



## Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare

*Empowering vulnerable communities*

### *The MouthPiece*

We are pleased to welcome you to UCOBAC bi-annual newsletter, “*The MouthPiece*.” This issue will bring you the latest news and information about UCOBAC activities. Articles, poems, pictures, opinions and any interesting information from our stakeholders are most welcome! *Information sharing is a vital tool for breeding new ideas and influencing change.*



UCOBAC is a Non-Governmental Organization working in over 20 districts in Uganda. Its mission is to attain improved welfare of vulnerable women and children using community based initiatives.

UCOBAC is a consortium of grassroots /community based organizations based in its operation areas. These are made up of volunteers who work closely with UCOBAC staff in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of programs. The volunteers include; District Affiliate Committees, Community human rights workers and Home based care givers.

UCOBAC has a team of 15 well qualified, competent and motivated staff based at the secretariat, regional and district offices. These oversee and provide technical support to the implementation of the programs.

We empower the vulnerable communities through four major program areas including; **Orphans and Vulnerable Children, Economic Empowerment, Health, Governance and Human Rights.**

### Projects round-up

#### Community Development Program (CDP)

Canadian Feed the Children is sponsoring 565 children in 8 Government aided schools and over 365 households infected and affected by HIV and AIDS in Bugiri district through UCOBAC's CDP.

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#### Grassroots women march towards a violence free life.

Mbuya-Kinawataka, March 9,2013 - UCOBAC organized a **ZERO TOLERANCE TO VIOLENCE** march in Mbuya, Kampala-Uganda from UCOBAC Secretariat all through Mbuya Kinawataka Zone.

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#### Women's Land and Human Rights project (WLHR)

Mubende and Mityana - 90 community paralegals and 580 human rights watch dogs have been mobilized and empowered to promote women's land and property rights through undertaking community based initiatives.

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## Community Development Program (CDP)

In 2004, the Government of Uganda launched the National Orphans and Vulnerable Children's policy together with the National Strategic Program plan of interventions for Orphans and other vulnerable children in Uganda. Guided by the provisions in the national policies, UCOBAC undertakes a Community Development Program which aims at complimenting the existing strategies to promote the welfare of orphans and vulnerable children in Uganda.

It undertakes human rights based approach, a family and community oriented approach, focusing on the most vulnerable children with an attempt to reduce vulnerability. The program also facilitates community participation and empowerment, promotes gender equity between boys and girls, puts emphasis on respect for OVCs, ensures reduced discrimination and stigmatization on OVCs, and ensures participation of OVCs, families and communities in the community development process.

UCOBAC with support from Canadian Feed the Children (CFTC) is working in Bulesa, Buluguyi and Bulidha sub-counties, Bugiri district to improve the welfare of 445 beneficiaries from the home based care through construction of houses, provision of home based care and counseling, referral, trainings and public engagement.

Under the education sector of the program, UCOBAC comes in to supplement Government's Universal Primary Education policy which is characterized by a number of challenges, through improvement of the learning environment in 8 government aided schools in Bugiri district. This is done through provision of scholastic materials, provision of furniture, provision of school uniforms, construction of classroom blocks and facilitation of in school peer to peer education sessions the and supporting the school feeding program.

As a result of the project, there is an increase in the number of children enrolled in school; a substantial decline in the level of child drop outs and school absenteeism. The general performance of children in these schools has also improved tremendously.



*Pupils of Nakabaale Primary School, Bulesa Subcounty in Bugiri district after receiving books from UCOBAC*

## Editorial

Since beginning of the year, as an organization we have been busy given the fact that the organization is making a strategic plan for the next five years, 2013-2018. The decision to review the strategic plan was a necessary one to guide our work, ensure clear accountability and to facilitate improved coordination of organization activities now and in the future.

In the recent months, UCOBAC took part in the Fifty Seventh Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that was held at the United Nations Headquarters in March 2013 in New York .

As an organization we continue to be concerned about the work our home based care givers do and the growing call for accountability and growth of the Home Based Care Alliance (HBCA). The conference in New York spurred a one day meeting of the HBCA Focal Point Persons along with the Executive Director and the Program Officer for Health at the UCOBAC Secretariat to lay strategies for a stronger and sustainable national HBCA.

Serving and empowering the vulnerable communities being UCOBAC's core objective; we have embarked on strengthening the organization's service delivery through the health centre located at the secretariat in Mbuya. We now provide general medical care, immunization and vaccination, free HIV counseling and testing every last Friday of the month and have a fully fledged family planning unit.

We welcome on board our new comrades and partners Uganda Health Marketing Board, the Uganda Police and Kampala City Council Authority who have been and still are active participants in our activities.

In a special way we recognise our partners Huairou Commission, Canadian Feed the Children, American Jewish World Service, Groot's International, International Centre for Research on Women, Southwest Boston Garden Community, International Solidarity Foundation and African Centre for Media Excellence for their unconditional support towards UCOBAC and the vulnerable communities that we serve. Your presence and support is greatly appreciated.

As we work round the year, we are looking forward to exciting capacity building activities for our staff and members delivered by the experts from partner organizations both nationally and internationally.

*Thank you for your interest in UCOBAC.*

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## Marching towards a violence free life



Saturday, March 9, 2013, UCOBAC along with its volunteers celebrated the International Women's Day with a march through Mbuya, Nakawa Division under the theme; **Zero Tolerance to Domestic Violence**. UCOBAC caregivers, volunteers and well wishers sang songs of women liberation while marching through the roads of Mbuya-Kinawataka.

In the meeting that followed the march, participants and community were further informed of the organization's objective and programs which evolve around improving the welfare of women and children.

Men and women were sensitized about the effects of domestic violence and how it can be overcome. It was agreed that men should as well be brought on board for an effective campaign.

UCOBAC Program officer -Health, compared domestic violence to the act of being kidnapped and being tortured for ransom that one will never be able to pay. He encouraged citizens to break the silence on domestic violence by making use of the law institutions in place like the Uganda Police.

Aida Kemigisha, a representative of KCCA Town Clerk, emphasized the fact that men should be encouraged to take part in the sensitization campaigns.



“Create harmony in your families and endeavor to wipe out issues leading to domestic violence. This will lead to successful marriages and a better Uganda.” said UCOBAC capacity building officer.

The Observer newspaper participated in the march and took coverage of the celebrations. Read more on [http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=24127&catid=34&Itemid=114](http://www.observer.ug/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=24127&catid=34&Itemid=114)

### Discussion forum for women land rights.

Uganda land Alliance in partnership with Oxfam held a discussion forum on women land rights where key strategies for moving the Women Land Rights Movement (WLRM) were set by the different partners. Key issues raised were; challenges women encounter to attain land justice, absence of harmony among the institutions meant to give justice and lack of empowerment opportunities for grassroots women.

Major reasons for failure of women to own land were found to be; problem of crafty guardians and unjust cultural beliefs. Some of the WLRM partners in attendance were UCOBAC, CEEWA, Street Law Uganda, NAWOU and a representative from the Attorney General's office.

### UCOBAC Health center

UCOBAC wishes to appreciate **Uganda Health Marketing Group** for the diligent support they are giving in way of capacity building for the health program. With well trained medical personnel, UCOBAC health center located in Mbuya is now able to provide general medical care and advice, free HIV testing and counselling, family planning services, counselling, drugs and medical IEC materials to the community.

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## UCOBAC IN NEW YORK AND BRAZIL

The Executive Director of UCOBAC, Solome Mukisa and a staff member, Suzan Gamwino were sponsored by Huairou Commission to attend the 57th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) that was held from 4th-5th March 2013 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The theme of the 57th CSW was “Elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls”. UCOBAC representatives were able to participate in several discussion panels and to learn from the experience and best practices of other member countries how to implement programmes for promotion of gender equality and women empowerment in particular the grassroots women.

### 15th International Anti-Corruption Conference: -

The conference was to launch the final report of Grassroots Women’s Perspectives on Corruption and Anti-Corruption. Birungi Frances, Senior Program Officer at UCOBAC in delegation by Huairou Commission presented the research findings from this qualitative study which aimed to document grassroots women’s perspectives and lived experiences of corruption in the developing world.

To further empower the grassroots women to fight against corruption and to encourage their participation in national initiatives, Huairou Commission is supporting UCOBAC to implement a new project called Transparency and Accountability Initiative whose major priority is to monitor, evaluate and improve service delivery by the designated authorities through good governance.



UCOBAC staff, Frances Birungi (2nd from left) addressing participants at the IACC in Brazil, 2012

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## Computer training for HIV/AIDS Home Based Caregivers Alliance members.



FPPs with UCOBAC Program officer Health, Gary Agaba (far-left) in a computer training session at the secretariat in Mbuya.

Following a needs assessment that was carried out to determine the HIV/AIDS HBC givers’ computer literacy levels, UCOBAC through its guidance and coordination role in the Uganda HBCA organized computer training for the HBC board members at the UCOBAC secretariat. The training was aimed at assisting members in their home based care work ranging from documentation to communication level.

The objectives of the training were; learning how to communicate using electronic mail, effective report writing using the Word processor, saving documents and opening new email accounts. The skills acquired are meant to help the care givers communicate with all grassroots women and caregivers both locally and globally.

## Organizational Capacity Building

**Organizational Advocacy and communications capacity building** – UCOBAC Staff were trained by African Center for Media Excellence in a number of skills including engaging effectively with the public and media as a human rights CSO. This has strengthened UCOBAC internal and external communications systems and had led to the development and adoption of an effective organizational advocacy and communications strategy.

In the same light, International Center for Research on Women will over the next two years build the capacity of UCOBAC and Uganda Land Alliance through the Advocacy and Communications capacity building project to foster the development of a civil society advocacy coalition in Uganda and Tanzania that is firmly rooted in empirical evidence, bringing new and diverse voices together to engage in Joint Advocacy in promotion of women’s land and property rights.

## No longer worried



*In the picture is, Ziriya with her children and grand children. Far right is the house they lived in before and in the background is their new home.*

Through a peer exchange visit to Masindi, Ziriya learnt about the village saving and loan scheme and the importance of saving to have a good life.

When asked how her involvement with UCOBAC has impacted her life; this is what she had to say; “The most significant change that resulted from my involvement is that ***I was able to save and build a permanent house for myself*** so I am no longer worried about collecting grass for thatching the house any more.

UCOBAC gave me two goats, I reared these goats, they reproduced and I got seven goats all together. I sold three of these goats and hired a piece of land to grow maize. The first season I harvested 10 bags. The next season I harvested 30 bags of maize. I sold this maize and built myself a small permanent house.

### The Revolving Savings and Credit Fund (RSCF)

The fund was initiated to support poor households in the districts of Mubende, Mityana, Hoima and Kiboga. Grass-roots women as a major target group are trained in projects’ identification and management. Later, they are given financial support to run the chosen Income Generating Activities.

Mrs Kyotasimire, a treasurer of Twekambe Village Saving and Loan Scheme in Kilukya Parish - Hoima District together with her husband Mr Kyotasimire and their children, realised their dream when they joined UCOBAC’s RSCF which is supported by International Solidarity Foundation. They have been able to buy land and cattle. They now live in a permanent home and their children are schooling.

The strongest factors behind their success are having a good marital relationship, hard work and faith in God.

Ziriya Nakuloba, 45 years old is a resident of Buwumi village, Bulesa sub-county in Bugiri district. She was enrolled as a beneficiary of UCOBAC in 2008 when her family was identified and verified among the most vulnerable. Ziriya is a widow with six children, was living in a grass thatched hut and is HIV positive.

Despite her working hard as a casual laborer, not much could be reaped to adequately provide for her and the children. When UCOBAC learned about her plight, it intervened by supporting her with a welfare kit which included; 2 mattresses, 2 jeri-cans, 2 treated mosquito nets and constructing a pit latrine for her home to promote hygiene.

She was provided with two goats and seeds to start up a vegetable garden from which she could nutritiously supplement their diet and sell off the surplus to boost the family income.

*UCOBAC gave me two goats, they reproduced and I got seven. I sold three and hired land to grow maize from which i harvested 10 bags in the first season... and 30 bags in the next...*

I also have a heifer that I acquired after exchanging some of the goats. Besides, people no longer laugh at me, instead they come for advice.”

Today, Ziriya is one of UCOBAC’s Home Based Care beneficiaries and is also a member of the drama team.

###



*Mr and Mrs Kyotasimire in standing by their previous home.*



*The Kyotasimire family outside their new home.*

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## The Women's Land and Human Rights project (WLPR)

Land is a critical resource in Uganda and provides a means of livelihood to communities and development in Uganda, which is predominantly an agricultural country. While 83% of women in Uganda are engaged in agricultural production and over 90% in food production and processing, only 25.5% control the land they cultivate. This underpins women's ability to make income, feel secure in their homes and communities and to participate effectively and meaningfully in society.

UCOBAC's Women's land and property rights project aims at empowering women at grassroots level through enabling women to exercise their land and property rights. The objective of the project is to increase and improve women's access to, ownership of and control over land and property using community driven and human rights based approach.

The WLPR project strengthens an effective community support structure to sustainably promote women's land and property rights through mobilization and capacity building of community human rights workers. Over 120 community paralegals and 560 watch dogs have been mobilized and trained in grassroots communities of Mityana, Kiboga and Mubende. Community awareness and knowledge on women's land and property rights is created through community based advocacy and community sensitizations on women's land and property rights.

WLRP project strengthens women's access to favorable community justice through provision of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, referrals and support in existing justice systems and through fostering collaboration and dialogue between community women and actors in the justice systems in local to local dialogue sessions.

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### Dissemination of research findings on corruption and anti-corruption in Kiboga

16th-17th May 2013 Kiboga District; A team of UCOBAC staff undertook a dissemination exercise in Bukomero and Dwaniro sub-counties, Kiboga district.

The purpose of the workshop was to acquaint District and local leaders along with community paralegals and the community at large with the main research findings from the study, "Beyond the State: Grassroots women's perspectives on Corruption and Anti Corruption" that was undertaken in Kiboga in February 2012.

It was reported that grassroots women experience corruption as endemic, pervasive and as part of their daily life.



76% of women surveyed perceived that corruption prevented their access to public good and services while 21% pointed to being asked bribes in relation to income generation and business activities.

The police was consistently named as the most corrupt government agency.

#### Accomplishments

- UCOBAC is now partners with UHMG, the Uganda Police and KCCA
- Strengthened service delivery at the UCOBAC Health Center.
- Refresher training for Mbuya Home Based Care Alliance members.
- Home Based Care alliance received funding to support Income Generating Activities (IGA)
- Received donation of 15 laptops to be used in the training of women grassroots leaders to enhance computer literacy skills.

#### Upcoming activities at UCOBAC

- Establishment of a new HBCA, May 2013
- Training for Women Grassroots leaders concerning leadership and communication skills
- Mbuya and Kawempe HBCA will be integrated into the Village Health System.
- Outreach in Mbuya, May 2013
- Peer exchanges between Alliances
- Project: Using the Transparency and Accountability Initiative to monitor and evaluate the health budget in Kiboga district

# PICTORIAL



*The house they lived in before*



*New home constructed by UCOBAC*



*Elderly beneficiary expressing her gratitude to UCOBAC staff for her new home constructed.*



*Program officer introducing Community Development Advocates*



*Bufasi Primary School under construction CFTC UCOBAC CDP 2013*



*School desks delivered at Bukhokhe Primary School*



*Team of UCOBAC Home Based Caregivers - Mbuya*



*Home Based Caregivers - Rubaga Division*

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