



TRANSPARENCY UGANDA

REPORT OF THE PILOT PROJECT ON

**Corruption, Human Rights
And Good Governance**

IN

South Western Uganda

OCTOBER 2003 – SEPTEMBER 2004

Funded by:

AUSTRIAN DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

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INTRODUCTION

The project on Corruption, Human Rights and Good Governance in Western Uganda is part of the deliberate efforts of Transparency Uganda – the national Chapter of Transparency International, to sensitize, empower and mobilize civil society and the local people at the grassroots in western Uganda to actively demand for transparency and accountability from the people in positions of leadership. This is in line with the overall objectives of TI Uganda as stated above in the background.

Funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation, the pilot project was implemented in Kisoro District in southwestern Uganda, an isolated area with poor accessibility bordered by the states of Rwanda in the south and DRC Congo to the west. The pilot project started in October 2003 and ended in September 2004. Extension of the project to the Districts of Ntungamo and Kabale is expected after a thorough evaluation and fine-tuning of the program based on the experience gained from the pilot project.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Transparency Uganda set out to undertake the following activities in the District:

1. Facilitate the Anti-corruption Week 2003 activities and launch the Human Rights, Good Governance and Anti-corruption Awareness Project in Kisoro District
2. Build the capacity of the Field office and the Secretariat in Kampala
3. Conduct sensitization workshops
4. Facilitate the Drama Performances
5. Hold Radio talk shows
6. Set up Information Notice Boards at Sub-county Community Centers for displaying information
7. Produce News letter
8. Facilitate formation of Voluntary Accountability Committees
9. Develop Service Users' Anti-corruption Manual
10. Conduct Investigative journalism refresher course for local journalists

11. Facilitate the formation of the Kisoro District Anticorruption Coalition (KDAC).

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

(a) **Launch of Anti-corruption Week 2003 and Project**

Objective

To create anti-corruption awareness among the people of Kisoro on the causes, manifestations and effects of corruption on the delivery of services and development in general and how as members of the general public, they could participate in the fight against corruption in their localities.

Target groups: -

- District and sub county councilors
- Local and International civil society organizations in the District
- District Tender Board committees
- School Management Committees
- The private business community
- Religious leaders
- Institutions of learning.
- CBOs

Out puts

- The project on Corruption, Human Rights and Good Governance was launched in the District between 27th October and 2nd November 2003 during which time the Anti-corruption week activities were carried out.
- During the period, consultative meetings, workshops and drama activities were conducted and elicited the appreciation and support of the district leadership.
- The locals were mobilized and briefed about the project objectives, activities, expected outputs and what their roles would be.

- The anti-corruption week activities were used to highlight what needed to be done with regard to the problem of corruption and its effects on the social economic development of the District and to mobilize the public to work towards fighting corruption through various engagements. This developed into building more confidence among the people to open up.
- Existing anti-corruption initiatives in the district were identified and mapped.
- Forum for exchange of information on corruption created.

Lessons learnt and Challenges

- At the beginning there was some resistance to the project by the District Leadership who viewed it as an un-necessary intrusion in the affairs of the District by self-imposing outsiders. This posed difficulties in identifying and mapping the already existing anti-corruption efforts in the district and the mobilization of the various actors. However, through identified local interventions this slowly faded as resistance was expected considering the sensitive nature of the corruption issues.

Ways to overcome the challenges

- A stakeholders workshop and district dialogues are key to creating and enabling project conceptualizations.
- Getting the District leadership to accept the project should carefully be planned and executed through protracted approaches well in advance of the start of the project by a high-level advance party.
- There is need to identify some allies with whom or through whom to approach the District leadership to secure an easy acceptance of the project.
- Mobilization of the people for participation in the project should in future be extensively planned and enough resources considered for this purpose.

(b) Sensitization Workshops

Objectives

- Sensitize participants on the causes and effects of corruption in the district
- Identify the various forms of corruption in the district and discuss ways of dealing with it.
- Produce and disseminate extracts of laws relevant to the anti corruption crusade in Uganda.
- Highlight essence of the Leadership code and the related offences and penalties as means of promoting its enforcement by the locals.
- Identify and facilitate the formation of Voluntary Accountability Committees (VACS to monitor and report on incidences of corruption and abuse of office in the District

Outputs

At least 500 District leaders together with civil servants and civil society activists were sensitized. A total of six (6) Workshops were conducted as follows:

- A workshop to sensitize local NGOs, Voluntary Associations and Youths Clubs in Kisoro on 23rd and 24th April 2004
- A workshop for Head teachers and School Management Committees of UPE schools, 19th and 20th March 2004
- A workshop for civil servants held on 23rd June 2004.
- A workshop held for discussing the roles and code of conduct of the Voluntary Accountability Committees.
- A workshop held for equipping and commissioning the Anti-Corruption Coalition with necessary tools for fighting corruption held on 28 August 2004.
- Forms of corruption in the districts identified and their effects discussed
- Population sensitized about the Leadership Code and PAF implementation strategies
- Extracts of laws relevant to Corruption collected, packaged and disseminated.

Lessons learnt/Challenges

- Due to human resource capacity at the Secretariat, there were undue delays in field activities. Balancing this with Kampala activities was limiting.
- Limited mobility capacity made accessibility of the remote areas of the district expensive hence increase in transport overheads.
- Attendance of workshops by some participants was inconsistent because they were in easy reach of their homes and were dividing their time between attending the workshops and sorting out family obligations.

Recommendations

- There is need to recruit a Field office for better coordination of the project activities and results.
- Address the organization's mobility needs so as to address the transport constraints to the project areas.

(c) Information Notice Boards

Objective

To provide a mechanism for relaying information to the local people at the Sub-county level regarding the funds released by the District and other relevant information to each sub-county so that the local people are able to know and follow up on what these funds are meant for.

Outputs

- Provision of Information Notice Boards in all the 14 sub-county community centers in Kisoro District was successfully undertaken during the project period.
- The general public is making effective use of the information provided to know about what is going on and to use this knowledge for monitoring and reporting/feedback purposes
- Increased visibility of TI Uganda in general.

- The Notice Boards are already proving to be a powerful tool in the projects monitoring processes as they enable the locals to be informed of the developments taking place in their areas and by whom.

Lessons learnt/Challenges

- The Notice boards need to be guarded against abuse by wrong people who may not be happy about the kind of information being displayed on them as it interferes with their corrupt agendas. These people instruct some local people to pluck off the notices displayed.

Recommendation

- Increase on modalities that could limit abuse of Notice Boards by the wrong doers.

(e) Newsletter

Objective

- To provide updates on the project work plan and activities of Transparency Uganda and an overview of the overall activities of the Transparency International movement on corruption.

Output

- Three issues of the newsletter of Transparency Uganda “Transparency” were produced on a quarterly basis during the project period. One issue was pending by the close of 2004.

Challenges

- Dues to human resource constraints the organization did not have a full time staff in-charge of the Newsletter production. It had to rely on the services of volunteers

to collect information, analyze, edit and produce the drafts. This caused delays and in a way compromised the quality of the Newsletter.

- The poor culture of reading and writing is limiting the effective use of the newsletter because of the high illiteracy levels in the project areas.

Recommendations

- Recruitment of personnel with the required skills for handling the Newsletter should be expedited.
- Alternatively the available staff could be facilitated to acquire the skills by undergoing short courses in Newsletter production.

(f) Formation of Voluntary Accountability Committees (VACs)

Objectives

The Voluntary Accountability Committees are aimed at playing the following roles:

Mobilize the local people to participate in anti-corruption activities

Coordinate and replenish information on the notice boards

Serve as a link between the District administration and local people

- Listen to the local people's complaints and advise accordingly

Outputs

- VACs were formed and equipped with the core values and principles and what is expected them.

Challenges

- The committees comprise representatives from various parishes. Commuting to the sub-counties for meetings is a problem due to lack of convenient transport facilities.
- Some members of the Voluntary Accountability Committees became over zealous soon after the sensitization seminars and produced unsubstantiated reports of

corruption against some of the District Leaders. This did not augur well for the young project.

- Some of the members of these Committees were soon found wanting in their track records which impacted negatively on their work.
- Some local activist groups are wanting in their conduct and track records in their agendas to fight corruption. They are abusing their roles and causing bad blood between the District leadership and the civil society.

Recommendations

- Some volunteer's allowance should be given to the voluntary actors for the purposes of motivation.
- Bicycles should be provided to ease the movements of these volunteers.
- Transparency Uganda has to be conscious of its public image and should thoroughly scrutinize the activist groups that do not have a good track record and avoid dealing with them.

(g) Radio Talk Shows

Objective

- To create awareness among the masses of Kisoro and mobilize them for action against corruption in their communities and how to demand accountability from the leadership
- To disseminate information and administrative announcements to the members of the general public

Output

- Seven (7) Radio talk shows were conducted on Kigezi FM between December 2003 and July 2004 and people were sensitized on issues of taxes, PAF utilization and their obligations in fighting corruption.
- General public inspired to make responses and participate in the debates during the talk shows by phoning in to contribute to the discussions and debates

- Talk shows appreciated as a strong medium of communication and mobilization where transport means and levels of literacy are low.

Challenges

- The talk shows exposed the corrupt people who, naturally, were not happy. They turned to threatening both the owners of the local Radio stations and those participating in the programs. Some people were labeled as saboteurs of Government programs or associated with rebel groups as an intimidation tactic.
- The costs for hosting talk shows are still very high and prohibit an otherwise very effective way of reaching out to the people with anti-corruption messages.

Recommendation

- Considering the difficulties in fighting corruption particularly for the individuals involved, a mechanism should be put in place to protect whistle blowers against intimidation and harassment through the law.
- More funds should be raised to ensure that there is continuity of these radio talk shows.

(h) User's Awareness Manual on Anti-corruption

Objective

- To provide a reference guide on the obligations of duty bearers as applies to public finance expenditure in general and in particular to PEAP/PAF funds, local government budgets and projects implemented at District levels as provided by law.

Output

- 1000 copies of the Users' Manual developed, printed and distributed to the people in the project areas, civil society organizations, government departments and other NGOs.

Challenges

- The 1000 copies produced are too few to go round all the targeted audience.
- The manuals were produced in only one language, English, thus limiting their relevance to only those who can read English.

Recommendations:

- There is need to produce more copies of the manual and to have it translated into at least four local languages to cater for the big population of those who can not read English.

(i) Investigative Journalism Course

Objectives

- To enhance the capacity of journalists in investigative reporting
- To improve writing and analytical skills
- To enhance the ability of the media to conduct independent research using information technology.
- To deepen understanding of media oversight functions in Uganda's democratization process.
- To nurture a culture of investigative reporting.

Outputs

- A Training workshop on investigative journalism was conducted targeting the local reporters of the key print media institutions namely *The Monitor*, *Orumuri* and *The New Vision* newspapers who file reports on what happens in the sub-districts of Kisoro and to this effect journalists and interested people were trained.
- Oversight functions of the media enhanced and appreciated
- Ground set for provision of accurate and reliable information to the general public and lawmakers
- Emergency of a strong cadre of investigative journalists set in motion

Challenges

- Limited funds hindered the training of a larger number of the investigative journalists.
- Five days were insufficient to cover the syllabus in detail for better effect.
- Limited follow-up activities.

Recommendation

- Given the crucial role of investigative journalism in the war on corruption there is need to increase the budget for training to enable bigger numbers of journalists to participate and also for the courses to cover more issues in sufficient time.

(j) Kisoro District Anti-corruption Coalition

Objective

To put in place a body to coordinate and harmonize the activities of the Voluntary Accountability Committees and other anti-corruption activists in the District. The Coalition is expected to perform the following roles:

- Mobilize citizens for great participation in anti-corruption activities/conduct
- Define the acceptable standards of services to be provided through consultative processes.
- Call for the display and dissemination of information about service providers
- Ensure two-way communication between the locals and their government representatives/leaders
- Maintain suggestion boxes at Community Centers for citizens to channel their complaints
- Listen to people's complaints and give free advice or refer to the relevant authorities.

Output

A Kisoro District Anti-corruption Coalition established and trained in issues of good governance, human rights and accountability.

To an extent the sustainability of the Anti-corruption activities in the district ensured.

Challenge

- Elected leaders showed a lot of zeal and commitment at the start but are not being facilitated by the Field office to do thorough job. There was no effective follow up and capacity building of the Committee. The Committee needed to be facilitated.

Recommendation

Facilitating local leaders and the district coalition office bearers should be considered as it is one of the ways of ensuring that they remain focused and committed to their obligations in the fight against corruption.

(k) Capacity Building

Objective

- To establish a well functioning national chapter of Transparency International.

Output:

- Office space furniture secured for 12 months (February 2004- February 2005) for the Field Office situated at the corner adjoining Matanda Road and Park Road in Kisoro Town.
- The Field office serves as the contact point for the Kisoro Anti-corruption Coalition, which is to steer the work of Transparency Uganda beyond the life span of the project.

- For the Kampala office, new offices premises were secured at Plot 5 Dewinton Road and a Laptop (computer) together with a portable printer purchased. Two executive desks and two executive chairs were also procured.

Constraints

- Limited funds hindered the recruitment of enough skilled personnel, which led to delays in many of the project activities.
- Financial constraints also hindered the purchase of the necessary equipment to facilitate the smooth running of the Secretariat.

Recommendation

- A strategic fundraising drive to ensure a well functioning national chapter with enough infrastructure and human resource should be developed.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation of the project was integrated in the project document. Externally the M&E is to be carried out by a team chosen by the Federal Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Austria. The team shall assess the implementation strategy of the project, the process, the outputs and the impact and make recommendations on the way forward. The exercise shall be conducted in January 2005. Internally, the Board and management through its quarterly meetings reviewed the progress reports of the project and discussed the way forward.

PROJECT IMPACT

After a series of activities in Kisoro District, a number of aspects have reflected the impact of the project on the people of Kisoro. The IGG report 2004 ranked Kisoro as the 2nd least corrupt in the country as compared to last year when it was? It also reported the resolve of the people in Kisoro to ensure that unsatisfactory/shoddy work by service

providers is revisited. The road network in Kisoro is regarded as being the best in the country and there are reports that health services have greatly improved this year. The Anti-corruption Coalition and the participation during the Anti-corruption week are key indicators of the project impact. Schools and local groups have composed songs and plays which have created continuity of the project. Most District leaders who were sensitized now relatively look at corruption as a riskier business that could cost them their reputation or jobs and are being more mindful. The problem of ghost pupils has been attended to and minimized. It would not be wrong to surmise that these developments are partly a result of the interventions of the Transparency Uganda project in the District.

CONCLUSION

The project program in spite of the initial resistance from the District leadership and the consequent delays was all executed according to the work plans save for the Public Service Assessment. The people of Kisoro District have been sensitized about the various forms of Corruption in the District, the effects on the economy and welfare of the ordinary people, what needs to be done towards checking it and the roles they can play. It now remains for the people in Kisoro to keep focused on ridding the District of corruption through the ways they have been shown. Transparency Uganda on its part will play the monitoring and mentoring role to ensure that the efforts of the locals in the fight against corruption remain on course so that the momentum is not lost.

There is need to consolidate the achievements in Kisoro. Premature withdraw could cause more conflict among the anti-corruption advocates and the well-placed corrupt personalities.