



UGANDA COMMUNITY BASED ASSOCIATION FOR WOMEN AND CHILDREN WELFARE

The MouthPiece

UCOBAC's Bi-annual Newsletter

Editorial

It's a great pleasure to welcome you to this edition of the *MouthPiece*, UCOBAC's bi-annual newsletter where we update you about organization activities in the last 6 months. As we come to the close of the year, UCOBAC would like to appreciate all its partners and stakeholders at global, national and local level for their support and participation in the organization activities.

Get updated about

- UCOBAC's participation in Habitat III planning;
- Day of the African Child celebrations;
- The Women's Manifesto 2016-1021
- UCOBAC's expansion to new communities in Mubende and Mityana districts
- The continued struggle for women's land rights
- New partnership with Transparency International

And so much more...

More details to be shared in the upcoming organization Annual Report 2015.

Enjoy

Gertrude Nalubinga.M
Advocacy, Networking & Communications
UCOBAC



UCOBAC receives Certificate of Excellence – Bugiri

In a district management meeting held at Bugiri headquarters in July this year, UCOBAC was recognized for its remarkable and dedicated service delivery to the people of Bugiri district.

This came about as a result of the various activities implemented through UCOBAC projects (Community Disaster Resilience and Child Development Project) aimed at enhancing the welfare of communities at large.

UCOBAC Director of Programs nominated as policy expert in the Habitat III planning process



Frances Birungi- UCOBAC Director of Programs was nominated as an expert to join the Policy Unit 8 on Urban Ecology and Resilience contributing towards the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III). The Conference will be held in Quito, Ecuador, in October 2016.

Policy units bring together high level expertise to explore state of the art research and analysis, identify good practices and lessons learnt and develop independent policy recommendations on key issues related to sustainable urbanization

Following procedures established by the Bureau of Preparatory Committee for Habitat III and given the quality of her professional experience and policy engagement, Frances was selected to be part of the policy unit 8.

Frances joins a group of policy experts that will work with Huairou Commission to Engender the new Urban agenda by pushing for women and grassroots' issues to be incorporated in the new urban agenda of Habitat III.

---Congratulations Frances, Congratulations UCOBAC.

UCOBAC hosts Canadian Feed the Children Partners Forum

Canadian Feed the Children (CFTC) is supporting three partner organizations in Uganda to implement programs that break the cycle of poverty and consequently improve the lives of children in their communities. The partner organizations include; UCOBAC in Bugiri district, Huys Link Community Initiative (HUYSLINCI) in Entebbe and Child Rights Empowerment and Development Organization (CEDO) in Masindi district.

The overall objective of the partners meeting is to promote peer learning through sharing best practices and experiences in order to strengthen organizational programming and practice besides fostering active working linkages among the partners.

The one day partners meeting held in August was attended by 9 participants from the three CFTC partner organizations. Participants shared their 2015 project activities, registered achievements, emerging challenges and possible solutions were discussed. Lessons learnt were shared to facilitate specific organizational 2016 project plans.



UCOBAC Program Officer - Bugiri (standing) contributing to a session in the meeting

Effective girl child programming: - The Safe Space Model

August 2015 - UCOBAC along with several other Non-Government Organizations participated in an intense and practical four days training workshop on programming for vulnerable adolescent girls. The training facilitated by Population Council was held at Hotel Triangle in Kampala.

Participants were equipped with knowledge on using data to identify context-relevant adolescent girls, the asset building approach and critical program design elements, working with families, leadership development, and rooting programs in communities, monitoring and evaluation, and fundraising.

Besides providing a networking opportunity for the participating organizations; participants were introduced to the Safe Space Model which entails creating safe meeting points (safe spaces) within the community for adolescent girls ages between 9-19 years. Through these safe spaces, and with guidance of an adult mentor, girls are empowered with knowledge and skills on sexual and reproductive health, financial literacy and economic empowerment through savings. The girls are trained and advised on how to utilize this information for their benefit to secure a better future and positively participate in their nation's development.

Presented with this wealth of information, organizations were advised to tailor the training content to suit the specific communities in which they operate to protect and meet adolescent girls' needs as well as assist the girls to overcome factors contributing to their vulnerability.

Organizations were tasked to mainstream girl child programming in their existing organizational programmes to be more effective in empowering girls.

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Child Sponsorship Program - Strengthenin Child Administration.

In working to strengthen its capacity in undertaking effective, accurate and timely child updates in its Child Development Project (CDP) in Bugiri district, UCOBAC sought the support of its partner Huys Link Community Initiative (HUYSLINC) to train project staff on key aspects of child administration including child registration, capturing child photos, data entry and management into the SCID among others.

Through support from Canadian Feed The Children (CFTC), UCOBAC supports 558 children/child ambassadors, their schools, families and communities at large through providing a conducive learning environment in 8 government aided primary schools, by providing scholastic materials, construction of classroom blocks, provision of furniture, school feeding program and improvement of livelihoods and food security in their households in a bid to promote children's rights and fight poverty.

The organization undertakes a periodic updating process in which information about the sponsored children is collected and updated in the database for effective project planning and programming



UCOBAC staff in photo shooting learning session



UCOBAC celebrates the Day of the African Child

In commemoration of the Day of the African Child on June 16th, UCOBAC along with Bugiri district administration and several child actors convened in Buwunga sub-county, Bugiri district in recognition of the day. The celebrations organized under the theme, "*Ending early child marriage, a collective responsibility*" were used as a forum by participating child actors to share their experiences in mitigating children's vulnerability and upholding their rights and welfare.

Among the key messages highlighted was the need for communities to recognize and realize that early marriage is a vice that is affecting their development and if not curbed the future generation would be destroyed and therefore all present were called upon to join hands to support strategies that can end early marriages.

30 children from across the 8 government aided schools supported by UCOBAC through the Child Development Project in Bugiri district participated in the event and they performed a traditional dance, folk songs, recited a poem; all portraying the rights of a child – an African child.

Prioritize Women– The Women's Manifesto 2016-2021

Civil society organizations, representatives of government and the private sector led by Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) together with the Women Democracy Group (WDG) launched the Women's Manifesto 2016-2021 at Makerere University Freedom Square on July 9th, 2015.

The Women's Manifesto is a political tool which was developed through a consultative and participatory process led by WDG in 50 districts from different regions of Uganda. Consultations were conducted among women councilors, representatives, civil society organizations, political party officials as well as development partners. To promote and ensure gender equality and women's empowerment, activists for women welfare request through the Manifesto for the following issues to be prioritized; a) women's health b) land and property rights c) women and education d) economic empowerment; and e) women's participation in politics and decision-making.

Launched by Oyam County South Member of Parliament, Betty Amongi, the Women's Manifesto comes at a time when Uganda is moving towards general election period. Besides sensitizing the leaders and the general public about women and girls' needs – it's aimed at helping citizens to vote for leaders who are accountable and responsive to their needs.

The tool clearly highlights issues that are pertinent to women and informs incumbent and aspiring leaders what needs to be prioritized and addressed. Some of the demands being made are; 5% allocation of the total health budget to maternal health services at all health center IIIs and IVs in Uganda, designing specific policies and programme measures to protect widows from property and land grabbing, promoting women participation in political leadership at all levels to at least 50% representation among others.



UCOBAC Executive Director at the event

UCOBAC hosts the African Regional Resilience Planning Meeting

November 2015 – Following the Global Braintrust III Meeting held in September 2014 to take stock of the state of the campaign, reviewing and establishing priorities around the Community Resilience Fund (CRF) and the Community Practitioners Platform (CPP), UCOBAC hosted a 3 - days African Regional Resilience Planning Meeting in Uganda at Kireka Sports View Hotel.

The meeting coordinated by UCOBAC along with Kawempe Home Based Care Alliance (KHBCA) and Slum Women Initiative for Development (SWID) supported by Huairou Commission included grassroots women leaders from 6 African countries including Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Ghana and Zimbabwe. Participants shared and discussed best practices of resilience building according to their organizations and country context as well as evaluating their performance and impact against the set CRF operational guidelines (*CRF operational guidelines available online*).

The Africa Regional Resilience Planning Meeting served as a Regional Braintrust Meeting, engaging groups that have implemented the CRF and CPP at the local level, and to some degree engaged with advocacy at regional and global policy spaces around climate resilience and Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). Besides working to create a joint vision of a resilience platform, the meeting was used as an avenue for discussing and finding ways of integrating monitoring and evaluation into all phases of implementing CRF activities and proper documenting of impact and lessons learnt.

** The CRF is a field-tested mechanism for channeling resources to organized groups of women in poor, hazard-prone settlements. It enables women to mobilize collaborative resilience practices that reduce community vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change.*

The CPP for Resilience is an organizing and networking mechanism connecting grassroots community based groups working to reduce their vulnerability to disaster and climate risks in rural and urban areas.



A session on Monitoring and Evaluation



UCOBAC participants discussing organizational CRF plan



The gallery walk to showcase organization resilience practices

Women's Land Rights: The power of information and knowledge on rights



Nakuya Aidah, a 40 year old single mother of three has been in a land wrangle with one Ssendendo Godfrey, a fellow community member since 2006. Aidah bought 10 acres of land from one land lord, Kiwanuka Ben in Kabangere village, Madudu sub-county in Mubende district in 2004. She received a land title from the land owner for this transaction.

Two years down the road when she had started cultivating the land and building a house, 70 year old Ssendendo approached her and told her that she had no right to

till the land in question because it belonged to him and she had never sought his consent to carry out anything on it. This greatly puzzled Aidah for she possessed a land title for her land and also informed Ssendendo as much. Ssendendo would not listen to any of this and asked her to stop all activities and vacate his property as soon as possible before the situation could worsen for her.

Shocked, Aidah requested Ssendendo to show his proof of ownership but he only told her that he was a man and thus did not have to prove anything to her a mere woman. This got the war raging!!!

"After that encounter, I immediately went to the Local Council I (LCI) chairperson for help and advice but he was of little help instead he sent me to Local Council II (LCII)", explained Aidah.

At LCII, Aidah and Ssendendo were asked to prove ownership of the land; while she confidently showed off her land title, he had nothing to show except to say that Aidah was flashing a fake land title and he would bring the actual copy. The Chairperson settled the dispute concluding that Aidah is the true land owner and went ahead to grant her authority to carry on with her activities without any interference from Ssendendo.

After months had passed by, Ssendendo and his son mobilized community members to attack Aidah. They asked her why she had grabbed an old man's land and how she had the nerve to challenge a man over land. Many said that she could not afford to be a land owner given the fact that she is a woman. This went on and on for almost a year with Aidah keeping a low profile ignoring the inconveniencing members and insults.

Ssendendo visited the Local Council III office and reported Aidah for trespassing on his property. At this, Aidah who had attended several community sensitization meetings on Women's Land and Property Rights organized by UCOBAC paralegals sought the services of a trained community paralegal, Nalwoga Prossy, who checked Aidah's ownership documents (land title, receipts and land sale agreement) to ascertain her possession of all the legal documents that prove ownership before moving to the next step.

Nalwoga endeavored to organize mediation meetings between Aidah and Ssengendo to settle matters minus higher authorities being involved but these failed as Ssengendo would not turn up neither could he be contacted for counseling. Unfortunately during this period, Ssengendo passed on after a short time illness. The war ceased for a long time then.

Years gone, one of late Ssengendo's sons, one Senoga Henry resurrected the case by reporting Aidah at the local police station claiming that she had stolen their late father's property which he left to them as orphans and that she was a trespasser who had gone as far as clearing their banana plantation gardens off the land to settle on it. Aidah only got to know of this when she was issued a police order to visit the station for questioning.

Similar conversations and meetings as held in the past were repeated with requests of proof of ownership of the land and this time round inviting the original land owner who had sold the land to Aidah to be present to confirm the transfer transaction and land boundaries. In one of the negotiations, The LC III advised the disputed parties to visit the Uganda Land Office in Entebbe where all land titles are kept to verify the title. Senoga (son of deceased) refused to pool funds with Aidah for this exercise saying she should pay for all costs of verification since she was the culprit depriving orphans of their land. He (Senoga) also claimed that the district land office was involved in fraud of issuing a fake land title. With no proof of ownership over the land, no evidence for the claims being made; the LC III court made a decision in which Senoga was asked to sign an agreement never to interfere or attack Aidah's family or dare to take her property for she is the lawful owner. This was signed by Senoga, Aidah, the leaders present, UCOBAC paralegal and family members from both sides.

Today, Aidah is a proud trader and farmer of maize, beans, tobacco, ground nuts, irish potatoes, cas-sava and bananas on her own land. She also keeps livestock including cows, goats, hens and pigs.

With a smile, Aidah said, "It was really a tough battle but I was very firm and confident through this struggle because I have been attending community meetings on women's land rights by UCOBAC so I knew what to do. I encourage other women not sit back and keep quiet as they [men] step all over them - let them seek the justice."





Allan being guided by a teacher in class



Allan (in front - left side) in class



Allan taking porridge at school

"I will not ashame my sponsors, teachers and parents."

Allan Mwondha is a Canadian Feed the Children (CFTC) sponsored child at Nakabale Primary School in Bugiri district. Allan is thirteen years old. He is in Primary Six. His class teacher says he is a very active pupil in class and his academic performance is fair. He attends school regularly.

When the Programme Officer interacted with Allan Mwondha he had this to say about CFTC and UCOBAC

"I was selected to be sponsored by CFTC in 2008. I have got so many things from CFTC like a dozen of books every term, pens, pencils, desks, uniform; [UCOBAC constructed a classroom block with four rooms, an office, a store and a modern kitchen Nakabale P.S]. My parents get seeds for vegetable gardens. My father is a member of the UCOBAC Village Savings and Loan Association (VLSA) that is supported by CFTC. I am given a cup of porridge every day at school.

Before I joined the project, I had so many challenges. I had a problem of getting books. My father would buy me only six books and they would get filled up before the school term ends. Ever since I joined the sponsorship programme, I am given a dozen of books each term plus pens and pencils, these books last through the term.

We used not to have porridge at school but UCOBAC began to give us porridge flour and sugar at my school and I stopped running back home at lunch time. I would go back for lunch and would find my mother still preparing lunch. She would ask me to do some household chores at lunch time like washing dishes and fetching water. Sometimes, I would be late at school. Now I have porridge at school and I have time to play at school and attend my classes in time".

Allan was asked what he wants to be in future and he said...

"I want to be a teacher when I grow up because teachers get a lot of money and they are smarter than other people in the community. My favorite teacher is Mr. Mwaka Muhammed. He is my role model. He teaches us so well and encourages us to be disciplined pupils. Mr. Mwaka is a very interesting teacher he usually sings us short interesting songs. He also tells us interesting stories."

Allan was also asked what his life would be like if he was not at school and he said.....

"If I wasn't at school. I would be wasted. I would be having bad friends. I would go hunting, fighting and I would be playing gambling games to get money. Perhaps I would be a thief. I want to thank Canadian Feed The Children and UCOBAC for loving me. I will work very hard to become a teacher. I will not ashame my sponsors, teachers and parents.

Compiled by
Susan Gamwino
Program Officer

UCOBAC expands operations to new communities



Trained CHRWs pose for a group photo

-UCOBAC has since 2008 implemented a women's Land and Property rights project in Mubende and Mityana districts aimed at empowering women through realizing their land and property rights. The project aims at strengthening community support structures to promote women's land rights, increase awareness and knowledge on women's land rights and increased women's access to land justice

UCOBAC has in 2014/15 expanded its operation to 3 new sub counties namely; Malangala subcounty in Mityana district as well as Myanzi and Manyogaseka sub-counties in Mubende district; in addition to the already supported six sub counties, and has trained new 90 community human rights workers (CHRWs) in addition to the existing 90 CHRWs. In addition to this, a total of 150 new community watchdogs have been mobilized and trained. These are provided with knowledge and skills that enable them to carry out a number of activities in their communities to promote and protect women's land rights.

New partnership – UCOBAC joins hands with Transparency International Uganda for women land rights

Due to UCOBAC's vast experience and capacity in promotion and protection of Women's Land Rights to enable women attain land justice, UCOBAC was selected as one of the civil society organizations to partner with Transparency International Uganda (TIU), under its new project "Women, Land and Corruption", being supported by Transparency International.

The project is geared towards improving livelihoods of men and women adversely affected by corrupt practices in land administration and in land deals in Africa. The project main objectives are; a) to increase understanding on issues of women, land and corruption b) Leverage discussion and recognition of corruption issues affecting women's access, control and ownership of land at national, regional and international levels, and c) enhance the capacity to design, and implement projects to respond to women's concerns on corruption on land administration and land deals.

As a key partner in the planning and implementation of this project, UCOBAC participated in the Breakfast workshop to validate the women, Land and corruption report on the 13th July 2015. UCOBAC also participated in TIU's partners' meeting to strategize on how to roll out the project where a decision was reached to generate a position paper based on the report findings in relation to women, land and corruption, which will build momentum in influencing policy and practice in the promotion of women's land rights.

UCOBAC was also invited by TI's Women, Land and corruption in Africa to share its work on promoting women's Land rights with the Transparency International Africa chapters.

More activities implemented by UCOBAC in this period to be elaborated upon in the upcoming Annual Report 2015

1. Child Development Project

- Training in modern farming
- Local to local dialogue
- The Village Savings and Loans Scheme

2. Women's Land and Property Rights (WLPR)

- WLPRs endline survey in Kiboga (IDF)
- Local to local dialogue
- Community dialogues
- Training of local leaders on WLPR
- Radio programs
- Community theatre

3. Participation in meetings

- IDF Annual Partners' meeting
- National Forum on the State of the African Child - UN
- Investment in Child Health and Development in Uganda - UCRNN
- Global Resilience Braintrust IV - New York
- CSO dialogue on implementation of the National Land Policy - ULA
- 5th Annual Anti-Corruption Convention - CSOs

More information and stories to share



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