

UCOBAC



Bi-annual newsletter - *The MouthPiece*

January - June 2015 Issue

Highlights of the season

- Children's Annual Award Ceremony
- Mbuya Innovative Practices
- Transparency & Accountability Urban Ex
- Civil Society Leaders' Immersion
- Resilience Campaign
- Beneficiary of the season



Editorial

Warm greetings from UCOBAC. Its with pleasure that we present the latest issue of the MouthPiece; UCOBAC's bi-annual newsletter informing you about the organization's activities along with its partners.

Special recognition to all our comrades in the struggle of uplifting the welfare of women and children all over the world and Uganda in particular.

In this issue, read about Bagonza a 47 year old single mother who has been able to start up a small business and build a home for her family using funds from UCOBAC Revolving Credit Fund; find out why young Nafula Harriet (15 years) enjoys going to Bubuzi Primary School and her dream for the future.

Watch the video of the grassroots women of Mbuya Home Based Care Alliance showcasing their innovative practices for eradicating poverty among themselves and their community and learn about how grassroots women have gained government support in their Community Disaster Resilience campaign.

Read about all the above and much more...

We thank you for being part of UCOBAC's work,

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UCOBAC Executive Director - a gold medalist on Heroes Day.

The Executive Director of UCOBAC, Mrs Solome Mukisa received a golden jubilee medal from His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni on 9th June 2015 - Heroes Day at Katwe Primary School in Dwaniro sub-county, Kiboga district.

This was in recognition of her contribution towards the socio-political development of Uganda. Over 300 Ugandans who have strongly served to build the country's history were commended and awarded medals. The day's theme was, "Building blocks for a better Uganda".

Transparency and Accountability Initiative Urban Exchange



Grassroots leaders participating in the T and AI urban exchange

April 2015: Grassroots leaders implementing Transparency and Accountability Initiative (T and AI) came together in Nairobi - Kenya to collectively exchange ideas, experiences and lessons learnt relating to governance and anti-corruption activities. The 2 - day exchange at Grace House was attended by partners from GROOTS Kenya, the Huairou Commission (HC) and Best Practices Foundation (BPF).

Besides providing a platform for dialogue and information exchange on the monitoring tools and strategies employed by the implementing organizations, the exchange was organized for purposes of linking local accountability strategies to broader trends and best practices on governance.

A number of group discussions and exercises carried out by participants facilitated by HC and BPF through presentations and use of participatory tools led to the development of a general action plan for documenting best practices and lessons of women in the governance campaign. Among the key issues emphasized in the exchange was the need for the individual organizations to review their respective partnerships in T and AI and the significance of these relationships in advancing the T and AI objectives.

Although grassroots women have made remarkable progress in addressing challenges rising from corruption, a lot of collective efforts are still required to create an even greater impact. Leading issues that emerged include; the need for continued sensitization of citizens on their rights to public services and the procedures for accessing them, mobilization of citizens to join the struggle against the deep rooted vice of corruption amidst fear of backlash, building of meaningful partnerships with government and the private sector and need to push for good governance practices.

The Transparency and Accountability Initiative is an action research being conducted in 7 (Uganda, Brazil, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Kenya, Philippines and Nepal) countries worldwide with the purpose of collecting and demonstrating grassroots women's non-confrontational strategies and practices for addressing corruption while aiming at improving service delivery in their communities and countries at large.

Children's Annual Award Ceremony

558 sponsored children from the eight government aided primary schools supported by Canadian Feed the Children through UCOBAC participated in an annual award ceremony in Bugiri district.

The children came together for the first time in a central place to interact and make friends. Accompanied by their parents/guardians and teachers, they were engaged in games, plays and quizzes. 196 best performers in the exercises received awards.

This motivational activity was used as an opportunity for encouraging children to stay in school and complete the primary cycle as well as work hard in school for good grades and prepare for bright futures. Children were also encouraged to continue serving as child ambassadors. The occasion was attended by local leaders from village to district level who appreciated UCOBAC efforts in promoting education in the district.



Children cutting a cake at the Award Ceremony



Pupils of Nakabaale and Buluwe Primary Schools competing

Preparatory Committee II

Delegated by Huairou Commission, UCOBAC participated in the second session of the Preparatory Committee (Prep Com II) for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development which took place in Nairobi, Kenya from 14th -16th April, 2015.

Over 700 participants representing governments, organizations and private sector from over 180 countries attended to contribute towards the development of the New Urban Agenda that will drive Habitat III (HIII) for next 20 years starting October 2016.

Several side events were organized by Huairou Commission to showcase grassroots women's contribution towards urban development and the great potential women possess for advancing the New Urban Agenda. Among these was the Women's Daily Caucus for strategizing on how women can continue to effectively participate and contribute towards Prep Com II and HIII.

Ambassadors of Community Disaster Resilience earn Government support



A leaders dialogue in Bugiri district



A group discussion during one of the CDR trainings



Trained CDR ambassadors planning for an activity - Kiboga



Community garbage collection trunk provided by KCCA to promote CDR activities in Nakawa

In support and recognition of grassroots women's contribution to the development of their communities through active engagement in disaster resilience activities, the Local Governments of Bugiri and Kiboga districts allocated land for resilience activities to women groups.

Women organized in Iwemba and Buluguyi (Bugiri district), Dwaniro and Bukomero (Kiboga district) received land for planting of oranges, cassava and trees. This comes at a point in time when several communities are bearing the brunt of climate changes manifested in form of drought, famine, floods, increased spread of crop and livestock pests and diseases, deteriorating hygiene and sanitation among others.

UCOBAC in partnership with Huairou Commission in 2014 trained 40 grassroots women from the districts; Kampala, Bugiri, Kiboga and Wakiso trained on Community Disaster Resilience (CDR) and sent them out to be ambassadors in their respective villages promoting environment conservation through sharing knowledge gained for the training as well as implementing CDR.

Some of the activities in which the women are involved include; planting of drought resistant fruit trees and crops to promote food security, community sensitization on proper waste management and general sanitation and hygiene practices and communal clean ups.

Government agencies such as Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) have complimented the women's resilience activities establishing garbage collection points in Nakawa and availing a truck for routine garbage collection in the communities.

More updates on CDR in the next MouthPiece

Beneficiary of the season

Annet Bagonza (47 years), a single mother of 7 from Bucunga village in Buhaniika sub-county, Hoima district in mid-western Uganda thought that owning a safe and permanent home as well as a personal business was a farfetched dream which was only meant for the rich and blessed.

As a member of Tukolehamu Women Solidarity Group supported by UCOBAC Revolving Credit Fund, Annet and her colleagues have seen their lives changing since 2005 when their group started accessing small affordable loans and receiving business training.

Using the small loans, Annet was able to invest in crop and animal farming. She specifically focused on maize and beans growing as well as pig rearing as she felt that these would be more profitable than any other kind of investment. While the proceeds from her efforts sustained her family, the surplus was sold to earn an income for building a proper shelter, support her children through school as well as expand her business. Annet is enjoying the fruits of her efforts and aiming higher.

"I used to stay in a house given to me by my cousin brother but thank God and UCOBAC, am now a proud owner of a home and a piggery - I never dreamt that this could be my life one day".

Through the project, Strengthening Community Based Resource Mobilization, UCOBAC aims to uplift vulnerable women, children and orphans' standards of living in rural areas of Midwestern Uganda by enabling families to generate income and savings.

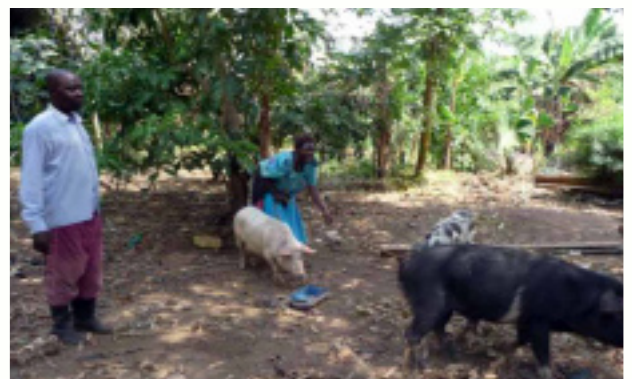
It is implemented through conducting of a Revolving Credit Fund and saving schemes amongst organized women groups and training of the groups on socio-economic issues together with business and credit planning and management.



Bagonza showing her former home



Bagonza outside her new home



UCOBAC credit officer (left) inspecting one of Annet's piggery units

Civil Society Leaders Immersion

Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) under the umbrella of Uganda National NGO Forum in January, 2015 were engaged in a two day Civil Society Organizations (CSO) Leaders' Immersion that was organized by UNNGOF in conjunction with Kikandwa Environmental Association (KEA) in Mityana district.

Organized with an objective of deepening CSO leaders' insights and experiences in rural community people's lives and experiences, the Immersion was also used as a learning and sharing platform about Community Driven Development (CDD) - a government model that stimulates grassroots' efforts in development processes.

Leaders were involved in practical learning activities including; residing in Kikandwa countryside for the duration of the Immersion, field visits to Kikandwa village homesteads to interact with community people with an aim of understanding their lived realities and development challenges, appreciation of nature through forest and hill treks and visiting of KEA's projects and innovations.

Through this experiential learning, CSO leaders appreciated the experiences and challenges that local NGO/Community Based Organizations like KEA encounter while working with peri-urban communities like Kikandwa, the significance of self help community driven initiatives as well as the need for facilitating development at village level.

Besides brainstorming on the experiences and lessons on the exposure visit to create a collective way forward for community development, leaders gained relevant practical knowledge for shaping responsive livelihood/poverty interventions in their respective areas of organization operations.

KEA) is a developmental Community Based Organization situated in Kikandwa sub-county, Mityana district. It works to address rural development issues and natural resource management through promoting agriculture to ensure food security, income generation and natural resource preservation. Members of KEA and the communities surrounding benefit from having the organization in their midst as it looks out for their welfare through different strategies such as; setting up a community school, a plant nursery supermarket (where various improved and indigenous seed varieties are grown and availed), forest reserve, demonstration banana plantation garden among others.

Pics of products made by members of KEA



"What I like best about going to school is that ... we don't stay hungry ..."



Harriet after getting porridge at school



Harriet threshing beans at home



Harriet with her favourite teacher at school

My name is Nafula Harriet. I am 15 years old. I study at Bubuzi Primary School in Primary four. I want to be a teacher when I grow up because I want to teach children in our community to help us in different ways. I also want to be a teacher because teachers are educated people who are given a lot of respect.

English is my favorite subject. Miss Taaka Florence, our headmistress as well as English teacher is my favorite teacher at school. I like her because she does not beat us and she tells us amusing stories in class.

I like going to school because we do not stay hungry and we are given enough time to play. But I do not like it when I lose my pens and pencils - when they are stolen.

If I were not going to school, my future would not be good because I would be home fetching water, digging and doing household chores like washing dishes daily. On and on....the conversation continued....

The above information was gathered through an interview with a child sponsored by UCOBAC/ CFTC through the Community Development Program - the child sponsorship scheme. One of the program's objectives is to promote education by creating a conducive learning environment for children both at school and in their homes. This is achieved through provision of scholastic materials such as uniforms, bags, desks, books, etc and supporting a school feeding program among other activities to promote children's nutrition and retention in school.

According to Food and Agriculture Organization, the vast majority of hungry people (791 people) live in developing countries where 13.5 percent of the population is malnourished. Research by the World Food Programme reveals that daily meals provided at school keep children in school, create markets for poor food farmers as well as motivating parents to enroll their children in school.

Legal Aid Programme (LEAPII) partners meeting

February 2015: Partners under the umbrella of Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) and the Independent Development Fund (IDF) came together at Golf Course Hotel in Kampala for a one-day meeting to discuss Mid-Term Review (MTR) findings of LEAP I in preparation of LEAP II. Besides being a platform provided for partnerships and collaborations in response to MTR, the meeting provided an opportunity for facilitating discussions and resolutions from Legal Aid Services Providers Network (LASPNET) about documenting outcomes in Access to Justice.

Key speakers noted that although the number of legal service providers attending to the multitude of legal issues has grown in Uganda, the issue of quality of service still needs to be strengthened and this would be one of LEAP II's focus areas. Other issues emerging included; need for partners to design programmes that are responsive to needs of beneficiaries of legal services by checking for instance checking the level of satisfaction of case management processes; significance of documenting stories of change by following up on impact of services provided; performance monitoring; set standards for services provided by legal aid service providers as well as utilization of the Justice Law and Order Sector structures exclusively.

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Mbuya Innovative Practices

Grassroots women of Mbuya Home Based Care Alliance (MHBCA) successfully showcased the innovative ways in which they have managed to mitigate the challenges of living in an urban slum faced with urban poverty and HIV/AIDS.

The women who are engaged in small scale economic activities such as mushroom growing, crafts making, poultry keeping and making of liquid soap to support their families and contribute to development in their community; shared with the world about their experiences using a video.

Watch Mbuya HBCA in Action on: <http://www.universitasforum.org/index.php/ojs/article/view/164/579>



Women engaged in crafts making



A poultry project



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