



AFARD

Annual Report

2004

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1.0 Introduction

The Government of Uganda (GoU) has joined the international community in the commitment to eradicate poverty as guided by the Millennium Development Goals. By so doing, a number of policies are put in place to facilitate joint action in the fight against poverty. For instance, decentralization aims at making rural communities shape their destiny; liberalization and privatization focuses at making private sector and the market a vibrant actor besides the state; and legal reforms such as commercial courts facilitate the freeness with which operational contracts can be honored. Likewise, a number of community driven initiatives have mushroomed in all parts of the country. The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is one such organization that has taken up the challenges of poverty eradication through capacity development.

2.0 AFARD: Who are we?

AFARD is an indigenous voluntary, non-for-profit and non-denominational organisation formed in July 2000, by experienced and committed development professionals for the purposes of promoting participatory and endogenic development in the West Nile region of Uganda. Legally, AFARD is registered as a Non-Governmental Organisation with the National NGO Board (Registration No S.5914/3753); and with the Registrar of Companies as a Company Limited by Guarantee (Registration No 45170). AFARD is also registered with the National NGO Forum and is signatory to the NGO Generic Code of Conduct.

3.0 Performance in 2004

About 67% of the total population of northern Uganda, where Nebbi district is located, faces livelihood insecurity. Couple with high rates of population growth (3.5%) and the prevalence of HIV/AIDS (> 6%); a weak asset base exemplified by high illiteracy rate, few natural and physical assets, degenerating social security, inadequate financial services, and poor infrastructures majority of the people are with a low resilience to any form of vulnerability. Reliance on rainfed agriculture and government decentralized services as well as engaging in other low return activities provide a marginal ability to cope with risks. Faced with these challenges AFARD adopted an 'impact oriented approach' that aim at short-circuiting the capacity gaps that deny the attainment of better livelihood outcomes.

Consequently, the mainstay of AFARD's activities is capacity development based on mindset, leadership, skills, and tools that promote sustainable livelihood through self-reliance, participatory, and community democratization. AFARD's focus is on facilitating communities to achieve a sustainable livelihood basing on their needs and capacity. Over the last one-year, we have done this under the following key themes: Organizational Development, Income Generation and Microfinance, Food Security and HIV/AIDS

3.1 Organizational development through institution building

AFARD's strengthening of groups is based on a number of facilitation cycles. Partner groups are identified in a process that involves enlisting group members' willingness for self-reliance and local leaders support. This is followed by a capacity self-assessment where each group assesses its capacity on seven thematic areas. The next stage is thus a facilitation to identify and plan for a self-project. To date there are 32 groups pursuing own-projects in



*Training SMCs in Nebbi Teachers
Resource Center, 21st Oct. 2004*

various fields but with established leadership structures.

Achievements

- *Training of Civil Society Organizations*
During 2004, 10 groups were trained in group dynamics and management skills. Four of these groups are affiliated to Action Aid Nebbi, another four to Send A Cow Uganda, and only two were old AFARD partner groups.
- *Support to Nebbi District Local Government*
With funding from Action Aid Nebbi and European Development Fund (EDF) AFARD was able to support Nebbi District Women Council to formulate a strategic plan and advocated for its inclusion in the local government plans. Because of the uniqueness of this initiative, Human Rights Network Uganda (HURINET) has indicated its willingness to support the intervention at district and sub county levels in 2005. Similarly, AFARD trained school management committees in 10 schools on their roles and responsibilities so that UPE funds reach its intended beneficiaries – the pupils – within a stimulating environment with motivated teachers. Finally, AFARD trained project implementation committees in 20 projects all over the district on their roles, linkages with other actors and secure ownership of local projects.
- *Technical support to Nebbi District NGO Forum*
As a key member of the Forum, AFARD provided a free backstopping support to the Forum during the education week held in April with Commonwealth and Action Aid funding. In August further technical support was provided to ensure that the analysis of the NGO/CBO baseline survey data was done and the report produced.
- *Strengthening local organizations*
In collaboration with Action Aid, AFARD supported a district wide association of persons living with AIDS to formulate a strategic plan for the next three years. This similar activity was done for NASON, NGO Forum, and Nyapea Safe Motherhood and Child Care Association.

Constraints

- *Due to inadequate funding, the expected coverage of community based organizations (CBOs) is lagging. And as many CBOs emerge, this creates enormous gaps of having weak organizations that are unable to strengthen civil society on the one hand and delivering promising benefits to members on the other.*
- *The two networks in the district (NGO Forum and NASON) are too weak to coordinate effectively the activities of civil society. This has instead loosen the cohesion expected of all CBOs who on realizing that the networks have limited benefits for them resort to ad hoc relations with other CBOs and the network themselves.*

Lessons learnt

- *Many organizations are mushrooming but without a clear sense of direction. Neither do they have action plans and vision shared by all members. For many such groups, there is even no documentation of what they have been doing something that leaves them to rely on members' memory. Commitment to forming a strategic direction is hampered by lack of skills and inability to identify potential funding sources let alone opportunistic behavior in some groups.*

3.2 Income generation through community microfinance and microenterprise development

In 2002 a component of group savings and credit schemes with microenterprise development was started as a pilot project. This project was designed to provide the groups access to seed-fund for member IGA; expose groups to savings and credit management; inculcate in members prudent business management skills; but above all to lay a foundation for a future group-owned and controlled sustainable financial services. With a seed fund of Ushs 25 million from Gorta-Ireland in July 2002 the first batch of loans were disbursed to 8 pilot groups. Members set the operational guidelines and conditions during a stakeholders' meeting.

Over the years, the performance of this scheme deteriorated due to a number of factors. First, the war in Democratic Republic of Congo blocked the business supply source of agricultural produce that many members were involved in. second, the investments of groups in coffee nursery witnessed a marked government failure by Coffee Development Authority (CDA) to buy the grown coffee let alone pay for already supplied coffee.¹ Third, the inability to have a clear fund marked for the monitoring of the microfinance scheme slackened the effectiveness with which groups could be pressurized to repay loan. Fourth, the group loan committees abdicated their roles and were too unable to attach their members' loan security to enforce repayment. Finally, the loan conditionalities set by the groups were not prudent and had a number of loopholes. For instance, there was no specific demand for loan security. (This is the price of respecting community voice or ground rules set by beneficiary communities).



Although a review was made in the policy regarding the loan provision, to date a total of Ushs 52,955,000 was given as loan (indicating an increase in loan value of Ushs 27,955,000).² Yet, Ushs 18,765,000 is outstanding (to the point of being bad debts). Attempts to use the legal notice did not yield any positive results. Even trial on individual loans met with laxity to repay. Thus, in August 2004 the provision of small loan was paused until all outstanding debts were collected.

From the loans borrowed some members were able to make a stride into improving their livelihood. Livestock were procured, medical bills and school fees were paid, improved seeds were secured, and social cohesion among group members, especially those who got the loans, increased.

Constraints

- *The seed fund is too small to increase the loan portfolio based on its own growth. Besides, it does not encourage increasing loan size for graduating good loan performers.*

¹ To date, coffee nursery farmers are dragging CDA to court over their outstanding payment.

² Given that this is a revolving fund with 10% interest rate payable after the loan period, this increased value includes the Ushs 25 million seed fund, which certainly is a low growth rate.

- *There is an ingrown survival attitude in the community that does not promote a zeal for commercial enterprises.*

Lessons learnt

- *While leaving the community relatively free to set rules and direction of local development is advocated for, caution must be taken to ensure that those voices are technically sound and that community solidarity decisions does not always result into complete compliance. In this case community ownership jeopardized sustainability.*
- *Solidarity action aims at benefiting individual members. It is how much one is able to benefit that stimulate his or her engagement in collective action. This was demonstrated by the redirection of savings from group account into individual livelihood security. Group members resorted to saving in their household strategies rather than increasing their saving share in their groups.*

Table 1: Summary of loan defaulters

<i>Name of borrower</i>	<i>Amount outstanding (in Ushs '000)</i>	<i>Name of borrower</i>	<i>Amount outstanding (in Ushs '000)</i>
1. Utim Kisa Women Group	16.1	2. Kubbi Community	2,116.0
3. Bidokober Women Group	383.9	4. Rwoth Omio Group	905.0
5. Goli Agroforestry Group	2,745.0	6. Lemandha Group	1,650.0
7. Jacwic Jaberu Group	113.0	8. Mrs. Cwinyai Joyce	3,600.0
9. Achora Women Group	503.0	10. KG Adubango	4,600.0
11. Mer Lonyo Group	2,133.0		

3.3 Food security through sustainable agriculture enhancement

That many households are faced with food insecurity in Nebbi district, AFARD and AAN have joined hands to facilitate rural communities to solve the problem sustainably. The intervention sees food security as an 'Equitable access to 4A's – Availability, Adequacy, Acceptability, and Affordability – of quality foods at all times by all household members regardless of social categorisation'. In April 2004, AFARD and AAN operationalized the food security promotion project with a broad aim of 'household food security and income of 32 partner group members' improved in a sustainable, self-reliant and market-oriented manner'. This project focuses on increased productivity (both output and income) to attain food security (through production, marketing, and quality improvement). A series of consultations were then held with Action Aid Nebbi (AAN) and the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) Arua branch staff on the proposal. Eventually it was approved but with two explicit recommendations: (i) The project should be implemented in phases; and (ii) start with 6 groups then use lessons learned to upscale.



Achievements

- *Needs Assessment:*
This was done in 6 groups spread through the district (Songoli in Zeu, Apalala in Atyak, STOGA in Nyaravur, Kubbi Community in Erussi, Mer Lonyo in Nebbi TC, and Pacego in Panyango). The needs assessment established baseline information for the intervention by exploring the current knowledge, attitude and practice of farmers in the wake of rampant food insecurity. Members of the various groups also chose the crop-livestock mix that is relevant and feasible for their areas and management experiences.
- *Input supplies:*
The identified inputs were procured and distributed to the partner groups. Twelve improved goats were procured from Fort Portal in Western Uganda and improved varieties of bean, cassava and Irish potatoes were secured from national research stations and distributed to the groups. We also lobbied local governments to provide improved maize seeds to some of the groups. The beneficiaries are expected to pass on offsprings or seeds/planting materials to those who did not get. Agreements were signed to this effect with the groups to ensure involvement of non-group members and to maintain the spread of the improved varieties to the wider communities. With the high yields registered e.g., Songoli from 2 bags of Irish potatoes got 10 bags there will be the distribution of seeds/planting materials at the start of first season in 2005. meanwhile, the goats have started mating with local goats of group and community members.
- *Training:*
The 6 pilot groups were trained in organizational dynamics as well as practical skills of livestock management, soil and water conservation, pest and disease detection and control.

Constraints

- *Managing improved livestock is more demanding for groups and it requires regular supervision. Two goats died in Kubbi community and STOGA due to failure to adhere to the maintenance requirement.*
- *Actionaid conducted field visits without involvement and feedback to AFARD yet AFARD provided technical support to the project. This affected the operations and follow-up of the project.*

Lessons learnt

- *CBOs provide avenue for reaching out to the entire community contrary to the thinking that members of CBOs usually want to segregate other members. This approach can be used to upscale the project to other areas. It can also be used for other projects that target benefiting a bigger community.*

- *Any partnership arrangement requires clear terms of reference as to who does what and with what result to ensure coordination and joint accountable actions.*

3.4 Improved well being through HIV/AIDS control promotion ³

The ability of the population to engage in productive activities is in part dependent on their health. However, the disease burden in the district is largely attributed to inadequate knowledge and bad attitudes and practices in regards to preventive health. Safe environmental sanitation is inadequate. Likewise, the effects of HIV/AIDS are starting to explode. AFARD took this as an entry point.

Achievements

- *Behavioral Change Communication (BCC)*
Enormous effort has been put on Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) targeting prevention and counseling and testing. A strategic entry was made to ensure that each group of people was reached in their own unique social grouping. The essence of doing so was to ensure that communication was customized to the perception and practices of the group. It was also to promote free interaction, which is always lost when people of different categories (like a father-in-law with her daughter-in-law) are mixed together. Efforts were directed to awareness creation using a multi-channel approach. Interpersonal communication through seminars (reaching all the part of Dei village); print media like posters, leaflets, brochures, stickers, and T-shirts and caps were produced and radio messages (both spots and talk shows) aired on Radio Kitara and Paidha. To date, 849 people have been sensitized; 325 couples counseled; 7 radio talk shows and 5 radio spots aired; 312 T-shirts and caps distributed; 27 videos shown; 10 cartons of condoms; and about 3 reams of brochures, 2.2 reams of leaflets, 3 reams of posters, and 2 reams of stickers were designed, pre-tested, printed and distributed district-wide.
- *Skills development.*
In order to be able to face the problem of sustainability of impact and enabling local communities take control of their lives in their hands, skills development aimed at imparting the basic required functional and management skills the 'locals' needed in order to engage meaningfully in the fight against HIV/AIDS was provided. As a result, 20 peer educators-cum-counselor, 56 condom distributors, 10 traditional birth attendants, 2 community facilitators, 30 community leaders, 13 traditional healers, 2 drama groups, and 20 community based home care volunteers have been trained in especially Jonam and Padyere.



From these activities, there is a remarkable score in the change of knowledge, attitude and practices in our operational areas. In Dei in particular, people have become conscious of their sexuality. Rampant and shared sexual encounters, rotational marriage, unsafe sex, shyness to discuss AIDS with family and friends are slow fading away.

³ This activity was largely funded by Development Cooperation Ireland and Global Fund. Attempts with AIM was futile although no clear explanation was provided.

Constraints

- *Interventions are project based with specific components e.g., BCC or condom distribution. The other aspect of mitigation (OVC) is largely neglected yet crucial.*
- *VCT service provision by government alone is too inadequate. Supply is overwhelmed by high demand. Delay to streamline such services may affect further spread and/or resistance in future to testing.*
- *Stigmatization (self and by the community) is making many people shy from public declaration of their status. Many PLWA are not seeking counseling services neither are they integrating well in their communities.*

Lessons learnt

- *BCC requires a multi-approach, which should be target specific. The usual assumption that one message fit all does not work because of contextual differences. Thus, community views are important in any IEC design.*
- *The co-involvement of government agencies in development programmes of CSO requires facilitation. This beats common assumptions that government can fund their co-participation. Experience has shown that there is also budget deficit in government departments and as and when they are needed to partake in other institutional activities they may not have the required facilitation from their own vote.*
- *For positive results in the fight against HIV/AIDS to be realized there is need for a multi-faceted approach. Compartmentalization of intervention weakens social change.*

3.5 Consultancy services

In the year, there were few consultancy services. The main source of work with local governments in the past was affected by the policy of central government sourcing for consultants for local governments. The few contracts accomplished in the year are summarized hereunder:

Table 2: Summary of consultancy services

Activity	Funding Organisation	Contact Person
Training		
1. Project Implementation Committee	NDLG	Mr. Manano Richard
2. School management committee	NDLG	Mr. Kwiri Topher
3. Computer skills	Private Sector/NDLG	Mr. Cwinyaii/Mr. Kura
4. Microenterprise development	SACU	Ms. Rosemary Mirembe
Programme Development		
1. Strategic Planning	NASON, PLWA, NSMCCA, DWC	Mr. Kwiri Topher
Action Research		
1. Food security	Action Aid	Ms. Rose Atim/Drs. Lakwo A
2. Living with HIV/AIDS	AFARD	Drs. Lakwo/Mildred G
3. PMA and Fisher community exclusion	AFARD	Drs. Lakwo/Amule J.O

3.6 As a learning organization

AFARD's commitment to capacity building recognizes the fact that this is a long-term endeavor with forward and backward linkages. The growth of capacity is different for different organizations at any one moment and this creates different demands. A responsive approach would thus be to learn and grow with these organizations.

Achievements

- *Human Resources*
The Board has remained committed to the course of AFARD and continued to provide cautious direction throughout the year. Meanwhile, the Technical team lost one Volunteer to CARE-Uganda. Mr. William Oloya left AFARD in June 2004 and is now the Programme Manager for Gulu area but has maintained a close tie with us. And, for the Volunteer positions, we have continued to provide a few exposures as and when the opportunity comes, especially in contracts (without compromising our work quality!) where allowances are paid.
- *Tooling*
A number of equipments and tools were procured in the year. These were mainly audio-visual facilities. The old land cruiser was disposed of and a replacement ordered. We remain wanting largely in computers (because the ones that we have are now too old and expensive to maintain), and an Internet services.
- *Networking*
AFARD has maintained her associational membership in UNASO, NASON and NGO Forum (national and district). In 2004, we renewed our NGO Certificate and joined West Nile Private Sector Development Promotion Center Ltd and PELUM – Uganda. These have kept us abreast of (inter)national development issues and have provided us the opportunity to link with other similar minded organizations.

Constraints

- *The increase in local resource share over the years is not commensurate with the expected growth of AFARD and its self-sustainability. This has continued to challenge our conviction to maintain a low donor fund (<50%) in AFARD's long-term existence.*
- *Demand for Volunteer positions is beyond our absorption capacity. With no funds to support these young professionals' subsistence, it is quite hard to ensure their semi-permanent placement apart from temporary ventures that in themselves do not promote a coherent learning required of them to become articulate and committed practical development actors.*
- *The change in strategy (from a project to programme and process to impact) exerts enormous pressure on the human resource demand. Over the years, AFARD operation rested solidly on the founder members' voluntarism. This can no longer be sustained because a volunteer has to depend on his/her reserve that without renewal degenerates. Besides, it burr the entry of new people to stir up the organization to realizing its goals (not compromising the workforce's goals too!).*

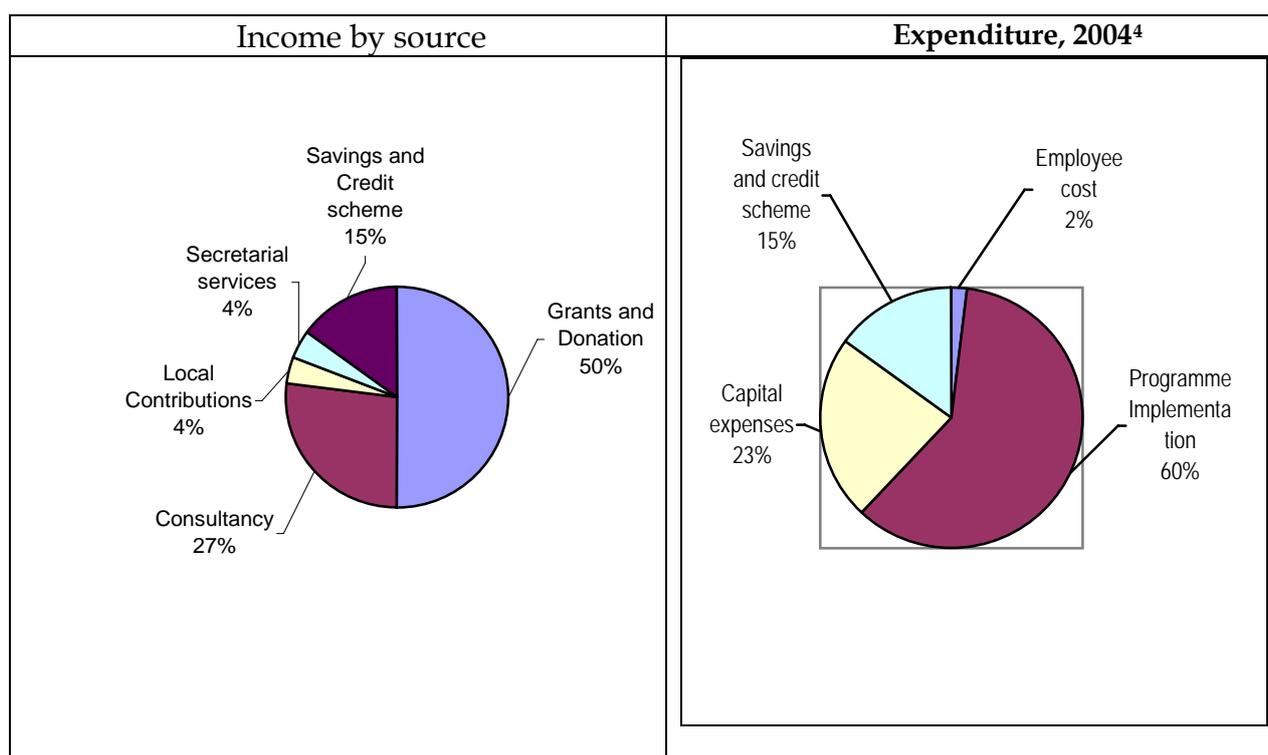
Lessons learnt

- *Organizational growth and recognition require time, adherence to concrete ethical values, and commitment to results both in the lives of the beneficiaries and the very existence of the organization. This takes both formal and informal approaches to managing change and relations.*
- *Voluntarism has its limit. Overtime, every organization needs to pay for services rendered to it if it must have professional competence to survive.*

4.0 Financial summary

The main sources of funds in AFARD are locally generated from membership fees, annual members’ subscription fees, other members’ contributions, consultancies, and secretarial services. Grants has been minimally sourced and for specific projects.

In 2004, AFARD continued to experience a steady growth in its finance. Income increased from Ushs Ushs 98,366,311 in 2003 and Ushs 160,679,587 in 2004 indicating 63% increase. Proceeds from contracts were re-directed to asset acquisition and continuity of partner group projects.



⁴ Expenses exclude (i) funds not yet deposited on account; bank balance on on-going programmes; and below the line budget

5.0 Plan for 2005

Below is a summary of activities planned to be undertaken in 2005.

Theme	Activities	Budget	Main source	Remarks
Institutional development	Gender	35,000,000	HURINET	Funds secured
Food security	Shea nut tree conservation	6,500,000	Overall Stichting	Funds secured
HIV/AIDS	Behavioural Change communication	83,935,545	DCI	Funds secured
	Children affected by HIV/AIDS	25,000,000	Canada Fund	Funds being discussed
Income generation	Microenterprise development	1,600,000	Haella Stichting	Funds secured

6.0 Who manages AFARD?

AFARD is managed by a Board of Directors (at the policy level) and a technical team composed of qualified professional who have lived and worked in the region for a minimum of 10 years (at the programme level) assisted by experienced community facilitators and volunteers (at the utility level).

(a) Members of the Board of Directors



Rev. Fr. Geoffrey Ocamgiu
(Chairperson)



Mr. Kura Vasco
(Vice Chairperson)

**His Eminence Henry
Luke Orombi**
(Member)



Mr. Ogenrwoth Sam
(Member).

Ms. Alarango Florence
(Member)



Mike B. Okecha
(Lawyer)

(b) Technical Team in AFARD



Dr. Sam Orochi Orach
Fellow, Health Policy and Management (USA); MPH (Management) Primary Health Care (Italy); Bachelor of Medicine and Surgery (Uganda).



Cwinyaa Wilfred
M.Sc. Agriculture, Rural Development (Ireland); B.Sc. Agriculture (Uganda); Certificate, Project Planning and Management (The Netherlands).



Drs. Alfred Lakwo
PhD Student (The Netherlands); M.A. Development Studies (Uganda); B.A (Uganda); Diploma Project Planning and Management (Uganda).



Uyirwoth Norbert
Higher Diploma in Marketing (Uganda).



Janey Watango
Diploma in Journalism and Communication Studies (Uganda).



Biwinjire Gladies
Uganda Certificate of Education (Uganda).