



WEEKLY

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Fighting for a better agricultural extension system

Agricultural extensions has often been referred to as the soul, blood, and spirit of any functioning agricultural system in the world. However, Uganda's agricultural extension has since independence evolved with no clear strategic focus from the government.

The national statistics estimates farmers' access to extension services in Uganda at 12-17%, which is far below any other country in the world. Since 2013, Uganda has been undertaking policy and institutional reforms in AEAS. Through these reforms, government proposed to integrate NAADS into the main public extension system – the Single Spine, which has so far remained a non-funded priority.

It is against this backdrop that ActionAid Uganda in partnership with Food Rights Alliance (FRA), National Farmers Federation (UNFFE) and the NSA working group on AEAS, undertook regional consultative meetings and field visits to Eastern and Northern parts of the country to revamp discussions of the AEAS in the public discourse.

The district officials and farmers from the two regions expressed their disappointment with central government in mismanaging and giving little attention to the agricultural sector.

Farmers handed over a petition to the ministry officials on what they want government to consider in the implementation of single spine extension system in Uganda.



District officials and farmers from Eastern hand over petition to MAAIF officials for consideration.

Farmers demands ranges from recruitment of all the approved staffing level of agriculture extension workers at national, district, sub county and parish level. They also demand for increased remunerations of extension workers and transport and fuel facilitation of extension workers for effective and efficient implementation of a single spine extension system in Uganda.

Danish ambassador salute tax justice and oil work



H.E Mogens Pedersen visiting ActionAid Uganda.

Two months ago, Denmark got a new ambassador to Uganda and last week he visited ActionAid Uganda for the first time.

Work on natural resources and Tax Justice are some of the areas, H.E Mogens Pedersen believes can be pivotal for the effort to improve living conditions in Uganda.

"Natural resources have been a curse, not a blessing for many countries in Africa. It is therefore an area, I believe DGF (Democratic Governance Facility) should focus even more on. It is great to hear more about Oil in Uganda and extractives is very important for Uganda's future," Mogens Pedersen said.

Among the other areas, Mogens Pedersen mentioned, is tax justice, which can help the Ugandan state generate more revenue.

"The civil society needs to make a strong push to ensure that everybody pays their fair share of taxes. The work ActionAid is doing for tax justice is very important and it is important to keep the link to other organisations through the Tax Justice Network," the ambassador said.

Denmark support development through Danida that is a big donor to both ActionAid Uganda and DGF. The new Danish government has cut its support to development and that has limited the support to ActionAid Uganda.

"The cuts have meant that several embassies around the world are closing down. For development work, I do not think the support will go up again in the foreseeable future. Denmark is still a relatively big donor so what we see now, is probably the new reality," Mogens Pedersen said.

Masindi partners advised to link up with the district



The assistant chief administrative officer from Masindi District Local Government, Kiiza Richard, has advised partners to Masindi Local Rights Program that they will not receive financial support from ActionAid Uganda to link up with district government departments in 2016. He gave the remarks at the end of year Participatory Review and Reflection Processes (PRRP).

Kiiza Richard acknowledged the contribution of AAU and partners that have complemented and filled the gaps in the government's provision of service delivery as the government of Uganda attempts to provide quality services to its citizens.

The Apac district statistician for the local government, Ogweng Emmy made a presentation about the status of service delivery in the district. While acknowledging the contributions of the different actors notably ActionAid, NGO Link Forum Apac and other partners, he stated:

"There is an urgent need for the partners like ActionAid to continue supporting the district in addressing issues like land conflicts that is still very rampant."

The meeting attracted 12 partner representatives for the 6 LRP partners, and 2 local government representatives from Masindi and Apac.

Teso launches Citizens Manifesto

Last week, Teso region launched the 2016-2021 Citizens Manifesto and the Teso Regional Manifesto at Kumi Hotel. The event, which was coordinated by ActionAid Kumi LRP in partnership with NGO Forum, saw over 400 Teso citizens launching a document running under the banner, Power belong to the people.



Chris Nkwatsibwe from the National NGO Forum highlighted that the launch was a result of a lengthy period of consultations to come up with a guiding document, which contributed to the Manifesto.

"The manifesto can also be viewed as a process as it is a continued engagement and commitment in participating in political process. It is an expression of our continuous commitment to renew this promise while demanding that those who seek to lead us are committed to the fulfilment of this promise," said Nkwatsibwe.

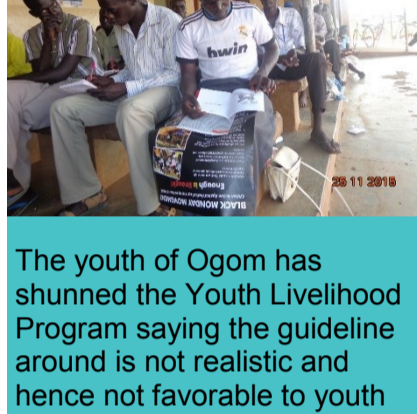
The challenges the Citizens Manifesto talks about, include a flawed system of governance, transitional failures, institutional breakdown and democratic reversals and breakdown in service delivery.

Delivering the Teso Regional Citizens Manifesto, Julius Arugo from Public Affairs Centre of Uganda said the key demands and aspirations as synthesised from the six districts that make up Teso region fall under the umbrella of economics, agriculture and livelihoods; water and sanitation; health; education; corruption and justice, law and order.

Specific demands from citizens in Teso include re-establishing of the cooperative unions to support and protect farmers against the exploitation of middlemen. These would help market the different agricultural products on behalf of the farmers.

Youth meeting in Pader demand citizen let monitoring

To provide opportunity for the youth to debate on issues and to strengthen citizen led monitoring of development programs; Pader LRP conducted a youth parliament to facilitate interactive feedback sessions with the youth on the progress and shortfalls on programs and priorities.



The youth of Ogom has shunned the Youth Livelihood Program saying the guideline around is not realistic and hence not favorable to youth at the grassroots level.

"Youth in the age bracket 18-30 do not have the capacity to access this funding," lamented Obua George. He continued saying that when it is time for distributing inputs under Operation Wealth Creation, they also do not benefit

The youth of Ogom expressed their anger towards politicians who use the youth during their campaigns and then drop them like rotten tomatoes!

"This time they will not use us because we are very fresh. Before we vote, we need clear agenda for the youth - most especially female youth," said Akello Mary.

Join the fight for oil transparency

ActionAid Uganda is running a campaign aimed at enhancing transparency and accountability in Uganda's extractives sector. The campaign involves an online petition to the President of Uganda asking him to lead his government to join the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI). Click [here](#) to read more.