

STRENGTHENING WOMEN COUNCILS IN NEBBI DISTRICT TO PARTICIPATE IN PLANNING AND BUDGETING AT SUB COUNTY AND DISTRICT LEVELS (2005-06)

End of Project Report



***Agency for Accelerated Regional Development
(AFARD)***

July 2006

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1.0 PROJECT SUMMARY

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Project Name and number	Strengthening Women Councils in Nebbi District to Participate in Planning and Budgeting at Sub County and District Levels.
Project Location	Nebbi District , West Nile region, Uganda.
Project goal	To increase gender responsiveness of local governments and women as a constituency to (effectively) participate in the decentralized planning and budgeting in Nebbi district.
Project target	The Women of Nebbi district.
Beneficiaries	Sub county and District Women Council.
Project Duration	Approved 12 months (Extension of 4 months).
Total project Cost	UGX 35,000,000 (excluding evaluation cost to be centrally paid for).
Funding Agency	Human Rights Network - Uganda (HURINET (U)).
Date of reporting	July 9, 2006

2.0 PROJECT BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) is a local NGO operating in Nebbi district in north western Uganda. It is committed to promoting improved livelihood of the people through: (i) management and technical skills development; (ii) participatory action research; (iii) information gathering and dissemination; (iv) resources mobilization; (v) networking and linkages; and (vi) advocacy and lobbying. This project is, therefore, an expression of that commitment.

In February 2005, the Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD) received a co-funding grant from Human Rights Network-Uganda (HURINET-U) for a project titled: *Strengthening Women Councils in Nebbi District to Participate in Planning and Budgeting at Sub County and District Levels*. The primary aim of this engagement was to increase gender responsiveness of local governments in Nebbi district on the one hand and women as a

constituency to (effectively) participate in the decentralized planning and budgeting on the other hand. Thus, this project had two objectives: (i) to sensitize Women Councils on the rights of women and how they can use their position to address women's problems; and (ii) to equip the Women Councils with skills (and facilitate them) to advocate and lobby for a gender sensitive local council planning and budgeting processes. This report, therefore, presents a summary of the achievements of the project and includes results of the post-training and advocacy follow-up done for four months to ascertain the actual gender responsiveness of the local government planning processes.

2.2 The review process

The quest to tease out the achievements of the project took the form of an internal review being aware that HURINET (U) is likely to undertake a more formal evaluation to ascertain the project's impact. The review, therefore, focused on the relationship between the project inputs, the anticipated outputs and outcomes versus the actual outcomes based on indicators used for tracking progress. Two tools were used:

- **literature review** of the project proposal, baseline situation, field activity reports, and periodic monitoring during the local government FY 2006/07 planning process; and
- **a joint review meeting** held with the women council members and community development staffs to trace and assess in a step-by-step manner the project evolution from where we started to where we are now asking the question, 'what next?'

A summary of the project intentions are presented on the next page and thereafter the achievements.

2.3 A Summary of the project intentions

The entire project was composed of four main activities. Below is a summary of the implementation processes undertaken.

Activities	Training of women councils and councilors	Sub county advocacy and lobbying workshops	District level advocacy and lobbying workshop	Follow-up visits
Objectives	<p>At the end of the training, participants are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to enumerate at least 3 cardinal issues related to women's rights as stipulated in the Constitution. • Able to explain development from a human rights perspective and position women's rights as pivotal in local government development process. • Able to use a gender responsive budget analytical tool to analyze annual local government budgets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness on gender issues and the gender impact embedded in LLG plans and budgets. • Enlist LLG commitments to GRPB and make them accountable for such commitments. • Come up with an agreed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) work plan that clearly indicates responsibility centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness on gender issues and the gender impact embedded in district plan and budget. • Provide feedback to the district on the LLG advocacy meetings • Enlist the district commitments to GRPB • Come up with an agreed monitoring and evaluation (M&E) work plan that clearly indicates responsibility centers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify progress made in gender responsiveness during the FY 2006/07 planning processes • Follow-up on the various commitments made to streamline decentralized planning processes.
Beneficiaries	Sub county and parish women council executives; women councilors; selected technical staffs	Sub county chiefs, Town clerks, health assistants/inspectors, community development officers, accountants, extension workers, parish development committees, LLG executives and councilors, and women representatives	District Executive Committee, Women Council executives, Councilors, heads of department, civil society representatives, the press	Direct contacts with the LLG chairperson, sub county chiefs, Town Clerks, Accountants, and Women council executives.

3.0 PROJECT performance: achievement of targets

Planned activity	Baseline situation	Action intended to address the situation	Expected output	Achievements	
				Process results	Impact results
Training of women council and councilors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WC were not aware of their human and women's rights • Many WC not aware of their roles • Women only aware of Women's Day budget • Bad relationship between WC and women councilors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train WC and councilors together on rights, roles, and the dynamics of gender responsive budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 405 people trained in 19 sub counties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customized training manual was produced • Facilitators were identified and inducted • Training mobilization conducted • Trainings held in all LLGs for 856 (86% women) people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women and leaders are aware of their human and women's rights • WC leaders made aware of development as their rights and not privileges thus LLG plans should be gender sensitive • Improved working relations between WC and women councilors
Sub county advocacy and lobbying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some LLG leaders were not aware of women's rights • LLG leaders were not aware of WC roles • Budgets and plans were gender blind or neutral • Development was perceived as 'given' by politicians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customize an advocacy for LLG leaders with women's rights and WC roles clearly spelt to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold advocacy for 665 people in 19 LLGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customized advocacy manual was produced • Facilitators were identified and inducted • Advocacy mobilization conducted • Advocacy held in all 19 LLGs for 630 people (53% women) – excluding Parombo • All LLGs made a commitment plan to engender their plans and budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for gender responsiveness is appreciated by leaders • Women and leaders (especially councilors) are aware of the resource allocation manipulation used by committees and technical staffs • Women called for having their office desk established with the LG structures

				Achievements	
District level advocacy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customize an advocacy for district leaders with women's rights and WC roles and commitments of LLG clearly spelt to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocate and lobby 45 district leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A customized advocacy manual was produced • Facilitators were identified and inducted • Advocacy mobilization conducted • 1 advocacy held at district level for 92 people (64% women) • The district made a more policy oriented commitment to engender LG plans and budgets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As above
Follow-up visits	See above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up all LLGs for their commitments made to engender their planning and budgeting processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct follow-ups 14 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress tracking checklist developed • All 19 LLGs were visited 	Based on EDF CSO Capacity Building Project's – Capacity Assessment conducted among sub county and parish WC executives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 33.6% are aware of their roles • 45% are executing those roles • 30.2% know; 11.1% have skills; and 19.1% apply both in gender responsive planning and budgeting

4.0 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

Activity	Approved budget	Actual budget	Variance	AFARD top-up	Remarks
Training of women council and councilors	15,295,500	15,295,500	-	-	
Sub county level advocacy and lobbying	13,414,500	13,414,500	-	-	
District level advocacy and lobbying	3,872,000	3,642,000	230,000	-	No advocacy was held at Parombo LLG
Follow-up visits	400,000	1,350,000	-950,000	950,000	Additional 5 LLGs were also visited
Administrative cost	-	71,363	-71,363	-	Not included in project budget
TOTAL PROJECT COST	32,985,000	33,702,000	950,000	950,000	
Bank balance		158,637			

5.0 OTHER RESULTS

During the year, the project benefited from a chain of synergies with other AFARD programmes.

- The lessons learnt from the project made it possible for AFARD to secure a highly competitive EU funding for 2 years worth UGX 175 million under the EDF CSO Capacity Building Programme.
- Improved image and acceptance of AFARD among both women and local government institutions.

6.0 CHALLENGES, LESSONS LEARNT AND WAY FORWARD

6.1 Key challenges

The following challenges remain notable in the project:

Unit analysis	of	Key challenges
Women individuals	as	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The high rate of illiteracy among women greatly affected the level of self confidence and esteem hence their participation in planning and budgeting. ▪ Most women are inadequately informed of their rights and other provisions meant to protect and promote their rights. Thus they cannot hold their leaders accountable
The women council		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most women councils are not functioning due to lack of knowledge of roles and poor facilitation from the Local Governments. ▪ Members of WC lack the skills to advocate for their rights and to enable other women know their rights. Thus in totality they have a weak voice ▪ The capacity of the WC and also the women councilors to question and engage in Local Government planning and budgeting processes and therefore the outcomes from these processes is still low and less appreciated. So technocrats and a few politicians do as they please.
Local governments		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Low prioritization of gender issues generally and women's concerns in particular in development plans and mid-term expenditure framework results into these issues not being reflected in budgets. ▪ Limited capacity to carry out a systematic and well organized gender responsive budgeting and gender analysis and mainstreaming makes gender to continue to remain more of a theoretical consideration. ▪ Development is taken by most local governments to mean hardware facilities which do not favor software interventions like support to the women council. ▪ Development is in most cases taken as a privilege not as a right because of politicizing development and the whole practice of vote buying, thus women and indeed most marginalized groups lose out. ▪ Information sharing between the LLG and the women council is very weak, hence women do not know where potential benefits lie.
National policies		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Although national policies on gender and human rights exist, it was noted that: policy generation are not done in consultation with the local community; policy dissemination is inadequate; and policies are not prepared in a consumable format e.g., policy translation. Hence the people in whose name the policies are developed are not aware of them.

6.2 Lessons Learnt

In the implementation of this project, we learnt that the realization of GRPB requires both (i) the technical competence to conceptualize, operationalise, conduct, and audit the gender responsiveness of the entire planning processes, the plan and budget contents, and follow-up of the actual plan and budget content implementation; and (ii) the political will to take up and question local government actions in regards to gender equity. In areas where none of these two ingredients existed no success was scored while where only one aspect was strong at least some partial positive results were scored.

In this way, GRPB is beyond the mere view of having gender concerns taken on-board in developing plans and budget and ensuring that those concerns are fulfilled. It also includes changing the mindset of policy makers to realize and appreciate gender equity in order to 'supply' services in an equality-oriented approach. Likewise, the beneficiary women need to know their human and gender rights in order to 'demand' for them from local governments. As such, the nexus of this supply-and-demand play lies in a multi-actor approach in local development planning (where all stakeholders are involved beyond mere information and consultation) as well as the full transparency (through effective communication) of duty bearer to ensure that people know the what and why they adopt certain actions.

6.3 Way forward

Given the challenges above and lessons learnt, the following are recommended if GRPB is to realized in Nebbi district.

- There is an urgent need to develop a minimum skills improvement package on participatory gender-oriented planning for all political and technical personnel especially those directly involved in planning.
- There is a need to have in place effective gender focal point persons right from the district to sub county levels equipped with gender analytical skills. Together with the District Planning Unit, they could strengthen the process of engendering planning and budgeting processes.
- There is need for capacity building on civic competence under a programme that targets the general populace in order to create awareness on people's civic rights and responsibilities so that 'returns to votes' can be questioned among elected leaders.
- There is need to mobilize women as a constituency to participate, at all levels of local governments, in planning and budgeting processes in order to echo (and force is need be!) their needs.
- Gender audit should be done in all local government plans and budget to ensure conformity to GRB and where deviations are found, the women of the areas must be mobilized to question the power that be.
- There is a need for a mass campaign to challenge and reposition the mind set that development is a privilege to that that support and uphold development from a human

right perspective. This can be achieved through a well designed IEC strategy for materials and knowledge dissemination.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Gender responsive planning and budgeting has been positively received in Nebbi District and all Lower Local Governments as seen from their commitments. However for GRPB to take root, technical competence of both parties have to be improved and the political will exhibited needs to be backed by tangible action.