



DRT Newsletter

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2014: A tough year for poor Ugandans



Taxes introduced in 2014

Shs200/lt slammed on kerosene (paraffin)

VAT on salt was reintroduced

Excise duty on sugar increased from **Shs25** to **Shs50**

10% excise duty introduced on mobile money withdrawal fees

18% VAT on agricultural inputs was introduced but, roundly rejected by 1 million farmers

About Shs650 billion is lost in corruption every year

2014 has been full of puzzles. It has been punctuated with grave challenges and marginal opportunities for the poor. **Story on Pg 4**

Have interventions on social protection gained political acceptance in Uganda?

BY JONH BOSCO MUBIRU
PROGRAMME OFFICER

The current waves surrounding issues of older persons in Uganda predicts that better days for senior citizens are coming. For months now, issues of older persons are strongly emerging and discussed at national level-something that never used to happen in the past.

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EDITOR'S PICK



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TO CONTRIBUTE TO POVERTY REDUCTION THROUGH ACTION RESEARCH

Kampala Tugende demonstrates importance of data amidst challenge



BY JOHN NSUBUGA
STATISTICIAN

Sectors/Tags	Dataset Title	Views	Release date
Education	Students' Enrollment and No. of Teachers by Division and School, Kampala City Compares number of students to number of teachers	3	October 25, 2014
Health	STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT AND NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY SCHOOLS AND DIVISIONS STUDENTS' ENROLLMENT AND NUMBER OF TEACHERS BY SCHOOLS AND DIVISIONS OF	23	October 25, 2014

Kampala Tugende workspace on opendevelopdata.org

“Every citizen shall have a right of Access to Information in the possession of the state except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the state or interfere with the right to privacy of any other person.” says Article 41 of the Uganda’s constitution.

This right was upheld by the enactment of the Access to Information Act 2005, which was operationalised with the passing of the implementation regulations six years later in 2011.

These good regulations place Uganda among countries that are open for citizens to get more involved in decision making and aware of what government does.

However, the right to access information is often abused and the law is not widely known by many Ugandans. There is slow movement and sluggishness in implementing the law among government institutions and other key sectors.

About a year now, Development Research and Training (DRT) has frequented some public offices looking for data to inform the implementation of the Kampala Tugende project. But accessing information has been quite challenging.

Kampala Tugende is a five-year slum transformation project implemented within the five divisions of Kampala. The project is implemented by DRT, Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and ACTogether with funding from Comic Relief.

The project is using access to information as a catalyst to inform positive change, faster

economic growth and development in city slums.

But accessing the required information on all the five slums of Kampala is somewhat a challenge. Agencies especially governmental are not always willing to release information mainly concerning public expenditure.

In cases where information has been released, data has always been disjointed, making it hard to compare and analyze in case one needed to do a trend analysis.

Interestingly, data from some government agencies is sold at relatively high price. Such bottlenecks are denying the public a responsibility to contribute to defining community development priorities, raising the necessary resources (through payment of taxes and levies), monitor and promote effective use of resources to end poverty. The hindrances also affect the promotion of transparency and accountability as well as stimulating innovation.

However, some agencies like, Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) are willing to share information they hold on behalf of citizens. Such a practice should be adopted by all agencies.

Basing on data gathered from open institutions, Kampala Tugende has managed to establish an online platform (www.opendevelopdata.org) where data sets on five sectors (health, education, water and sanitation, livelihoods and governance) is stored and shared freely. Different users freely download the information from the web-portal and analyse it to meet their goals. Currently, the website has over 50 datasets on Kampala city and at least 1000 viewers have visited the site.

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Have interventions on social protections gained political acceptance

From page 1

Their voices are amplified in the press more than it has ever been. One of the issues that have kept on surfacing both at the floor of Parliament and in the media, is the national roll-out of the senior citizens' grant.

The senior citizen's grant is an unconditional monthly allowance of Shs25, 000 (\$10) given to all older people (aged 65 years and above, and 60 years in Karamoja region) to support their livelihood. The programme is one of the core elements of Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) piloted in 15 out of 112 districts in Uganda.

According to the Expanding Social Protection Programme (ESP) under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, the programme is currently supporting only 105,135 beneficiaries yet the population of older person is estimated at 1.3 million.

"We believe that excluding such a sizeable proportion of potential SAGE beneficiaries is detrimental to social cohesion, political stability and poses a threat to Uganda's socio-economic progress." Mr John Orach, the

FACTS ABOUT SAGE

At least 105,135 older people in 15 districts are getting an unconditional monthly allowance of Shs25, 000 (\$10) to support their livelihood.

"It's the mandate of the ministry to promote social inclusion and this is the reason why the government is committed to implement the SAGE programme," Mr Sulaiman Madada, State Minister for Elderly and Disability

"The president promised that SAGE would be provided to all elderly persons in future as the economy grows," Ms Maria Kiwanuka, Minister of Finance.

"The pilot has demonstrated that the programme is affordable and has ability of transforming livelihoods of the old. I am wondering why the government has failed to enroll it to areas it has not reached." Mr Joseph Ssewungu, MP Kalungu West.



SAGE beneficiaries receiving their monthly payments in Napak district. Photo by Charles Male

chairperson National Network of Older Persons of Uganda (NNOU) said during the launching of SAGE programme in Yumbe District in October.

Majority of older persons are living a life of no form of financial resources because they are in the informal sector which lacks social pensions. Many experience social exclusion, discrimination and bear a burden of care for over 60 percent of Uganda's orphans and vulnerable children.

Before older persons raised their game play by petitioning Parliament on July 4, organising a series of regional engagements and showcasing the benefits they have attained from the grant, many politicians were mocking the programme. Some politicians thought the grant was going to create laziness and dependency syndrome in the economy, while others were saying the intervention is not affordable and sustainable. Such negative sentiments were hindering government to commit to the expansion of the project.

However, while launching the senior citizens grants in Yumbe District on the International Day for Older Persons, the Finance Minister Maria Kiwanuka said President Museveni was glad that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development had instituted safeguards to remit the grant. "He (president) promised that SAGE would be provided

to all elderly persons in future as the economy grows," Ms Kiwanuka said.

Meanwhile, many politicians have pick interest in the programme after realising that it is an economic safety net for the older persons, a social group government had otherwise ignored from its core programme. Some Members of Parliament who were speaking ill of the programme have started advocating for its national roll-out after realising that the issue is turning into a political capital.

On November 6, when the petition calling for the national roll-out of the programme was tabled to parliament by Ms Flavia Kabahenda Rwabuhoro, the chairperson of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Social Protection, many MPs particularly from Buganda region committed to support the petition. They threatened not to pass Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development budget until the roll-out of senior citizen grants is considered.

"The pilot has demonstrated that the programme is affordable and has ability of transforming livelihoods of the old. I am wondering why the government has failed to enroll it to areas it has not reached." Mr Joseph Ssewungu, MP Kalungu West.

The trends predict a bright future for the programme since lack of political will has always been challenge.



Petty traders doing their usual business in Ggaba trading centre.

2014: A TOUGH YEAR FOR POOR UGANDANS

Slamming taxes on paraffin was one of the most hotly debated aspects on new taxes introduced in 2014. It even went up to the president before it returned to the floor of parliament through the NRM caucus for final passage

BY PHIONAH SANYU
& JOSEPH MITI

The year 2014 has been full of puzzles. It has been punctuated with grave challenges and marginal opportunities for the poor. A sharp drop in food price inflation slowed Uganda’s annual inflation rate, giving an opportunity to the poor to have some food and other basic needs compared to 2013.

Also, through a successful 1million signatures campaign, the poor -of which majority are depending on agriculture, managed to force the government to scrap the 18 percent Value Added Tax (VAT) on agricultural inputs and equipment that was proposed in the 2014/15 budget. The Finance Minister Maria Kiwanuka had proposed an 18

percent VAT on agricultural supplies to generate Shs323.7billion. But, the poor rose to their feet and rejected the proposal with an appeal that the levy



should be halted until the Agricultural sector attains full modernisation indicators to sustain itself.

However, although the government accepted to drop VAT on agriculture inputs, it instead introduced a raft of new taxes that would see the budget “balanced on the backs of the poor”.

For example, government slapped a Shs200 tax charge on kerosene (paraffin) and accordingly approved more taxes on sugar, salt and mobile money transactions. Imposing new taxes on such items means imperiling the poor, increasing inequalities and deepening poverty among the population. For years now, the government has been purporting to make “pro-poor and pro-production” national budgets, but the budgets normally end up chastising the poor without pity. Instead of boosting the economy growth, the allegedly pro-poor budgets have continuously caused negative impacts on government programmes set to fight poverty and vulnerability. For example, levying a

FACTS ABOUT POVERTY

- 19.7% of Ugandans are still below the national poverty line.
- 43% of the non-poor remain vulnerable.
- Funding for Agriculture, which sustains livelihoods of 70% Ugandans remain low.
- Government’s intention to introduce new taxes on inputs used by the poor is a contradiction to the priority placed on the sector



Editorial

Taking the data bull by its horns



Shs200 tax on paraffin will definitely have a negative impact on the quality of education in rural schools where children use paraffin candles (locally known as "tadobas") to provide ambient light for reading at night.

This will also increase pressure on natural resources as people whom government has failed to provide electricity, will cut forests for fuel wood and charcoal.

The government has always had no kind words for those opposing such taxes and warning them to stop pampering the poor whom it supports to transform their lives through provision of free education, farm inputs and the abolition of graduated tax. This argument is supported by some individuals particularly politicians who say imposing such taxes oblige the poor to work harder and hold responsibilities.

While reinstating the paraffin tax in October, MPs, particularly from the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) party, backed the move with an argument that levying more taxes on paraffin will bar middlemen from taking advantage of waivers to exploit the consumers.

The argument that even when the government provided the waiver last year, the fuel dealers did not lower the prices is defeatist and is in itself an indictment on the government.

It is true; the poor also need to bear the burden of building their country, but it is erroneous to continue balancing the books on the backs of the poor Ugandans. To be realistic, there are leakages in the economy, which need to be fixed first before punishing the poor. More than Shs650 billion is lost in corruption every year and this money is pocketed by the well-off who do it with impunity.

Instead of oppressing the poor, who are the victims of the vice, the authorities in government should balance the Budget on the backs of the corrupt officials.

The fact is that government has to widen the tax base to generate more revenue to meet its budget obligations, stimulate productivity in the largely subsistence agriculture sector and support a number of poverty alleviation programmes, but this should be done through strategies that are kind to the poor.

It is no longer disputed that an open and transparent governance system combined with an informed citizenry improves the responsiveness of governments - both at central and local levels - to the demands and interests of the citizenry.

The first step in the change process is for both government and the citizens to see the value in having up-to-date information and acting upon it. In other words this has to be a change in attitude towards information. Presently good quality information is not readily available particularly at district and lower levels largely because, for decades, investment in statistics was not a priority of government. And the consumers of

The issue:
managing the data revolution for poverty eradication

The end result:
With the assistance of modern and powerful technologies, services delivered even to the remotest of places, can now be geo-coded and be available to consumers in real time.

of a "data revolution". At local and even grassroots levels there is an awakening to the need to generate, clean, store and disseminate data in real time. With the assistance of modern and powerful

this information were not demanding for data strongly enough as they got used to using outdated information, making speculative or half-baked statements based on scanty and incomplete data.

The good news is that this is now changing. At the global there is now talk

technologies, services delivered even to the remotest of places, can now be geo-coded and be available to consumers in real time.

DRT is playing its part in supporting local governments and communities to interact with each other using shared data that is more easily digestible and made sense of. Each story in this newsletter illustrates an aspect of the importance of data for different uses. The main story is that having quality data, properly analyzed, readily available, and acted upon, makes a tremendous difference whether in Kampala City divisions or in sub counties of rural districts such as Katakwi, Kitgum, or the Rwenzori region. We think that this is going to have a snowball effect as more local governments and communities appreciate the value of and demand information for decision making. Soon and very soon the question of "do we eat information?" will be something of the past as more people realize that information actually helps to put food on the family table and more as it helps them to get what belongs to them instead of depending on handouts. It is time to take the information bull by its horns and harness it for citizens' benefit.

Warren Nyamugasira,
DRT Team Leader

OUR COMMITMENT TO YOU

We pledge:

- To contribute to processes which promote poor peoples' abilities to manage and protect themselves against socio-economic and policy-related vulnerabilities.

- To build capacity of individual and institutional expertise in research, analysis, interpretation and information dissemination about poverty and more specifically chronic poverty.

School versus Community Based Gender Interventions: What is the best approach?



The intervention aim at enabling primary school pupils like those posing in the photo to understand gender related issues.



BY ANDREW KAWOONYA SSEBUNYA
SENIOR PROGRAMME OFFICER

Despite Uganda having impressive gender laws, policy and institutional frameworks, gender related issues are still misunderstood by majority of the populace, a new study has revealed.

The study, conducted by Development Research and Training (DRT) in Kotido and Amudat districts in October 2014, shows that although the gender concept is relatively well known by the locals, but is not fully translated in classes and at the community level.

“The cultural set up (cattle economy) affects access and quality of education particularly for the girl child” a consultation report reads in part. This

study was commissioned by UNICEF and Ministry of Education and Sports.

It was also clear that the link between the school and the community on gender issues was very weak yet gender related problems stems from the community.

The Gender and Economic growth in Uganda report (2008) revealed that 63 percent of women compared to 77 percent men are literate and 38 percent of girls compared to 62 percent boys are in school. The dropout rate from school by girls is higher compared to boys. This situation is even worse in districts like Amudat and parts of Moroto where Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and early marriages are also still very common.

The country has a number of laws and policies to mainstream gender. Articles 21 (2) and 32 (1) of the constitution of Uganda attempts to address gender inequities. “...a person shall not be discriminated against on the ground of sex. ...the state shall take affirmative action in favour of groups marginalised on the basis of gender for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them”. Other gender policies and

programme include the national gender policy (1997) and the national action plan on women (1999). Additionally, women are represented at all political levels right from the LC1, to parliament. This shows government’s commitment towards gender equality.

–The study further noted other persistent gender problems and violation in education which include sexual, physical, emotional and psychological violence and harmful traditional practices. It was also noted that gender and vulnerability programmes tend to favour the girl child.

“The link between the school and the community on gender issues was very weak yet gender related problems stems from the community

Since November 2011 with support from A New Global Programme on Education, UNICEF in collaboration with Ministry of Education has implemented a four -year Peace Building and Advocacy (PBEA) programme. The programme has targeted conflict affected areas (North Eastern Karamoja) and recognized education as a key social issue for promoting peace and social cohesion.

Meanwhile, basing on gender related challenges in education, the partners planned to implement a one -year pilot teacher training programme in Karamoja region to equip teachers with the understanding and skills to foster a change in gender social norms in schools. The pilot training attempts to address access and quality of education for boys and girls and shall build evidence on the best approaches for promoting gender parity and peace building through education. DRT was tasked to design the training package.

But the question that remained is; what is the best approach to addressing gender disparity? Targeting the school is not enough. There is a need to strongly link the school and the community where the gender problem is rooted.

A combination of ICT tools promotes effective resource allocation



BY SANYU PHIONAH

Programme Officer/ PS -ED,

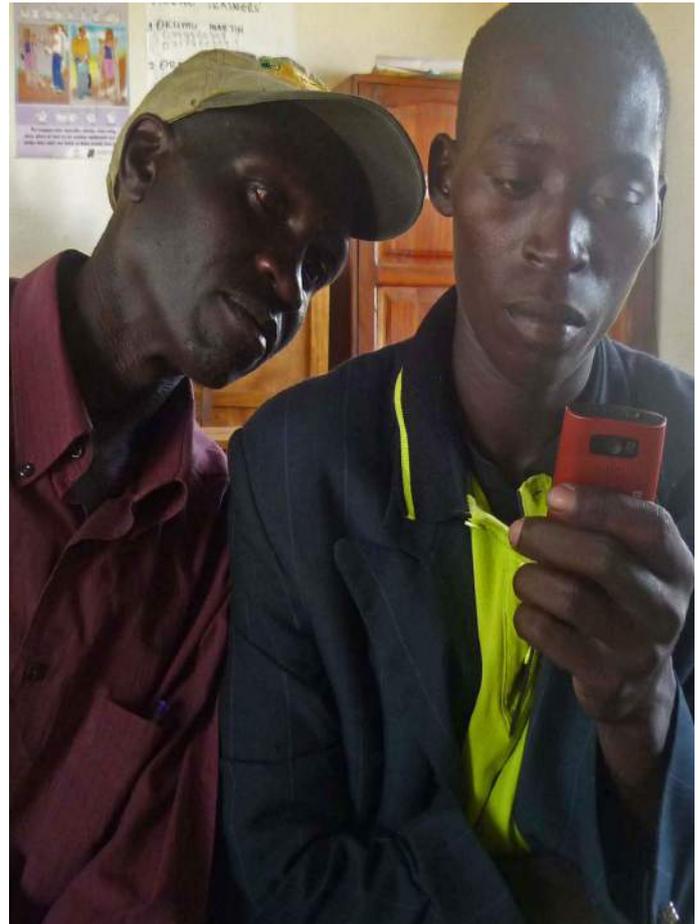
Promoting comprehensive use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools can be an important factor in reducing or completely ending poverty. Simple ICT tools like the internet, radio and telephones have demonstrated to be great mediums through which information can reach very faster to the targeted audience and in this case the local populace. Such tools are promoting participation of all stakeholders in planning and decision making as well as empowering community to engage their leadership.

In an ongoing research codenamed, the Information for Poverty Eradication (INFOTEP), Rwenzori Information Centre Network (RIC-NET) and Toro Development Network (ToroDev) have adopted the use of a combination of ICT tools to promote access to information among local communities in the Rwenzori region. INFOTEP programme is a collaborative initiative between Development Research and Training (DRT), Development Initiatives (DI) and five partners in Gulu, Buikwe, and Kabarole districts. RIC-NET and ToroDev are two of the five partners who are enhancing the use of data in making decisions that gear towards improving service delivery and hence eradicating poverty at community level.

The two partners have demonstrated that data provided openly to the community can act as a strong monitoring tool for effective and efficient service delivery.

Through use of telephones and radios, the two partners seek communities' opinions on service delivery and the responses are collated through the "tracfm" online platform. With the aid of the tracfm platform, partners are able to collect, analyze and gather responses randomly on the status of community services under a given sector. The validated information is then triangulated with data from other sources to determine the magnitude of the problem in a given community.

The information generated is also used by stakeholders in the sub-region to understand service delivery points and trigger policy debates on districts development prospects. Data collected so far is expected to be used during the planning and budget cycle for the financial year 2015/16. It will guide appropriate resource allocation that aligns to community



Thousands of Ugandans are using cell phone for accessing information on resources

Internet users in Uganda are estimated at 6.5million as of 2012.

95% of Uganda's population has access to radio and Television Stations.

At least 14 million subscribe to mobile phone

needs.

Furthermore, open access to information has reduced duplication of services and has promoted equal services and resources distribution in communities. Provision of information on poverty in the region has strengthened working relationships among various stakeholders working to end poverty. For example in Rwenzori region, District Community Based Services departments have been able to link with other service delivery stakeholders to address community needs. Basing on the information gathered so far, districts will be able to produce people-centered District Development Plans and Budgets. Using same information will also promote collective impact and effective service delivery thus ending poverty and vulnerability.

Such finds illustrates that more resources and energy should be invested in promoting access to timely information to influence decision making and resource allocation to eradicate poverty.

How DRT is using Open Data experiences to influence global data revolution debate

The need for and the dawn of a data revolution is at the heart of the international community's conceptualization of the UN-led Post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals. A call for a data revolution by the UN Secretary General's High Level Panel on the post-2015 development agenda provides an opportunity for countries to harness the power of information in the implementation, accounting and tracking of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at all levels of government.

In August 2014, the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon asked an Independent Expert Advisory Group (IEAG) to make concrete recommendations on bringing about a data revolution in sustainable development. The group made its recommendations in a landmark report that is expected to shape the data revolution debate in the post 2015 development framework.

Basing on DRT's experience of working on community and sub national levels in Uganda, the IEAG report fell far short in several respects particularly when it comes to issues of context and local realities.

DRT's views on the matter were communicated in an open letter to the UN Secretary General which was made by a consortium of organizations. DRT's main contribution to the letter was the point that the global data revolution framework as enshrined in the IEAG's report was not rooted in local and contextual realities. There were three significant areas of concern for the petitioning organizations which were led by Development Initiatives and included the Global Integrity and Publish What You Fund among others. There are, however, three significant areas of concern:

Lack of consultation

Whilst we acknowledge the limitations of producing this report to such tight deadlines, we regret the consequences in terms of lack of time for adequate consultation. This has led to frustration and criticism from many interested parties. Moving forward with this project, we recommend that the UN allows enough time for consultations to ensure sufficient participation in the process from all relevant

stakeholders. As the report itself says, it is subsidiary to the revolution.

Insufficient emphasis on strengthening human capacity

The report emphasises the need to build both technical and institutional capacity, but it underestimates the efforts required to strengthen human capacity – perhaps the most significant challenge that the data revolution faces. The final report includes a welcome acknowledgement of the risk of rising inequality between those who can access and use data and those who cannot. To mitigate that risk, more emphasis should be placed on strengthening human capacity, both to collect data and to use it.

Over-emphasis on global priorities at the expense of national ones

Progress in human development, including that envisaged in the draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework, will be driven by the actions and priorities pursued at national and sub-national level, with global efforts playing a supplementary role. Similarly, the Data Revolution for Sustainable Development must also be driven at this level, providing decision makers at national, municipal and local level and those holding them to account with the data they need to make well informed decisions. While the IEAG report states that "strengthening national capacities will be the essential test of any data revolution" – a sentiment we wholly endorse – some sections of the report continue to emphasise the role of global institutions and processes at the expense of national contexts and priorities. Providing experts with better data to monitor global progress on the SDGs will be a useful by-product of a successful Data Revolution, but should not be its driving motivation. The Secretary General responded to these concerns and promised to take them into account as the process moves forward, and also include them in the IEAG's synthesis report on data revolution.



BY BERNARD SABITI
SENIOR PROGRAMME OFFICER

The report UN report on data revolution underestimates the efforts required to strengthen human capacity – perhaps the most significant challenge that the data revolution faces. More emphasis should be placed on strengthening human capacity, both to collect data and to use it.

Experiencing the World of Independent Thinkers

Ssanyu Rebecca has been studying at University College Cork, Ireland for the last two years. She gives her story...

// You belong to our tradition of independent thinkers" trapped my eyes as I stepped at University College Cork, Ireland. My heart skipped a beat. An eerie silence hang over me as I repeatedly read the message from the billboard positioned at the entrance. The message painted a mental picture of tough conditions I was about to meet while studying for a Master's degree at the college for the next 15-month. Questions like "Am I an independent thinker? How can I become one? Will I manage?" started forming in my mind. But my fears were soon allayed as I realised that the college system is the one that grooms students into independence of thought. As I became familiar with the system, things became much easier and I was exposed to new fantastic experiences. In this bitter-sweet journey, I was introduced to:

Journalisation: This process involved tips on how to 'not lose ideas'. The trick was to keep a notebook and pen in hand at all times and to write anything that came to mind. It didn't matter what the subject area was, it just needed to be an original idea or an independent reflection of someone else's idea. The notes could later be useful in building discussions on various issues. This assisted us as a class to record new 'independent ideas' in a journal of sorts.

Reading, Listening and Critiquing: For the first time, I experienced lecturers who do not talk at length or dictate notes. In my class, students were required to read widely and listen to anything that related to their course, including print and electronic media. We were also expected to read at least five articles or chapters from the course reading list ahead of lectures and present a critique of our readings to class, explaining what we agreed or disagreed with and why. It was interesting to realise that often the class discussions dwelt solely on media reports. The lecturer in this case would prefer that the class debated the merits and demerits of a given media report, and draw linkages to academic or social theory. Being the only African in the class, it was also very common for the lecturers to ask me to relate the class discussions and concepts I had discussed to my situation back home, which was sometimes a difficult feat.

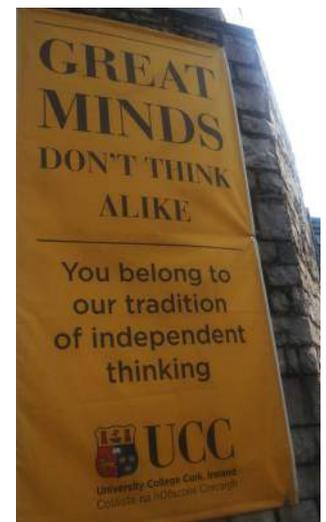
Reflecting, deciding, and writing: This involved critically thinking through an entire course unit and writing a 3000-word minimally referenced essay. The 'reflective essay' as it was called would comment on the process and content of the course unit, provide one's learning, and how they intended to apply that learning in real life. The process also involved writing a 500-word online journal (a blog of sorts) on a given topic and critiquing other students' blogs in 300 words. All the blogs and critiques were expected to have one's independent opinion, which would then have to be located in or linked to academic



theory. It was not acceptable to simply write statements like "I disagree with ..." or "I agree with ..." one had to explain why they agreed or disagreed.

The Lecturers who wanted to learn from students: This was one of the confusing experiences. The approach was, lecturers always wanted to learn from their students and not the other way round. I never got the sense of 'I know it all' from the lecturers as is common in many of our universities here in Uganda. The lecturers rarely gave straight forward answers to students' questions. I recall asking for guidance on the choice of my thesis topic and the lecturer simply asked; "What is your interest? How are you going to approach it? What is new and original that you are adding to existing knowledge?" The questions she asked drove me to think more deeply and ultimately make my own decision. She didn't at any time suggest to me a topic or say anything to discourage me.

In conclusion, paying attention to one's environment and picking information cues, as well as reading fast and keeping notes of one's thoughts is paramount in sharpening one's creativity and developing independence of thought. Secondly, to disagree with mine or another person's opinion is perfectly alright. It does not indicate in any way that one is right and another is wrong. It only brings out different opinions on the same issue and helps to generate debate and build knowledge. There is always something we can learn from others. This was the world of independent thinkers, to which I am proud to have belonged ... and continue to belong.



Initial deposit

She paid Shs200, 000 before accessing the loan.

BY JOHN NSUBUGA
STATISTICIAN

A visit to Kawaala, a neighbourhood within Kampala, Uganda's capital city, you clearly see that sanitation is a great challenge in this sprawling slum.

It is difficult to avoid moving through the garbage, heaps of polythene bags and flowing sewage while walking through this roughest neighbourhood.

Located approximately 5 kilometers (3.1 miles) from Kampala's central business district, Kawaala is predominantly a low-income residential neighborhood, with a handful of middle-class residences among the low income shacks.

Due to rapid population growth, solid and liquid waste have more than doubled as spaces for erecting sanitation facilities like toilets continue to reduce. This has facilitated the erection of inferior toilets that cause health and environmental concern.

To some residents, crammed into areas with no private toilets, they have become adept at holding it in, often spending hours in discomfort and eventually ending up using polythene bags (commonly known as flying toilets), which they then toss out into the channels.

However, at Ms Edisa Nankinga's residence, located in Kawaala zone-8 -Rubaga division, the story has changed.

Ms. Nankinga, a landlady accommodating about 30 tenants, she constructed a Biofil toilet, which is more environmentally friendly with minimal healthy concerns.

She says before she constructing this modern toilet, her family and tenants were susceptible to water borne diseases which is no longer the case.

"When you look at the latrine we have now and the one we used to have before, the latter was hazardous. Besides spreading diseases related to poor sanitation, it used to produce a terrible smell." Ms Nankinga explains.

She reveals that she constructed the Biofil toilet using a loan worth Shs



Ms Edisa Nankinga's new Biofil toilet under construction

Nankinga introduced a modern toilet in Kawaala to improved sanitation

5 million (1923.08 USD) which she secured from ACTogether. Through the Kampala Tugende -a Kampala slum transformation project funded by Comic Relief, ACTogether is offering sanitation facility loans in an effort to improve sanitation in all the 57 slums located in the five Kampala divisions. Other Partners of Kampala Tugende are Development Research and Training

(DRT) and Lutheran World Federation. Kampala Tugende is part of a wider

THE NUMBERS

Shs5,000,000

The loan she got to construct the Biofil toilet



Ms Edisa Nankinga



Ms Edisa Nankinga's old toilet

Kampala Slums Transformation Initiatives (KASTI). Besides sanitation, the project also promotes quality education, health, economic livelihoods, water and good governance.

According to Ms Nankinga, she paid an initial deposit of Shs200, 000 (\$76.9) before access to the loan.

Although it is always rare for slum dwellers to secure loans for non-business purposes, Ms Nankinga says she doesn't regret getting a loan to construct a toilet because she will be saved from a number of problems.

"This modern toilet will save me from expenses I have been incurring while repeatedly digging new latrines and space," she added.

She also expects to obtain manure for her garden from the toilet every after two years.

The Biofil is a simple compact on-site organic waste treatment system that uniquely combines the benefits of the flush toilet system and those of the composting toilets and eliminates the disadvantages and drawbacks of both systems.

It provides an enclosed environment for the natural decomposition (aerobic) of any degradable organic matter.

How it works

The Biofil technology mimics the decomposition found under forests' floors and other natural environments. Living organisms (both microorganisms and macro-organisms such as earthworms) in an enclosed environment treats all organic degradable matter through the natural process of aerobic decomposition.

Wastewater and fecal matter enter at the top of the Biofil where rapid separation of solids and liquid contents of the waste occurs. The digester is essentially a biological filter consisting of a medium of soil and pervious concrete. Bacteria, other organisms degrade solid fecal matter. All liquids are organically filtered out of the bottom of the digester and drained into the soil where further and final decomposition occurs. Other solids (toilet paper and all degradable anal cleaning material) are decomposed and converted into rich and safe soil.

Beneficiary feedback: a tool for fighting corruption



BY DOREEN ABALO
PROGRAMME OFFICER

For years, communities all over the world have always ensured that custodians of resources have the capacity to influence development outcomes and have morals to fight injustice subjected to their people. Communities have always set mechanisms through which they hold their leaders accountable.

In an African setting, there are informal and formal structures used to check and balance the daily functioning of a community. For example in Northern Uganda, the "Rwot kweri" (Chief of the hoe) used to mobilize households to support vulnerable communities in farming. This ensured that vulnerable households are not left behind.

Through such structures communities and duty bearers would share communications on development and sharing resources. Although traditional structures in some communities have been weakened by modernisation, some societies are still maintaining systems that promote openness which leaders should take advantage of while fighting corruption and mismanagement of public funds.

The government, through the Inspectorate of Government, a body tasked to fight corruption, has been spearheading the campaign empowering the local people to report all cases of corruption to their respective representatives. However, although

there are systems and processes to ensure smooth flow of resources from source to spending agents, they have been cases of manipulation and abused of resources.

This is attributed to low involvement of the citizenry in planning, delivery and monitoring activities implemented in their communities. Corrupt officials have taken advantage of citizens' ignorance to manipulate expenditures and data to suit their interests.

Basing on the three years' experience of working with locals in northern and north-eastern Uganda, DRT have documented numerous opportunities through which communities can give feedback and share information with each other and with their local leaders. At the local setting, communities have opportunities such as

- . Reviews and monitoring meetings
- . Barazas
- . Social gatherings e.g. churches, mosques, markets etc
- . Music, Dance and Drama (MDD)
- . Community dialogues
- . Planning, needs assessments and budgeting

These avenues provide opportunities for communities to engage with local leaders in discussing service delivery, giving feedback or choosing their priorities. Through the above opportunities, people are empowered to follow up on all revenues at Local Government (including Market dues, service tax and Licenses) and central government transfers (including conditional grants, un-conditional grants and equalization grants) and donor funds which are sent to support the functionality of local government.

Communities can participate in screening and awarding some contracts as well as following up monitoring to ensure better service delivery and value for money.

Therefore, there is need to promote increased community participation in generating, sharing and giving feedback by all actors like NGOs and local governments to fight corruption.

Citizens' participation key in promoting social protection



Old persons waiting for their monthly SAGE payments in Napak district. Photo by Charles Male



BY JONH BOSCO MUBIRU
DRT PROGRAMME OFFICER

The Africa Platform for Social Protection has embarked on supporting national platforms to implement projects that promote citizens' participation in social protection programmes.

Participation of citizens in social protection programmes has remained a big challenge in African counties including Uganda, creating a gap between duty bearers and the beneficiaries. The widening gap between the service providers and the recipients has triggered provision of poor services as well as incapacitating the latter's ability to demand for services.

Based on the recommendations of National Platforms, the APSP choose to support a two- year programme that focuses on promoting the participation of local populace in social protection under the theme "Grassroots Participation in Social Protection". The programme aims at promoting the

participation of local populace through building the capacity of the national platforms and the beneficiaries of Social Protection programmes to undertake Social Audits in collaboration with relevant government agencies in Ghana, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The APSP considers Social Audits as being a key element of promoting inclusion, which is an essential component of social justice. The audits will ensure that the vulnerable and marginalized groups have their voices heard and their ideas articulated. Furthermore, the local populace participation in the Social Audits will enhance the awareness and knowledge of existing social protection mechanisms and foster informed demand for services. This will help in building confidence in the systems and promoting ownership of programmes by the local populace. It is envisioned that this will work to reduce risks and shocks that deepen or cause poverty and render populations vulnerable.

A number of tools such as community scorecards, citizen feedback mechanisms, participatory planning and budgeting, monitoring citizen charter, among others will be used to ensure that the vulnerable and marginalised groups have their voices heard and their ideas considered during policy formulations. To achieve this, the national platforms including USPP will promote active engagement in the shaping of Social Protection policies, programmes and practices in Africa.

About DRT newsletter,

This newsletter is published by Development Research and Training (DRT) as one of the ways to share information about its work and that of its partners.

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About DRT

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