

THE CUSP BULLETIN

November 2023 – May 2024

“Empowering Citizens, Leaving No One Behind”



A community dialogue on governance and service delivery for refugees and host communities taking place in Koboko district, with support from CUSP.

Supporting CSOs' Legal and Regulatory Compliance Processes:

Our pilot project in the West Nile

Renowned for its diverse ethnic groups and cultures, Uganda's West Nile sub region is unfortunately characterized by high incidences of poverty. Many of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs in West Nile, lack the necessary human expertise, resources and skills to effectively attract external funding to make them sustainable and adhere to the regulatory and compliance requirements. The aftermaths of the closure of 12,000 CSOs in 2018/19 due to a lack of compliance are still visible in the region, including limited funds for CSOs.

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'Conducive Environment - A pre-requisite for civil society work'

Esteemed stakeholders,

It's yet another opportunity of addressing you through our bi-annual newsletter, the CUSP Bulletin, which aims at shedding light not only on the successes achieved by the many civil society organisations in Uganda, but also to look at the challenges they face. For many organisations, especially smaller ones, it is difficult to fully comply with the multiplicity of reporting requirements. They lack (wo)manpower to do so, they are not sensitized on the regulations, or they simply don't have the capacity to provide the required information. This raises the question on how to best support CSOs in overcoming these challenges. Ensuring a constructive dialogue between regulators and CSOs sits at the heart of CUSP II's ambitions: we are convinced that bringing stakeholders together will allow them to better understand their respective needs to build mutually beneficial relationships. This is why the programme is e.g., proud to support the "Talk to your regulators" project by Defenders Protection Initiative which contributes to building trust between CSOs and regulators.

Moreover, CUSP is committed to assisting grassroots organisations in their compliance efforts across the country. This edition of the newsletter features a longer article on how WECISNET has set up the Civil Society Information Support Hub (CISH) in Arua. The objective is to develop the capacities of CSOs in the West Nile to comply with the regulatory framework through an array of interventions: compliance clinics, support visits, face-to-face and online advisory services or training will be offered.



But it is not only the regulatory framework that CSOs struggle with: They also often too heavily rely on strongly fluctuating external funding. One of CUSP II's main focus areas is therefore to strengthen the resilience and capacity of CSOs to raise their own revenues, notably through the development of social enterprises. One good example for this is the Mbarara District Farmers Association (MBADIFA). To generate additional revenue, MBADIFA has developed a social business around training community members in the macropagation technology for clean banana plantlets. In this edition of the Bulletin, you can read the story of one of their beneficiaries: Asiimire Sharot, a 33-year-old woman, who got trained by MBADIFA and she is creating jobs for her fellow women and young people in her community.

This beautiful story of empowerment was compiled by Josephine Kiconco, our remarkable organisational development advisor who tragically passed away in April 2024 while giving birth. Josephine's hard work, passion for the communities and dedication are an inspiration for all of us in the programme, and we would like to dedicate this newsletter to her.

In your memory Josephine, we will continue your hard work for Uganda's women and men, and keep your passion for better service delivery alive, so that we can build a future in which all women can give birth safely.

Sincerely,

Tassilo von Droste zu Huelshoff
Head of Governance and Civil Society Programme¹

¹ The Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP) is part of the Governance and Civil Society Programme and co-financed by the European Union and the German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

Supporting CSOs' Legal and Regulatory Compliance Processes: Our pilot project in the West Nile.



The Executive Director, West Nile Regional Civil Society Network, Feni Twaib at the launch of the West Nile Civil Society Information and Support Hub, November 2023.

By Adinga Valentine

Programme Officer, Institutional Development, WECSNET

Renowned for its diverse ethnic groups and cultures, Uganda's West Nile sub region is unfortunately characterized by high incidences of poverty. Many of the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and NGOs in West Nile, lack the necessary human

expertise, resources and skills to effectively attract external funding to make them sustainable and adhere to the regulatory and compliance requirements. The aftermaths of the closure of 12,000 CSOs in 2018/19 due to a lack of compliance are still visible in the region, including limited funds for CSOs.

This situation can be attributed to a lack of knowledge and understanding of legal obligations, weak financial management practices and low governance standards. This hinders their ability to make meaningful socio-economic contributions to the much-needed region's development.

On 16th November 2023, the West Nile Regional Civil Society Network (WECISNET) launched the **Civil Society Information and Support Hub (CISH)**. CISH aims to create a conducive regulatory and operational environment through a series of strategies, including radio talk shows,

compliance clinics, support visits, face-to-face and online advisory services, and capacity-building training. **CISH targets 130 CSOs across the region**, along with their board members, local government officials, and regulatory bodies. The launch attended by key stakeholders from various sectors including political, technical, and representatives of district local governments of the region, regulatory bodies, and leaders from other civil society organisations (CSOs) in northern Uganda and Karamoja, aims to strengthen relationships among these stakeholders:

“

This project will ensure good working relationship with Government and development partners in order to achieve quality service provision and empowerment of communities in West Nile region to become self-sustainable.

— Arua City Mayor, Hon. Wadri Sam Nyakua

”

The Local Council V chairperson of Arua district local government who also represented West Nile Development Agenda (WENDA), Hon. Okuonzi Alfred, assured WECISNET of his full support and praised the CISH.

WECISNET organized radio talk shows which have been instrumental in providing crucial information on regulatory and compliance issues for CSOs, helping organisations improve their understanding of compliance obligations and develop necessary skills to meet them effectively. These efforts have also significantly reduced the previous mistrust

and misunderstandings among CSOs and local governments, regulatory bodies in the region.

Within three months of the project, WECISNET has recorded a total of 16 CSOs (15 CBOs and 1 NGO) seeking information on processes related to Financial Intelligence Authority (FIA), or the renewal or registration of permits from the National NGO Bureau.

With the full support and cooperation of the key stakeholders, and the CSOs in the West Nile Sub-region, CISH could contribute to the strengthening and amplifying of development processes.

Breaking Barriers: NUDIPU empowers persons with disabilities to benefit from the parish development model



NUDIPU training for Western region on PWDs' involvement in the Parish Development Model, Mbarara, May 2024.

By Denis Odwar,

Manager Policy and Rights NUDIPU and

Kako Joanita Davina,

Technical Advisor CUSP

The National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU) has emerged as a leading advocate for the rights of Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Uganda. With a strong focus on inclusion, capacity development, and economic empowerment, NUDIPU, the national umbrella organisation for Persons with Disabilities, is making significant strides in improving the lives of Persons with Disabilities throughout the country.

In 2022, the Ugandan Government introduced the Parish Development Model (PDM) to enhance household incomes and achieve sustainable socio-economic development. However, the model fell short in including Persons with Disabilities. Recognizing this gap, NUDIPU, with the support of CUSP II, launched a one-year pilot project to promote disability inclusion within the PDM.

On March 26, 2024, NUDIPU organized an enlightening session with representatives from district unions of Persons with Disabilities in five selected districts in the Northern region. The objective was to explore avenues through which Persons with Disabilities could benefit from the PDM. With a total of 30 participants, including 19 Persons with Disabilities, the training successfully bolstered their understanding of the PDM. Pre- and post-test assessments revealed a remarkable increase in participants' comprehension levels, surging from 0-30% to 80-100%.

During the training, district representatives formulated effective strategies to mobilize Persons with Disabilities and ensure their access to the PDM. These strategies encompassed door-to-door outreach facilitated by community leaders, utilization of existing support structures, dissemination of information from training sessions, data collection on Persons with Disabilities and engagement with stakeholders such as the parish development committee, parish chiefs, and various community platforms.

NUDIPU also conducted a one-day training session for stakeholders from the District Local Governments, including Focal Point Persons on Disability and Focal Point Persons on PDM from the participating districts. The aim was to enhance the capacity of district technical staff regarding disability inclusion and devise strategies to improve

PWDs' access to PDM funds. The training yielded successful outcomes, with participants displaying significant improvements in knowledge and a resolute commitment to implementing the discussed strategies.

To raise awareness and mobilize Persons with Disabilities, a radio talk show titled "Engagement with Persons with Disabilities to improve access to PDM Funds" was held on March 27, 2024, on Voice of Lango FM in Lira. The show sought to sensitize Persons with Disabilities and encourage their active participation in accessing PDM resources, thereby enhancing their economic and social standing.

Building on their achievements, NUDIPU extended similar interventions to the Eastern, Western, and Central regions of Uganda. Through these concerted efforts, they are breaking down barriers and empowering Persons with Disabilities to seize the opportunities presented by the PDM and other Government Programs.

The work carried out by NUDIPU shines as a beacon of hope, underscoring the significance of disability inclusion within national development agendas. By advocating for the rights of Persons with Disabilities, strengthening their capacities, and raising awareness with diverse stakeholders on all levels, NUDIPU is fostering a more inclusive and equitable society for all individuals.

EADEN:

Empowering communities in a step-by-step stride towards a just, green and climate transition



Members of Akadoit group in Serere district, Eastern Uganda learn the process of making energy saving cookstoves

By Stella Agagi,

Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator, EADEN, and

Joseph Wabwire,

Technical Advisor, CUSP

In the heartlands of Uganda, where agriculture is both a way of life and a livelihood, a quiet revolution is taking place. Thanks to the diligent efforts of the Eastern Archdiocesan Development Network (EADEN), supported by the Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme (CUSP), communities are embracing sustainable energy and Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) practices like never before.

Under CUSP I, the capacity of EADEN was built to strengthen its mandate and services in the domains of Sustainable Energy and Climate-Smart Agriculture. What began as a vision is now a reality, as EADEN has successfully rolled out its newfound expertise to two network organisations (Caritas Soroti and Tororo), empowering them to make a tangible

difference in their communities. The capacity building initiatives were also extended to over twelve Community-Based Trainers (CBTs) representing eight farmer cooperatives. These CBTs underwent rigorous training and received comprehensive manuals to guide their efforts in sustainable energy technologies and CSA practices. They have since become the torchbearers of change, reaching out to over 3,000 farmers in six sub-counties from four districts of Mbale, Manafwa, Tororo and Serere.

The impact of this initiative is profound; 700 members have been trained in the art of briquette making and usage, reducing dependence on traditional fuels and mitigating environmental degradation. Additionally, 100 farmers have been equipped with the knowledge

“

Our journey is far from over. As we celebrate these milestones, let us remember that the true measure of our success lies in the impact we create, the lives we touch, and the legacy we leave behind. Together, let us continue to sow the seeds of change, nurturing a future where prosperity and sustainability go hand in hand

— EADEN's Executive Director, Godfrey Muhwezi

”

and skills to construct energy-saving stoves, leading to a remarkable 1,750 households now utilizing these efficient alternatives. Moreover, EADEN's commitment extends beyond mere training sessions. The organisation has fostered a culture of innovation and sustainability leading to the creation of green jobs especially for the youth, encouraging practices like composting for soil improvement. By promoting such holistic approaches, EADEN is not only addressing immediate challenges but also laying the groundwork for a greener, more resilient future.

As we reflect on these achievements, it becomes evident that EADEN's efforts transcend mere development – they represent a paradigm shift towards a more sustainable and equitable future. By empowering communities with knowledge and resources, EADEN is not just transforming livelihoods; it is nurturing a legacy of stewardship and resilience that will endure for generations to come.

In a testament to EADEN's impactful work, the organisation has harvested further support under CUSP II to implement a project titled “Improving Local Governments and Civil Society Organisations Collaboration and Participation in Promotion and Adoption of Climate Resilient Agro Ecological Approaches and Sustainable Energy Technologies in four districts of Eastern Uganda”. This project

aims to harness the achievements under CUSP I through empowering local governments, civil society organisations, communities, and other key stakeholders to advocate for green growth and effectively respond to the challenges posed by climate change.

Moreover, EADEN has taken proactive steps to amplify its reach and influence. In the initial phase of the project, the organisation facilitated the formation of Civil Society Organisation (CSO) platforms and Production, Environment and Natural Resources Technical Committees at districts. These platforms serve as avenues for collaboration and advocacy, not only increasing the outreach of EADEN's work but also working closely with districts' leadership through the Technical Committees in advocating for increased budget allocations towards green and climate transitions initiatives.

Indeed, the seeds of change have been sown, and the harvest is abundant. As EADEN marches forward, supported by its partners and fueled by the dedication of the local governments and communities, the promise of a brighter tomorrow indicates – one where sustainable energy and climate-smart agriculture/ Agro Ecological Approaches pave the way towards a flourishing future for all. Thanks to our network members; Caritas Tororo, and SOCADIDO.

Democracy and livelihoods:

Civic empowerment for effective youth participation in Moyo and Obongi districts.

By Drilega Richard

Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, GLOBAL AIM UGANDA

West Nile currently hosts the largest number of refugees from South Sudan, with more than 60% of them being young people. Their participation in democratic governance processes is limited. This has been attributed to structural and individual challenges such as low access to information, poor understanding of local government planning processes, limited spaces for youth participation and, low levels of involvement by senior duty bearers. There are also poor communication skills amongst the youth.

With support from CUSP II, Global Aim is implementing a project which aims at strengthening youth participation in decision making processes in Moyo and Obongi districts. It targets members of the refugee and host communities, youth, women, persons with disabilities, management and staff of CSOs, as well as duty bearers. The project builds capacities of existing youth structures such as the youth council, voluntary youth groups, youth focused CBOs within the refugee and host communities. The key deliverable of the project is strengthened civic awareness and deliberate spaces for engagements between youth and duty bearers in refugee settlements' district, sub-county, and parish level processes. The goal of the engagements is to increase chances for youth access to quality services and more specifically to benefit from the Parish Development Model and other government-led development programmes.

GLOBAL Aim has built the capacity of 60 youth structures and groups in political participation of youth and young people in development processes, 50 youth structures on Human Rights Based Approach to Development and 50 youth structures on the Parish Development Model and Advocacy. Under the CUSP-supported project, 48 youth leaders have held two coordination meetings in Moyo and Obongi districts, two district level

dialogues on access to PDM and other development programmes, and eight Barazas with local leaders on youth participation and access to PDM and related government led development initiatives. Those activities led to an increased number of youth groups registered at sub-county and district levels. According to statistics on PDM beneficiaries, there is a 22% increase in the number of youth groups accessing funds from the program in Obongi district. In both Moyo and Obongi, there is office space for the youth council for both districts pending the budget allocation for the facilitation by the district councils, youth leaders intensified mobilization, leading to an increased number of youths voluntarily participating in planning and related development platforms at all levels.

Above all, the youth leadership is now able to identify irregularities surrounding the youth livelihoods program and seek redress from the leaders. Youth leaders are being listened to by leaders unlike before; the Chairperson Youth Council of Obongi District remarked:

“

I am happy that our leaders now give us space to do our work and listen to us whenever we approach them for anything. We recently engaged with them on the few numbers of youth groups accessing the PDM funds, and since then this has very much improved, I see that many youth groups are now benefitting.

— Mr. Adibaku Christopher, the Chairperson
Youth Council of Obongi District

”

The Chairperson of the youth council at sub-county level, highlights:

“

We were trained on participation and decision-making processes; this is already helping us understand our roles and effectively mobilize youths to participate in development processes in Moyo district. With the skills acquired from now onwards, we shall ensure that the youths utilize the 30% allocation of the Parish Development Model Funds properly.

— Mr Unzimai Rojas, the Chairperson of the youth council at sub-county level

”



A meeting with the Lamogi Youth Council in Amuru district discussing Parish Development Model, March 2024

Mbarara District Farmers' Association (MBADIFA)- Skilling women and youth in macropropagation technology to create employment.



© MBADIFA

Asiimire Sharot (3rd from the left) with some of MBADIFA members and staff in her plantlets chamber.

By Josephine Kiconco (RIP)

Former Technical Advisor – CUSP, focus on Southwestern region

Asiimire Sharot is 33 years old, resident of Nyakanyinya, Nyarweshama, Central Division - Sheema Municipality. She is a progressive farmer, dealing in the multiplication and distribution of seedlings such as banana plantlets and coffee cuttings. Asiimire is among the young women trained in banana macropropagation by MBADIFA with support from CUSP II. Macropropagation is a technique

used for multiplying plantain or banana plants by generating suckers for clean planting.

MBADIFA is promoting this technology in the southwestern sub-region due to high demand. Through its activities, MBADIFA is skilling youth and women in the technology to earn income and create employment,

contributing to inclusive growth and creating jobs for youth and women in Uganda.

MBADIFA targeted 20 women and youth from Sheema, Mbarara and Rwampara for a practical training in banana macropropagation technologies at one of their demonstration sites in Rwampara district. After the training, Asiimire mobilized UGX 500,000 from her own savings and sales from coffee seedlings and constructed a macropropagation nursery of one chamber with the capacity to accommodate 150 corms per season and other required input materials. She used family labour as support. Her target was to produce 50 plantlets in her first production to test if the acquired skills could yield results. In November 2023, she produced 23 plantlets only, which was lower than her target. She attributed this low yield to gaps in her production processes such as failure to manipulate the shoot.

This was a lesson to Asiimire. She reached out to one of the other youth trainees who had no capital to start his own chamber and employed him.

Between January and March 2024, Asiimire made her second production with 152 plantlets earning Ugx

104,000 from the sale of 52 plantlets to the nearby community members. Having learnt most of the production techniques, Asiimire has restocked the chamber with 150 corms and expects to get 2000 well-hardened plantlets. This could earn her Ugx 4,000,000 at an average price of 2000 per plantlet.

During this process, Asiimire faced challenges that included lack of financial resources to install a rainwater harvesting technology to ensure a sustainable water supply at her nursery. An engagement with Sheema District Local Government has been done by MBADIFA to seek support through linkages with other government programs like the Parish Development Model, agriculture fund, and others for this dedicated young woman who wants to make a difference in the sector and employ other women and youth.

MBADIFA continues to mentor Asiimire in the technology, especially on how to increase the multiplication rate while assuring quality, as well as nursery business management. MBADIFA has also introduced Asiimire to the district production department and they promised to give her a rainwater harvesting tank of 10,000 litres in the next financial year 2024/2025.

“

Today, I am famous in my community because of my knowledge in production of banana plantlets using macropropagation technology. I have given jobs to at least 10 fellow young women and youth in my community who work at the production chamber. MBADIFA has also strengthened my relationship with Sheema District Production Department where I hope to gain more support for my business

— Asiimire Sharot

”

Youth Engagement on Governance: The impactful 5 years of the National Debate Council (NDC)



A young person makes a speech at the Anti-Corruption Day, Kololo in Kampala, September 2021

By Gasta Kakaire

Executive Director, National Debate Council

Supported by the Governance and Civil Society Programme (GCSP), from 2019 to date, NDC has:

 OVER
2.5 million

young people reached both
in person and virtually.

OVER
400 schools, tertiary
institutions, and
universities across
Uganda, to date.

- had her work feature in the Inspectorate of Government reports to Parliament.
- had vNSAC & NSDC participants invited by Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) to present their activities, including to the President of the Republic of Uganda.
- groomed youth advocates now featuring at global level.
- contributed to the publishing of the 1st Young People's Handbook on TAAC.
- consequently, caught the eye of State House Anti-Corruption Unit (SHACU) who now directly support the Uganda Speech and Debate Champions' League to continue empowering and equipping young people to fight corruption.

Partnering with GCSP has been a springboard for NDC not just in Transparency Accountability and Anti-Corruption (TAAC) but also strengthening its organisational structures both administratively, and financially. This partnership has created a great opportunity for technical support and exposure to spaces the organisation would either take long to cover or never cover at all. By linking NDC to Anti-Corruption Agencies (ACAs) and CSOs working in the area of TAAC, doors were opened for capacity building, innovation, new partnerships, and synergies.

NDC is now seen as an organisation well-positioned to influence and rally millions of young people to promote TAAC.

👉 A LOOK AT THE INITIATIVES:

Virtual National Students' Anti-Corruption Challenge (vNSAC)

Born out of the necessity to engage young people during the COVID-19 lockdown, the vNSAC has emerged as a groundbreaking initiative. In partnership with ACAs and supported by GCSP, vNSAC provides a platform for young Ugandans to participate in identifying corruption challenges and proposing interventions to address the same. Young people are given space to explore and exploit their talents in poetry, speech, art, song/rap, interview, skits, news anchoring and essay/short story writing.

This challenge has seen unprecedented milestones like students interviewing key leaders in the country including Members of Parliament, Permanent Secretaries, District Chairpersons, ACA Principals, and civil society leaders. The vNSAC has enhanced NDC's reach on social media across platforms. This challenge has revolutionized young people's outlook on issues of TAAC and is partly the reason for the current wave on social media where young people are boldly demanding accountability from leaders. The growth in applications to the vNSAC from just over 100 in 2021 to almost 1,000 in the 2023/24 season is evidence to this.

National Speech & Debate Championship (NSDC) and National Junior Speech & Debate Championship (NJSDC)

The 2022/23 NSDC and NJSDC returned after a two-year pandemic break. GCSP supported the 8 regional qualifiers across the country where students from 150 schools were engaged in debates and speech events on topics of TAAC culminating into the 11th finals where the PPDA Executive Director officiated as Chief Guest delivered a keynote address. This championship saw students challenge Parliamentarians on government consideration to leverage technology in promoting TAAC.

The Uganda Speech and Debate Champions League

The NSDC and vNSAC saw the State House Anti-Corruption Unit (SHACU) reach out to support the Uganda Speech and Debate Champions League (USDCL) which they have for two running seasons: 2022 & 2023. The USDCL is a league of the 8 schools which have won NSDC at least once. Guest schools are then invited to form a parallel league. This league now runs under an anti-corruption theme and ensures inclusivity and fosters growth among students in the TAAC space. The league is annually hosted at the Office of the President during the International Anti-Corruption Week and has reached over 500 young people physically and another 30,000 virtually.

Position Paper on Deepening TAAC in the national secondary schools' curricula.

This ground-breaking project, supported by CUSP II, aims at enhancing the learning and teaching of TAAC topics in the Uganda schools and contribute to the building of the values of, ethics, integrity, patriotism, selflessness, and empathy in learners. It began with the consultation of teachers across the country on the state of TAAC in the curriculum and the recommendations to deepen its teaching. Other key players, including young people, will be consulted and the recommendations shall be submitted to the National Curriculum Development Centre

In a nutshell, NDC is empowering young Ugandans to become active participants in the fight against corruption and nurturing future leaders and change-makers. Many alumni of NDC have gone on to become national leaders in youth leadership, civil society organisations, academia, and international institutions. Their success stands as a testament to the transformative power of debate and speech education.

Office of the Auditor General (OAG)



© OAG / CUSP

Year of establishment:

1995

Location:

The Head Quarters, Audit House, Plot 2C Apolo Kagga Road, Kampala, Uganda.

OAG has a regional presence through eleven (11) regional offices in Gulu, Fort Portal, Mbarara, Masaka, Mbale, Soroti, Jinja, Arua, Moroto, Hoima and Kampala.

Geographical coverage:

National coverage

Website

<https://www.oag.go.ug/welcome>

Organization email:

info@oag.go.ug

Telephone contact:

+256 417 336 000

Background

The government is the steward of national resources gathered through taxation of citizens, donations, loans from external funders, and explorations of natural resources. In this context, these resources belong to the public, making citizens rightful beneficiaries. However, despite this inherent entitlement, Uganda faces challenges in delivering adequate services across various sectors of its economy. This suggests a gap between the government's responsibilities and its ability to effectively fulfill them. Such existing gaps can only be documented for action with empirical evidence. It is this evidence that is gathered annually by the Supreme Audit Institution of the Republic of Uganda, the Office of the Auditor General (OAG).

The OAG was established by an Act of Parliament (National Audit Act 2008) as the Supreme Audit Institution of the Republic of Uganda, mandated by the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995 to produce reliable and high-quality audit reports. In so doing, the OAG promotes good governance, transparency, and effective accountability in the management and use of public resources.

How the OAG works

The OAG executes its mandate through conducting regular independent audits and reporting on public accounts of Uganda and of all public offices including the central and local government administrations, and any public corporation.

OAG conducts Financial Audits, Value for Money audits and other audits such as Forensic audits of any project or activity involving public funds.

Who can access or utilize OAG services?

Audit reports are submitted annually to Parliament. This is normally done in January. The three (3) responsible public accounts committees of Parliament are then charged with reviewing the reports to ensure that the recommendations of the Auditor General are implemented. The issued audit reports are accessible to the public through the OAG Website: <https://www.oag.go.ug>

OAG work with the Civil Society

Together, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the OAG play complementary roles in fostering civic engagement and promoting good governance in Uganda.

Citizen-centric initiatives have emerged as important drivers of change. These initiatives prioritize the interests and concerns of ordinary citizens, seeking to empower them to hold government officials accountable and demand better governance outcomes.

The GIZ recognizes the transformative potential of citizen-driven initiatives in shaping the future of governance in Uganda. For this reason, GIZ has supported the OAG to ensure the inclusion of citizens in their work.

GIZ has rendered support to bring together the OAG with key Civil Society Players including the Civil Society Budget Advocacy Group (CSBAG) <https://www.csbag.org/>, Wizarts Foundation <https://wizartsfoundation.org/> and several other CSOs working in the governance field in Uganda.

CSOs serve as vital intermediaries between the government and citizens, advocating for the rights and interests of various societal groups. They often engage in monitoring government activities, promoting transparency and accountability, and providing grassroots support and empowerment.

Achievements so far

The role and responsibilities of the OAG while reporting on government expenditure have further expanded to include better engagement with the citizens and other stakeholders to ensure more economic, efficient, and effective use of public resources.

The target is to have more citizen-responsive audit reports that will be utilized to improve service delivery to the citizens and foster the sustainable development of Uganda.

To this end the OAG, with support from GIZ, has launched the Citizens Feedback Platform (CFP), which allows citizens to raise any concerns on service delivery, that will be use in the planning and execution of audits of central and local governments.

Lessons learnt

By working in tandem with citizens and leveraging their perspectives and insights on service delivery in Uganda, the OAG is contributing to a more vibrant and accountable democracy. This initiative helps to bridge the gap between government and citizens, creating opportunities for meaningful participation and driving positive change in the country.

Share Feedback with Auditor General via the Citizen Feedback Platform (CFP)

REPORT. ENGAGE. INFLUENCE.

The CFP enables you to share feedback on issues of accountability and service delivery.



Nakere Rural Women Activist (NARWOA)

Year of establishment:

2002

Location:

Lodon road opposite ILO compound – Kotido District- Karamoja, Uganda

Geographical coverage:

Kotido, other districts in Karamoja sub region

Organization email:

info@narwoa.org / narwoa2002.org@gmail.com

Telephone contact:

+256782821170

Vision: Inclusive society that promotes the rights of women and other vulnerable people in Uganda

Mission: "To promote the rights of women and other vulnerable groups through livelihoods and advocacy initiatives for dignified lives"

Areas of focus:

Community response to the humanitarian crisis in Karamoja. More specifically NARWOA aims at addressing cross border and inter-ethnic political instability, including the rise of war lords. Moreover, the organisation focuses on curbing high domestic violence, and discrimination of women in society.

NARWOA strengthens the rights of women and other vulnerable people in Uganda through the delivery of programmes in Management,

Leadership and Governance Capacity for women, Livelihood development and support, Research & Advocacy, Networking & Partnerships and Health promotion.

Biggest success so far:

CUSP entered a collaboration with NARWOA in 2020 to ensure NARWOA influences Women's political participation and leadership in Kotido District.

Background: There are existing barriers to women leadership and political participation in Karamoja. Culturally, Karamoja had for long relied solely on male elders who have in most cases passed resolutions in the local parliament - shrines "the Akiriket", in which women do not participate, leading to their discrimination. These conservative cultural practices include early child marriage, forced marriage, widow inheritance, the denial to own property, no freedom of speech and expression for women.

NARWOA, with support from CUSP II, established a forum of 95 female elders as messengers to the shrine (akiriket) of the male elders. These women leaders include fortune tellers, traditional healers, the wives of clan heads and the wives of prominent elders, who are occasionally allowed to speak for a limited time in such "Akiriket" meetings. These women leaders were trained and mentored on dialogues and engagement managing to pass issues and resolutions to the "Akiriket" every time they were given a chance to speak. This has reduced the incidence of forced marriages, child marriages and widow inheritance. This also gave women and girls the confidence to report such cases to authorities beyond the LC systems through the established

referral pathways. Nine cases of forced child marriages were reported and six prosecuted in the courts of law between December 2020 and November 2021.

Through five community sensitization and awareness creation meetings, two community outreaches, Women's Day celebrations and 16 days of activism commemoration, NARWOA managed to directly reach 600 women and girls, and indirectly around 2500 women and girls who are now aware of their rights and can advocate for others. 19 women groups reached by NARWOA have also been able to benefit from the Parish Development Model funds.

NARWOA with Support from CUSP trained 180 participants from their community network on the national gender policy, group dynamics and organisation, self-esteem and assertiveness and on their rights as women. The organisation also trained 18 leaders on leadership skills, civic education, advocacy, public speaking, lobbying, caucusing skills, awareness creation on women's rights and their roles in changing the lives of other community women. Women thus acquired skills and the confidence to challenge men. In Kotido District Council three women joined the District Executive Committee (DEC), whereas three women are chairpersons of district committees. These women sitting at council now can move motions and advocate for their rights and the rights of other women both at community and district level. In summary there are 98 women councilors across the Kotido district, both at sub-county and district, of which 19 sit at the District Council compared to only 9 before.

Defenders Protection Initiative (DPI)



The Western region "Talk to your regulator" engagement in Mbarara, April 2024

Year of establishment:

2012

Programmatic area of focus:

Governance – Rights of Human Rights Defenders.

Location:

Kampala

Geographical coverage:

National coverage

Website

<https://www.defendersprotection.org>

Organization email

projects@defendersprotection.org

Telephone contact:

+256 392 201102

+256 789 372534

Goal:

DPI's goal is to serve as a core and accessible center of excellence that provides contextualized approaches toward attaining a safer working environment for Human Rights Defenders (HRD).

Biggest success so far:

DPI launched the 'Talk to Your Regulator – T2R' project on 18th August 2022 to bridge the knowledge gap and mitigate the misapplication of the NGO regulatory framework and its adverse effects on the civic space. Under the T2R project, which is supported by CUSP, DPI has conducted seven regional engagements. These have brought together over 150 representatives from a diverse range of civil society organisations, including NGOs, CBOs, and other entities to share compliance obligations, seek clarification, give feedback for the improved working environment, and engage with the main CSO regulators – the NGO Bureau, Personal Data Protection Office, Financial Intelligence Authority, National Social Security Fund, Uganda Revenue Authority and Uganda Registration Services Bureau. WhatsApp platforms to continuously share timely regulatory challenges and successes have been formed in all these regions, and NGO regulators have shared contacts with the CSO representatives to facilitate timely information exchange. Different entities have received instant support such as clarification on remittance of employees' NSSF, guidance on company registration and administration of Tax Identification Numbers among others.

Lessons learnt:

- There is interest and mutual benefit in a dialogue space between NGO Regulators and Civil Society Organisations. This is not only bridging the trust gap between the CSOs and their regulators but also improving the fulfillment of their compliance obligations.
- "Talk to Your Regulator" engagements need to be implemented alongside Compliance Clinics. This would ensure that the services of the NGO regulators, particularly the ones located in Kampala, are brought closer to grassroots NGOs in the different regions.
- CSOs located and operating up country are not well abreast with the new laws and amendments of various laws regulating the sector. The T2R project enabled them to get to know the new laws and amendments firsthand from the regulatory agencies. Some are even now aware of the existence of branch offices in their regions. For example, one of the participants from Moyo just got to know during the session that there is a URSB branch office in Arua, yet she had been traveling to Kampala to get services from the headquarters.

Katosi Women Development Trust (KWDT)



Members of Katosi Women Development Trust showcase their improved, value - added fish business

Year of establishment:

1996

Programmatic area of focus:

- Economic Empowerment
- Water Access, Sanitation & Hygiene
- Education:
- Environment:

Location:

Coordination Office on Plot 901
- off Kalema RD - Makamba
Zone - Lungujja Kikandwa
- Rubaga and a field office;
Katutu Village, Mukono.

Geographical coverage:

Mukono District, and the
islands of Kalangala district
and Buvuma district in Uganda.

Website

<https://www.katosi.org>

Organization email

katosiwomen@katosi.org /
katosiwomendt@gmail.com

Programmatic area of focus:

1. **Economic Empowerment** of women in integrated sustainable agriculture, fishing, fish processing and fish trade and access to microcredit
2. **Water Access, Sanitation & Hygiene** involving the construction and management of clean safe water sources for communities, schools and health centres.
3. **Education** of children in fishing vilages through improvement of primary schools' infrastructure and vocational skilling for youths and women.
4. **Environment:** to support sustainable agriculture practices, soil, seed and water conservation and generation and use of renewable energy.

Biggest success so far:

Our most notable achievement stems from the transformative impact of empowering rural women and fisherwomen to overcome social and cultural barriers that hinder their full potential. Women, working together

in groups, have been supported to engage in fishing, while individuals have been skilled in construction of latrines, rainwater harvesting tanks, and hand pump mechanics, biosand filters, biogas plants marking a significant breakthrough into occupations traditionally reserved for men by cultural norms and traditions.

The transformative approach has pivoted on women working in groups, equipping them with knowledge and skills to make informed decision on transforming social cultural norms that have for centuries impeded women engagement in development. Witnessing these women emerge as leaders and change agents within their communities is this project's main success. Women are breaking through visible and invisible barriers, fostering empowerment, gender equality, and sustainable development at grassroots level.

Lesson Learnt as an organization:

Facilitating those most affected by the issue to take the lead of the transformation has been a key lesson for the project. Women groups have taken lead in identifying repressive traditions and norms that need to be transformed. Placing women in this position they were quick to realize that human rights and gender training should be provided to the men in the community as well, so as to facilitate the transformation of repressive cultural norms.

The empowerment of women to change of social norms and cultural practices is best done with the inclusion of traditional, religious and political leaders.

Divine Agency for Integrated Development (DivineAid)



DivineAid conducts community awareness and sensitization on water and other natural resources

Year of establishment:

2001

Programmatic area of focus:

Environment protection and climate change adaptation, Livelihood and economic Empowerment and Integrated Water Resources Management

Location:

Plot 41, Boroboro Road, Senior Quarters, Lira City

Geographical coverage:

Lango, Acholi and Teso Sub-regions

Website

<https://www.divineaid.or.ug>

Organization email

info@divineaid.or.ug

Telephone contact:

+256-392-967162

Success and lessons learnt so far:

With support from CUSP II, DivineAid is implementing a project to enhance women participation and voice on environment governance and climate change adaptation in the Lango sub-region.

DivineAid supports integrating climate change education into various aspects of learning and ensuring that the next generations are equipped to tackle environmental challenges effectively. Up to 90 women have been trained conducting 18 Parish level community awareness forums on rights and roles of women on climate change adaptation and protection of environment. The project has identified 75 women as change agents on women's participation and influence in decision processes on climate change transition. These 75 change agents have conducted 141 community actions on waste management, sensitization and basic climate - Smart farming methods.

Beginning January to April 2024, local capacity has been built on sustainable environment and climate change transition by forming and training 13 Village Environmental Protection Committees (VEPC). A total of 13,000 trees were planted at the initiative of the VEPC groups.

Overall, current areas of engagement for environmental protection, climate change adaptation includes woodlot restoration (tree growing/afforestation), riverbank and wetland restoration, climate and environmental justice (increasing voices of community (women) in climate change conversations, and stakeholders engagements and accountability on climate change commitments by leaders.

District women council representative sensitizing the community on their role towards environment protection and climate change adaptation.

Fare thee well Josephine Kiconco

By Elone Natumanya Ainebyoona,

Gender and Youth Technical Advisor, GCSP

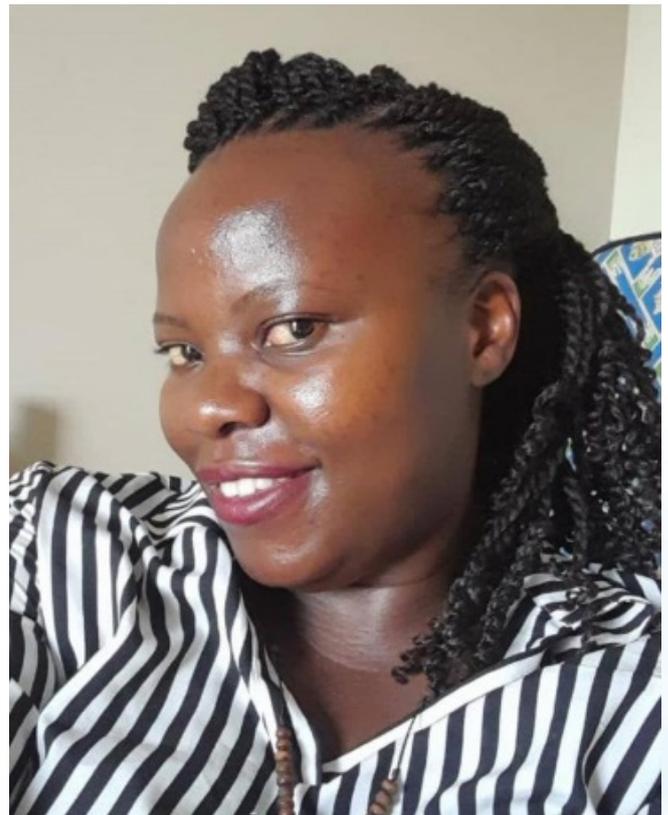
Wednesday 17th April 2024 was supposed to be a day to receive good news, shared with a few colleagues about a new baby added to the team from our colleague Josephine Kiconco. Instead, the saddest of the news was shared: Josephine had passed away in the night of 16th April while bringing to the world a new baby! The news came as shocking to everyone who knew the vibrant and very jolly Josephine. She had worked with GIZ for close to five years as a technical advisor. She passed away at Divine Mercy Hospital in Mbarara and unfortunately the new bundle of joy too could not make it, leaving everyone with a heavy heart.

In most cases, we hear and speak about maternal mortality rates in Uganda and globally as “mere statistics.” According to the 2022 Uganda Demographic Health Survey, the Maternal Mortality Ratio stands at 189 per 100,000 live births while the infant mortality is at 34 per 1,000 live births. For us at GIZ Uganda, this can no longer be statistics. It’s one of us who passed away bringing a new life to the world. It is Josephine Kiconco and her dear daughter, “not those numbers!”

During a vigil held for Josephine at the GIZ Uganda offices in Nyonyi Gardens, Kampala, everyone spoke about her passion, candidness, and tenacity to deliver quality work.

“We always looked up to her for inspiration whenever we were almost giving up,” eulogized her colleague, Brian Chanwat.

In her work, she expressed experience and charisma to ensure that partners are well served, and citizens reached with as much support as possible. The partners indeed came in large numbers to condole with the family and the GIZ team at her final send off in Muko, Rubanda district on Friday 19th April, 2024. The partners expressed shock and grief as they knew her as a vibrant technical advisor



who had built long lasting relationships between them and GIZ.

Josephine herself had advocated for the creation of a nursing space for mothers in food markets in her area of engagement. She didn’t live to see this dream come true. At the time of her passing, the new offices at Nyonyi Gardens were being refurbished with a plan to include a nursing room for mothers. Josephine, who worked mostly upcountry, could have perhaps made use of the facility while delivering on her work in Kampala.

As one passes by the Nyonyi Gardens reception, you cannot miss seeing the beautiful photo with a smile next to a candle already blown away by the wind after the vigil. And that is the candle that she was to us, the light that brought joy and inspiration to many of us who worked with her. Josephine left behind a son, from whom we shall always remember her joy and vigor and pray that he grows to be as resilient as his mother was. Rest In Peace dear Josephine! We will always remember and miss you so much.

A poem in honour of your work, Josephine Kiconco

By Joseph Nuwasiima

Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor, GCSP

Iron in the West -
emerald in the room.
She was a flower, in
nature's loom.
A stalwart soul, a
beacon, so divine.
A purpose unwound; no
challenge denied.
Her slim laughter a
melody, in the wind's
soft caress.
Bringing solace and joy,
amidst life's duress.
With warmth in her
gaze, and kindness in
her touch.
A chorus of hope, A
champion for change.

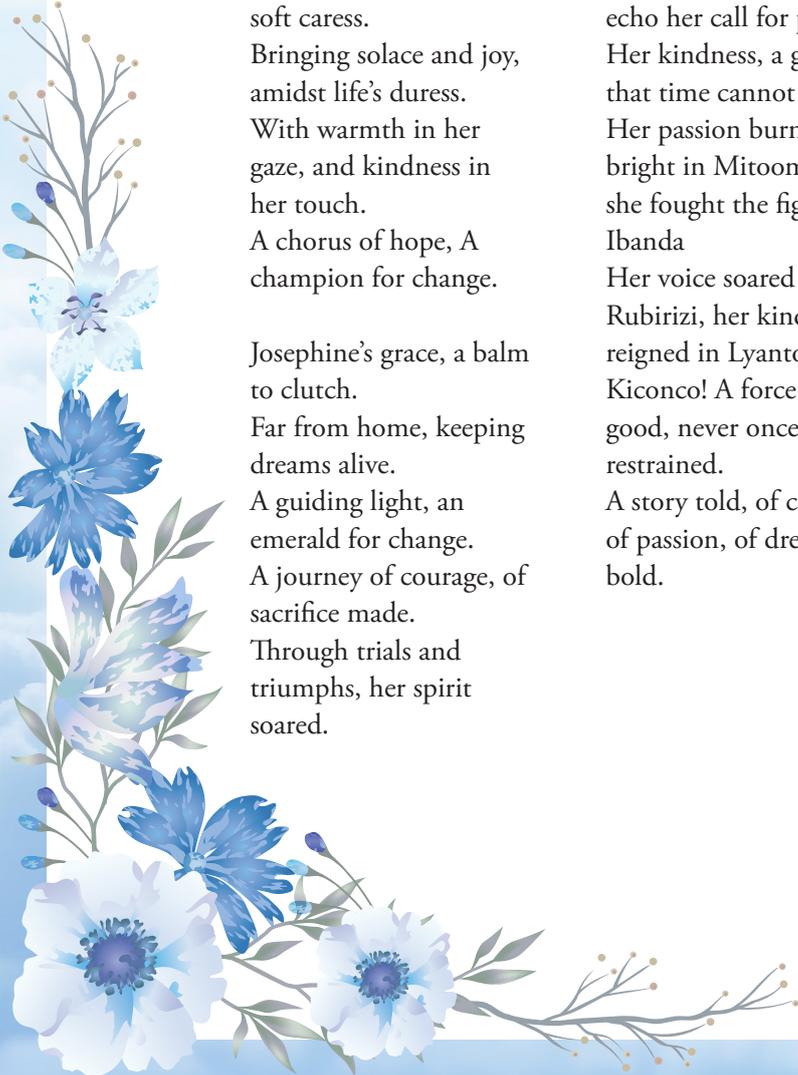
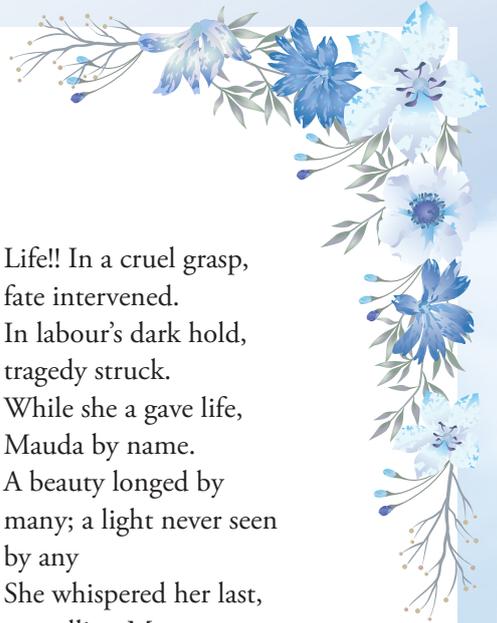
Josephine's grace, a balm
to clutch.
Far from home, keeping
dreams alive.
A guiding light, an
emerald for change.
A journey of courage, of
sacrifice made.
Through trials and
triumphs, her spirit
soared.

A heart tender and
meek, yet strong as steel.
Her chuckle danced
free, like waves beneath
the sea.

A path laid in Rubanda;
a light so immense in
Kabale.
Bushenyi, Mbarara, they
echo her call for peace.
Her kindness, a gift,
that time cannot erase.
Her passion burned
bright in Mitooma,
she fought the fight in
Ibanda
Her voice soared in
Rubirizi, her kindness
reigned in Lyantonde
Kiconco! A force for
good, never once
restrained.
A story told, of courage,
of passion, of dreams so
bold.

Life!! In a cruel grasp,
fate intervened.
In labour's dark hold,
tragedy struck.
While she gave life,
Mauda by name.
A beauty longed by
many; a light never seen
by any
She whispered her last,
yet calling Momma next
And Josephine gave life,
to Mauda's embrace.
Together they slumber,
their souls intertwined.

Josephine and Mauda,
their spirits interlace.
Only by shadow they
live, on Elvin's side.
A void left behind, a life
never same.
A reprieve for fate, a
legacy ever told.
A mother's watch, a
chorus of hope.
An Iron in the West, a
silence now profound.
In the hearts of many,
an essence, forevermore



EVENTS

 **5th**
June 2024

Launch of Strategic Plan for Mbarara District Farmers' Association, in Mbarara

 **4-6th**
June 2024

Western and Central Regional Civil Society Conference, Fort Portal

 **11th**
July 2024

Virtual Students' Anti-Corruption Challenge (vNSAC) 2023-24 award ceremony. Hosted by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority.

 **July**
2024

Compliance workshops in Nebbi, Moyo and Arua districts, organised under the Civil Society Support and Information Hub (CISH) and involving CSOs and regulatory authorities, July 2024.

 **2024**

Eastern Regional Civil Society Conference, Mbale; Northern Regional Civil Society Conference, Gulu, (dates to be communicated)

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