



AGENCY FOR ACCELERATED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

ANNUAL REPORT
2008



AFARD's Core Values

Respecting human dignity, equality, justice and freedom

- * Empowerment
- * Local ownership;
- * Use of participatory methodologies
- * Reliance on local resources
- * Localizing research
- * Genuine partnership
- * Linkage and collaboration
- * Transparency and accountability.

AFARD:

ORIGIN, DRIVERS AND LEGALITY

The origin

The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is a local professional, not-for-profit, non-denominational NGO currently operating in Nebbi district, West Nile region of Uganda. It was formed in July 2000 by professional sons and daughters of the West Nile region because first, West Nile is located in the poorest northern region of Uganda where 6 in 10 people live below the daily US\$ 1 poverty line. Second, many development interventions have been 'external to local context' with mainly physical structures and dysfunctional committees in place but a people hardly changed. Third, given the hitch of 'democratic centralism' of decentralized governance, the people are reduced to subjects and not citizens of the state. Finally, the region has experienced a high human resource flight thus limiting the enthusiasms to work for self development.

The drivers and mandates

The vision of AFARD is, "a prosperous, healthy and informed people of West Nile". Its mission is, "to contribute to the moulding of a region in which the local people, including those who are marginalized, are able to participate effectively and sustainably and take a lead in the development of the region". To achieve these mandates AFARD undertakes Skills development (management and technical training); (Participatory) action research (to make interventions locally sensitive); Information gathering and dissemination (for the promotion of knowledge-based growth); Resource

mobilization (with external resources only seen as supplements for specific non-substitutable purposes); Networking and linkages and Advocacy and lobbying (to promote the human rights of the "voiceless" marginalized people while making government accountable).

Legal status

Legally, AFARD is registered with the NGO Board as an NGO (Reg. No. S.5914/3753) and with the Registrar of Companies as a Company Limited by Guarantee (Reg. No. 45170). AFARD is also an affiliate member of a number of active networks like:

Uganda National NGO Forum and Nebbi District NGO Forum (NDNGOF) as umbrella bodies for NGO operations;

Participatory Ecological Land use and Management – Uganda Chapter (PELUM) focusing on sustainable agriculture and smallholder farmer voice;

Water Integrity Network (WIN) and Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET) that coordinates Water and Sanitation sector quality operations;

Uganda National AIDS Services Organizations (UNASO) and Nebbi AIDS Services Organization Network (NASON) that gives attention to HIV/AIDS services delivery; and

West Nile Private Sector Development Promotion Center Ltd. that prioritizes enterprise development.

DID YOU KNOW THAT LIFE IS NOT THE SAME FOR ALL OF US?

Often when we hear of poverty we seem to derive not just diverse meanings from it but also to take it for granted that poverty is everybody's experience. True as that may be, our experiences of poverty are diverse to the extent that the current universal targeting policies need rethinking. Poverty is real for majority of people in West Nile. For the doubting Thomas's, below is a snapshot:



A TYPICAL HOMESTEAD

The most common type of housing unit in West Nile region is the grass-thatched roof and mud wall temporary houses. A few households have chairs made from timber. Majority sit on logs, goat skins or on the bare ground. The people sleep on papyrus mats that they spread on the house floor. The "kitenge" that women wear also double as bed sheets. But many people use the very papyrus mat for both sleeping on and part of the roll for covering themselves.



FOOD AND NUTRITION

It is uncommon to think of eating two decent meals a day. One meal –often supper- a day is the norm. Besides, there is no preferential treatment regardless of status – the sick, old, breastfeeding mother, or even children. Many people now eat foods that were known as "foods for lepers". For instance, many households now eat the tiny silver fish (locally known as "muziri") as the best dish one can have simply because they lack the money with which to buy the preferred tilapia and Nile perch. Meat is often eaten during Christmas or on funerals. And the once proud community with open door food policy is long gone. Greed has taken over as few people eat with their supra family members.



ACCESS TO SAFE WATER AND SANITATION

Safe water is a luxury. Few safe water points exist in many villages. The few boreholes have regulations of access imposed on them. In Murusi, for instance, a household is entitled to 40 liters of water every three days. And the queuing starts as early as 2-3am. Thus, many homes use water from unsafe streams. During dry seasons, women compete with baboons and monkeys for water in rock creeks. And many homes do not have safe sanitary facilities like latrines, bath shelters, and garbage pits. As such, many nearby bushes are littered with human feces.



INCOME GENERATION

Without the requisite education for gainful salaried employment, majority of the people (eight in ten) depend on farming. Growing of crops and rearing of small ruminants is the norm. But the farming practices are subsistence oriented. Most of the technologies (inputs, skills and practices) used are indigenous. Access to government extension services that favor the already rich (termed as contact farmers) is a night mare for many peasants. Thus, majority of peasants depend on historical cash crops such as cotton, coffee, and tobacco with extremely low input-output ratios let alone being labor intensive and less paying. No doubt the average after-harvest income range between UGX 20,000-200,000.



Another means of earning income is by selling labor. A whole day's work earns a miserable UGX 1,000. Meanwhile, majority of households are diversifying their livelihoods by taking up petty businesses. But these businesses are characterized by low volume, product duplications, poor branding, credit sales, product seasonality and above all very low profit margins, if any.



QUALITY OF LIFE

If you thought, as usual, we are all poor then it is time to realize that we are also not all living the same poor lives. The inequalities are real, biting some people more than others. Many of the people in West Nile are living a life of desperation in violation of their human rights to a dignified life. They are toiling for a day-to-day "hand-to-mouth" lifestyle. The future we claim should be better for all seems too far to think and talk about for them. Many people are clumped into insecure and vulnerable livelihoods where parents only transmit generational poverty to their children; and their children to their grandchildren.

Thus, many young men and women look older than their ages. Equally, many children and elders alike are dying young. One religious elder in Rhinocamp summarized the lifestyle when he noted that 'our lives are worse off than the devil's hell. Satan may even fear to come for our souls that no longer feel any pain'.



Board members during a Board Meeting

FROM THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

AFARD team, touched by the above realities of lives in the West Nile region remains committed to catalyzing the energies of the people so that they can attain sustainable livelihoods wherein they are able to manage emerging local and global shocks and stresses without slipping back into insecure and vulnerable lifestyles. This is the change we desire and Yes we can.

In pursuing this commitment, AFARD in 2008 witnessed marked strides in its operation. Pursuing its Strategic Direction 2009-11 that prioritizes wealth creation; better well – being; and presence and voice to the marginalized poor men and women in the region, AFARD was able, with Gorta funding to, for the first time, set up a long term development work in Yumbe and Arua districts.

As a result, a number of grassroots support partners were reached out to in the three districts of Nebbi, Arua and Yumbe. These include 13 church-based partners and 16 community based organizations with a total of 2,156 households (51% women). Besides, a strategic HIV/AIDS prevention programme is under implementation in 13 fishing villages in Panyimur sub county.

In the year, the Board of Directors revised the Human Resource Policy and the Board and Staff Evaluation guidelines. The Board also conducted the 2007 Financial Audit together with a few visits to project sites in order to keep members abreast with what is on the ground. Two other independent audits were

also conducted by KPMG for Irish Aid and DAVITA & Associates for Civil Society Capacity Building Programme. Besides, more assets were procured. For instance, AFARD office now has an intercom, a new 4WD vehicle, a power backup system, broadband internet connectivity and a Programme Staff office annex. Finally, the Board initiated the AFARD Complex construction.

All these were achieved because of the increase in income from UGX 501.8 million in 2007 to UGX 1.3 billion (excluding (UGX 734 million that went directly to partners) in 2008. Importantly, we are grateful to the various Development Partners who have continued to support our work.

The critical challenge for us in 2009 and thereafter remain seeking answers to building a sustainable AFARD. While the needs in our region are enormous and no one donor can commit to solve that forever; aware that it takes time to 'deepen and harmonize impacts', we continue to invite more support to enable us build a prosperous, healthy, and informed people of West Nile.

Thank you.

Rev. Fr. Geoffrey Ocamgiu
Chair, Board of Directors



Irish potatoes farming in Congambe Women Group

IN SEARCH FOR INCOMES: From Food To Cash Crops

Traditionally, many smallholder farmers focused primarily on subsistence agriculture. There were few specific cash crops and the concept of cash and food crops was distinct. Nebbi district was semi-gazetted for the production of only Arabica coffee in the highland and cotton in the lowland areas. 'Many people grew old without imagining they can raise money from other crops' commented an elder in Orussi community. Besides, the farming system was gendered with cash crop production consolidating power over money in the hands of men. Yet, the two coffee harvest seasons and a single cotton harvest with yield prices determined by buyers and their middlemen provided many families with marginal after harvest incomes (averaging UGX 100,000). Finally, such a farming system sapped family labor and time away from food production. In recent times, these concepts and practices are getting blurred as AFARD has ignited a new wave

of sweeping changes in the region. Gorta support is being directed to enabling beneficiaries produce crops with both market and food value. This drive is fueled by the fact that food and income security are intertwined. By approaching smallholder farming from an entrepreneurship development approach, farmers are integrating crop production purposes for both income and food. In this way, crop selection has become a critical aspect in farm decision making. The primary crops preferred in the last two years are Irish potatoes (also known as a poor man's meat), simsim, and cassava. These crops have high yields and market prices; are not a preserve of only men; and are also food crops. Ave Maria Kalowang and Nyaravur group members in the last one year earned collectively for their groups UGX 6 million and UGX 5 respectively while individually the minimum amount earned was UGX 250,000 from the sale of cassava

cuttings only. Meanwhile, Congambe women's group in Jangokoro in the first season of 2008 was able to earn UGX 900,000 with each member earning at least UGX 200,000. With these funds, the groups were able to co-fund the building of their Gari-technology houses. In Ave Maria Kalowang, the Sister's community with which the grassroots community is working was able to use the proceeds from its cassava cutting for roofing iron sheets for the Sisters' house under construction. And in Congambe the group has invested its income into a revolving fund where its members are accessing business booster capital in an area devoid of financial services. This innovative approach to smallholder farming has balanced women's and men's access to income and enhanced households' access to nutritious food. It has also enabled producers to negotiate prices directly with buyers free from middlemen exploitation. If nurtured, this will serve as a real big push for the region.



Even men can be good cooks not just for money but also at home

ANIMAL TRACTION FOR IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY

Farming practice

The people of West Nile mainly practice subsistence farming as their major livelihood activity. Like most activities, farming is gendered in the sense that the so-called 'hard' labor activities like slashing and opening up land are a male preserve while planting, weeding, and harvest are largely women's domain. Farming is still done largely on small scale using rudimentary tools with the hand hoes as the main implement used.

This means that the farming practices is characterized by small farm sizes that result into very low yield per unit area and inadequate food and money. Not surprising, the region continues to experience high poverty incidences characterized in part by lack of basic needs like salt, soap, paraffin, sugar, clothes and also basic social services like health and education.

Promoting animal traction technology

The above situation is compounded by the misconception that smallholders' farmers cannot change their farming habits. No! They can. Some of the projects supported by Gorta and AFARD have demonstrated this with blinding clarity. The Nyaravur Rural Community Initiative for Development Association, pilot tested the Animal Traction Technology (ATT) in 2006. The results were incredible and beyond imagination. This led to the ATT replication in Wadelai, Kalowang, Odokibo and Yiba in 2008, all with commendable success.

The results so far

Amazing! From the ATT, women have also taken on land opening roles that hitherto were considered hard labor demanding and a task that can only be managed by men. Farm sizes have increased from 0.5 acre to 1 acre per beneficiary. Equally, beneficiaries have reported increased yields, increased food availability and cash incomes. In essence, the project is literally killing two birds with one stone, economically empowering the people and bridging the gender gap thus demystifying gender roles in the process. Mr. George Adubango of Nyaravur had this to say:

When you see our members, they look old and frail. You will simply conclude that they can no longer engage in active farming. You will be proved wrong. These women and men have a minimum of 1 acre from 0.25-0.5 acres before. All have at least cassava and maize as cash and food crops. They are also expecting a minimum of UGX 1,000,000 each from their next harvest. This sum of money many of us never in our lives dreamt was possible.

It is such thrilling results that have compelled almost all beneficiary agencies in the lowland terrain to request for ATT come 2009. The demand chorus is 'we all want to get rich'. There is no stopping a determined and empowered people whose perspectives about development have changed from succeeding, and they will.



Even men can be good cooks not just for money but also at home

ENGENDERING FAMILY NUTRITION PRACTICES

Feeding is gendered

Few people realize or even understand that what they eat, its quality, quantity, and frequency matters a lot for a healthy living. Nutrition is a family obligation and should be the responsibility of both men and women particularly to the children.

A simple nutrition analysis of what kinds of food exists in a given community and who eats what indicates there are a number of foods available that are ignored as non-traditional staple foods. For instance, the small silver fish (called Muziri) is considered food for lepers despite its nutritional values.

Another aspect often neglected is that feeding is gendered. Men eat first, followed by 'their' children (mainly boys) and women and girls eat last. In the face of food insecurity, women and girls are perpetually denied adequate food intake. Worst still, many nutritious foods like chicken, eggs and some fish/meat species are forbidden for women and girls in most cultures. This exclusion relegates women to eating less nutritious foods that cannot help them build their bodies for a healthy life.

At a training among Gorta supported

beneficiaries which involved spouses, the information from the above analysis made one elderly man in Zeu to loudly wonder, 'so that is why my wife has been growing smaller and smaller every year? You mean I have been starving her for life'. An elderly woman who is also a member of the Women Council in Orussi had this to say, 'You can see the injustices in our lives as women. It starts right from within our households. Men's greed is universal. Imagine even on food that we grow or care for,

cook and serve them, still, they treat us unfairly.

Information is vital to engender feeding practices. This analysis brought to face a challenge for men and even some women who believe that such cultures should be upheld. They started to think that there is need for engendering food sharing and acceptance practices. It became important that a family should always eat together so that everyone gets the same food quality without any restriction because different foods play different roles in the body.

Very often it is little known that there are foods for energy generation, body building, and immunity building. At the said training, particular attention was focused on food intake demands by pregnant mothers, children, the sick, and the old.

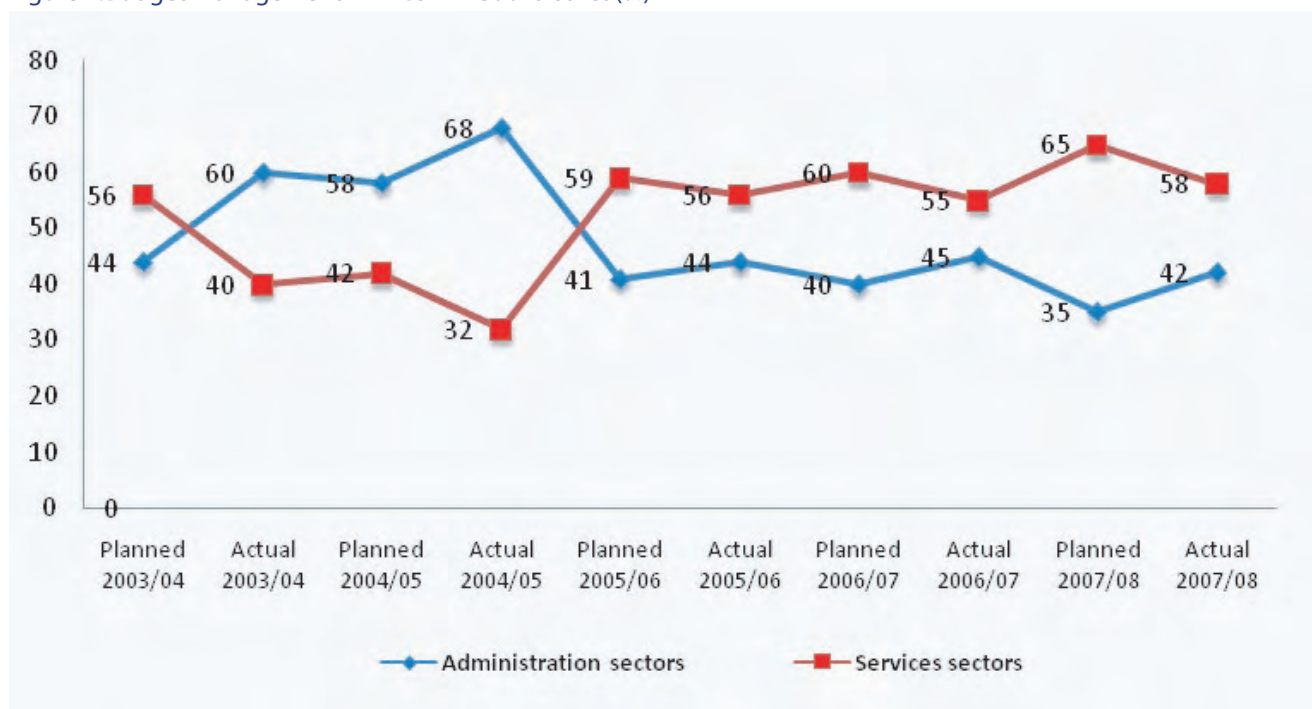
The power of information cannot be underestimated. In the subsequent reviews that followed, it was realized that the project changed eating practices in many homes of the beneficiaries. It also demonstrated that people are not always resistant to change as is often claimed. An elderly man in Anyengele remarked, 'Now my brothers fear eating with me because they don't want to eat with children and women. But I don't care because I know in my home every one is treated fairly'. Meanwhile, a woman in Mungulonyo pointed out that, 'men are now eating muziri that they had refused before'. And another woman in Zeu pointed out that, 'at least some women have started eating hitherto forbidden foods'. While these are pockets of change, they can be cumulative in the very foreseeable future as long as more people are reached with this kind of information.

EMPOWER WOMEN;

Engender Local Government Responsiveness And Accountability

Decentralization is gendered

Figure 1: Budget management in LLGs in Nebbi district (%)



In June 2008, AFARD closed the project it co-funded with the 9th EDF-GoU, Civil Society Capacity Building Programme. This project aimed at invigorating women's civic engagement with local government officials so as to engender decentralization. Why? Decentralization had not benefited women equally compared to men. While Nebbi district continues to receive sufficient funds to deliver services (in 1995/96 UGX 3.2 billion and in 2007/08 UGX 11.2 billion), few women benefited from government services e.g., NAADS programmes, access to fee-free education, and health care.

The main reason for such disequilibria was that very few women were demanding for services and accountability from local government officials. This was due to the ineffectiveness of women leaders to champion women's needs; limited awareness of the planning and budgeting process; exclusionary mobilization strategy employed by male officials; and livelihood insecurity.

Building political capabilities

Through an action-oriented project, AFARD undertook to promote a grassroots approach to participatory gender planning and budgeting as a way of furthering social accountability. Building civic engagement competency of women was seen as a critical link to promoting citizen-

state co-governance. This was done by women's political socialization through skills training to enable them maneuver and re-shape their political arena. Critical herein were:

- Awareness of rights and opportunities and procedures for claiming ones rights;
- Civic engagement skills training in mobilizing constituency, putting agenda on resource allocation table, generating factual and relevant information, and communicating effectively with other actors. Others include managerial skills for planning, budgeting and monitoring; and
- Alliance building for strengthening multi-actors support.

Results of interventions

- Women leaders became aware of human and women's rights. As such, they took to identifying women's needs (36%), advocating for gender equality (66%), and monitoring government services (58%).
- Women leaders also gained gender responsive planning and budgeting (70%), advocacy (65%), and



A placenta pit constructed in Nyaravur health centre. The result is increase in supervised delivery

gender monitoring (65%) skills. Using these skills they are mobilizing women's views and pushing them in sectoral committee meetings.

- More women (>50% gains) started participating in the mobilization of women to attend the various planning and budgeting meetings up to budget approval. They are also engaging in monitoring village projects (37%) and project committees (18%) besides partaking in the implementation of village project (27%).
- The pressure from both grassroots women and women leaders has compelled many LLGs to: adopt gender sensitive analysis, gender responsive statements and considerations for affirmative action in their plans (100%); and to tilt their budget allocations and disbursements (>50%) in favor of services delivery from which grassroots communities can benefit (see figure 1).
- These efforts also led to tangible projects notable was the construction of maternity units and/or equipping them with placenta pits, beds, mattresses, pieces of curtains, and bath shelters. The importance attached to the placenta pit was thrilling as the Chairperson WCE of Nyaravur narrated, In the past many women and their children were dying from unsafe deliveries. They preferred to deliver at home

with traditional birth attendants because they did not want the placentas of their babies to be thrown in the bush after delivery for dogs and fox to eat. Traditionally this is assumed to bring bad omen to their children. And no one cared! The leaders who controlled our money had little regard for such simple needs of ordinary women. When we came to the table where resources are shared, we demanded for such a simple project as part of an affirmative action. Because it was not costly, many LLG officials supported the idea.

When we informed the women in the villages that the health unit now had facilities for the disposal of placenta, they are flocking to deliver at the health facilities because they know it is safe.

Meanwhile the groining from deaths has instead reduced. No more wasted labour for digging graves and fewer headaches from wailing for the deceased. All we want are such services that make life better for us all!

Challenges

The cardinal challenge remains with local government transparency and accountability practices. They are less willing to share their approved plans and budgets and reports of periodic revenues and expenditures. Compounded by the limited awareness of human rights and gender policies and biting livelihood insecurity, engendering decentralization remains an uphill task.



The Deputy RDC passing our Peer Educators-cum-Counselors in Panyimur



Supporting Voluntary Counseling and testing in Panyimur

PROMOTING HIV/AIDS PREVENTION AND MITIGATION AMONG FISHER COMMUNITIES

In June 2008, AFARD signed a 2-year agreement with Civil Society Fund to undertake Fisher Youth Anti-AIDS Project (FiCAP) worth UGX 398,962,410 in Panyimur sub county. FiCAP targets only HIV/AIDS prevention. Its implementation covers 5 epicenter (and 8 satellite) fishing villages jointly identified with Panyimur Sub-County officials. The project goal is 'to contribute to the reduction of sexual transmission of HIV among fishing communities in Panyimur sub county, Jonam county, Nebbi district'. Its specific objectives are: (i) To establish and motivate a cadre of 60 local people capable of sustaining efforts to prevent HIV spread; (ii) To promote positive behavior changes (sexual practices) among 29,650 people in 5 fishing villages within 2 years; and (iii) Increase correct and consistent condom use.

In the last half year the project was able to:

- Equip AFARD and field change agents with basic operational logistics for outreach and community education.

- Assess the knowledge, attitude and practice regarding HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation in the project area and using its findings designed local area sensitive strategies.
- Train 30 up to 24 year old and 30 over 24 year old (50% females) service providers in peer education and counseling and condom promotion.
- Reach out to 2,013 (45% females) up to 24 year old and 1,794 (51% females) with integrated ABC messages through video shows-cum- sensitization meetings.
- Refer 12 people for ART services although only 2 people accessed such services.
- Produce and disseminate 2,000 posters and 2,000 leaflets in the local language; air out 1 phone-in radio talk shows; and hold 6 drama shows.
- Train 400 youths in life skills.
- Finance HIV-status testing for 270 people (59% females) in the project site.
- Network with the various health institutions both within

Panyimur and at the district level.

- Continue supporting the operations of peer educators and counselors.

Visible changes

- Open discussions about HIV/AIDS.
- Shunning risky behavior like sex-for-fish.
- Negotiation for and increased condom use.
- Increased demand for HIV testing.
- Emergence of 5 Post Test Clubs with cash savings of UGX 200,000 – 700,000 in support of PHAs to access ART.

Challenges

- Resistance of religious leaders to condom promotion.
- Inaccessibility of HIV testing services.
- High costs (distances, time, and funds) for ART services access.
- Resistance to Engabu condom brands.



Jupaliga East with the first ever deep well since independence. Courtesy of RNE, Kampala

BUILDING A HEALTHY COMMUNITY THROUGH COMMUNITY POLICING

Preventable diseases are our chief ills. If water is life then sanitation is health. But a majority of Nebbi's population lack safe water and sanitation chain management.

An assessment in Singla fishing village and Jupaliga in 2008 indicated that on average people fall sick, from otherwise preventable diseases like malaria, diarrhoea, dysentery, and cholera, etc, for up to 5 days in a month. The implications are numerous namely, lost productive days by both the sick and caretakers, and reduced educational participation among school-age children. Besides, on average households spend about UGX 40,000 (an equivalent of 40 person day hired labor earnings) on treatment.

In a system where community health is pegged to facility-based services delivery, the people are less in control of their own health. For years this approach has not worked. It has kept the people sick, unproductive, and poor.

Promoting preventive health through collective responsibility

AFARD saw it imperative to empower rural communities to take charge of

their health under the code "Our Health Your Responsibility". Realizing that access to safe water and sanitation could reduce up to 80% of the common causes of sickness and deaths, adopting a preventive community health approach was inevitable. With funding from the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Kampala, two projects were implemented in Singla fishing village in Panyimur and Jupaliga East in Panyango.

These projects provided deep well water sources, constructed VIP latrines in public places, identified and trained local change agents (Village Health Team - VHT), and supported health education and campaigns. The climax was in facilitating the beneficiary communities to formulate their Community Sanitation Bye-laws. With the help of resident magistrates these bye-laws were aligned to the formal laws of Uganda and were passed for enforcement by the Sub county Councils.

Once the bye-laws were in place, the VHTs ensured that their communities were educated on the bye-laws in order to avoid the formal legal approach of 'ignorance is no defense'.

The after effects

The enforcement of the bye-laws have yielded positive results. Many homesteads now have what their communities agreed up on as the basic safe home facilities – latrines, garbage pits, soak pits, and bath shelters. Resistant family heads were prosecuted in Local Council (and sometimes Sub county) courts. Meanwhile, those who were too old were helped by VHTs to erect the required facilities. From these projects, in Singla alone, access to safe water for drinking and bathing increased. Home hygiene increased by 20%, and personal hygiene and vector control practices by 10% each.

As a result, the community is enjoying 25% decline in morbidity rate from water related sicknesses. The average number of days lost to sickness also reduced by 0.5 for adults and 0.7 for school-age children.

Beyond the restoration of esteem and confidence in the community, this approach has been replicated as feasible by Panyimur local government.



Network members posing for a group photo after a quarterly review meeting in Nebbi.

STRENGTHENING RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH NETWORKING

United we stand

From 2005, Gorta preferred consolidated funding support to the West Nile region. In 2008 alone, twenty nine Beneficiary Organizations (BOs) – with 2,146 households (51% of which are women-headed) and approximately 12,000 people - in Nebbi, Yumbe and Arua districts were supported largely in the areas of income, food and health security building that they chose as their livelihood transformation path. However, to attain project quality assurance, leverage, efficient fund management and effective results, AFARD coordinates all the BOs under a network arrangement. The network operates with a Code of Conduct (CoC) that cherishes professionalism, participatory leadership, transparency and accountability, among other things.

Networking value-addition

The network has the following key gains:

- Participatory project formulation improved beneficiary voice, needs-intervention synergy, and transparency.
- Participatory review of

both programme and financial performance enhanced leaders' transparency, members' knowledge about their project, and change tracking.

- It increased cost efficiency especially through joint procurement.
- It promoted mutual learning through intra-network linkages and ensured discipline especially of financial management thereby heightening the adoption of organizational best practices.
- Centralizing capacity building initiatives yielded improved training quality.

Networking challenges

- "My Project" mentality was common among the first lot of BOs because they felt their operational mandates were in Dublin and not Nebbi.
- Conflict of interests as many managers wanted to control procurement and training to their personal benefits.
- Lack of access to means of transport and telephone contacts made many CBOs distant from rapid response initiatives

required to backstop their project implementation.

- Limited reporting skills and a weak management information system retarded network management for impacts. Often, the network is engaged in process rather than product management.
- Time overlap between BO's programme planning, reporting, and funding has always proved a management headache in coordinating operations as one unit.
- Beneficiary voice is weak as often it is only the leaders who participate in the network activities. This has led to hoarding correct information from beneficiaries. However, the adoption of Tripartite Agreement between Gorta, AFARD and BOs spelt out the roles and responsibilities of every actor. Also by ensuring that training funds were managed in a contractual manner and only through AFARD vested interests were checked. Meanwhile the adoption of planning for 2009 using a consolidated West Nile Development Initiative plan and budget will enhance collective voice, responsiveness and accountability among all network members.

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

AFARD believes that its human resource is very valuable for its continued existence and success. The human resources are also seen as the best guarantee and assurance of quality services delivery. In this view, the enhancement of staff performance is inevitable.

Therefore, during the year staffs were provided with various opportunities to enhance their performance-related skills. These included:

- The participation of the Programme Director in a World Bank co-funded Africa Regional Workshop in Durban on Participatory Budgeting. As a result, AFARD is participating in Peer-to-Peer Learning with TZ, SA, Ecuador, and Ghana.
- The Visiting Fellowship at the Africa Studies Centre, Leiden by the Programme Director.
- The participation of the Community Development Manager & Finance and Administration Manager in workshops organized by TPO in Nebbi & Arua and CSF in Kampala.
- Training 2 Field Officers (Health and Crop production) in project planning and management by HR Training Agency.
- Programme staff in-house coaching, by the Programme Director, in process and impact report writing skills.
- Field Officers' in-house coaching, by the Community Development Manager, in powerpoint presentation.
- Supporting Mr. Norbert Oyirwoth – the Accountant – to continue with his B.Com studies at Makerere University, Kampala.
- Supporting Mr. Khemiss O. Pimundu – the Crop Production Specialist – to continue with his ABA-Agric. studies at Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi.
- Co-learning forum with 6 intern students from Uganda Christian University Mukono, Makerere University, Makerere University Business Schools, Nsamizi Training Institute and Mid Sweden University.
- The Programme Director was also provided the opportunity by PMU – Civil Society Capacity Building Programme to train Grantees in Strategic Planning in Development Organizations (in Mukono). He also facilitated Mbarara NGO Network to develop its Strategic Plan.
- Field Officers' participation in baseline studies. Through these studies, the staffs who were directly involved gained basic research knowledge and skills.
- Undertaking joint monitoring visits to project sites so as to instill in the staffs members requisite skills for conducting monitoring and also to deepen programme cross-learning by staffs involved in other programmes.

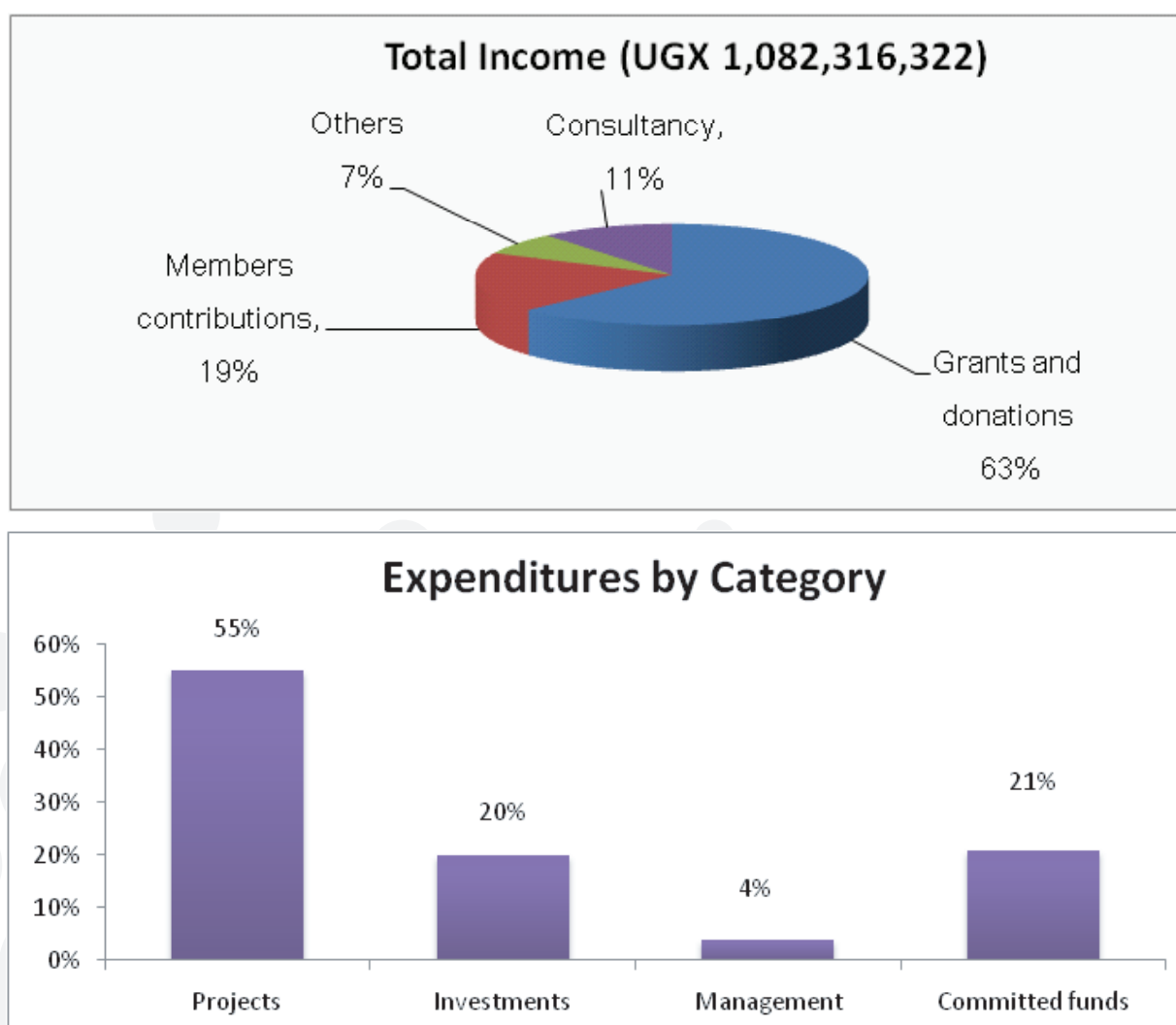
Overall, AFARD shall continue to enhance the professional capacity of the staffs to deliver quality services particularly where critical gaps exist. In this way, we will balance capacity building needs with performance needs in order to make skills enhancement relevant to both AFARD and the staffs.

FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Budget out-turn

While only UGX 1.5 billion was approved for 2008 programme and management cost, as at December 8 2008 we had mobilized on AFARD accounts alone UGX 1.1 billion (excluding UGX 0.7 billion directly spent by our network members and €148,916 from European Commission). Thus, overall, the year 2008 witnessed a 141% revenue mobilization turnover.

There were developments of great importance to note. First, the programme coverage area increased in 2008 beyond Nebbi district to also cover Yumbe and Arua districts. Second, the share of grants remained the same at 63% implying the vigor with which the Board is committed to building AFARD's sustainability.



Financial management

To strengthen financial management, the Final Accounts for 2007 was audited by Jasper Ssemu & Associates Auditors. Audits were also conducted by KPMG for Irish Aid funds and DAVITA & Associates for 9th EDF funds. Management reports were subsequently discussed by the Board and issues therein used to improve financial management.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

Development partners

In the year, we are proud to be in partnership with the following development agencies: EU Civil Society Capacity Building Programme, Gorta – Ireland, Civil Society Fund for HIV/AIDS, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, The European Commission in Uganda and INclusion. The support from the various local governments can not be overemphasized.

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