



TRACK

Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition Newsletter

News Letter

Issue XIV



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From the Editor

Hello Readers!

To all the TRACK fans out there, welcome to yet another exciting edition of the TRACK news letter. In this issue, we bring you some of the successful stories recorded by our interventions, in addition to a pictorial summary of key events during RAC's ten years of existence and dedicated service. Your feedback of course is of paramount importance to us.

Victoria N. Busiinge
Communication and Documentation Officer

A decade of dedicated service... yet growing stronger

For many years, a vibrant whistle-blowing organization in the Rwenzori region was only a dream far from reach. However, in the year 2012, the 'architects' of Rwenzori Anti-corruption coalition (RAC) decided to translate this beautiful dream into reality. It is one thing to dream, but another to make your dream to become reality.

From a very humble beginning, Rwenzori Anti-corruption Coalition has grown from a simple civil society organization to a mighty whistle-blowing organization capable of saving/recovering misappropriated funds to a tune of Shs.4,000,000,000/= (four billion) in 2011, and Shs.6,000,000,000/= six billion in the year 2012.

What started as a simple NGO with a couple of members now prides in a total of 450 monitors for her mainstream projects, in addition to other female monitors, youth and reflect circles that total up to 150 monitors.



Community empowerment: RAC has through her ten-year of service widely sensitized the grassroots of the need to get involved in the fight against corruption

Challenges notwithstanding, the achievements realized during these years of service are enormous:

- We have caused recovery of huge sums of money misappropriated by public officials
- Widely sensitized the masses on the evils of corruption and their need to get involved in monitoring and demanding for quality service delivery
- Caused 're-dos' of shoddily constructed works like roads, and other public infrastructure in schools, health units and other public offices
- Caused interdiction and dismissal of fraudulent civil servants in public offices
- Contributed to a build-up of transparent and accountable leaders

We see a ray of hope and restoration of faith among the grassroots communities whose trust in the judiciary and other government bodies had long been lost. In fact, judging from the number of cases received on a daily basis at the secretariat in Fort Portal, one may be led to think that RAC is a paralegal agency that provides probono services to the grassroots community in the Rwenzori region.



Forum theatre: Mistreatment of patients by medical personnel is one of the key problems reported within the health sector

In a recent mini-survey (March 2013) carried out on the impact of RAC's programs on grassroots communities, many testified how RAC had transformed them into patriots who shun the corrupt and their tendencies in their society. Others confessed that they were no longer afraid of their leaders and therefore could freely engage with them on issues of transparency, accountability and service delivery. Now that they know their entitlements, they can no longer be duped into paying for what rightfully belongs to them and should that happen by any chance, they will quickly report them to RAC or even other agencies of authority.

Despite the inspirational testimonies, a number of impediments still stand in RAC's way to fully realize her dream – 'a Just and corruption free society'. These include among others;

- Delays in response and action against the corrupt/cases forwarded to government agencies for action
- Continued harassment of our monitors at the ground level,
- Donor dependency, coupled with limited resources and capacity to expose and bring some of the cases to logical conclusions,
- The loophole within the legal regime which sometimes defeats logical conclusion of cases reported and in a way de-motivates the activists when no decisive action is taken.

Nonetheless, Rwenzori Anti-corruption coalition is growing stronger, with many activists joining the struggle. Our driving force is one: we strongly believe that one day; corruption will be wiped out from the surface of the earth. So, what are you waiting for? Come join the struggle!

Alleged misappropriation of CDD funds in Bundibugyo district

Community driven development (CDD) is a development initiative that provides control of the development process, resources and decision making authority directly to community groups. The underlying assumption of CDD projects are that communities are the best judges of how their lives and livelihoods can be improved and, if provided with adequate resources and information, they can organize themselves to provide for their immediate needs. Moreover, CDD programs are motivated by their trust in people (Naidoo and Finn, 2001) and hence it advocates people changing their own environment as a powerful force for development. By treating poor people as assets and partners in the development

process, previous studies have shown that CDD is responsive to local demands, inclusive, and more cost-effective compared to centrally-led NGO-based programmes. CDD can also be supported by strengthening and financing community groups facilitating community access to information, and promoting an enabling environment through policy and institutional reform (Dongier, 2002). CDD projects work by providing poor communities with direct funding for development with the communities then deciding how to spend the money. Lastly, the community plans and builds the project and takes responsibility for monitoring its progress.

Prospective beneficiaries are encouraged to form organized groups at parish level and it is through these that the funds are extended.



Community meeting: CDD is built on the conviction that organized grassroots communities can enhance their development with minimal support given

Despite its good intention and objectives, the CDD program has been abused in some areas where it is being implemented. In one of RAC's monitoring exercise in Bundibugyo district, it was revealed that the CDD funds had been misappropriated by a few selfish individuals, denying the poor target groups a chance to improve their social economical status.

In the year 2011, a total of fifteen million was pronounced as available for this particular program – to benefit 6 different organized groups. After thorough assessment, Nyahuka Angels Beauty salon and crafts was selected to be one of the lucky few to access these funds. Being a group of young, energetic and hardworking women, they expeditiously embarked on the required processes, hoping to get these funds, which would – or at least they thought would be a turning point in their business and definitely their lifestyles. The paper work was done to perfection and all that was left was to cash the 1.5 million cheque that had been given to their group.

What seemed rather bizarre was the fact that no funds ever went to their account. In search for the missing puzzle, the group was informed by the bank officials that their cheque had been blocked and therefore could not receive any money. Disturbed, the team went up to their LCIII chairman – Mr. Bisoro Friday to find out what could have gone wrong. The chairman's response to the group's queries was rather strange: in his words, the sub-county chairman assured the group that they would not receive the money unless the late district Chairperson Mr. Bambarira Jackson – their ally came back to life. A response like that was as good as telling them to forget about these funds. He said this because the group had strongly supported the Late Bambarira Jackson during the 2011 general elections.

Considering the amount of time and other resources injected in this venture, the group decided to give up and embark on other initiatives that could strengthen them, other than taking them backwards. Their demand is however a simple one: since they did not receive the CDD funds despite being selected as one of the beneficiaries, who did? Did this money end up in the right hands or was it defrauded by some selfish individuals out there????

In a bid to understand deeper what the real challenge is, we spoke to Mr. Balyebulya Kaija Richard – the District community Development Officer (DCDO) – Bundibugyo. Mr. Richard admitted that the program is affected by various challenges – influence peddling by politicians being one of the major ones. They tend to lobby for their parishes in order to gain popularity among their voters. He also added that these funds have been largely abused and if such challenges are to be addressed, funds should be directly deposited from the district's account to the beneficiaries' accounts, other than sub-county accounts to block the loopholes that cause abuse. The sub-county chiefs, chairpersons and town clerks should only play a supervisory and monitoring role, but not be involved in the transfers of these funds. The DCDO further recommended that thorough research for prospective beneficiary groups should be done to ensure that the groups are not only qualified but also capable of meeting the program objectives.

Kyenjojo hospital: Monitors intervene to have the ceiling defects fixed

Every month, RAC monitors are mandated to visit various points of service delivery in the five areas of government's National Priority Program Areas (NPPAs) – not necessarily for fault finding but rather, to monitor performance as a means to improved service delivery. In monitoring, they seek to assess the quality of service delivery, identify gaps that require different level intervention as well as giving credit where it is due.

Simple as their interventions may seem, the RAC monitors have remarkably contributed to improved service delivery. Although their efforts may be viewed as a drop in the ocean, the fruits realized are magnificent. We have witnessed success stories throughout the seven districts of the Rwenzori region and beyond including; interdiction and dismissal of corrupt officials, fixed defects of shoddy works, refund of stolen/misappropriated public monies, reduced absenteeism and late reporting for duty among public servants, to mention but a few.



Healthcare: Patients registering for treatment at a community health center

Continued on Page 10

Pictorial



RAC board members during the 9th AGM at Gardens restaurant in Fort Portal



Below: Capacity building - Rwenzori DPACs organization



Women involvement - we closely work with the women to cause action against corruption

RAC monitors during the 9th AGM at Gardens restaurant



Working with Police officers

Below: other members



Summary



Regional training of the members of RAC organized by RAC



Below: Forum theatre: Mistreatment of patients by medical personnel is one of the key problems reported within the health sector



Police officer at a meeting to fight against corruption



Public Expenditure Tracking - The RAC ED - Ms. Angela Byangwa in an interview with the Ntoroko District CAO - Mr. Asaba Allan

Monitors at the agm

Monitors at the agm



A distinctive example is one where the female monitors of Kyenjojo during their periodic monitoring landed on shoddy works at the general ward of Kyenjojo hospital. Despite the fact that the newly constructed building was due to be commissioned and handed over to the district, its water system was non-functional, the ceiling was on the verge of collapsing, and on top of that, the floor was all cracked.

First, they had to identify the contractor – who was later confirmed to be Nyamaha contractors. Realizing that they needed an extra hand in righting these wrongs, the monitors quickly informed the relevant stakeholders – including the District Health Officer, the then acting District Engineer and the medical superintendent of Kyenjojo hospital. These officials were tasked to use their powers and authority to ensure that the culprits do not walk away scot-free



Ceiling before monitors' intervention



Ceiling fixed after Monitors' intervention

A site visit was thus made with the monitors together with the above-mentioned district officials to verify the allegations. The officials couldn't agree more; without further ado, it was resolved that the ceiling be demolished and redone, have the floor repaired and also put in place a functional water system. All these were to be fixed by the same contractor at his own cost.

Two months later, the monitors together with the district engineer made a follow-up visit to the hospital to verify if the resolutions had been adhered to. Indeed, all the defects were fixed and the building was successfully handed over Kyenjojo district local government. Who knows what could have befallen the hospital and its beneficiaries had it not to be for the monitors' intervention?

Fraudulent Midwife in Kyenjojo fined and tasked to refund the money swindled

Many times, we tend to think that the change we desire can only be brought about by huge investments and large amounts of money. However, others believe that it is the elite of this world that will lead us to glory land. To all those who have for long undermined their potential in transforming this nation, here is a news flash. Policies, however stringent they may be can't and will not stop corruption. Similarly, moneys, however much will not develop our motherland. It is those little things that we do (all combined together) with commitment, selflessness, patriotism, hard work and above all, believing that 'change begins with me' – that will drive us where we desire to be.



Women involvement in the anti-graft fight: Women too, like their male counterparts can play a very big role in fighting against corruption

The inspirational stories of our female monitors are a typical evidence that truly, one does not have to possess a masters' degree or doctorate to make a difference in people's lives:

Mpirirwe Gloria - a resident of Misandika parish – Kyenjojo town council attests to the support accorded to her by one of RAC's female monitors – Sumayiya Kamuli. Ms. Kamuli is an ordinary citizen residing in Kyenjojo town council yet to Gloria, she is a super hero. It all stems from the assistance she accorded to her when Gloria – despite her financial state was taken advantage of; by one – Kakyoo, a midwife at Kyenjojo hospital.

It all happened in February 2012 when Mpirirwe Gloria took her six-month old son; malnourished and underweight to Kyenjojo hospital for medical care. Considering the

boy's state of health, he was recommended for a healthcare program that would provide special medical care and nutritious foods to boost his immunity. Although this service is meant to be provided free of charge, Kakyo, the midwife who attended to Gloria asked her to pay a fee of 30,000 to be enrolled on the program. Gloria – for the sake of her sick son toiled to get the money – which she handed over to Kakyo. She was then asked to check after two weeks to confirm if her son had been enrolled on the program. Unfortunately, this did not happen. Gloria made various attempts – hoping that her son's name would eventually be included on the list of beneficiaries but all this was in vain.

Frustrated, she sought for a helping hand and it is at this point in time that she landed on Sumayiya – one of RAC's female monitors. Hearing Gloria's plight, Sumayiya together



Sumayiya Kamuli - the female monitor who assisted Gloria

with Gloria walked straight up to the accused midwife who despite acknowledging receipt of the said money was not willing to refund it. Determined to help Gloria, Sumayiya took another step to involve higher authorities. The matter was reported to the Principal Nursing Officer – Ms. Kimara who after carefully listening to Gloria's story convened a staff meeting to settle the matter once and for all. The verdict was reached: Kakyo – the accused midwife was fined a total fee of 200,000/= shillings on top of refunding the embezzled 30,000/= to Gloria. Better still, Emanuel – Gloria's son was enrolled on the program as a beneficiary for the services provided therewith.

Bundibugyo: Fraudulent inspector interdicted, caused to refund misappropriated funds

By Meshack Byomuntura – Gender Officer RAC

Eight million Uganda Shillings was the total amount of money earmarked by the Uganda Road Fund for improving the community access roads in the sub-counties of Ngamba, Ntotoro, Mirambi and Bubukwanga in the financial year – 2012/13. Although this money was meant for fuel to work on the roads, the Bundibugyo road inspector – Mr. Baluku Christopher chose to divert it for his personal gain. Out of the total 2106.1 liters, only 470.9 liters were purchased, leaving a deficit of 1635.2 liters unutilized.

This shocking revelation was unveiled during the district dialogue meeting organized by Rwenzori Anti-corruption coalition (RAC), held on February 25, 2013 in Bundibugyo. The meeting was attended by various dignitaries including political heads, police, CID,



One of the receipts given to Baluku after repayment of the fuel.

The RAC ED and Gender officer verifying Baluku's Receipts at Bundibugyo Highway Petrol Station. At the center is one of the pet technocrats/civil servants and the wider grassroots community. Mr. Baluku – the accused inspector was also present. On hearing the accusation, Mr. Baluku did not deny the allegations; he pleaded guilty, asked for pardon and pledged to pay back the misappropriated funds. A written commitment was made to this effect as basis for honoring his pledge.

Punitive measures were further taken, where Mr. Baluku on March 17, 2013 was arrested and detained for two days. He was later bailed out and tasked to pay back all the misappropriated funds soonest possible to avoid being re-arrested.

In a follow-up exercise that was carried out by the RAC team, the Bundibugyo District Police Officer – Mr. Denis Namuwoza informed the team that Baluku, had partially lived up to his commitment: By April 30, he had refunded a total of 1,052.2 Liters of fuel worth 3,000,000 paid at Bundibugyo petrol station in Bundibugyo. The RAC team went ahead to verify and indeed, the station manager confirmed this to be true by showing us the carbon copies of Mr. Baluku's receipts.

Because of his dubious actions, Mr. Baluku is currently under interdiction. This should therefore serve as an eye opener to all who have or intend to engage in similar kind of behavior because if you don't, you might be the next in Mr. Baluku's shoes

Opinion: Government and CSOs need each other to realize development in Uganda

By Ntawanga George – CPF and RAC Monitor

For transparency, accountability and good service delivery to prevail in any country, there must be a vibrant civil society to keep government in check on behalf of the citizens. Civil society should also instill the spirit of patriotism in the citizens and should assist government in civic education and implementation of government programs.

For civil society to perform its duty and mandate of checking government the two must not go to the same bed, however there should be reasonable cooperation and partnership since they all work to achieve a common good for the country.

Unfortunately the president and other government officials have been quoted blaming civil society organizations for working for foreign agencies – a case in point being the recent allegation that ACODE had bribed the Members of Parliament to block the passing of the oil bill.

Rather than the president accusing CSOs, he should encourage them to acquire support from countries that are pro Ugandan development.

I strongly believe that if the two worked hand in hand, attainment of our development goals would be made easy. This can be evidenced by a few CSOs that have tremendously contributed to Uganda's development in one way or another. RAC has for instance made her contribution through exposing and causing action against corruption, thereby saving/recovering huge sums of monies that had been misappropriated by some selfish individuals. In the year 2012 alone, RAC managed to save over Shs.6, 000,000,000/= Imagine if every CSO in Uganda was in position to create such fundamental change, how far could we have reached?

Under health and education, we have witnessed tremendous improvement in this sector due to the works of CSOs, both national and international.

Government should thus come up to support such organizations that have proved to be beneficial to the country's development. Although some organizations have been accused of detrimental engagements, there are quite many that are for meaningful development and should thus be supported to carry on with the good work

For God and my Country



State of classroom blocks in a primary school in Harugale sub-county

Festoration HUMC at Butiti HC III is Restored

By Meshack Byomuntura - Gender Officer

The community of Butiti and the surrounding areas are jubilating after their health center – Butiti health center III acquiring a health unit management committee. Absence of a functional management committee had for long impeded proper service delivery at this unit. This was mainly a result of two conflicting parties concurrently serving as the management committee for Butiti HC III for about two years.

Located in Butiti sub-county – Kyenjojo District, Butiti Health unit management committee (HUMC) had served for six consecutive

years. However, with Mr. Amany Joseph coming in as the new LCIII chairperson for Butiti sub-county in 2011, a new HUMC was appointed but, without dissolving the old one.

This move, though with good intentions did not go down well with the old committee, as conflicts were bound to happen as of which of the two was the legitimate committee. Sooner than later, the management conflicts began to suffocate service delivery at this center.

The old members accused Mr. Amany – the new LCIII chairperson of appointing his campaign agents as the new management committee and therefore could not hand over office to them. The old members on the other hand, were accused of overstaying in power – that it was about time for them to vacate this office for a new committee.

As a public eye, ear and mouth-piece, the female RAC monitors of Butiti could not sit back and watch such events go by without intervention. These and many other issues were taken for verdict in a sub-county conference organized by RAC in 2012. In attendance were the Butiti sub-county leaders and the health unit in-charge among other participants. As a key step in ironing out these conflicts once and for all, the conference resolved that a team – composed of the RAC monitors, the sub-county chair and the members of the old and new committee hold a meeting at a later date to appoint a neutral committee acceptable by all.

In yet another event – the district dialogue organized by RAC on May 6th 2013, at Twilight cottages in Kyenjojo district, Mr. Kaboyo Abas – the Butiti health center III in-charge was happy to report that the conflicts had been wiped out completely and that; a new functional committee had been put in place. Mr. Kaboyo further commended the monitors for the job well-done and urged them to keep up for the growth and development of our motherland Uganda.



Butiti monitors pause for a photograph at the end of the sub-county conference



The Bundibugyo District Engineer - Mr. Muhindo Robert takes the RAC team around the district stores in a verification exercise.

The RAC crew pauses for a photograph at the end of a monitoring exercise in Bundibugyo district.



Participants at one of regional dialogues organized by RAC

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