

ActionAid International Uganda Weekly Newsletter

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Dear Reader,

In this edition, we look at commitment number 8 of the AAIU Leadership Behaviour Charter. We also bring you updates from our anti-corruption work, you'll also get to read about what initiatives we are undertaking to sustain Women Economic Empowerment Initiative. You also get know the lessons and recommendations from the EUD field visit to YESSSEN Project areas. That is not all, find out more details on these and other stories inside!

Enjoy!

Today we reflect on the eighth commitment of the AAIU Leadership Behaviour Charter



AAIU Leadership Team sharing reflections during the leadership training in Entebbe early this year

By Xavier Ejoyi

ENTEBBE - Periodic review of progress with implementation of our individual and collective commitment towards the AAIU Leadership Behaviour Charter is important to ensure accountability to those we lead and to each other. During the all-staff retreat and leadership training it emerged that we are not good at following through commitments and actions agreed in staff meetings and retreats.

As a matter of fact, there was an unsaid **concern or worry** during the all-staff retreat and leadership training **that the Leadership Behaviour Charter too, will remain on paper, and we will continue business as usual.** While competing priorities, limited resources, conflicting schedules of leaders, etc may make follow up on key resolutions, actions and commitments difficult, a reputation of failing to follow up on commitments is not one AAIU should take pride in.

As leaders, we committed to hold a half-day quarterly reflection meeting as Leadership Team. It is now six months (two quarters since the leadership training) and, while we have not held the half-day quarterly meeting, the plan to hold regular reflection meetings or engagements (if physical meeting of the leadership team is not practical) still stands. The nine-day profiling of the Leadership Behaviour Charter Commitments provides a good entry point to this process.

I will reach out to the Leadership Team in the coming days on options for this reflection process. Beyond the reflection processes for the Leadership Team, **I encourage all staff to embrace the culture of reviewing commitments we make in staff and partner meetings, retreats or workshops and take responsibility in following up** implementation of ensuing action points and commitments.

Having not received their emoluments since January; penniless Masindi Councillors demand for an audit over financial mismanagement



AAIU Staff interact with some Councillors during a monitoring and support visit

By Phillip Kabuye

MASINDI - The Ipaidabrike anti-corruption drive in Masindi district continues to unearth cases of rampant corruption, poor accountability and wanting service delivery in government departments. The Masindi Central Division Councillors who have since January gone without payment of their emoluments are demanding an audit over irregular payments and mismanagement of revenues by the Finance Committee.

“I have been in council for eight years but have never experienced anything like this in Masindi Central Division, we are suspicious of financial mismanagement at the Division. We have not received financial reports from January to date. Every time they come up with excuses like the system being down, etc.” said a Central Division Councillor.

The Central Division councillors have petitioned the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) requesting for an internal audit by the Municipality Auditor but have also not got any response as the RDC claims to be busy. We received our petition on August 6 and till today, we have not seen any response,” a Councillor noted.

Among other issues that have raised red flags is allocation of UGX 1.2 Million to the executive, yet it was not provided for in the budget. We made budgetary recommendations as required by law and slashed certain irregular allowances to some of the members, but we were shocked when the secretary to the council, read that the previous budget would be maintained in total disregard of our recommendations.

This issue has been escalated is being followed up with the regional Inspectorate of Government (IG) Office in Hoima. We will keep you posted on the outcome.

Joint AAIU - EUD Monitoring and Learning Visit picks up lessons and makes recommendations for improving YESSEN Project outcomes



By Dalson Twecan

AMURU & NWOYA - The three days' field visit by European Union Delegation in Uganda representative and ActionAid Staff to Youth Empowerment for Sustainable Self-employment and National Development (YESSEN) Project areas of Nwoya and Amuru district, comes following an earlier one conducted in the month of June in the districts of Lira, Pader and Kotido.

The visit was conducted on 2nd, 5th and 6th September 2019, concludes the planned yearly visits to all the project districts particularly to directly engage with project beneficiaries to inform EU programming and financial decisions while drawing experiences and lessons from the implementation of the YESSEN Project. The visit sought to check on the progress made by youth trainees who undertook apprenticeship placements and young smallholder farmers practicing Climate Resilience Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA) Model as an adaptation strategy to climate change.

The activity involved field visitation to two CRSA groups including Ryemo Can Pe Yot and Gum Kayo Youth Groups in Nwoya and Amuru respectively. Ryemo Can Peyot group in Nwoya district is running a piggery enterprise as a livelihood diversification practice adopted by the group alongside other climate adaptation measures to sustain their livelihood. On the other hand, Gum Kayo Youth Group is currently practicing fish farming and horticultural crop production including tomatoes and cabbages in Opok village, Gira Gira parish, Lamogi sub-county, Amuru district.

The apprenticeship groups visited were Rwot Omiya Tailoring and Trust God Beauty Salon in Nwoya district, and Tem Gumi Tailoring Youth Group "A" & "B" who are operating tailoring and garment cutting businesses in Amuru Trading Centre and Otwee Town Council respectively.

The visiting team was warmly welcomed by both the political and technical leaders in the two districts. The leaders appreciated the positive results the project has brought to their areas specially to benefit young people in the face of high unemployment level among the youth. They were noted that the intervention directly supplements the development programme areas where the districts have limited capacity to intervene.

There was visible positive change created by the project in form of enterprises established and testimonies of increased incomes by beneficiaries. It was also noted that the project is empowering, enhancing learning and nurturing synergies with local government stakeholders in the areas of public service delivery through improved coordination, dialogue, partnerships among youth groups, CSOs and Local Authorities for greater accountability.

Despite the foregoing, it was established that the groups still face challenges of leadership, enterprise ownership and group cohesion, enterprise diversification, resource constraints among others. As a result of this; various recommendations were made to improve the project outcomes. These include;

Promotion of high-value crops such as horticultures should be supplemented with local crops varieties which the smallholder farmers are familiar with; Group farming should be taken as a learning point for the youth and the entire community; the Project should continue to embrace individual farming to enable farmers to get higher profits.

In addition, Piggery should be taken as a centre of excellence but the group members should plan on keeping pigs at an individual level; Rain-water harvesting in CRSA is an important component but has not been tried by Ryemo Can Pe Yot Youth group and should be taken on; Need to re-think about the best irrigation machines since the treadle pumps were reported to be tiresome in large scale farming.

It was also noted that, more interventions are required around mindset change of young farmers so that they start focusing on activities such as processing, value addition, packaging which would make them reap more from their farming activities; Migration from the traditional courses such as tailoring and garment cutting which does not yield much income to enterprises which are of high returns such as electrical & electronics repair, leatherworks, art & craft, catering, management & hospitality, welding & metal fabrication; Cross communication between ActionAid and other implementing agencies within the region executing similar interventions such as Advance Afrika, ZOA, CARE, CUSP, etc. and; in future programming and projects, apprenticeship training should be planned to take at least 6 months and trainees supported with adequate start-up kits.



AAIU Women Economic Empowerment Initiative links beneficiaries to DFCU's Rising Women Initiative to support Women in Business



Participants during the training at Kakanyero Hotel - Gulu

By Bella M. Eton

GULU The Rising Woman initiative is a partnership between DFCU Bank, Daily Monitor and Uganda Investment Authority (UIA) to recognize, celebrate and promote a culture of mentorship among women entrepreneurs in Uganda. The initiative organised Rising Woman business trainings on 11th and 12th September 2019 at Kakanyero Hotel – Gulu.

The trainings will focus on: Basic business skills, Business planning, Enterprise management, Getting financial support, Winning tenders and Marketing products. . Beyond the training, the initiative also has Mentorship programs and One-year access to the dfcu Women in Business Advisory Centre with experts on taxation, business performance, investment and marketing.

Women entrepreneurs will be given the opportunity to sign up for the dfcu Women in Business programme at no cost and will enjoy the following; Business advisory services, A dedicated Relationship Manager, Business trainings and mentorship opportunities, Local & international business linkages and study tours and an Opportunity to grow savings through dfcu Investment Clubs.

It is above anticipated benefits that AAIU's Business Development Unit working with the Gulu Cluster's WEE Technical Officer sought to harness this opportunity to strengthen our engagement with corporate institutions while at the same time promoting the sustainability of the WEE Initiative that is currently funded by UKaid under the Support to Uganda's Response to Gender Equality (SURGE) Programme.

After the training, DFCU Bank applauded ActionAid for mobilising and facilitating the women to ensure their participation in the training. They appreciated the active participation of the women who attended the training noting that this initiative is meant to support Women Economic Empowerment in the region.

The training for the women in business paves way for the groups to participate in the regional competition that involves proposal development where the winner stands to win up to UGX 30 Million with up to ten runner-up winners getting various benefits.

One of the key outputs of AAIU's WEE initiative is to create linkages between WEE groups and both financial and non-financial service providers which include Banks and Government development programs such as Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Program (UWEP) respectively.



Above: Various facilitators make presentations during the training. Below : Women Economic Empowerment Beneficiaries pause for a group photograph after the training

Communities in Nebbi and Pakwach districts demand for increased budget allocation towards education financing



By Moses Okwonga

NEBBI - On the 24th August and 13th September carried out sensitization meeting in Nebbi municipal and Panyango subcounty focusing on increasing attention paid to the need for progressive use of tax revenue to increase financing for free and good quality public education. The meeting was attended by local business community, political leaders, civil servants, market vendors, contractors, companies operating within the district/municipal, CSOs, landlords, taxi drivers, hotel owners, Local Councils I, II&III executives, children, cultural and religious leaders and the local communities.

The participants were sensitized about how under-funding of education sector is affecting the efficient, effective and quality education in Uganda and how government is losing billions of shillings through giving tax holidays to investors, which money could be used to finance education. The participants were made to know how education is a development multiplier and the pivotal role it plays in accelerating progress across all 17 Sustainable Development Goals and therefore need to be prioritized.

The community members were made aware of their responsibility in paying tax, monitoring public expenditure in education and holding government officials accountable towards quality, efficient and effective education. The different stakeholders were encouraged to put a strong demand to the government to prioritize and increase funding to education.

When the Nebbi Municipal Treasurer presented accountability of the revenue collected in the financial year 2018/2019, his presentation sparked anger as the participants realized that little funds were allocated to finance education. The locals decried poor service delivery in education sector which has forced many parents to take their children to private schools.

They pointed out that most government schools have inadequate classrooms, toilet facilities, teachers, limited number of desks, high teacher to pupil ratio, lack of clean water, poor performance, low syllabus coverage among others resulting into high dropout rates and poor performance among others.

The Nebbi Municipal Mayor committed to engage his team to increase budget allocation from local revenue to education department in 2019/2020 financial year. The Local Councillors commended ActionAid for bringing to light challenges in the education sector even though that they seem not to be taken seriously.

Accordingly, they committed to prioritize construction of toilets and classrooms in their planning to improve the children's learning environment. The business community on their part, promised to support schools in their respective communities with water tanks to provide safe drinking water for school children. All the stakeholders committed to pay their taxes to enhance service delivery.



Above: The Mayor addressing the Participants (left) and the Municipal Treasurer responds to a question from the Participants (right). Below: A Participant making a submission during the meeting