

BLACK MONDAY

Newsletter

Citizen Action Against theft of our money without SHAME!

EDITORIAL

On March 8th, 2014 we will be celebrating International Women's Day under the theme; "Inspiring Change". In commemoration of this day, the Black Monday newsletter shares with the populace the enormous theft of public resources that persists unabated, and also to profile individuals who have stood out of the crowd, at both national and local level, to be counted for their integrity.

The latest Transparency International Corruption Perception Index (2013) put Uganda in the 140th place, up from 130 in 2012. And yet day by day as we read the papers, watch the news, in conversations, we hear about more scandals of theft being uncovered.

However, in the midst of all this, there are people that are inspiring change, challenging the status quo with vigilance and making their individual contributions to the fight against corruption. So as we celebrate women's day we share with you the efforts of two women who have played their part in fighting corruption. All of us have a role to play, wherever we are, however young or old, and as the youthful artist Benezeri sings in his song Zukuuka; it's time to wake up and do what we must do to make our country a better place for ourselves, our children and our children's children.

Fellow Ugandans, the fight is still on. We will not stop talking about the theft of our tax money until the battle is won. So Zukuka, Yab Wangi, Yimuka, Olamuke, Wake up... Its time for Action!

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Inspiring Change: Women in the fight against theft



INSPIRING CHANGE: Women must be ready to stand up say "enough is enough" to corruption.

Evidence shows that our country continues on a downward trend in terms of corruption. At the last count, we had lost over three trillion Uganda shillings to theft of public resources. In the Black Monday newsletter for last month, it was clear this theft of public resources has been with us for quite some time. Even as all this goes on, individual women most times unnoticed, have made a contribution to fighting this vice. As we celebrate International Women's Day, we share the perspectives of two women who have "Inspired Change" in their own ways to combat corruption. These perspectives demonstrate that if all of us played our part, may be theft of public resources could be a thing of the past.

I QUIT MY TEACHING JOB TO FIGHT CORRUPTION

Meet Joventa Twinomuhangi; a courageous woman whose sole aim of quitting her teaching profession was to fight corruption in Kabale District.

Remarkably, this Ikumba Sub- county

woman councilor joined a group of councilors at the district to censure the secretary for works who kept submitting a report of roads to be worked yet the funds remaining on the account.

Joventa could not rest until she took action. She started gathering signatures to censure the secretary for failure to implement and lying to constituents on Radio that the roads had been worked on. After the censure, the District executive leadership called in female councilors to withdraw signatures but she refused and said that she would fight to the end.

A team from the district then went to her home thinking that they would use her close brother to influence her to withdraw her signature. She boldly told them that she was voted in by the community members and will not keep quiet until they get proper service delivery.

Unfortunately, one cowardly councilor withdrew his signature leaving them short of the minimum number required, so their censure became invalid. But it did not end there.

The battle raged on as the censured secretary took them to courts of law. Joventa did not retreat. She stood her ground and formed a group that explained to all female councilors to stand firm and attend the court session.

The executive still wanted to use her brother as "a bait,". Through him, they hoped that they would influence her to mobilize other councilors to reconcile with the Secretary. She courageously came out with a statement that if they want them to reconcile, they should first work on the roads and retract the false information that they made over the radio that all roads had been worked on, and clarify that she did not go to council to make friends with councilors. She was voted into council by voters who knew her values.

Her voters know her for asserting her position in demanding for their civic rights and her statements are always aired out after every council sitting because she is critical and

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NOT FOR SALE

A former civil servant's view on corruption

Mary Nannono is a former senior civil servant whose many years working in government make her one of the most suited to give an insightful view of the nature and degree of corruption in Ugandan public life. She served on the Education Service Commission before briefly being appointed the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health.

The Ministry of Health, as well as the Ministries of Education and Defence, are among the largest recipients of government budgetary resources in Uganda. So her service in health and education gives Nannono the additional benefit as a credible witness in the supervision, accounting for and disbursement of these resources.

She, and several officials from the Ministries of Health and Finance were suspended in 2009 by President Yoweri Museveni, over what the president said was their insistence on importing drugs yet Uganda now has its own anti-retroviral drug factory.

Today, she is the acting coordinator of the Uganda chapter of the Council for Economic Empowerment for Women of Africa (CEEWA), an advocacy and networking agency.

In Ms. Nannono's view, greed, not need, is the force behind much,

if not most of Uganda's high-level cases of corruption. Many of those implicated in the biggest corruption scandals live well above any level of financial struggle.

She also says that poor administrative systems are the main loophole by which rampant corruption flourishes in Uganda. That would include poor accounting practices and the inability simply to supervise employees.

The office of the Inspector-General of Government (IGG), for example, has made it a point to follow up and verify the declarations of wealth by civil servants. But the IGG as an inspectorate has limited resources and the investigative expertise to do a thorough job of it.

"The level of laxity in this country is shocking", she notes.

In 1992, when the government's wide-ranging reforms of the public service began, civil servants, who had worked faithfully for years, would get a letter terminating their services at short notice, often on their last day of work.

Most of these retrenched civil servants were not paid their gratuity and the terminal payments much of the time only came several years later and often after they took the government to court over the matter.

This "summary" dismissals and delayed terminal payment caused a



MARY NANNONO: Acting coordinator Council for Economic Empowerment for Women in Africa (CEEWA) Uganda chapter.

lot of bitterness among the former civil servants and was a warning to those who remained. Those who survived retrenchment, remembering

the fate of their former colleagues, realized that they too were not secure in their jobs and retirement.

It could be argued that the ar-

bitrary and insensitive manner in which the government handled the retrenchment exercise might have contributed to the uncontrolled corruption in Uganda we see today. And yet it does not explain why government hospitals do not have drugs, as has been widely reported in the media. It is a little more complex than that.

Nannono, who was relaxed and did not seem to be as deeply frustrated about corruption said, in her view, it finally comes down to the lack of will to curb rampant corruption in Uganda. In other words, human agency, political leadership, is the missing hand in the fight against corruption. In her view, it is not the complex structural reasons that some media and political commentators usually attach it to. "If there was a will to end rampant corruption, it would have ended. Because there is no such serious collective will on the part of government, corruption thrives. Plain and simple."

Going by Nannono's opinion, by focusing on pressuring government, the Black Monday anti-corruption effort is centering its attention where the final decisions and show of will and purpose will be made and shown if this runaway corruption is to be reduced.

—By Timothy Kalyegira

Inspiring Change: Women in the fight against theft

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does not let any vital issue pass her by. She is known for her transparency, consistency, openness and being principled. Her voters are proud of her because she is heard time and again talking on their behalf.

The community members have gained confidence in her and submit their concerns to her because they know they will be submitted to the authorities. She is invited to talk to groups, associations and she willingly goes with Village Budget Clubs (groups of community activists that advocate for accountable leadership and equitable service delivery) to address Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings and community dialogues. The community members see her as their advocate because she submits all community concerns and follow them up. She is now popular because when the media have an issue to discuss, they run to her.

Such stories of charismatic women like Joventa should not be surprising because the burden of corruption is most felt by women and mothers; especially in the rural areas of the country. Therefore, women have to take lead in fighting against the same vice that affects their progress and livelihood.

The truth of the matter is that this fight

is not going to be an easy walk. Like in Joventa's case, women are faced with several hurdles like their capacity being undermined and the fact that the thieves are very determined in what they are doing. This shouldn't deter women but instead give them courage to soldier on because it will take a few who are bold to stand up to the corrupt.

GOING AGAINST THE ODDS TO FIGHTING THEFT OF PUBLIC FUNDS

Lydia Twebingye 43, is a woman councilor of Mpumudde Parish in Mpumudde Sub County, Iyantonde district, who has made her mark in the fight against theft of public funds. When Lydia decided to fight the theft of public funds in various public institutions, she was determined that nothing was going to stop her.

She started by educating her community members about their role in stopping corruption at an individual level by highlighting the

dangers of giving money to Health Workers of Mpumudde Health Center for access to basic health services.

Before Lydia alerted the public, health workers were taking advantage of community members. Pregnant mothers living in poverty were the main victims as they were charged money for services and items that should be free.

Lydia rolled up her sleeves to do something; she started by making impromptu visits to the health center to find out from the patients how they were treated and the challenges they were facing.

She takes advantage of all the platforms that are available to her, churches, weddings, sub-county meetings, parish level meetings, village meetings and even burial ceremonies in the whole Sub-county - anywhere she can get an opportunity to talk to the public.

She took her campaign a notch higher when she started school outreaches with the same message. Her tar-

get was not only the students who were challenged to live upright lives: She also reminds the parents and teachers about their roles in ensuring better education services and on the better use of Universal Primary Education (UPE) funds which were mismanaged and not allocated to intended activities.

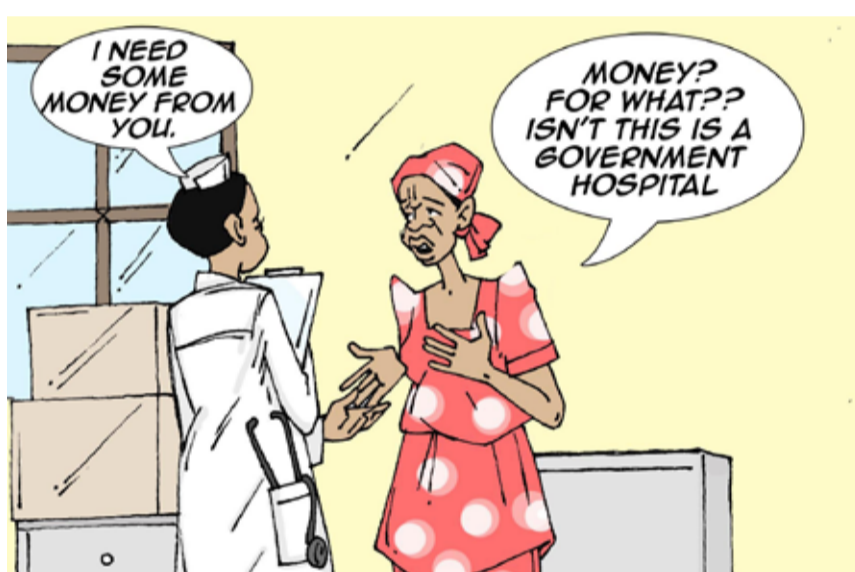
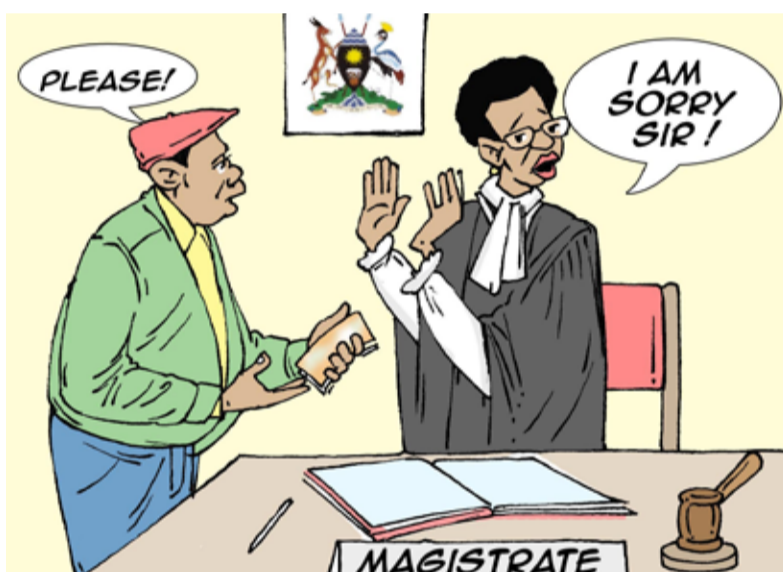
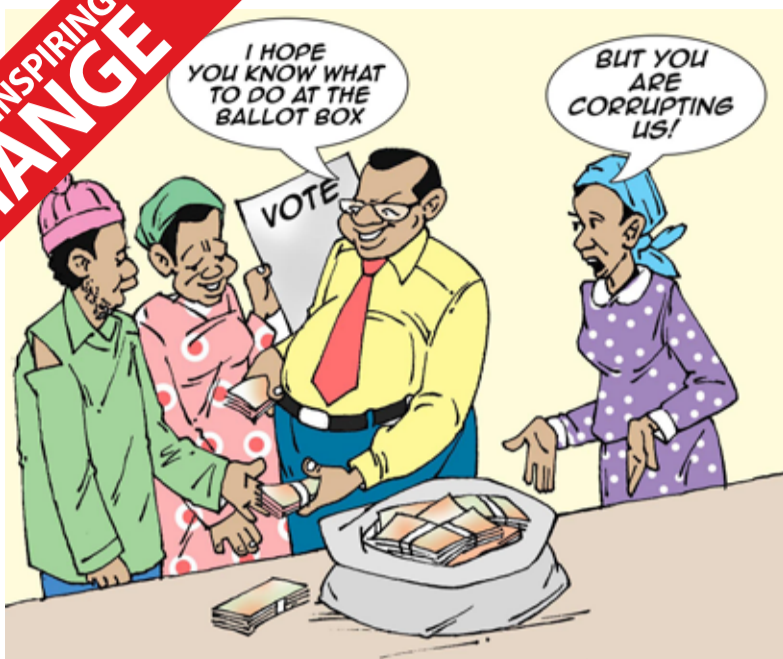
The battle has not been easy as she faces resistance from civil servants; difficulty in getting the credible information about health centers performance as well as schools. The community members are also scared of giving information about whether they are accessing services at the health centers or not. This has however not hindered her attempts and resilience in her creation of awareness to the public, she has is not about to give up. Community members, sub county officials and fellow councilors have joined Lydia in her fight against theft of public funds after realizing that her efforts was paying off.

Therefore, as we commemorate this International Women's Day, we should be reminded that it is possible to be a person of integrity and play a role in ending theft in our communities. Now is the time more than ever when resilient women are needed at the frontline in the fight against theft of public resources.

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Joventa Twinomuhangi, Ikumba Sub-county woman councilor

**WOMEN INSPIRING
CHANGE**

Theft impeding Uganda's achievement of MDGs

Year 2015 is fast approaching – the year when the nations of the world evaluate whether the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were adopted through the United Nations Millennium Declaration in 2000 have been achieved.

Currently, Uganda is far from achieving these goals especially with the high levels of theft of public funds. The cost of corruption cannot be underestimated; for instance about 5 billion Uganda shillings meant for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Northern Uganda through the PRDP program vanished in the prime minister's office. That is just one example from the wastage of donor and taxpayers' money that has happened over the years as indicated in the information chart at the back of this newsletter.

This squandered money could have rather been used to eradicate extreme poverty, reduce child mortality, infrastructural development,

better health care services among others.

Actors in different regions of the world have been assessing progress made in achieving the MDGs and have begun to reflect on the shaping of the post 2015 Development framework. At the upcoming 58th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, governments will meet to discuss the "challenges and achievements in the implementation of the MDGs for women and girls".

For Uganda, a recent assessment showed that 2 out of the 17 MDG targets have been met, that is halving the number of people living in absolute poverty and managing debt sustainably. Another 8 of them are on track. These include:

- Halving the proportions who suffer from hunger.
- Eliminating gender disparity in primary and secondary education.

- Reducing by two thirds under 5 child mortality
- Achieving universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS

- Halting and beginning the reversal of malaria and other major diseases

- Halving the proportion of people with sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

- Provision of access to affordable essential drugs

- Making available the benefits of new technologies

Yet even with the above progress, there is still a long way to go. Several other factors work against the MDGs especially a myriad of gender inequalities:

- Although gender parity in enrolment especially for primary school has been achieved, there is a high dropout rate especially in upper

primary classes. 66% of girls in primary complete primary seven, compared to 68% of the male. Additionally, sociocultural factors such as teenage pregnancy, early marriage and domestic chores disadvantage girls.

- Trends in maternal mortality and HIV/AIDS are particularly of concern due to the wide range of gender issues that affect women and girls more.

- 20 women die daily - pregnancy related complications; 44% of whom are young mothers aged 15-24.

- Although the proportion of people living below the poverty line has dropped from 56.4% in 1991/1992 to 22.1% in 2012/2013, the total number living below poverty has not changed significantly and the inequality of income has worsened.

- The high population growth rate

of 3.2% annually is likely to reverse the trends.

- 7.3% of Ugandans aged 15-49 are HIV-positive. HIV prevalence is higher among women (8.2%) than among men (6.1%)

Although the MDG framework provides focus on gender, it does not offer a comprehensive strategy for creating the desired change and transformation in the lives of women and girls. Women's rights movements are calling for two critical things: a transformative standalone goal on gender equality and that all the pillars of a new framework must call for mainstreaming gender. To the women, the ultimate aim of achieving the MDGs can't be achieved until corruption is dealt with and the stolen public funds returned to ensure that the above processes move as planned before 2015.

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SUMMARY OF CORRUPTION SCANDALS TO LOOK BACK AT



What must we do to get our money back?

Wear only black clothes every Monday to show you are tired of theft.

Demand political action from the President

Isolate every thief implicated in a theft scandal. Don't invite them to your burials, weddings.

Do not buy goods or services from businesses owned by thieves. Support Ugandans working honestly to make a living.

Until all the thieves have returned our money.