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The anti-corruption caravan returns!

Last Friday, it was all laughter, hugs and ululations as the Eastern League of the Anti-Corruption Caravan returned. The crew comprising of ActionAid staff, Uganda Police, media persons, and documentation teams, Activistas among others set foot in Kampala after ten days of spreading the gospel against corruption in the East. Suhail Mugabi, a media representative stated that the move by ActionAid was very important and had high impact, in its effort to unearth corruption scandals.

"Because of this caravan, we were able to discover that Abim hospital is going down the drain, and yet money was set aside for its renovation. In Kumi, we unearthed a billion shillings dam project that has never become meaningful to the locals. They still suffer to get clean water. These are just some of the scandals. We want ActionAid to count on us and call on us. We shall document and publicize these cases, for the good of our country," he said.

Arthur Larok, the ActionAid Country Director thanked everyone who had made this happen. He informed the gathering that the Campaign was going to be taken to another level. All names that had been forwarded as corrupt officials and the Icons of integrity will be subjected to a vetting process and the results will be released during the Anti-Corruption week later this year.

When the talking was over, ActionAid expressed its gratitude to the Uganda Police and the media houses that had given the event their all to make it a success. They all took a cake and a thank you card to their families from ActionAid. We shall be sharing more about the Caravan. Just watch this space!

Top: ActionAid finance staff welcomes back the Policy and Campaigns manager.

ActionAiders celebrating the return of the anti corruption caravan.

ActionAid Country Director Arthur Larok hands over a cake to the head of the Uganda police team.

Local Artist Bobi Wine joins the Anti-Corruption Caravan in Pallisa

Pop star Bobi Wine joins the fight against corruption.

When the Anti-Corruption Caravan reached Pallisa, it was not business as usual. Local Artist, Bobi wine took on to the stage and sang his heart out against Corruption. He pleaded with his fans to report all corruption scandals that they are aware of.

"I am not only an activist against corruption, but a concerned citizen. That is why I am here today. They continue to abuse funds meant for medical supplies. That is why our mothers continue to die. I urge all my fans to stop the silence. Let us shame the thieves of our resources!" spoke Bobi Wine, while yelling into the microphone.

Read more about Bobi Wine and the_caravan here

DFID and ActionAid plans phase two of the WPC Project

Last Thursday, a team from ActionAid led by Nickson Ogwal held a strategizing meeting with the DFID team to forge ahead the Women Protection Centre project. ActionAid was represented by Jamilla Kagoya, the Finance Officer who will be overseeing the project implementation, Yuda, Joyce and Hellen.

Hellen Mallinga, the National Women Rights Coordinator presented a status report on the progress of the project. She highlighted lessons learnt from both the successes and failures.

Both parties agreed that there was need for a more innovative programming in the next phase of the project as this would surely improve and consolidate the existing Women protection Centres instead of opening new ones.

ActionAid and DFID agreed that all parties in this partnership will maintain GBV component of their programming more strongly visible especially in the areas of upgrading the women protection centres to "fully fledged One Stop Centres", increasing the convening power and informing national policy.

March against TAX on agriculture inputs in Namutumba

While it is still a proposal, Namutumba Activistas and farmers are very keen to keep it that way – a proposal! Having been supported diversely in the past year by Actionaid-Busiki LRP, this group has first-hand knowledge of the eminent negative impact of the proposed tax on agricultural inputs to a farmer and his or her household. Tax to the Agricultural inputs will automatically lead to an increase in the prices of everything used in the garden; from the hoes, pangas, and insecticides to manure, animal feeds, and animal drugs.

Last week, Farmers in Namutumba with the support from Busiki LRP held a peaceful demonstration to mobilize signatures against the tax. In just a span of four hours, the gathering had mobilized 439 signatures. The farmers are contributing to the one million signature collection to petition the Speaker of Parliament to reject the tax on agricultural inputs.

The residents stated that they intend to follow these tax proposal processes keenly to ensure that the taxes are not passed. 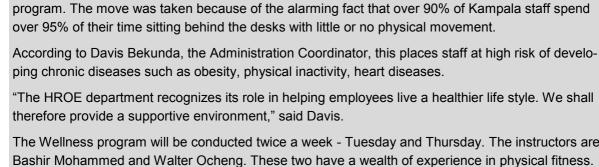In a related development, the media broke the news last week of MPs vowing to reject the tax on Agricultural inputs using the one million farmers signatures.
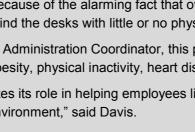
Read more about the 1m signature campaign in New Vision here

ActionAid Launches the Staff Wellness Program!

Last week, the Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness unit launched the staff wellness program. The move was taken because of the alarming fact that over 90% of Kampala staff spend over 95% of their time sitting behind the desks with little or no physical movement.

According to Davis Bekunda, the Administration Coordinator, this places staff at high risk of developing chronic diseases such as obesity, physical inactivity, heart diseases.

"The HROE department recognizes its role in helping employees live a healthier life style. We shall therefore provide a supportive environment," said Davis.

The Wellness program will be conducted twice a week - Tuesday and Thursday. The instructors are Bashir Mohammed and Walter Ocheng. These two have a wealth of experience in physical fitness. They are the resident fitness instructors at Serena Hotel, UNDP, and WFP among others.
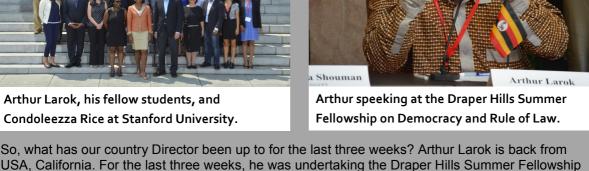
Asked whether the program will be rolled out LRPs, Davis stated that unlike Kampala staff, the LRP staffs are advantaged because the nature of their work places them on their toes more often. He however added that he was in consultation with them to find out which kind of wellness product they would prefer. After consultations, the unit will then roll out suitable products. We can only look forward to healthier ActionAiders!

The CD is back!

Arthur Larok, his fellow students, and Condoleezza Rice at Stanford University.

Arthur speaking at the Draper Hills Summer Fellowship on Democracy and Rule of Law.

So, what has our country Director been up to for the last three weeks? Arthur Larok is back from USA, California. For the last three weeks, he was undertaking the Draper Hills Summer Fellowship on Democracy and Rule of Law at Stanford University. When asked how important this Fellowship is to ActionAid, Arthur stated that during the fellowship, he reflected a lot on the strong focus on the international dynamics on democracy and what it means for our work at the local levels.

"The other very important issue learned was the importance of ActionAid not to just focus on democracy promotion like is the norm in our civic education campaigns but to also pay attention to fighting the individuals and institutions that are against democracy. " he added.

Arthur also used the study trip to network and get important partnership contacts such as Google, the National Endowment of Democracy among others. Looking forward to the new wealth of Knowledge from California.