yet we need technical staff such as transport economists and bridge engineers, but we cannot afford to recruit them because of the government ceiling,” he says.

Ochieng however, adds that he is optimistic most of these challenges will be overcome as more road development partners come on board.

Amuru LC5 Chairperson Michael Lakony says financial challenges also affect their district’s operations.

“We have not been able to support community access roads because of financial incapacitation. As a district, we do not mind public involvement in road affairs because locals need to see value for money,” Lakony says.

He notes that road funders only look at road works yet there are other activities outside road works such as sensitisation and workplace policies that need funding.

Gulu District boss Martin Ojara Mapinduzi says lack of roads and long distance are hindering the delivery of social services to the populations in the remote areas of the state.

Mapinduzi argues that the poor roads make it difficult to transport patients to hospital in time for treatment hence leading to otherwise preventable health complications.

Corruption is a Growing Concern:

Despite the existence of anti-corruption agencies such as Inspectorate of Government (IG) and Anti-Corruption Court as well as Zero Tolerance to Corruption policy, graft still remains a concern as cases of misappropriation of public resources continue to be reported by the media (read Daily Monitor Nov 1 2016 Hospital Accountant held over failure to account for Shs100m and Daily Monitor Oct 31 2016 Gulu Accountant held over Shs67 million youth fund).

How corruption is viewed

Before exploring how corruption is viewed by the people of Northern Uganda let’s first define corruption. According to Corruption Watch, Corruption is the abuse of public resources or public power for personal gain while Transparency International defines it as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain. To a certain extent, corruption is viewed by some people as a way of life, that is, you can’t get a service without offering a bribe or an inducement to facilitate the process. This permeates at local, district and national level especially when it comes to accessing services from responsible authorities.

During the Northern Uganda Watch team visit to Acholi sub-region facilitated by ActionAid Uganda (AAU), cases of poor service delivery in the health, agriculture, road and education sectors were attributed to corruption.

The respondents interviewed pointed out various forms of corruption for example diversion of public funds for personal aggrandizement, late coming and leaving office early and absenteeism by some civil servants, as forms of corruption reasoning that

this is cheating government and yet the public officer gets paid for no work done.

This practice was common in Amuru, one of the new districts where public officers reside in the mother district and commute to their work station.

Incidents of public officers arriving late around 10:00am or 11:00am and leaving at 2:00pm or 3:00pm instead of reporting and leaving at 8:00am and 5:00pm respectively affects service delivery.

The same practice occurs in Health Centre IIIs where health workers are supposed to attend to patients. Regarding agriculture, the current ongoing Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) programme is meeting hurdles as the intended beneficiaries have raised complaints on the criteria used to identify who should benefit from what, especially when it comes to livestock, saying it is riddled with corruption.

Not only has the livestock distribution raised concern but also the farmers are questioning the timing of distribution of agricultural inputs especially the seedlings as they have ended up drying up and the suitability of the soil besides whether the farmers requested for a particular seedling (see The Observer Nov 2, 2016 Museveni anti-poverty tour draws criticism and The New Vision Oct 31 Museveni calls for documentation of Operation Wealth Creation beneficiaries).

Recommendations

To address the corruption concerns, actions such as sensitizing the residents/communities living in Acholi sub-region first on the dangers of

graft and empowering Activistas, community monitors and community trackers to hold the district leaders accountable.

Stakeholders such as religious and cultural leaders, Members of Parliament and civil society working in the districts should be responsible for sensitization.

Establishing free toll call centre in each district to report cases of corruption. The civil society and District Local Government should bear the cost of running the centre. Introduction of yearly awards to district leaders who have taken significant steps in the fight against corruption. Civil Society in consultation with community, religious and cultural leaders should be the ones to identify such leaders using scorecard.

The publication of Northern Uganda Watch should be strengthened and

coverage expanded to more districts in assessing the impact of corruption and the documentation period should take 14 days instead of six days.

In the near future translation of the Northern Uganda Watch in local language Luo is crucial for the community to understand the issues of corruption and how it affects service delivery.

Extensive consultation with the communities on agricultural inputs should be explored as opposed to imposing seedlings on them and community involvement in major undertakings by the Local Government such as roads, classrooms and health centres constructions. This is important for ownership of the projects and creation of eagerness to supervise.

Bring all stakeholders together for a workshop to come up with solutions

to curb corruption.

Civil society should be the architect of such meeting with support from development partners.

Conclusion

Worldwide corruption is a global concern to the extent that each country is rated using Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International and Uganda is not exceptional as it was rated to the 139th position out of 175 countries, according to the 2015 Corruption Perceptions Index reported by Transparency International. It therefore, requires concerted efforts by all stakeholders particularly the will of the political class to deal with corruption and ensure that public resources are used for the public good to spur social and economic development in Uganda.

Community Monitors Enhancing Delivery of Services in Kumi District

Mukongoro is the largest Sub County in Kumi district. It has 18 parishes which include; Akadot, Kadami, Kabukol, Kajamaka, Osopoit, and Kodokoto among many more. The Sub County has been blessed with a number of community monitors whose voluntary efforts are geared towards checking the performance of public services in health centers and in primary schools. This week, Northern Uganda Watch visited these community monitors who gave us an insight of their day-to-day activities.

Q: What prompted you to become community monitors?

A: I realized that public resources were being misused by a few individuals for their personal gains. Resources meant to develop the entire Sub County were being used

to benefit only a few privileged ones. In addition to that, it is both my right and a duty to fight corruption as a citizen of this country.

Taxes are not utilized to benefit the entire Sub County. When we go to

the health centers for example, we do not get drugs. Most of these health workers take the drugs to private health units. I felt the need to serve my community and ensure that people get all the services that they deserve.



There are two categories of people, one of which is the voiceless. Personally, I felt the need to speak on behalf of those who could not speak for themselves. I wanted to become their voice.

Q: What exactly do you monitor?

A: We monitor government programmes that are meant to benefit everybody in this Sub County. We inspect roads, health centres, and schools to check if they are performing well and meeting people's expectations.

In the health sector for example, we monitor drugs especially the types which are sent to our community, how they are distributed to the different health facilities and how they reach the tax payer. We also continuously check the relationship between patients and health workers. We do this by gathering feedback from the community.

In schools, we monitor pupils' performance. We also check the arrival books for teachers to assess whether or not they are working for the minimum time required.

Q: Where do you get the courage to carry out such a risky activity?

A: We get our power and protection from the community. We are their voices so we get maximum support from them. Usually, we use dialogue so as to suggest improvement in areas where it is necessary.

Q: What challenges do you face when undertaking community monitoring?

A: There are cases such as defilement which usually need to be followed up. As community monitors, we do not have the mandate to follow up such cases. Unfortunately, the government does not follow the cases either and in the end, justice is not served.

Some government policies need to be revised. For instance, health centers I, II, and III are not allowed to request for drugs from Entebbe National Medical Store. They are simply pushed to the health centers and usually, the drugs sent are not the drugs that the community really needs.

Q: What do you think should be done in order to improve service delivery in Mukongoro Sub County?

A: All health centres should be

granted power to request for drugs from the national medical store. In other words, a pull system should be adopted such that the drugs sent to the health centres meet the needs of the community.

Community monitors should also be motivated. Our work is completely voluntary. Sometimes, we do not have the resources to perform our duties. Monitors should have increased access to information. This can be done if they are provided with transport.

Successes

The LC I system in my parish used to charge both the complainant and the accused in times of disputes. For this reason, people stayed away from the justice system. I created awareness in the community and made people realize that they have a right to receive free services from the LC1 office. Francis Opedun, Community Monitor Omerei parish.

The staff members at the Health Centre were not punctual before. Patients had to wait for long hours before they could receive medical attention. As a result of community monitoring, health workers are now

working for longer hours. We introduced an arrival book and a Health Management Committee at the health centres in order to improve performance.

Florence Amagoro, Community Monitor Agaria Health Centre II. The health services in my parish were extremely poor. There were no drugs, health workers were considered rude by the community and the supplies meant to be free of charge such as mosquito nets and mama kits were being sold. As a result of community monitoring activities, the former in charge at the health centre was dismissed and now there is a better relationship between the health centre and the community which it serves. John Fredrick Odeke, Community Monitor Kakures/Kodokoto parish.

Enos Emuget, Community Monitor Akadot/Kadami parish. There was a head teacher in my parish whom we realized had been using the school's money for his own benefit. He admitted and promised to pay back the money. Later, he was dismissed from office. James Epongoit, Community Monitor Osopoit/Kabukol parish.

Some of our Sub-county land had been grabbed by the Sub-county Chief and sold to private individuals. When we intervened, the Sub County chief was dismissed from office and demoted to Parish Chief. Lawrence Olupot, Community Monitor Kajamaka Parish.

Teachers at Olecho Primary School were not meeting our expectations. Today, they are performing much better than before. Rev. Charles Osako, Community Monitor Olecho parish.

Mothers Pay for Deliveries at Nyero Health Center III

Nyero Health Center III delivers between 7 and 10 mothers weekly. The health center is located in Nyero Sub-county in Kumi District. Present are two midwives who have to attend to all the expectant mothers.

“According to policy guidelines, our health centre only has two midwives. When one works during daytime, the other works the night shift,” said Moses Opedo, the Health Centre in-charge.

Moses also explains that many mothers deliver at home or anywhere away from the health centre due to transport hinderances. “Most of the expectant mothers have to travel from as far as Kalapata and Kamenya to receive medical attention,” he said.

Basil Ongodia, the head of community monitors in Nyero Sub County confirmed that the long distances that have to be travelled to the health centre hinder expectant mothers from receiving medical attention. He however added that some of them stay away because they cannot afford to pay the money charged by the nurses and the midwives at the health centre.

“Deliveries are charged. Nurses and midwives ask mothers to pay Ug.Shs 5,000 and Ug.Shs 7,000 for female babies and male babies respectively after delivery,” he said. “The mothers are not discharged from the health centre until the money is paid and due to this unfair procedure, most of them opt to deliver their babies at home.”

Shifra Cheptoek, a nurse at Theo Health Center said that all the services offered in maternal health care are completely free of charge and that no expectant mother is asked to pay any amount of money. Norah Anyuu, a 37 year old Sub County Councilor and peer mother said that she has delivered all her six children at Nyero Health Center III but has never been forced to pay money. She said that mothers choose to give the midwives money only as a token of appreciation.

“I have never been charged money for antenatal or after delivery,” she said. “We (expectant mothers) are only required to come with 500g of OMO washing powder, a bottle of Jik and a tablet of Dettol soap.”

Norah further explains that while the items collected are meant to clean and disinfect the labour ward after deliveries, there are women who cannot afford these requirements who are then forced to deliver their babies from home.

Cheptoek also said that the situation at Nyero Health Center III calls for immediate intervention. There is no standby ambulance at the health center and in case of an emergency, they have to wait for Kumi Hospital to send one. On top of that, the facility has no safe water. Both health workers and patients, including expectant mothers have to carry Jerri cans of water to the health centre.

Primary Head Teacher Swindles 2.4million

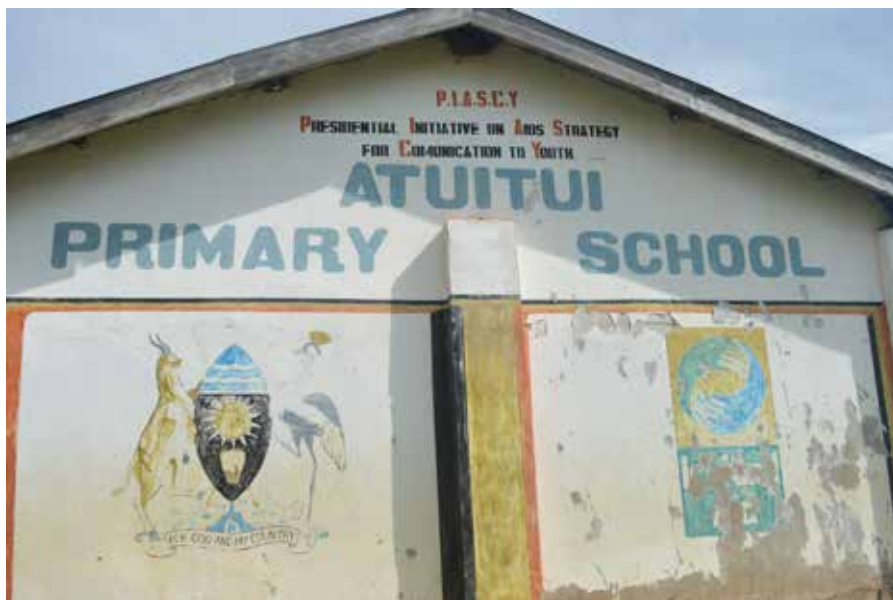
A primary head teacher in Kumi District is on fire for playing ping pong with community members after failing to account for over UGX 2.4million meant for the reconstruction of a roof. Community members as well as monitors accused the head teacher, Venus Akodo for using money collected for the reconstruction of a roof at Atuitui Primary School for personal benefits.

In April this year, a roof of one of the four blocks at the school was blown away by wind in a storm. The block was being used by both primary six and primary seven pupils. Located in a remote village in Ongino Sub County, Kumi district, Atuitui Primary School was founded in 1999 and has over 800 pupils. At a single glance, it is easy to conclude that the school has suffered a number of "bad days."

Community monitors in Ongino Sub County as well as members of the School's Management Committee (SMC) reveal that Akodo who is also the accounting officer at Atuitui Primary School called for a meeting after the incident where parents agreed to contribute money to reconstruct the roof.

"After the roof was blown away, the school held a meeting with parents where they all agreed to contribute UgShs 5,000 for development, UgShs 2,000 to enroll more teachers, and UgShs 3,000 as membership fee in the school's Parents Teachers Association(PTA)," Lawrence Openy, the Vice Chairperson Community Monitors in Ongino Sub County said at one of the community meetings.

Ibeeret Julius, a member of the PTA added that after parents had made



their contributions there was enough money to reconstruct a new roof. "We managed to collect a total of UgShs 2,444,000," he said before adding: "The Office of the Prime Minister also gave us 186 iron sheets to support rehabilitation of the classroom block."

However, roofing was postponed because pupils were about to sit for their end of term one examinations. Afterwards, the head teacher claimed that he had used part of the money to pay salary to one of the teachers who is not on government pay roll. When asked to produce the rest of the money, he mentioned that it was not available at that time.

"He said he had used some of the money to pay off a teacher. However, he could not explain how much had been spent and how much was left," said Francis Adong, a community monitor. She also narrates that the head teacher said that the rest of the money had been kept in a safe place, far from the school premises.

In a meeting held by the SMC and the PTA in August 2016, the head teacher said that only UgShs 1,904,000 was left after he had met a few expenditures, which he failed to explain in the meeting. When the School Management Committee (SMC) assigned a contractor to reconstruct the roof, the head teacher then admitted that he did not have the money but would pay it after two weeks.

Peter Obelon Omwany, a member of the SMC is worried about parents who keep demanding for accountability for their money. "My biggest worry is the fact that we cannot fully explain the situation to the parents. They contributed money and they are demanding to see how it was used," he said. He also explains that since the head teacher is also the accounting officer, he is also fully responsible for the school's financial records which are not readily accessible by other staff members.

The Chairperson Parents Teachers Association, Lawrence Iberut expressed the community's anger and disappointment in the head teacher.

"We fear that our lives are in danger because of the head teacher's actions," he said. "The common man in the village is not happy about it." While the School Management Committee (SMC) has the power to reprimand the head teacher, the chairperson SMC, Francis Ojakor,

said that initially, no action was taken against him but if he fails to produce the money, they will resort to other measures.

"We wanted to give him (the head teacher) a chance to honorably bring back the money, so we acted upon humanitarian ground. But if he fails to do so, we shall take this matter further," he said.

Pupils of Atuitui Primary School have since then been congested in

the other blocks which have proper roofing. Adong fears that this is not just a threat to the pupils' academic performance but it could also put their health at risk.

"Primary one and two pupils have been put together, just like those in primary six and seven," she said. "They cannot perform well under these conditions. They may also catch illnesses like cough and flu from one another very easily."

Turning Fate into Fortunes through Agriculture

Richard Okweny lives to tell of how agriculture has shaped his life. It has made him see the good, bad and ugly. The 30 year old lives and grew up from Adodoi village, Kapujan Sub County, in Katakwi district.

Like all youths, Okweny was excited when the Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) was introduced in his sub

county in 2015. He surely knew his time for poverty to end was about to come, but, that was never the case. The energetic youth narrated to the Northern Watch how the 10million he and his friends got under the Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) took him to prison later and hence forcing him to abandon all his plans

for agriculture.

"I used to read newspapers and this is where I found information about the YLP. Later I discussed about it with 9 of my friends and fellow youth," Okweny recalls.

When the programme reached the





sub county level his group of 10 managed to receive UgShs 10m meant to develop themselves with Okweny as the chairperson. "Our initial plan was to start rearing turkey. We started procuring the turkey and building structures for them," he recollects.

The group had also budgeted for a bicycle to ease transport. They had also planned to rent a piece of land that they would cultivate. However, these plans were not put into action. They were abandoned for something else that Okweny would later regret this decision.

"We made changes and decided as a group to buy a motorcycle. This left us with a balance of UgShs 2.6million. But before we could start renting land, some of the group members accused me, their chairperson, of trying to 'own' the motorcycle," he vividly recalls. Okweny reminisces that at this stage, events unfolded so quickly that he did not get an opportunity to explain himself to his fellow youth. Before he knew it all, the authorities had been involved.

"We held a meeting with the Resident District Commissioner(RDC) and I was asked to produce receipts for the motorcycle," Okweny remembers. But it was far from over. "When I arrived home that day, I was greeted with news that my other group members had taken away all the turkey. To make it worse,

the deputy RDC, Walter Elakas Okiring had also taken the group motorcycle," Okweny sadly recounts. On the same day, Okweny was arrested and taken to Katakwi Police Station where he parted with more than UgShs 500,000 before he was released.

"That day, I had UgShs 210,000 in my pocket which was taken by a police officer when I was arrested," he said. "I also had to pay UgShs 300,000 before I could be released by the police."

Okweny felt betrayed by not only the authorities especially the Deputy RDC but also the people he regarded as friends, his group members. After his release from prison, he did not give up on his plans for agriculture. "My parents own a huge chunk of land so I thought of this as an opportunity to start something of my own," he said. "I also realized that practicing agriculture did not need a lot of capital to start. This is why I did not face a lot of hardships in the beginning,"

"I started growing tomatoes and my first harvest came in November 2015 where I earned UgShs 2m," says Okweny explaining that while in prison, the group broke up.

By January 2016, Okweny had also stocked more than 900 fish in a fish pond from which he has started harvesting fish for domestic consumption.

Okweny expounds on why he and the fellow youth failed while venturing in agriculture. "This business is sometimes disappointing and it requires a lot of patience. Most of the youth feel discouraged," he said. The LC3 Chairperson of Toroma Sub County in Katakwi District, Obwalinga Kizito, confirmed that three groups had benefited from the YLP last year, including one which was given UgShs 10m. He explained that when groups are approved at the Sub County and district levels, they each open bank accounts where the money is deposited directly.

Obwalinga observed that the YLP was doing poorly and that little or no progress at all was being made by the groups.

"It seems like the youth are not oriented before they are given the money," he said. "Recovery is very poor because the youth spend this money on enterprises they choose while denying others equal opportunity to participate."

Obwalinga also said that similar government programs like NAADS and Operation Wealth Creation failed to work out in Katakwi District as a whole because they are poorly implemented, making their impact on the community unrecognizable. He also noted that some of the programmes introduced in Katakwi District do not suit the region. "The government sends us cattle from Western Uganda which cannot survive the climate and the conditions here. As a result, these cattle become very unproductive," said Obwalinga.

"To improve these programs, enough education should be done to sensitize the community, favorable enterprises should be identified, and standard procedures on how groups should be monitored should be put in place," said Obwalinga.

Gulu Accountant Held Over Shs67 Million Youth Fund

Gulu District Youth Chairperson Isaac Ojok said the process of releasing money under the programme has always been problematic.

By JULIUS OCUNGI

GULU- Police in Gulu District have arrested an accounting officer in charge of the Youth Livelihood Project (YLP) over alleged embezzlement of Shs67 million meant to benefit youth in the district.

The suspect, Mr David Lalonyo, an accountant at the department of health in the district, was arrested on Friday on orders of the district Chairperson, Mr Martin Ojara Mapenduzi. The officer in charge of criminal investigations at Gulu Central Police Station, Mr James Asubu, confirmed the arrest saying the suspect was detained pending investigations.

“We received orders to arrest the suspect on grounds that he swindled money meant to benefit youth in the district,” Mr Asubu said. Mr Asubu said after their investigation, the suspect would be charged with embezzlement.

Gulu District Chief Administrative Officer Ms Dorothy Ajwang said the money is part of Shs224 million the district received this financial year for the youth programme. “We were alerted by the internal auditor who found out that only 21 of the 29 youth groups approved to receive the money had actually got it,” Ms Ajwang said. She added that when Mr Lalonyo failed to explain why the other youth groups had not received their money, they became suspicious that he could have embezzled it.

Gulu District Youth Chairperson Isaac Ojok said the process of releasing money under the programme has always been problematic. He said the suspect should be compelled to refund the money.

In the 2015/2016 financial year, Gulu District received Shs389 million under YLP meant to benefit 51 youth groups although recovering the cash from the youth became a hurdle.

About Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP)

YLP was initiated in 2013 by the government to supplement the defunct Youth Venture Fund. The project is a combined effort by stakeholders to address rampant youth unemployment in the country.

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Museveni Calls for Documentation of Operation Wealth Creation Beneficiaries



By Vision Reporter

President Yoweri Museveni has called upon Sub County chiefs of kawuma village, Luwero district to stockpile information of how many people are engaged in Operation Wealth Creation (OWC) and how many have not yet benefited in each Sub County.

He urged the RDC to assist and sensitise wanainchi about their land rights.

Speaking during his four day OWC, monitoring and supervisory mission in the district, President Museveni who visited homes door to door also expressed his satisfaction towards progress made so far on the basis of households visited.

“There have been reports of seedlings distributed under Operation Wealth Creation drying up, but I am happy these ones are doing well,” he said. “What I now want the leaders to do is not only stop at distributing seeds, but also follow up and supervise. The agricultural officials should also come and offer technical assistance to these farmers,” he added. On the issue of land, he urged the RDC to assist and sensitise wanainchi about their land rights

Museveni Demands Results for OWC Projects in Luweero

According to Mr Museveni, the Entandikwa project which was originally meant to kick-start the poverty fight among households did not go well

By DAN WANDERA, LUWEERO

President Museveni has demanded for results from projects aimed at improving household income including the Operation Wealth Creation program in Luweero area. Museveni's brother General Salim Saleh is the Chief Coordinator of Operation Wealth Creation.

Museveni who addressed a public rally at Kikunyu village in Makulubita Sub-county, Luweero District on Saturday said Luweero which is supposed to be a model area for all programs implemented by the NRM Government because of its historical liberation war factor has not made progress in areas aimed at fighting poverty among households.

"I have not identified any single farm project from these areas yet OWC farm inputs are distributed. I have decided to conduct a house to house inspection to find out progress for the household poverty fight for residents of Makulubita," Museveni said at a rally in Makulubita on Saturday.

Museveni who addressed leaders from Luweero, Nakaseke and Nakasongola Districts at the same rally blamed leaders for fronting road projects as the most pressing needs of the people they represent yet poverty is more at household level. "Government tarmacked the

Mattuga-Ssemuto road but many families who live near this road are very poor. These families have not made any significant improvement in terms of fighting poverty. The story is the same for all areas that have these tarmacked roads. A family which has no income project will remain poor even when we build good schools and roads. They will instead transfer the same poverty to these schools since they cannot afford the life basics. This was the genesis of my struggle to find ways of improving household incomes of families in 1995 after my careful study," Museveni told the rally.

According to Mr Museveni, the Entandikwa project which was originally meant to kick-start the poverty fight among households did not go well.

"You all know what happened to this project because some of you were beneficiaries. We also had the NAADS programmes where most of the funds ended up paying the workers with less benefit to the farmers. This is the reason why we embarked on the Operation Wealth Creation where we engaged the UPDF to boost family income projects through distribution of farm inputs to farmers at village level. I now want to find out how far this programme has gone in this area," Museveni asserted

He said he had decided to camp at his new farm in Kawumu village in order to monitor some of the projects.

"Luweero is supposed to be a model

area for all these projects. I do not want to meet individuals but demand progress on the poverty fight for each family," Museveni said as he instructed Ms Lucy Nakyobe to get him a bicycle at his new residence at Kawumu.

In Makulubita Sub-county, the authorities informed the President that 328,575 coffee seedlings had been distributed to farmers for the new planting season which began in October 2016.

In July 2013, Government launched the Operation Wealth Creation Project to replace the NAADS program where the UPDF officers fully supervise the distribution of farm inputs at village level. The project was intended to facilitate growth of household income through agriculture.

In Luweero and Nakaseke districts, the local leaders claim the programme has not made enough impact because the inputs are delivered late while many claim the inputs delivered are not demand driven. Mr Paul Ssemakula, the Member of Parliament representing Nakaseke South Constituency says some of the farm inputs are imposed on farmers without studying the soils. We are surprised that farmers are forced to plant oranges and mangoes yet these may not necessarily help them improve household income yet they lack food for their respective families. This is a big challenge which must be addressed, Mr Ssemakula said on Saturday.



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