

EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES FOR PRO-ACTIVE ACTION AGAINST CORRUPTION KAKUUTO COUNTY-RAKAI DISTRICT

PROGRESS REPORT: APRIL-JUNE 2009

Introduction

Uganda is governed through a decentralized system of governance where political, administrative and financial powers were devolved to lower local governments. The decentralization framework was aimed at increasing citizen participation in decision making processes, fostering transparency and accountability, and improving local governance and democracy through bringing governments closer to the people.

Local communities need to become effective actors to foster transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs and resources at Local Government level. TI Uganda is to implement a project entitled: Corruption and Good Governance in Local Governments: Empowering Communities for Proactive Action against Corruption.

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda bestows upon the citizens a duty to fight the abuse of office and public resources (Article 17(i)) and confers power to the people to recall or demand for action to bring to book those who engage in fraudulent and scrupulous practices that affect the effective delivery of services to the target audiences. It is from this background that TI Uganda is implementing this project funded by New Partnership for Transparency Fund in Kakuuto County, Rakai district.

The Purpose

This project seeks to equip local communities with knowledge and skills to create vigilant communities to actively demand for transparency and accountability in the development processes at Local government level for better service delivery.

The objectives

1. To increase the number of people actively engaged in monitoring and reporting corruption cases in the priority sectors of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan.
2. To form and train Voluntary Accountability Committees in social mobilization

Target Area:

The project is being implemented in Kakuuto County, Rakai District in southern Uganda

Target Groups

The project targets local Non Governmental Organisations, religious leaders, civil and political leaders and councillors at county and sub-county levels; CBOs (local youth and women organizations), heads of schools and management committees, heads of health centres, men and women.

Project Administration and Management

The project is implemented by Transparency International Uganda (TI Uganda) through a partnership arrangement and is coordinated by a Project Officer through the entire project period.

Expected results

- Awareness promoted about corruption and its effects
- Civic responsiveness created among local communities to participate in the eradication of corruption.
- Communities become conscious about their rights, duties and obligations in the implementation of development programs.
- Communities in the target area have knowledge and skills to mobilize, monitor, detect and report corruption in Local Government Development Programmes (LGDP).
- Increased participation of local communities in planning and decision making in development programmes
- Increased responsiveness of community leaders in espousing values of transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs and resources

Progress of project implementation within the specified period;

- Coordinated the procurement of the drama groups to sensitise the grassroots communities with anti corruption messages through drama shows in all the Sub Counties of Kakuuto County. This stage mainly involved; identifying the drama groups, and drafting terms of reference. Two drama groups were forwarded Terms of reference and have submitted proposals to carry out anti corruption performances on behalf of TI Uganda.
- In order to strengthen the capacity of VACs in monitoring, TI Uganda conducted a one-day Budget and Monitoring skills workshop on conditional and non conditional grants for the Voluntary Accountability Committees, School Management Committee and Health Unit Management Committee representatives from all the five sub counties of Kakuuto County. During the training, the participants were educated on the link between the roles and responsibilities of School and Health Unit Management Committees and the fight against corruption. They were also taught skills in budget monitoring for conditional and non conditional grants for effective community development and efficient utilisation of public funds. The VACs can now differentiate the different funds that come to their county and sub counties and for what purpose. They are able to trace how much was received for the different purposes and monitor their utilisation and the quality of the work produced.
- TI Uganda staff together with Voluntary Accountability Committees participated in the four-day case study monitoring visits conducted in four sub counties in Kakuuto County to practically train the Kakuuto County Voluntary Accountability Committees in monitoring the utilization of public resources in various community development programs and areas for better service delivery. The areas covered during the monitoring included Education, NAADS, Roads, and Health.

- Conducted training in community needs identification and advocacy for VAC members. This training enabled TI Uganda to impart basic skills in identification of community needs, community based advocacy approaches, report writing, petition drafting, and mobilization of communities for action among others.
- To ascertain whether the VACs created and trained are exercising their roles as community monitors, TI Uganda has closely followed up the VACs and monitored how they are using the different skills they acquired during the trainings and sensitisation activities. Indeed the VACs have tried to work as expected despite challenges of transport to travel distant areas where the community development projects are taking place and the Sub county/district headquarters for clarifications on varying issues as far as the project costs, and or specified qualities are concerned.

Major Achievements

1. Improved adherence by service providers to the principles of transparency and accountability resulting into free access to basic social services thus improved service delivery. For example in Kakuuto County Health Centre IV, and Kibanda Sub County Health Centre III, the VACs intervened when patients were forced to pay for drugs and pass books for pregnant women and the situation changed and patients no longer pay bribes to access these items.
2. The Sub County VACs in Kifamba Sub County have organized meetings with the school or health unit management committees, staff or local leaders as VACs on selected issues that need to be addressed. They have resolved to contact the members of Rakai Anti Corruption Coalition formed by TI Uganda in Kyotera to work together and combine forces to work as one body to represent Rakai district and look at corruption issues in all corners of the district and work out how to eradicate it. *(details of their achievements attached)*
3. The VACs have become influential in their sub counties. This is backed by the fact that in Kakuuto Health centre IV, the VACs caused the transfer of a lab assistant who was soliciting bribes from patients and also caused the transfer of Officer in Charge (OC) of Mutukula Police Post in Kakuuto for asking money from prisoners to the district police headquarters at Kalisizo.
4. Increased public awareness and sensitisation on rights, obligations and responsibility towards public resources and accountability mechanisms under various development programmes e.g. the community in Kakuuto Sub county tipped the VAC members about the OC of Mutukula Police Post who was soliciting bribes from prisoners in order to kill evidence against them and in Kasasa sub county the local community tipped the VAC members about the NAADS funds that were not transparently allocated to the relatives of the NAADS committees. The information that drugs and passbooks were being sold to patients at Kakuuto, Kasasa, and Kifamba was got from the local community who were failing to access the said services freely as they are meant to be.
5. Increased commitment among councillors in district, sub-county, parish and local levels to community priorities and demands. The Kasasa Sub County NAADS committee and Kibanda Health Centre III management committee involved VACs of the respective areas in their planning meetings.

6. Increased participation of VAC members in the budget process and supervision of the public servants for provision of better development programmes and impact. The VACs in Kakuuto County are working together to see that the Sub County Chief of Kasasa Sub County refunds the two million shillings he received from Kyebe Sub County coffers to buy school text books for Kasensero Academy Primary school while he was the Sub County Chief of Kyebe Sub County. They have taken the first step to write a letter to him asking him to refund the money or deliver the said books. The VACs have given him a month to respond in that line and if not, they will write another letter and copy to all the relevant sub county, county, and district authorities including the Inspectorate of Government, police and Transparency International Uganda.

Challenges faced

The project implementation faces challenges which affect its effectiveness:

The lack of a field based office and field based personnel poses a big challenge for effective mobilisation and monitoring. This lack of physical presence in the project area also poses a challenge for better coordination of project activities, accessibility for consultation by those that need clarity on issues.

The VACs created and trained by TI Uganda in the entire county feel competent and are mobilising other members to report incidences of corruption in their areas but lack transport to move to some concerned authorities especially at the district headquarters. This poses a challenge to TI Uganda's project as well because these people were not catered for in terms of facilitation and yet they are expected to move in order to work more effectively.

Ensuring visibility of New Partnership for Transparency Fund (PTF) in the project area

- TI Uganda continues to display the banner with the words "Project supported by the **Partnership for Transparency Fund**" to all target audiences of all the project activities.
- TI Uganda also continues to disseminate the information, education and communication materials that were produced with similar messages to a wider community in the project area.
- TI Uganda ensures that information about the funds from PTF is reflected in the invitation letters.
- The mention of PTF occurs at all project activities e.g. workshops; radio talk shows among other project activities.

Outstanding Activities

- Conduct Monitoring and Evaluation of all the project activities (On going)
- Stage ten (10) anti-corruption drama shows in schools and community centres to sensitize the masses that have not been targeted for other project activities about corruption, its effects, on attainment of services from leaders and how corruption manifests itself in the communities in which they live.

- Hold a review meeting with the key stakeholders in the project area (Kakuuto) to evaluate the project's achievements and challenges in empowering the communities on how to mobilize, monitor, detect and report corruption in Local Government Development Programmes (LGDP).
- Organise the last Radio Programme in the project area
- Submit quarterly reports as well as final project reports to New Partnership for Transparency Fund

Lessons learnt

- There is need to open field offices and recruit Field personnel to man it for grassroots projects for effective mobilisation and monitoring. This would have given TI Uganda the necessary presence in the project area for better coordination of project activities, accessibility for consultation by those that need clarity on issues.
- Empowerment of the local communities is very vital in the fight against corruption as beneficiaries to effectively monitor projects in their area. A well informed, mobilised and vigilant community is the only answer in the struggle against corruption.
- Sustainability should be given the attention it deserves because it's vital and critical in the success or failure of any project. The ability for the community to push the project goals forward even after the project winds up is the most critical measure of success or failure of the project. Sustainability should therefore be the focus of any project from its start and be sustained throughout the project lifetime. There is no success where there is no sustainability

QUARTERLY ACTIVITY PLAN FOR THE NEXT QUARTER RUNNING JULY – SEPTEMBER 2009

No	Activity	Months of Activity Implementation			Responsible persons
		July	August	September	
1	Coordinate the staging of anti-corruption drama shows in all the Sub Counties of Kakuuto Sub County. This will involve; working together on the drama script, and ensure that actual performance commences and ends by 30 th September 2009				Project Officer, VACs, Drama group
2	Organise the last Radio Programme in the project area				Project Officer, Contact person
3	Organise a review meeting together with the key stakeholders in the project area (Kakuuto)				Project Officer, Contact person
4	Conduct Monitoring and Evaluation of all the project activities (On going)				Project Officer, Contact person

5	Preparation and submission of Progress report				Project Officer
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