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act:onaid Uganda

The Impact Mirror Pallisa Cluster Newsletter



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Pallisa Cluster Newsletter

Strengthening Struggles for Social Justice

Editor's Note

Welcome to the first edition of ActionAid Uganda Pallisa Cluster Newsletter which serves as an additional communication channel between the Cluster and its valuable stakeholders. In this edition the team gives you a glimpse of the Cluster's work in three (3) Local Rights Programme (LRP) areas namely Kumi, Busiki and Pallisa. The issue features the work that the Cluster and its partners have been doing in governance, women's rights and livelihoods.



This edition also features some activities carried out in the month of February. The team is delighted to say that communities are being empowered through the various interventions currently underway such as the Sponsorship model, Reflection Action Circles, Tax Justice and Mentorship programme for young people. The team hopes that stories in this edition will give you a glimpse of the team's commitment to strengthening struggles for social justice.

The team is happy to say that the Cluster and its partners remain committed to working with the government, other CSOs, social movements and diverse citizen struggles to transform power relations in our quest to address social injustices.

It is the team's hope that this Newsletter will help you understand the work done in this Cluster to encourage sharing, learning and an improved collaboration. The team looks forward to an impactful year where the Cluster and partners work towards mutual goals for the betterment and prosperity of the people of Uganda.

A huge thank you to all who contributed to this edition and without you this edition would have not been a success.

To valuable stakeholders, your support is greatly appreciated. It is the hope of this team that you enjoy reading this edition.

Happy reading!
Chipso Bangira

Message from the Pallisa Cluster Coordinator

As Cluster Coordinator, I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome you to our first edition of Pallisa Cluster Newsletter. This initiative is borne out of the desire to ensure that as a Cluster we document and share the work that we do, the results, change and impact of our work in the communities for it to reach those that we work for, we work with and other stakeholders who may be interested in the work that we do. I wish to reiterate our commitment to ensure that we catalyze change, amplify impact especially in pursuit of social justice in line with our new, exciting but equally challenging five-year strategy (2018-2022). I want to assure you that the stories from this particular edition are

very interesting and inspiring in the sense that they capture the essence of our existence as ActionAid and in particular ActionAid Uganda Pallisa Cluster. I wish you the best and hope you enjoy this edition and many other editions that will come after this one.

God Bless You and Enjoy!
Aggrey Kibet



Harriet, a tale of a business woman

By Immaculate Awori - Busiki LRP



Harriet Kanikule Nkulega's new and old house respectively



Harriet Kanikule Nkulega aged 48 years is married with 12 children and resides in Bulagala Village, Bubago Parish in Nsinze Sub County, Namutumba District. She is a small holder farmer and a budding business woman.

Harriet is a member of Tukulereghalala Reflection Action Circle which is supported by ActionAid Busiki Local Rights Programme (LRP) and Nsinze HIV/AIDS Workers Association (NSHAWA). Through the Reflection Action Circle Harriet's life has changed.

"I used to be a shy person who could not speak in public before joining Tukulereghalala Reflection Action (RA) Circle. I did not believe that women could also save money, own businesses and participate in local government decision making processes. I greatly depended on my husband to provide everything not knowing that I could also contribute towards my family's well-being and development of my community", said Harriet.

"Harriet now makes bricks for sale which has enabled her to pay school fees for her children and she is in the process of building her new house.

"Through savings with the group and money from the sale of group produce which was used to supplement member savings, I received UGX 1.5 million when the box was opened and we distributed our money. I was able to buy iron sheets, iron bars for roofing my house and I bought four goats.

"I want to thank NSHAWA and ActionAid for introducing us to the Reflection Action circles that have taught us how to form groups, identify community challenges and come up with local solutions. I am now able to pay school fees and buy scholastic materials for my children", she added.

Harriet hopes that Tukulereghalala Reflection Action circle will be a model to other communities and it will inspire them to work together in developing themselves using home grown solutions.

More than 120 people have benefited from the Reflection Action Circles through training on village savings and loans association (VSLA), sensitization programmes and better farming methods.

From perpetrator to champion for anti-gender based violence

By Ger Odock - Kumi LRP



happy Alphonse Opolot and his wife Esther

Like in many happy-ever-after stories, Alphonse Opolot's family leads a happy life after making gender-related violence a thing of the past.

Opolot is a 70 year old man from Aacapa Village in Mukongoro Parish, Mukongoro Sub County in Kumi District.

After retiring from his job as a prison warden, he joined his wife, Asire Esther Lucy and their 10 children.

They are into full-time cassava and groundnuts farming production.

Esther said that her husband developed a drinking problem which led to her being battered. He would also sell farm produce for his own benefit. This led to family conflicts.

In every cloud, there is indeed a sliver lining. Opolot turned a new leaf for his family after attending gender-based violence (GBV) sensitization meetings.

GBV sensitisation meetings are a program, now in Phase Two, rolled out by ActionAid and DFID.

The program's objective is to conscientise people on domestic violence, child and land rights as well as effects of early marriages and marital disputes.

Opolot and other did not only take interest in stories from other model couples but took real steps to dump his abusive past.

He revealed through Male Champion, Radius Okurut, that the campaigns were an eye opener.

"I now understand how my violent and

irresponsible ways have affected, not only my children, but also my marriage as well," admits Alphonse.

As Okurut routinely guides the couple, Opolot has since committed to stopping drinking and beating his wife.

Esther testified that her husband is now and empowered and reformed.

"We make decisions together, he accompanies me to the garden and is much more approachable as a husband," said Esther with a bright smile.

The happy and united family has embarked on a family project to build a house and expand farming programs.

The changed Opolot did not end with his change, he also wants other men to see the light.

"My husband and I out and mentor newly married and young couples involved in marital challenges, share with parents the importance of educating their children especially the girl child to reduce cases of early marriages and the associated problems to the girl child," Esther said.

Alphonse is a beneficiary of efforts to stop Gender Based Violence in Uganda by ActionAid and DFID. After implementing the Women Protection Project for 3 years in Kumi District, the project entered into another extension phase that focused on gaps, lessons learnt and best practices from the first phase.

Linked to the 16 days of Activism that is commemorated yearly to mitigate and popularize the GBV advocacy messages, ActionAid Kumi WPC supported the male action groups in selected villages and implemented door-to-door campaign while involving other community structures such as; local councils, Male Champions, Community Development Officers, Parish Chiefs as well as Opinion and Clan Leaders in Mukongoro Sub County.

The LRP recognizes that awareness creation through campaigns and mentoring by all the stakeholders involved in GBV is a participatory approach which is empowering.

Stakeholders, for example, model men, LCs and opinion and religious leaders play a significant role in increasing community awareness on Human Rights issues.

The power of knowledge

By Asubu David - Kumi LRP



Innovative Babrah at her work

There is no other story which illustrates the maxim, “Knowledge is power” better than that of Babrah Hope, who embraced the available knowledge not only to ameliorate her family’s challenges but also to salvage her education which could be a thing of the past just as the case with many girls her age.

She is a humble 16 year old from Kabarwa Parish in Kabarwa sub county Bukedea district. She has become a symbol of hope and inspiration to her family and community as well as to young girls after successfully establishing a small business.

Babrah lost her father at the age of seven. Since 2008 life has not been a bed of roses for her and the family. Babrah’s mother, Ketty said the ten years since her husband’s passing has been prickly for the family both financially and psychologically.

“My children struggled to attend school due to lack of school materials, food at home was not enough, lack of household income and the village people used to talk about our poor living standards,” she said.

To think that Babrah is now an O’ Level Alumni and that her family has soldiered on thus far, is unthinkable given her family’s difficult predicament.

Apart from scholastic support she received from ActionAid, Babrah did not receive a windfall of aid money but heard, listened to and understood the importance of life skills as taught by ActionAid supporters. It took this support and knowledge for her to move to the next level in life.

As part of the donation ActionAid facilitated for Orphans and Vulnerable children, Babrah’s family has received among other things a

pair of bed sheets, mattress and school stationery. Babrah was also helped with access to a child peer supporter from abroad who motivates her educationally and gives her moral support. Babrah is grateful for the support and life skills information she receives.

“I have been encouraged to be patient, hardworking, resilient and focused at school in order to weather the challenges because I now know that education unlocks opportunities especially for a girl,” she said.

As an adolescent Uganda girl, she faces unique challenges of peer pressure early marriages, defilement, dropping out of school, risky behaviours.

“I face real challenges that most girls of my age face but I came to appreciate the power of having knowledge. Through ActionAid support programs, I gained life skills such self-awareness, living with others and effective decision making as well as innovation. I’m still working towards my ambition but most of my peers are now young mothers”, said Babrah.

During a vacation in 2017 Babrah put her innovative skills to use when she started a small business nearby trading centre of Kabarwa. She had received 20,000 shillings from her mother. Hope has so far multiplied the capital to 100,000 shillings (approx. GBP 19) from the sale of cabbages, tomatoes, pounded ground nuts, onions.

“Through this business, I am hopeful that I will proceed to Advanced level. One day I want to join the police force and fight the injustices that young women are facing in my community,” revealed the hopeful Babrah.

ActionAid Uganda’s Kumi Local Rights Programme runs a child sponsorship programme reaching out to over 1000 school going children in Kumi and Bukedea District. The programme focuses on provision of scholastic materials, sensitization of the children and their parents on child care and protection, life skills, Gender Based Violence (GBV) and its effects, training of farmers (parents of children under ActionAid support).

Residents call for accountability in the Ugandan tax system

By Shibah Namulindwa - Pallisa LRP

Residents of Gogonyo Sub Country have deplored the state of the Ugandan tax system at the same time calling for accountability and equity in the use of the revenue they inject to the service delivery in the region

This was revealed during the Pallisa LRP led awareness meetings on taxation and service delivery supported by the hills project with five public schools in Gogonyo Sub County. The awareness targeted school management committees, parent's teachers associations, pupils, and school administration and reflection action community members.

The sessions were organized to raise community awareness on taxation to facilitate community analysis of the tax problem and its impact on provision of services to a lay person to facilitate community led advocacy initiatives.

The sensitization meetings attracted 200 participants who expressed their understanding of tax as money paid to Government after buying or selling something. Well as tax is a compulsory contribution, most participants viewed it as a burden on their incomes and called it unfair on the poor people especially where the rich, foreign investors and corporations are taxed less, given tax exemptions at the expense of the local person while local

business men keep avoiding tax.

This has led to increase in the prices of essential goods and services to raise more revenue, poor service delivery, corruption, harshness of tax collectors and low revenue collection rendering slow growth of the district. This analysis was made possible using different tax power tools trained to participants among which included; tax stones, shopping list on VAT, public service map and others.

Residents criticized the sorry state of public service delivery in the district, namely the Health Delivery and Education Sector yet they pay tax for such services

Although participants viewed tax as a necessary contribution, the several problems embedded in the tax system make it unfair including lack of accountability by duty bearers. This is reflected in poor

quality public services in the district for instance the increasing poor performance of their children in UPE schools as noted by one of the participants Betty Akol.

"Agurur Primary school which has in the past year had 48 out of 50 pupils failing with grade U, said Betty

This situation is no different from most public schools in the district Low skilled teachers, no text books, no food for children at school, low motivation for teachers, high teacher pupil ratios attributed to low staffing in public schools are some of the problems facing public schools and reflect poor public service in the district

"We are not seeing the value of paying taxes, there no essential drugs in health centres" were some of the sentiments expressed by participants during the meetings

ActionAid is committed to supporting and facilitating communities challenge social injustices through strengthening their struggles for social justice especially on public service delivery.



Residents demonstrating fair tax system

Love is trending

With **#selflove #youngwomenmatter #Patriotism**

February being a month of Love, the Busiki Local Rights Programme conducted two (2) mentorship sessions under the theme “Love Begins With Me” **#selflove #youngwomenmatter #Patriotism**.

Here is a snippet of what happened

Busiki young women mentored in **#selflove**

The LCV Vice Chairperson, Secretary Gender and Children Affairs Namutumba District Local Government, Honourable Amina Batega challenged young women in Namutumba District council to use their talents and reclaim their lives.

Speaking during a mentorship session organized by the Busiki LRP on Valentine's Day, Honourable Amina shared her experiences and gave hope to the young women and girls encouraging them not to give up.

“Do not look down upon yourself, whatever mistake you made, you need to move on. They are so many things that you can achieve in life, you just need to believe in yourself and work hard towards your dreams. I am a living testimony, who would have thought that one day I will be in this position of influence”, said Hon Amina.

The participants were taken through the concept of self-love and how it was important for their personal development. It was agreed that the young women will be mentored by mentors drawn from the district and they would work together in addressing the identified challenges.

The participants were also taught how to make necklaces, key holders and serviette stands as part of economic empowerment.



*Chipo Bangira giving a lesson about **#selflove***

Connecting the Dots...

#Selflove #Patriotism and role of young people in nation building

Hosted by Kisiko College, the LRP facilitated a mentorship session during the Patriotism training to build the esteem of young people in this country. Discussions about Self-love, Patriotism and the role of young people in nation building characterized the session. We explored how self-love connects with Patriotism and the role of young people in Nation building can be of importance as we mentor leaders of today and tomorrow. The best way to empower young people is to let them realize the Power and Greatness within them.

The LRP continues to find alternative ways of engaging young people and building their capacity in civic and political participation.



Chipo Bangira and a group of Kisiko students

Retirement planning: Critical for younger employees

By Aggrey Kibet and Miriam Cherukut

When most people hear about retirement, they think its stuff for old people. They switch off and think about other 'important things'. Well, I used to be the same till a training opportunity came along through an ActionAid nomination to a URBA organized training on 7th February, 2018. I attended it with Miriam my Co-author who doubles as a fellow staff. To say the pre-retirement training was empowering an eye opener is an understatement.... It was simply awesome.

Okay. Let's get down to it. Do you know that you are a potential retiree? Yes, this is because retirement means cessation of a fulltime job. Its not about age but the time you find you cannot earn income because employment ended for whatever reason. It could be due a sudden restructuring at work, sickness, anything.... because life takes many turns.

Some key stuff to consider from the training;

Planning for retirement; So, what is very important is to plan, plan and plan. Hopefully

you remember that. Yes, plan for when to retire (even if you cannot be sure when involuntary retirement might happen-Some people go in and out of employment from time to time and that is okay). For starters, planning should be at least 10 years to due retirement date. So, plan for when, where to retire to and with clear logic.

Income at retirement; Plan to earn at least 75% of your current income at retirement to ensure smooth consumption and transition from your current lifestyle. *to page 8*

Pallisa Cluster embarks on a Reflection Action Methodology Refresher Course

By George Awuor | Pallisa LRP

Following the knowledge gap in the use and application of Reflection-Action (RA) methodology among group members and facilitators in Pallisa, the LRP is currently running a RA refresher course targeting 20 participants across the two districts of Pallisa and Kibuku.

The Pallisa district completed their two-day R-A

course held at GOREDO Reflect Office to support them identify, analyse and generate practical solutions that address the challenges they are facing.

One of the participants said that the training was an eye opener and it helped her to understand how inequality takes place in her community.

"I found the course relevant as it met all my expectations. I learned new concepts such as Access and Control matrix' and how power relations affect the allocation and use of resources in my community, said AgwangMaragaret of Oukot Reflect Circle.

Kedi Apulas from Oboborio Reflect circle said "The training has brought new insights, I am impressed with the training because everyone took part and I feel I have acquired more knowledge especially on Problem tree tool which we are going to apply in my group when analysing the problems we are facing in my sub-county."

The course is in line with ActionAid Uganda' Strategic Paper Five (SPV) which calls for the strengthening of citizen actions to deepen democracy and hold the state, corporates and political leaders accountable for social injustice by 2022.

Retirement planning: Critical for younger employees

By Aggrey Kibet and Miriam Cherukut

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Invest but do not consume your Retirement Lumpsum; Every often retirees receive lumpsum with excitement with wired mentality of alas...at last I need to enjoy. Most Ugandans except accountants have challenges with money and squander it in no time. They forget it is their last pay for the next 17 years after retirement. One should view lumpsum as funds to invest to improve earnings, improve passive income and possibly complement the usually meagre pension if you have one.

Go social networks; As soon retirement sets in, it's time to adjust to a new life. It's time to go social if you are to live longer, search for something useful in the community.

The secret of longevity is feeling of fulfilment and usefulness to others. Join a voluntary mission team, get involved in a church or religious group, join rotary club or get involved in other charity initiatives, join a support group, exercise, walk, go outdoor, do something you always wanted to do for your community. And hey lest you make mistakes, the social group should be ones that builds and empowers rather than one that undermines your social standing.

Ensure healthy lifestyle: Invest in retirement health now, live healthy. The secret is regular screening at least every 6 months. Poor health is a major cost driver for retirees, you might want to grab an insurance policy if you can or at least plan for an income that will support your al important health needs.

Investment: You can still invest and grow wealth in retirement. The example of the KFC founder is testimony marshalling a global franchise running into billions of dollars of fortune. Maybe you don't want to be a billionaire but you



Aggrey Kibet



Miriam Cherukut

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what are the best investment options for retirement in a Ugandan context? Watch out for an article coming next on the same. Those interested can contact the authors.

"Wish you the best and you plan, plan and plan again for your retirement!"

Investment: You can still invest and grow wealth in retirement. The example of the KFC founder is testimony marshalling a global franchise running into billions of dollars of fortune. May be you don't want to be a billionaire but you certainly need comfortable income to live on, invest wisely in non-risky ventures.

Some have a nerve for risks but that may be a personality attribute...but just remember that you may not be very strong to deal with loss of business in your advanced age...you could plummet quickly to the next world. So what are the best investment options for retirement in a Ugandan context? Watch out for an article coming next on the same. Those interested can contact the authors.

"Wish you the best and you plan, plan and plan again for your retirement!"

**Meet the Pallisa Cluster team
that made this edition possible**



Editorial team

ActionAid Uganda Pallisa Cluster

EDITOR

Busiki -LRP

DESIGN AND LAYOUT

Chipo Bangira and Awori Immaculate

CONTACT DETAILS

Actionaid Pallisa-LRP Cluster(LRPs Coordinating Office)

Plot 4, Kaucho Road

P.O. Box,114

Pallisa,Uganda

Tel: +256(0)392720022

Email: Pallisa.Uganda@actionaid.org or Aggrey.Kibet@actionaid.org

Web : www.actionaid.org/uganda