



TRACK

Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition Newsletter

News Letter

Issue XIII



From the Editor

Hello Readers!

A happy new year to all the TRACK fans! I once again welcome you to Issue XII of the TRACK Newsletter. This being a new year, we decided to bring you something a little different from our previous issues; this particular bulletin is a tribute to our monitors – the lifeline of RAC; without them, there is no RAC!

Embedded in this issue is a track-record of some of the success stories witnessed through monitors' intervention in the year 2012. We hope that you, just like many others will be inspired by these souls who have dedicated their lives to make a contribution however small to the fight against corruption. I may not be sure if or when the corruption scourge in Uganda will end, but one thing is for sure, you and I can do something to bring it down. It's at this point that I ask you our dear readers, what have you done to put a halt to corruption in Uganda? Waiting for your expeditious response...

Sincerely;

Victoria N. Busiinge

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A word to a wise...

Message from the Executive Director

I take this opportunity to congratulate you all for having sailed through 2012 to a fresh and happy new year 2013! Every year has its unique features: 2012 was no exception and I am confident that a lot will be unfolded in the New Year 2013.

In the anti-corruption dome, various actions in the year 2012 were under taken at the national and regional level. Some of these have already given birth to beautiful fruits, while others are yet to pay off. My message is one; don't give up! Just keep the struggle on. I may not ask you to fund an anti-corruption event, but I will ask you for just one thing: the coat you're wearing may not count... just **PLAY YOUR PART to STOP CORRUPTION FROM ESCALATING!**

FOR GOD AND MY COUNTRY

Angela Ssenabulya Byangwa
Executive Director

Hooray Rac Monitors!

The Fruits Of Your Sweat Are Sweet...

A journey of 1000 miles begins with one step... It is this conviction that has kept Rwenzori Anti-corruption Coalition (RAC) going despite the massive hurdles faced in fighting graft in the country. We fix our eyes on the positive, not ignoring the hitches though. With a dedicated team of community animators – popularly known as the RAC monitors, RAC's contribution to regional development cannot be underrated. We have witnessed recovery of billions of shillings from corrupt hands, caused reconstruction of poor standardized works, and enhanced improved service delivery in the health, education, works and production sectors among other fruits.

For years, RAC has continuously supported her monitors to investigate corruption cases sighted within their localities, urging them to expose and cause action against the corrupt. It's from such efforts that the grassroots communities and the Rwenzori region are enjoying improved service delivery in the public sector.

In the health sector, periodic monitoring visits to health units have kept workers on their toes and as such; theft and illegal sale of drugs has reduced, abscond and late reporting to duty by health workers has been minimized and; cases of harsh or rude health workers have remarkably gone down.

In Kasitu sub-county – Bundibugyo district, Ntandi health center III for a long time did not have a maternity ward but through intensive lobbying and advocacy by the monitors, the health unit was able to acquire a maternity ward.

In Kamwenge district, Kamwenge health center III for a long time did not have a placenta pit – a condition that not only affected the delivery section but also the entire hygiene of the center. Through continuous lobbying and advocacy, a placenta pit was dug, hence resulting into improved maternity services and hygiene of the center.

In Kyegegwa district, monitors in the month of October 2012 received reports from concerned mothers about a mid-wife at Kyegegwa health center IV one – Nyakato who is alleged to have been involved in executing her duties under the influence of alcohol. It was further alleged that Ms. Nyakato would on several counts ask for a 10,000/- bribe from the patients to enable her buy ‘booze’. Flabbergasted about the allegations that came to their attention through community reports, the monitors quickly intervened, in a bid to save the poor mothers. They immediately reported the case to the health in-charge whose investigations revealed that the accusations against the midwife were actually true. The in-charge thus summoned the midwife and because this was her first major offence, she was given another chance to reform. True to her word, Ms. Nyakato dropped her bad habits and has greatly improved in her duties. She is carrying out her duties as expected – much to the benefit of the delivering mothers – who are forever grateful to the monitors for having ended what seemed like a terrible nightmare!

Other interventions have been witnessed in the education, works and production sector as detailed in the following articles:

Karambi Chief tasked to reimburse stolen funds and Health center Bed

By Karambi Monitors

Residents of Karambi sub-county and the surrounding communities could not conceal their joy when they learnt that the former Karambi sub-county chief – Mr. Dan Biryandi had been forced to refund the stolen Primary Health Care (PHC) funds from Kamasasa Health Center II; located in Karambi sub-county – Kamasasa Parish. The move came as a result of concerted efforts and pressure mounted by the RAC monitors who; upon discovery that the Health center’s (PHC) funds had been swindled, vowed to have them recouped at whatever cost!



Monitors in an interview with the Karambi HC in-charge (Right)

The missing funds were unearthed during RAC's periodic monitoring visits in the month of June 2012: Every month, all RAC monitors visit the different sectors of service delivery i.e. Health, Education, Agriculture, Works and Environment to assess their level of performance. It is during the monitoring visit to Kamasasa health center II that they discovered that the unit had not received PHC funds for the two preceding quarters. Not even the health in-charge – Ms. Mbambu could provide answers to the cause of this unfortunate state. Despite checking with the bank on several counts, she always got the same response – **Zero balance on your account Ma'am...**



Patients queue up for service at Karambi HCIII in Kasese District

It's here that the monitors braced up to track the missing funds; regardless of what it took. They were so determined to find the missing link to the puzzle. In their quest, meetings of enquiry were made with various stakeholders including the Karambi LCIII chairperson. The chairperson, just like the monitors and the health in-charge was also puzzled, wondering what could have befallen the funds in question. It's at this point that the monitors advised the chairperson to consult the medical superintendent of the sub-district hospital – Bwera hospital on the whereabouts of the funds. The superintendent checked with the bank but to his surprise, he found that the money had actually been withdrawn. Primary investigations revealed that the funds had been withdrawn by the former Kamasasa health in-charge – Mr. Peter Bwambale but on further investigations and scrutiny, it was actually realized that Mr. Biryandi – the sub-county chief had only forged Mr. Bwambale's signature to access the money in the bank.

The revelation was a mega link to the missing puzzle; the monitors without further ado quickly informed the LCIII chairperson and in the RAC sub-county conference held on June 22, 2012 (which the accused sub-county chief attended in person), the issue of theft of the PHC funds was number 1 on the agenda; as the monitors could not wait to have the chief respond to the allegations. To their relief, the chief pleaded guilty to the accusation and pledged to refund all the stolen funds. True to his word, the embezzled monies were refunded in two installments – 300,000/= and 500,000/= respectively.

However, embezzlement of public funds is not the only offense the embattled chief has been engaged in. Mr. Biryandi is also accused of personalizing public facilities for his selfish interests – a typical corruption act. It all happened when BTC – Belgian Technical Cooperation donated seventeen beds to Karambi Health Center III but out of selfishness, Mr. Biryandi personalized one of the beds, and kept it in his office at the sub-county offices in place of the health center. When asked why, the chief said that he needed to use the bed when working at late hours. At the same RAC sub-county conference, the monitors together with the rest of the community members present disdained the chief's actions and tasked him to return it to the rightful users. The chief complied and on June 25, 2012, the bed was returned to the health center.

Recovery of the stolen public facilities is not the only reward realized from the monitors' efforts and commitment to expose Mr. Bibandi's offenses. Because of his notorious acts, the chief was first transferred to Buhuhira sub-county but in November 2012, he was suspended from his office until further notice.

To the RAC monitors of KARAMBI, it's a job well-done! All we can say is that keep on keeping on...

Tokwe Bridge: Defects Fixed; Service Delivery Improved...

Tokwe drift is a bridge that was constructed to connect the two sub-counties of Harugale and Bukonzo in the district of Bundibugyo, located in the western region of Uganda. The District is bordered by the Districts of Ntoroko in the North, Kabarole in the East and Southeast and by the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) to the west. It is one of the seven districts that make up the Rwenzori region – where RAC

operates. Bundibugyo became a District on the 11th of April 1974 within the aftermath of Rwenzururu movement uprising that led the government by then to allow the break off of Bwamba county and Busongora county from the former Toro/Kabarole District as Semuliki and Rwenzori Districts which are the present day Bundibugyo and Kasese respectively.



Base detached from the super structure



Part of the bridge sinking in

After a decade of service in the region, RAC has witnessed more corruption-related offenses in Bundibugyo than the other districts where she operates. Corruption tendencies reported range from ghost workers, shoddy constructions, mismanagement of public funds, inadequate health and education facilities among others; affecting service delivery.

Based on the aforementioned peculiarity of the district, the report about shoddy construction of Tokwe Bridge though unfortunate was no 'breaking news' to

RAC. The 59,000,000/= bridge supported by the Uganda Road fund was way below acceptable standards! The shoddily constructed bridge developed big cracks hardly after its completion! The drift slab/surface had loose aggregates that could be easily removed by a mere finger-scratch. Simply said, the bridge was on the verge of collapsing! These observations were made by the RAC monitors during a monitoring exercise held on February 02nd-3rd, 2012.

Perturbed, a fact-finding mission to identify who, why and how the bridge defects could have arisen was their immediate concern. The primary investigations commissioned by RAC saw various consultations held with the community members, district leadership and technocrats and from the facts revealed, it was realized that the bridge construction was done force on account. It was further revealed that the ratio used to mix the cement with sand was 1:5, contrary to the acceptable 1:3 for bridge construction and; the sand used was of poor quality. Under such circumstances, failure of the bridge to stand the test of time was not surprising at all!

Determined to have the bridge defects rectified, the monitors took on the district chairperson and the CAO – Bundibugyo in a bid to have the responsible culprits not only penalized but also right the wrongs committed during construction. In response, the duo in a joint move with RAC paid a visit to the litigious bridge: the district bosses could not deprecate the monitors concerns and at this point, there were no further questions... there was only one answer.

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Pictorial Summary of



The RAC staff and monitors sing along with Araali Moses Kigambo during the launch of the Anti-corruption song – CULIKA



The Deputy RDC Kamwenge rewards



The Kabarole District Health Officer - Dr. Mugahi together with the RAC ED – Ms. Angela S. Ssenabulya paying attention to the testimonies of the Anti-corruption activists.



Keep up the fight... Hon. Alex Ruhunda shares his experience as the RAC board chair – Mr.

Below: Anti-corruption walk... the RAC ED welcomes the RAC patron Hon. Alex Ruhunda to the convention



Below: Say no to corruption! Activists

the quarter's activities



an Anti-corruption activist with a prize.



Engabu za Toro cultural group entertain participants at the anti-corruption convention 2012



akes a hand with the Deputy Kamwenge RDC, James Mwirima smiles along



The Kabarole District Health Officer - Dr. Mugahi together with the RAC ED – Ms. Angela S. Ssenabulya paying attention to the testimonies of the anti-corruption activists

match along the streets of Fort-portal



Below are some of the dignitaries who attended the convention

A meeting was thus held by the district executive committee that unanimously agreed to resolve the issue once and for all. The executive resolution tantamount to a single directive: **'Fix the defects!'**

No further ado! With instructions from above, the contractors were left with only one choice – and hooray! The defects were rectified with no extra penny given to the fraudulent contractors! They bled all the extra shillings required to right their wrongs.

This achievement did not only excite the people of Harugale and Bukonzo sub-counties, as it benefited many others beyond the region. Business transactions

can now be effectively carried out without any transport hindrances.

On the local scene, the grassroots have better access to health services in Bundibugyo main hospital and Buhinga referral hospital in Fort portal, access to markets for farmers' produce has greatly improved; hence improved livelihoods of the people living in the surrounding areas. Credit goes to the RAC monitors who took the first initiative in addressing these challenges as well as the district leadership that took heed of RAC's advice to fix the bridge defects. The fruits are already here, yet many more lie ahead.

Health Workers Cheat HIV Patients; Monitors cause Refund of the Money

Many a times, we tend to think that life is unfair, especially when the people we consider to be less 'holy' thrive in abundance and 'blessings' than we who imagine to be less evil. Although this assumption may hold some water, there's no justification for condemning life to unfairness. Various underlying factors may influence or deter many from attaining their dreams. To some, their dreams are snatched away by cheats while to others; their success was trampled on by people who stood in their way by way or unscrupulous engagements.

Looking at Uganda per se, is the biting poverty in some parts of the country a result of natural cause or man-made factors? This is a debate that could go on and on; depending on the school of thought you consult and I'm not about to go there.

Getting back to the gist of this article; why, for heaven's sake would a health worker steal from a patient? When I asked a friend this exact question, his response was a bible quotation: "Man eats from where he works..." 'Disgusted' is the word but that is putting it mildly and although his answer was only a joke, it hurt so bad that many people have been involved in scandalous moves to cheat the poor, depriving them of even the least basic services which should not be considered as privileges but fundamental rights!

In Kyegegwa, a team of health workers teamed up to siphon money from people living with HIV/AIDS. The unscrupulous workers in connivance with the expert client at Kyegegwa Anti-retroviral Therapy (ART) clinic – Kyegegwa district took advantage of the HIV patients who for two months had failed to access ARVs. These patients were residents of Kakabara sub-county but because Kakabara health center does not supply ARVs, the patients could only access ARVs from Kyegegwa health center IV. It is this lag in supply that the health workers took advantage of; demanding Shs.1000/= from the patients with claims that the funds collected were to facilitate the expert patient to collect the drugs from Kyegegwa health center IV to Kakabara HC III for easier access.

This particular case was reported during a monitoring exercise by the female monitors of Kyegegwa. Dismayed, the monitors with no further ado reported the case to the district chairperson – Hon. Norman Birungi who called for a meeting to address the raised concern. The meeting was attended by the Kyegegwa District Health Officer, the Chief Administrative Officer, the Resident District Commissioner, the Kyegegwa and Kakabara health in-charge, RAC monitors, expert clients and the affected people living with HIVs (PLWHIV).

From the meeting, it was resolved that the accused expert client together with his colleagues refund the 50,000/= shillings stolen from the 50 ART clients of Kakabara sub-county; and indeed, it was refunded..

The other key outcome of this meeting was a resolution drawn to deliver the drugs to Kakabara health center III on a bi-weekly basis to enable easy access of the ARVs by the patients. This has been viewed as a major achievement not only by the PLWHIV but also the entire community. The monitors are viewed as a rich resource and link to problem solving in as far as handling corrupt tendencies in the community is concerned.

Karugutu Head-teacher, Board Chairman seized over fraud

Shoddy construction of school buildings and other public infrastructure is quite common in Uganda today. Many a times, embezzlement of construction funds is usually the underlying factor leading to poor workmanship of these structures. The first suspects are usually the contractors, and probably the supervisors, who choose to divert the funds from the intended goal to meet their own selfish ends.

The case of Karugutu Secondary school is however different; different in the sense that the construction company awarded the contract – BOAZ & SONS company was devoted to the successful completion of the construction. The company was however

defeated by the fraudulent supervisors, who time and again forced the contractor to give them some money. It is therefore not surprising to see that the entire construction was characterized by shoddy work – ranging from cracked walls and floor, collapsed pit latrine and poor mixture of cement evidenced by loose surface walls that would easily shade off upon scratching.

The government aided school located in Karugutu sub-county, Ntoroko district received a total grant of Uganda Shillings 300,000,000/= (Three hundred million) from the World Bank UPPET phase 1 project grant. The grant was intended to construct classroom blocks in selected secondary schools in Uganda, under the ministry of Education and Sports.

Having sighted numerous anomalies around the construction, the school chairperson – construction committee Mr. Gad Mutegeki approached the Karugutu-based RAC monitors, shared his concerns and thus tasked them to commission an inquest into the surrounding circumstances under which the classroom blocks were constructed. Despite being the construction committee chairperson, Mr. Mutegeki had never set his eyes on the Bills of Quantities (BoQs) for the said construction.

With the uphill assignment given to the monitors, they braced up to accomplish the assignment received. First, they talked to the contractor – who declined to avail any information for unknown reasons but after further probing and insistence, he pledged to open up only if a meeting comprising the school management committee and other school authorities (board and management) was called.

In the meeting, accusations and counter accusations formed the first part of the discussions and according to the contractor, he alleged that the head teacher and board chairman had on several occasions asked for money illegally, forcing him to divert the construction funds to comply to their demands. Although he tried to resist at first, the pressure mounted on him forced him to give in, hence creating shortages for the construction funds. For this reason, the contractor had to fit the construction within the available funds, hence poor and shoddy workmanship.

With the monitors' advice, the case was forwarded to the regional office of the IGG – Fort portal who; used their investigative tactics to grab the culprits.

Having denied the accusation, the IGG photocopied some money, gave it to the contractor and told him to pay them the exact money should they demand for any more money. It was not long before the head-teacher and board chair went back to the contractor asking for more money. They fell into the trap set as they were nabbed with the exact money photocopied. They were arrested and taken to the anti-corruption court where after some days of detention, were bailed out. The case is still on-going

Fraud! SACCO Bosses embezzle institutional funds; monitors attempt recovery

By Rutete Monitors

Mr. Tusiime Deo and Turinawe Bezalari are on the run after embezzling funds amounting to five million two hundred thousand Uganda shillings (Shs. 5,200,000/=) from Kasenda SACCO. The two are former board members of the said SACCO i.e. Chairman and Treasurer (respectively).

It all started way back in June 2010 when concerned members of the SACCO sensed anomalies in the general running and management of their institution. They were highly disgruntled and suspicious of the entire institutional management system, yet the accounting officers could not provide the highly demanded answers. It is for this reason that the concerned members run to the RAC monitors for advice. The monitors, on receiving the members' complaints quickly moved in to verify the allegations. As one of the key steps into the inquest, a fact-finding mission was instated; which culminated into a meeting with the accused, the complainants (four SACCO members) and the monitors as the mediators.

Investigations jointly carried out with the RAC monitors, OC police – Iruhura post and the Gombolola Internal Security Officer (GISO) revealed that true; the accused had embezzled the SACCO funds. Although they attempted to refute the accusations, the available evidence incriminated them beyond reasonable doubt. The only remaining option was to plead guilty and face the music. Realizing that they were in hot soup, the treasurer – Mr. Turinawe took a French leave from his home area, leaving his counterpart – Mr. Tusiime to face all the subsequent repercussions. Left with no choice, Mr. Tusiime pledged to refund all the embezzled funds within a month's period. A written agreement was signed to affirm his pledge, using his land as collateral security. (Refer to the agreement below)

However, Mr. Tusiime did not live up to his word. Shortly after signing the agreement, he attempted to sell off the land in question. When approached by the monitors and the local leaders, Mr. Tusiime radically attacked, and sent them off with a panga; only to be rescued by some good Samaritans. The case was reported to Rwaihamba police post but unfortunately, Mr. Tusiime had escaped by the time the police arrived at the crime scen. The search for the two culprits is still ongoing.

The duo had however refunded 1,250,000/- prior to their escape. to date. This was done in two installments, first by the chairperson who had paid 650,000/= while his counterpart – Belizeri having heard that his name was on police's wanted list, sent 600,000/= through his mom. All the money was handed over to the RAC monitors who later remitted it to the current SACCO management.

Corruption! What have you done to stop this wild-bush fire?

By Nganwa George – RAC Monitor

Corruption is the major stumbling block to the development of our beloved country. Billions of taxpayers' money is lost annually. Funds meant to provide better health care to citizens is 'eaten' by a few; while innocent Ugandans die of preventable diseases like malaria. In fact, corruption claims more lives than wars in Uganda!

As patriots, we need not to lament over the quandary corruption has caused; instead we ought to do something different: make a contribution – however small in making the world a better place for our children's grand children. It is for this reason that I write this article, to reserve my place in history – as my least contribution to this fight.

Uganda has some of the best laws and policies not only against corruption but also in other governance development arena. The institutional framework too is well developed to implement these policies but what is rather surprising is the fact that as a country, we rank as one of the highest in being corrupt.

Institutions like the office of the auditor general, Inspector General of Government (IGG), police, the judiciary and the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) among others are facilitated to ensure transparent and accountable systems to foster improved service delivery. However, display of figures and moneys lost to corruption is what these institutions do best.

Minimal facilitation as a major hiccup to their work notwithstanding, these agencies need to prove their worth! They need to do something better than lamentations over minimal facilitation or even expose the corrupt – yet the much needed action is left hanging. Power is nothing without control... so they say! What's the point in having endless lists of anti-graft agencies yet no matter how much scam is revealed, the corrupt are left to go scorch-free? Won't we be better off without them, if only to save tax-payers' money which could be reverted to something more beneficial? This is not to say that their work as government institutions is a complete waste of time, NO! But, can we do something tangible? Something that will bring the untouchables to book; something that will see the different arms of government working independently, yet complementing each other for a common cause...

Now, for this to happen, anti-graft institutions need to practice what they preach... how do you expect the police, for instance to bring a corrupt official to book yet they rank as one of the highest in being corrupt? Where on earth will they derive the moral authority to condemn the corrupt if they too are corrupt?

Adequate facilitation is a must if they are to perform to our expectation but could they first and foremost prove that they are indeed worth the extra penny?

My last plea as I wind up, can we all (regardless of our stature in society) endeavor to be the change we desire to see? We may preach the best gospel; we may speak the sweetest words, we may do everything humanly possible to stop corruption but for as long as we don't change our lifestyles – believing that change begins with us, never shall we achieve our dreams. Can you therefore do something different today? Can you brace up in new garments for the anti-graft war? Don't repeat what failed the last time you tried because I was told that **'Doing the same thing again and again expecting a different result is simply insanity!'** Try something new... who knows? It could be the missing link to the change we have for long desired! ALL THE BEST!

Some of the RAC monitors monitoring a Project



Part of the latrine collapsing



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