

# October 2014 Newsletter

Focus on Corruption



How the corruption cancer destroyed Abim Hospital

Youth and 2016 elections

Patronage politics responsible for NAADs failure

Governance Barometer: Integrated participation of citizens improves service delivery

COVER STORY  
Cancer of corruption

**act:onaid**

## Inside ActionAid

### Programs

- Three quarters of the year is gone. Our programs unit is currently undertaking the Participatory Review and Reflection process (PRRP). The exercise is being carried out in all LRPs. This time round, hands on support to partners and introduction to the new reporting templates are being given priority by the IASL team. This will improve the quality of reports but also the timeliness in reporting.

### Human Resource and Organisational Development.

- A Women leadership meeting took place on 15th May 2014 with the topic "work life balance a challenge for the woman leaders in the 21st Century". The guest speakers were Miria Matembe and Hon Victoria Sekitoleko.
- The unit is also working tirelessly to ensure that all vacant positions are filled the next month. The unit advertised and is currently concluding the recruitment process for the following positions: Drivers, M&E Officers, Livelihoods Coordinator, Sponsorship Officer, Public Funding for Agriculture Coordinator, Projects Manager, Local Rights Program Coordinator-Pader and Finance Trainees. We look forward to the new wealth of knowledge.
- We have been confirmed for participation in the Birches Salary Survey for June/July 2014. An email was sent to IS HR partners to conduct the AAU structural review. We await confirmation.

### Governance

- ActionAid held its Annual General Assembly on the 14th of June 2014. New members to the General Assembly were oriented into their new roles while the outgoing ones were commended for a job well done.
- The Assembly also approved Moses Opondo, a successful accountant and Nicholas Opiyo, a Lawyer as new Members of the ActionAid Governing board.

# How the Corruption cancer

By Samanya Kyategeka

Two years ago, the Government of Uganda set aside 2.8 billion shillings to renovate Abim Hospital, one of the biggest hospitals in the East. The hospital is meant to serve over four million people in Karamoja region.

According to the areas L.C.III Joseph Owona, Excel construction Company was contracted under very unclear circumstances to carry out the renovations of the hospital. The firm supposedly completed the work and were awarded with a certificate of completion

When the Anti-Corruption Caravan reached the district, Mr. Owona challenged the media crew to visit the hospital. The situation is pathetic. The water and sewage system has broken down. The

walls have major cracks. The ceiling is in pieces, and bats have made it their home. Rats can be seen running up and down freely, as though the visitors had invaded their territory. The Caravan crew had questions. Wasn't the current state of this hospital posing more health risks to the patients? Unfortunately, there was no one to answer this question, as the hospital authorities shied away.

While there the crew witnessed relatives who had lost a loved one. The 39 year old had been rushed to the hospital but not attended to for a whole day.

"Can you imagine that our brother has passed on without being attended to for a whole day. The medical personnel kept telling us that there are no drugs. National medical stores usually delivers



Cover photo: **Kumi's icon of integrity**. Imoni Anna, a nurse at Omatenga Health centre (III). Despite the challenges, she has delivered services with a smile to Kumi residents

# destroyed up Abim Hospital

drugs to this hospital. We see the truck several times. Where do these drugs go?" remarked the bitter relative.

Mr Owona has since engaged the district leadership to explain where the 2.8 billion went, since the hospital is still in a pathetic situation. However, his demands for accountability and transparency have landed him in the Police cells thrice. According to the authorities he is inciting violence.

The Assistant Chief Administrative Officer of Abim, Nedson Otim, added that to date there is no clear explanation as to why Excel was awarded a certificate of completion of renovation work, when the hospital is still in a state of emergency.

"Thank you ActionAid for bringing the Caravan to Abim. We are sure that our cry will be heard and a thorough investigation will be launched into the hospital renovation project. All we want is a descent hospital for the people of Abim. We are not waging political wars as we have been accused before", he concluded.

ActionAid and the entire Caravan crew comprehensively documented this case. Going forward, this and many other cases will be handed over to the Inspectorate of Government for thorough investigation and prosecution of the parties that will be prosecuted for swindling money meant to renovate the hospital.



## Insights: The second leg of the Anti-Corruption Caravan



**Local Musician, Bobi Wine joined the Caravan in Pallisa.**

ActionAid Uganda in partnership with 6 national and 15 district based Civil Society organizations, launched the second leg of the Anti-Corruption Caravan in August. It covered the regions of North East and Eastern Uganda under the theme **'Stop the silence! Shame the corrupt! Fame good leaders!'**

The Caravan traversed 15 districts of Kotido, Abim, Amuria, Katakwi, Soroti, Kumi, Bukedea, Kapchorwa, Mbale, Tororo, Pallisa, Kibuku, Budaka, Namutumba and Iganga. While in these districts, the caravan crew moved village to village, raising awareness about corruption among the ordinary citizens, spreading messages of integrity and good governance but most importantly mobilizing citizens to take action in fulfilment of their constitutional mandate of combatting corruption (Article 17 (1)(i), (Constitution of the Republic of Uganda).

The Caravan was flagged off by Mr Ruhweeza Jossy Jules, the Director of Corruption Prevention in the office of the Inspectorate of Government. The official rally was launched in Kotido. The caravan ended its journey in Iganga.

Among the many strides, the Caravan managed to:

- Mobilize citizens for collective anti-corruption action by raising public understanding about how corruption destroys service delivery and welfare of the citizen.
- Both national and local media extensively documented cases of corruption in the region. After these cases were aired, there has been overwhelming response from the duty bearers who are now taking responsibility and acting on the issues raised.
- During the caravan, Icons of Integrity in the region were identified as part of an effort to reward and promote local champions in fighting corruption.

# Reflections from the maiden caravan

By Samanya Kyategeka



**Standard work is the order of the day in Teso region, as a result of corruption**

As the abuse of power, secret dealings and bribery continue to ravage societies around the world; Uganda is not an exception. ActionAid and other CSOs have taken the initiative and this must be eradicated. Among the efforts invested is the Black Monday newsletter on corruption scandals, actions and proposed future interventions, radio talk shows, individual opinions among others. Learning from past experiences show that while a lot of legal, administrative, policy and institutional efforts have been put in place by the government, it is increasingly clear that without a national citizen rejection of corruption and greater public pressure, current efforts will at best remain lukewarm. **It is time to stop those who get away with acts of corruption.**

In December 2013, AAU the National NGO Forum and ACCU and their development associates, and organizations launched a 3 year national Caravan against corruption through the districts of Amuru, Adjumani, Apac, Arua, Gulu, Lira, Luwero, Masindi, Moyo and Nebbi. It was a 10 day journey aimed at renewed efforts to ignite citizens action, profile cases on corruption and advocate for more transparent public institutions.

The caravan objectives are:

- Raise public understanding about corruption and thus mobilize citizen support for positive anti-corruption action across the country.
- Document cases of corruption across the country.
- Document and widely share the experiences various anti-corruption crusaders face and celebrate these efforts.
- Identify national icons of integrity as part of an effort to current focus on fighting corruption to promoting integrity.
- Strengthen ongoing civil society led efforts against corruption and engender a countrywide momentum to the positive anti-corruption movement that is emerging in Uganda.

## Turning the tide on corruption! The citizen's voice

It all started at Hotel Africana at the national convention on corruption when the crew was flagged off by the Deputy Director of Ministry of Ethics and Integrity, Moses Makumbi, who represented the Minister. The reception at the launch point in Luwero was impressive and

attended by a mammoth crowd hosted by CODI (*Community Development and child welfare initiatives*). Among the other participants were district dignitaries, political leaders, CSOs and ordinary citizens. The journey moved on to other districts highlighting corruption but remained with the question "*what will happen to the cases we have reported*" - a sign that people have lost hope in the systems and structures that should support redress of such issues! Among the complaints were the scandals in Pakwach when we hosted the viewing of the eclipse. While it was seen as an opportunity to discuss issues, it turned out not to be when the people only saw the influx of external visitors. With the caravan in Pakwach people were happy to see an effort to listen to their plight! It is possible to turn the tide and eradicate corruption with massive mobilization, provision of information and timely follow up of action.

## Lessons from the caravan journey

The Campaign should engage and collaborate with a diverse range of partners: media, government, corporations, anti-corruption agencies and individuals at all levels.

Empowering people to hold the government accountable cannot be about open data only, it is

also about shifting narratives, values, principles, and ethics.

There is no disconnect between service delivery, monitoring and advocacy strategies. These must be combined for effective results.

It is important that the groups know the budget allocation and priorities in order to monitor public spending and service delivery.

The need for numbers and clear constituency: The more people come together in numbers in an organized way, the more they are to be heard. People who do not have access to the traditional channels of power must be organized in order to - create change and hold government and other institutions accountable.

Knowledge consolidation: Effective development practice must position grassroots citizens

as experts, teachers and trainers, not as beneficiaries or targets so that they develop a critical consciousness and a collective discourse and political agenda for change. The voices were loud and clear.

Keeping the momentum: Follow up action on the cases recorded through the first caravan journey in liaison with the institutions and structures that are supposed to provide redress

## Youth and the 2016 General Elections

By Mishka Martin

In democratic societies, voting is widely considered the most important form of political participation. The extent to which citizens turn out to make their voice heard provides a useful temperature gauge to measure the level of civic engagement in political processes and to a large extent, the level of legitimacy of the incumbent Government.

In the 2011 presidential elections, 59% of the total eligible population turned out to vote. This marked a significant decrease from the previous elections when it stood at 70%. This worrying trend demonstrates increased voter apathy and a growing deficit in political participation.

In 2016, Ugandans return to the ballot box to decide who will represent them for the next five years. Endowed with a majority vote, elected officials will be vested with a mandate and the authority to govern and legislate on behalf of Ugandans. However, as the ruling party gears up for its fifth election campaign, and the oldest leader in Africa looks unlikely to be contested, the youth could be forgiven for feeling that voting might be a futile exercise.

However, their lack of participation could be seen less as a sign of apathy and more about the systemic exclusion they face in the democratic process.

A recent report by National Alert observes that whilst youth feel that they were involved in the lead up to elections, they sensed this was superficial and that their vote was largely manipulated by political elites to fulfil their personal political agendas. The youth were quickly forgotten after the winner was declared and commitments made were reneged upon.

Credit free loans for boda activities, free fuel and other incentives were exchanged for political support in 2011 and is evidence enough that the youth vote was perceived as something to be purchased rather than earned by policy credentials or performance of incumbents.

It is this electoral manipulation that erodes the trust of young Ugandans, who in turn harbour a deep seated distrust for electoral processes and the very political institutions that are tasked with ensuring electoral transparency. The resulting apathy only serves to write a blank cheque for political elites who when elected, have no loyalty or accountability to those who return them to office.



**Bobi wine preaching against corruption among the youth in Pallisa during the last Anti Corruption caravan**

A large and disenfranchised youthful population is widely known as a key ingredient for civil instability and political unrest, which often manifests around election times when youth often retaliate against the manipulation and exclusion they face.

Educating young Ugandans of their role in political elections is therefore a critical step not only in building social cohesion, but also as a means of safe guarding young people against electioneering tactics. By enabling young people to understand their role and their potential, ActionAid supports youth to reject the political candy and to be a credible and well-organised force.

ActionAid Local Rights Programmes are spearheading this work with youth, building the knowledge of their civic responsibilities and participation in electoral processes. This year, Busiki LRP shifted to using Theatre for Development to empower the youth on elections and electoral processes, human rights, governance and advocacy. Theatre for Development marks a conscious shift away from the weary format of meetings and conferences and provides an outlet for youth to critically analyse their situations in a participatory and

creative way. The origins of this approach originates from Brazilian theorist Paulo Freire and the Theatre of the Oppressed he inspired, that understood theatre as a platform for social and political transformation. More than a spectacle, it is designed to explore oppression and power and for citizens to come up with solutions to their own issues. that fosters democratic and cooperative forms of interaction among participants.

The Theatre for Development approach has a strong multiplier effect and enables Busiki LRP to reach beyond the usual suspects, engaging community members that might not have previously been exposed to the issues posed by the performances. At the tail end of the skits, the communities get an opportunity to discuss with the actors issues that relate to the skits and how they affect their households, neighbourhoods and communities. To date, 20 Youth from Busiki are using Theatre across three sub counties in Namutumba to communicate to the masses issues relating to Agriculture, Education, Human Rights, Governance, Advocacy, Social Action, Leadership and Electoral processes. The issues emerging from the skits have informed advocacy issues for engagement at Sub County, District and National Levels.

The nature of performance brings people together and aids to break down barriers between different age groups. In Busiki, Theatre for Development has proven to be successful in changing attitudes and their ability to see how Human Rights relate to their own lives:

*"Nakyito Fatima is a 23 year old resident of Nawaikona Village, Nsinze Sub County. She stays with her 10 year old sister Nakusajja Tamila in a one-room mud and wattle house. She basically grapples with making a living as she has no consistent source of income and solely depends on her husband Mukose Karimu who is a bodaboda operator in Nawaikona Village for all the life basics. Nakusajja does not attend school as her elder sister has denied her that right despite provision of the same by UPE instead, she wakes up early in the morning to fetch water then tend to the farm. Nakyito Fatima started staying with her younger sister after the death of their mother. In her own words she said; when Activistas told me that I was violating my sister's right by not allowing her to attend school, I justified it because I was busy trying to supplement my husband's income. On 24th May 2014, she attended one of the Theatre caravans in Nsinze albeit late, to watch the last skit which was on Human Rights. If Nakusajja would be attending school, she would be in primary 4.*

*During this play, Nakyito was just like any other community participant, laughing at the jokes and grinning at the beating but at the end of the play, she was shedding tears of pain after she realised that what she was doing was a disservice to her sister by denying her right to education.*

This shows the strategic reach and power of theatre in grassroots. Despite the fact that civic participation by youth has been less than satisfactory, the youth now have an agenda that they seek to follow and this agenda calls for door to door support for all to ensure increased practicing of civic rights and actualization of civic roles and responsibilities.

But armed with this newfound knowledge, the question begs, what role will the youth carve out for themselves in the 2016 elections?

Uganda has the youngest population in the world, with the average age being just 15 years old who will just fall short of the voting age by 2016. But the largest segment of the population will come of age for the 2021 elections. Equipping them with the knowledge and mindset of active citizenship now will ensure that the youth are actively involved in 2021 and beyond.

Despite historical challenges, the youth are slowly starting to navigate their way into the political process and carving out a

distinctive youth voice. The National Youth Manifesto of 2010 put forward a number of key recommendations that were subsequently fed into the wider citizens manifesto and eventually reflected in the major parties political manifestos. However, sustained youth engagement after the election process has proved to be challenging, both in terms of coordination and availability of resources.

Whilst elections provide a valuable entry point into the democratic process, it is critical for the youth to be supported to engage in the whole election cycle, beyond the initial election campaigning. Youth have a substantive role to play.

However, given the diversity of the youth population, agreeing on a coherent agenda will be key in building power. Providing a platform for youth to deliberate and define priorities will enable diverse perspectives to be harmonized and help to build consensus on the common way forward. The resulting agenda will provide a blueprint for follow up with elected officials in the years that follow and the mechanism through which they are held accountable. Supporting the youth to be a powerful and unified constituency will ultimately help guard them against the co-option into political patronage and prevent political parties from exploiting the cleavages of the youth demographic.

## Patronage politics responsible for NAADS failure

By Fredrick Kawooya.

Recently, the suspension of NAADs (National Agricultural Advisory Services) has dominated public domain following a number of similar suspensions by President Museveni. He claims that the highly hyped project had failed to deliver anticipated results and had been turned into a pot to benefit a few elites through corruption. This action has created mixed reactions with some excited that since NAADS had failed to make a difference in lives of most smallholder farmers, this decision was long over due. Others, particularly the beneficiaries of the program have decried the action claiming that the program has had some impact that cannot be ignored and that it should be given chance to put right what has perhaps gone wrong.

Regardless of the side to the argument, the only point of agreement is that NAADs has had challenges and has not lived to the expectations of Ugandans. Access to extension has dropped from 31% in 2000 to 10-15% in 2012. What is missing in all these arguments is the understanding of why NAADs has failed, what is behind the proposed changes and whether these will actually make a difference in the lives of farmers. To appreciate these, we must look at the trend of events that have befallen NAADs, the proposed changes and how these fit into the current context.

NAADs came into existence in 2002, with an act of parliament as one of the pillars of Plan for modernisation of Agriculture. The other pillars included; Research and Technology Development, Agricultural Education, Rural Finance, Marketing & Agro-processing,



**A bridge recently constructed by the UPDF**

Sustainable use & Management of Natural Resources, and Physical Infrastructure. Because the NAADs and partly Research and Technology Development were of great interest to donors and government, these attracted considerable

attention and funding while the rest remained largely un-funded and thus unimplemented.

Originally piloted in 6 districts, the highly popularised NAADS picked up like a wild fire spreading to many districts of Uganda. Albeit

some challenges common in any project, it is stated that NAADS was a success and a promising project for the first few years, until about 2005. This was when the country was still running under the single party rule, the NRM.

NAADS began gaining unusual popularity in 2005-2006 when multi-party elections drew closer. This was a time when political concerns of gaining popularity in the rural areas became more apparent. The president got more impatient with the fact that the highly hyped PMA was not showing results on the ground to guarantee the regime the needed votes, hence, the need for more direct and visible interventions.

While this political ambition was understandable, the challenge was how to implement this. Either the president didn't dig deeper to understand why PMA had failed or they had to find a quick fix to the bigger problem that was, and continues to be apparent in their eyes.

With the challenges in NAADS, the sector had failed to show results because they had not funded the other pillars and, which were equally important to the mother ministry. Working like a witch doctor, a wrong prescription was given which called for a shift in NAADS from purely provision of advisory services to distribution of inputs such as seeds.

After the 2006 elections, a new structure for the Prosperity for All programs was established under the president's office running in parallel with the secretariats of NAADS and Prosperity for All under Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. A number of officers from NAADS were directed to undertake Prosperity for All work although not much of this was very visible. This resulted in fusion between NAADS, a highly technical areas and the president's office. The officers in NAADS and the institution at large changed their loyalty from their mother ministry to the office of the president. The fact that NAADS and the office of the president were now fused meant that the rules, procedures and ethos of public spirit built up in the civil service, over some years, were abrogated and undermined. Since then, the president started intervening directly in the NAADS program.

In late 2008, he actually suspended the NAADS program and all activities, and even salaries, were put on hold. The reasons for the suspension have never been entirely clear but observers speculate a palette of political discontent, with the limited range of clientelist opportunities.

NAADS only resumed after a couple of months, under a "new NAADS" label, with Local Government extension staff once again to the fore and with lower level governments (through committees of which the local Movement chairman by law is a member) selecting six model farmers per parish to receive benefits and serve as demonstration farms for the rest of the community.

This moved the program further into the arm pits of politicians who turned it into a vehicle for mobilising support and votes. In demonstrating his control over the program, in 2009, the president, without consulting the 'technical staff' directed the minister of Agriculture, to only give resources to the six families instead of scattering them around. Most of the selected farmers were



Some of the past works by the UPDF.

local elites who would be able to mobilize votes for NRM regime. The program was turned into a vehicle for strengthening of patronage politics including a need to mobilize votes through local elites who can be given patronage in the form of appointments as model farmers.

This directive left the technical people in a dilemma as they were confused whether to follow the guidelines provided under the program or to follow the word of mouth from the fountain of honour. The confusion here worked to the advantage of some who were politically correct while it disadvantaged those who inclined to the prescriptions of the NAADS regulations. On the same front, the change did not augur well with the donors who were Museveni's darling as the shift in the program to focus on provision of inputs was out of the mandate of NAADS.

At the same time as these direct interventions in the NAADS programme were taking place, the PFA unit was organizing presidential tours around the country, the so-called 'poverty tours' under the PFA program where president Museveni visited model farmers and gave them tangible benefits such as pick-up trucks or cash. The president through praises to the program and castigated the opposition for trying to frustrate NAADS that, in his eyes then was successful.

As the 2011 elections come closer, NAADS again came under lime light with the president disowning it and blaming local leaders for its weaknesses and failures whenever people who turned up to listen to him complained about it. Many NAADS officials were paraded, humiliated and 'fired' by the president amidst jubilation from crowds because they had failed to explain what impact the program had created among farmers. The government eventually suspended it in a bid to reorganise and revitalise it. The focus was to strengthen linkages with the research arm under NARO to facilitate technology diffusion under what was called AATAs. New guidelines were developed and shared but the technical people were again left confused as the political directions continued to supersede the technical guidelines creating a policy lacuna.

As 2016 draws nearer, the same song is playing again, perhaps this time louder. Recently, the president announced that he was disbanding NAADS because it had failed to transform farmers from peasantry farming into commercial farmers. In his wisdom, it's now the military that should take over, arguing that civilian officials had eaten enough and were only frustrating him! This comes at a time when the military



is taking on most of the public roles. Recently the military was charged with the distribution of mosquito nets, although its not known how many ugandans did receive these. They have been charged with contruction of the Ugandan railway, implimenting the national identity card project, and have been in charge of distributing seeds through the veterans club, of which is was estimated that 60-70% did not germinate.

At the same time, the Inter-ministerial technical committee has been tasked to explore how extension system in Uganda can be revitalised and through their report to the minister of the presidency, have made wiered proposals that focus on creating just another useless structure that cannot deliver to the expectations of Ugandans. The report, that will most likely inform the new structure makes a mere change of the name of NAADS to a National Agri-business Promotion Agency (NAPA) whose functions and structure are not any different from NAADS. At the same time, the report proposes the establishment of a directorate of extension under MAAIF that shall ostensibly oversee the NAPA. The inter-ministerial report puts a lot of efforts in articulating the structure of the directorate and the agency at national level. However, it has not fully articulated how the services of the directorate and NAPA will be organized at the local government level to benefit poor small scale farmers even though this is the most crucial point where services will be delivered. With these eminent gaps in the structure, one can tell what the intention is.

These ineffective structures are created and their failure to deliver is what gives political capital to the president. They also become conduits for mobilising the much needed resources to lubricate the ruling system. What is clear is that failure in extension is not merely because the structure but is because of the neglect of the entire sector. NAADS being the only famous program, it has been trurnned into avehicle for propaganda that government is doing something to adress the gaps in the sector. For success of any agricultural extension reform, the fundamentals will have to be addressed, namely; providing sufficient qualified technical personnel at all levels; optimal budget for the extension system with sufficient operational funds at field level; and operationalization of well-coordinated complementary services to extension as envisaged under PMA. The disjointed institutional arrangements being proposed may not offer the much needed coordination and coherence.

# Governance Barometer: Integrated participation of citizens improves service delivery

By: Joseph Madzvamuse (Inspirator-Governance and Youth, Pader LRP)

According to Mohammed Mamudan, Human Rights are by-products of people's struggles. Duty bearers do not feel obliged to provide services unless they are pressured to do so. In this case, duty bearers like government are not prepared to provide services to citizens freely. For the communities in Pader District, the quest to get space and voice underlines their struggle. The government has a duty and an obligation to provide services to community which is supported by the supreme law of the country, the Uganda Constitution. Pader District which lies in the heart of Acholi Sub-Region was subjected to a protracted conflict between the government and the LRA and this left so many wounds and scars which have unfortunately become inherent in the day to day lives of the communities. The picture of life in the camps is still very much visible with some communities still struggling to get basic social services like health and education.

## Where will the People of Pader get it and how?

The bigger question of the day hovers around the role of the government in provision of services and its relationship to the common man in Pader. Many programmes such as NUSAF in its two phases, NAADS, ALREP, PRDP and CDD have been initiated for Pader district but the lives of many still remain stuck in the muddy. Little has been realized from these programmes as they tended to take advantage of knowledge gaps in the community. However, Pader LRP through the participatory democracy and governance programmes has managed to rally communities to demand for quality social service delivery. To this end the more than 45 IRTs who were trained in budget tracking have managed to mobilize communities in Awere and Ogom sub-county to demand for improved health services. One of the Health Centre II facilities which had been closed has now been reopened. In Ogom, the IRTs, youth Activistas and REFLECT circles also managed to mobilize and demand for the opening of a Health Centre II clinic at Ogom centre and it has since been commissioned.

## Towards collective citizen efforts: Responsibilities and obligations

The youth Activista movement is not only about advocacy and campaigning. It stretches further to nurture young people on the best way to be responsible in the community. The youth Activista in Ogom Parish have set among other

goals to contribute to community welfare and development by helping elderly members of the community who cannot help themselves. One such case is the case of this group of young who organized themselves to build a house for 90 year old Abwoyo Santa from Telele East Village in Ogom Sub-County.

The successful engagement of the youth Activista in the sub-county is starting to bear fruits as more and more youth are beginning to take responsive action to challenges the community is facing. In the African cultural context, young people are supposed to help the elderly in different ways. The 90 youth Activistas in Ogom Sub-County have mooted quite a number of community projects to assist the less privileged members. The youth led by their leadership molded bricks, cut the roofing grass and timber required and are also building a hut for Abyoyo Santa.

The youth Activistas' actions are a sharp contrast to what the situation was before the formation of the Activista groups. Before joining the Activista most youth spent their time drinking as well as in some cases engaging in anti-social behavior. Some of the youth were even engaged high risk behavior as a result of idleness.

## Towards equitable youth participation and decision making

The youth who constitute the biggest age group in population and been forgotten about. There was little to write home about the youth whom some government officials accused of being idle and redundant. Majority of them would spend time either drinking or betting and a greater number remained vulnerable. However, through the DGF interventions aimed at broadening and expanding the 'youth agenda,' over 600 have been reached out to. A cocktail of trainings in basic advocacy and lobbying, resource monitoring and youth leadership have been done and this has increased the number of youth participating in government budget planning cycle. Community members have upped their interest in government interventions which has resulted in improved service delivery. The Youth in Pader have also participated in the youth camps which have been used to help to bring them together and deliberate on the youth leadership agenda towards total participation and transformation.

## It's not a stroll in the park: "The silent Black Monday Wars and State Reprisals"

From community capacity building and strengthening, the LRP has also been on the drive to publicize the Black Monday Newsletter to the communities of Pader which has however been received with hostility from some district officials who have asked the distribution and circulation to be halted. The struggle against theft of public money and other resources has won few supporters from the government circle who have viewed as a direct attack on the functions of the government.

Filmsy excuses from the some district officials on the reasons why they have banned the Black Monday magazine in Pader have not deterred ActionAid and its partners from taking the anti-corruption gospel to the community. To date three barazzas, three public accountability meetings in Awere and Ogom have been carried out with success. Community members were able to quiz the sub-county and district officials on the deplorable state of schools, health centers and community access roads. This prompted the sub-counties like Awere to expedite the repairing of the roads. Thus through solidarity building with the partners, the level of awareness on the negative effects of theft of public has risen drastically.

## Who wields power and authority: Walking the path of citizen's organizations empowerment?

For a time communities in Pader had been made to believe that they have no power and thus should be dependent on the government to exercise its benevolence on their cause. Majority of the government programmes were making less impact than anticipated as a result of poor participation by the communities. However with ActionAid's increased emphasis on community participation, some services such as health have improved. Communities have gone on to become the drivers of change in their respective areas as opposed to mere recipients of government programmes. The participation of communities is helping to shape the mode of development which is pro-poor. Community organizations such as farmers groups, REFLECT Action groups, the IRTs and the Activistas are more strengthened to challenge poor quality of service delivery.

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