



TRACK

Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition Newsletter

News Letter

Special Edition

RAC @ 10 10TH ANNIVERSARY



Highlights: Key success stories of our Ten year journey.

Celebrating our Achievements.



From the Executive Director

What started as a community initiative to fight against corruption in only 5 sub counties in the Rwenzori region, has now grown into a formidable citizen-driven organization striving to curb corruption at all levels of society. Formed in 2002, Rwenzori Anti-Corruption Coalition is a Non-government organization that seeks to expose and cause action against corruption in the Rwenzori region.

Through her ten-year journey, a lot has been achieved; people's lives have been touched and changed, moneys saved and above all, service delivery improved. Over ten billion Uganda Shillings (10,000,000,000/=) has been saved through RAC's efforts i.e. causing arrest, interdiction and dismissal of public servants found guilty of corruption; causing unscrupulous contactors to re-construct shoddy works or even refund of misappropriated funds by the corrupt.

Albeit corruption still exists in the region, RAC's efforts to curb it cannot be underrated. Our sensitization and advocacy programs have increased the citizens' level of understanding and can thus hold their leaders accountable. This is witnessed in the growing number of cases reported to our office and other anti-graft institutions like police,

office of the Inspector General of Government (IGG) among others. RAC's efforts have further contributed to a new caliber of leaders with values that promote transparency and accountability. They are conscious of RAC's determination to fight corruption and therefore desist from graft tendencies.

Challenges notwithstanding, RAC's achievements are enormous. This can be attributed to the close working relations and collaboration with her development partners and other anti-graft agencies including; the office of the Inspector General of Government (IGG), Directorate of Public Prosecutions, police, the judiciary, national and international NGOs, grassroots communities, the over 450 RAC monitors spread across the region and of course the board and the RAC staff who run the office on a daily basis.

What follows in this dossier is thus a compilation of some of the stories of change we celebrate in our ten years of existence. Though not exhaustive, we believe that the testimonies herein will inspire many to join the struggle to silence the corruption monster that has deeply eaten into our society.

Kamwenge District engineer interdicted over duty negligence

Mr. Alex Mugume- the Kamwenge district engineer was interdicted after investigations proved him guilty of duty negligence. As the district engineer, Mr. Mugume was expected to closely supervise the construction of Rukunyu health center IV maternity ward in Kamwenge district worth 138,000,000/=. However, the works turned out to be shoddily constructed with multiple defects including reduction in the size of the labor suit, broken doors and window shatters, poor finishing of the floor, with a poor drainage system. Despite all these defects, the engineer went ahead to offer a certificate of completion to the contractor, something that caused wide-spread dissatisfaction among the community of Rukunyu. Although the contractor is partly to blame for the shoddy works, the district engineer is equally guilty for had he played his supervisory role, the defects would have been identified at an early stage and rectified before completion. Shoddy works in public works are very common, leading to loss of tax payers money and poor service delivery.

The intervention

When this issue was brought to RAC's attention through her monitors resident in Kamwenge, various steps were undertaken to verify the allegations. First, a sight visit was paid to the site, interviews held with key stakeholders including the workers and patients of Rukunyu as well as the political leadership of the district. One response that seemed to come out clearly from most of the respondents

was that although the defects were evident, correcting them was almost impossible since the building was complete with a certificate of completion awarded to the contractor. Simply put, they had given up!

However, as a whistle-blowing organization, RAC could not sit back and watch tax payers' money go to waste. When RAC requested for IAF's intervention into the pending cases in the region, this was one of the top most issues in Kamwenge. When presented to the IAF during the ministerial visit to RAC, ultimatums were given to the culprits, including the district engineer to ensure that the defects are fixed. Although the engineer pledged so, he didn't live up to his promise, resulting into his interdiction – as per the instructions left behind by Hon. Lokodo to the district leadership

The results

Although the engineer did not live up to his word, some of the defects were corrected. RAC received reports from her monitors and the members of the community that the window shatters and broken doors had been fixed. The floor was also redone, hence resulting into proper service delivery at the health center.

On the other hand, the interdiction of the district engineer, and the entire process of quizzing the accounting officers during the minister's visit went a long way in encouraging the community to report any corruption scandals, as well

as demanding for what rightfully belongs to them, lest they face RAC's 'iron hand'. Several lessons were learned by other leaders and civil servants within Kamwenge and the region all over – this incidence was covered and discussed by various media houses especially the local radio stations, where people applauded RAC for this initiative and were also confident that this would reduce on the corruption scandals within the region.

Additionally, correcting the defaults of the maternity ward are underway and once complete, the people of Rukunyu sub-county will benefit from the improved service delivery offered at this health center



Broken windows at Rukunyu Health center IV maternity ward before RAC-IAF intervention

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.

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

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.



Ceiling fixed after Monitors' intervention

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 a 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.

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 – Kakyoy, 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, Kakyoy, 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 Kakyoy. 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 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: Kakyoy – 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, 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 1052.2 Liters of fuel worth 3,000,000 paid at Bundibugyo Highway petrol station. 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

Monitors facilitate restoration of a functional HUMC at Butiti HC III

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. Amanyaa 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. Amanyaa – 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.

Karambi Chief tasked to reimburse stolen funds and Health center Bed

By Karambi Monitors



Some of the Karambi RAC 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!

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.



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

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

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.

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. 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 FACILITATE RECOVERY OF THEIR 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 Bezaleri 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 scene. 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.

Busaru-RAC monitors cause recovery of embezzled NAADS funds

By Byomuntura Meshach (Gender Officer – RAC)

National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) is a Government intervention program that envisions an increase in farmers' access to information, knowledge and technology for profitable agricultural production. The move is intended to boost productivity of agricultural produce in the middle of declining soil fertility, weather fluctuations and increasing disease incident.

As provided for under the National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) Act, 2001, the mandate of NAADS is to contribute to the modernization of the agricultural sector in order to increase total factor productivity of both the land and labor for the benefit of the farmers.

Despite its good intentions, the program has been widely abused in several parts of the country, undermining its results. This was the case in Busaru sub-county – Bundibugyo district where seven hundred thousand shillings (700,000/=) was released under the NAADS program to support 80 group farmers in the first quarter of the financial year 2011/12. Surprisingly, the money went missing under unclear circumstances, causing confusion among many. This revelation was brought to RAC's attention during a sub-county conference held in May 2013, in Busaru sub-county.

The funds in question were withdrawn from the sub-county NAADS account no 0140080749402 at Stanbic Bank – Bundibugyo branch by one – Mugisa Sam

through cheque number 005247. Mr. Mugisa claimed to have worked on instructions by the sub-county chief – Mr. Balinsangayo Silver.

In his defense, Mr. Balinsangayo claimed to have mistaken the NAADS account for the Local Government Management of Service Delivery Program (LGMSDP), where money was withdrawn to pay casual laborers. What seems rather bizarre is the fact that the funds were withdrawn from the NAADS account without the knowledge of the NAADS coordinator!

This contentious issue raised a lot of debate when presented at the conference. Many were dissatisfied by the chief's explanation, demanding that he refunds the money. Bowing to citizens' demands, the chief instructed the accountant to prepare a cheque worth 700,000/= from the tax compensation account to refund the NAADS money. The conference conveners demanded that the money be re-banked to the NAADS account within a period of one week, and yes, this condition was met. Meshach Byomuntura – a RAC official received a phone call from the sub-county chief five days after the conference confirming that the NAADS money had been re-banked. This was verified by looking at the pay-slips used in this money transfer.

Well-done! Dear RAC monitors of Busaru branch...

Karugutu monitors cause recovery of stolen Government property (VHT T-shirts)

Sale of government property for personal gain is a common practice and often times, the culprits tend to get away with it. Aliphonse Kalisa – a resident of Mengo ward – Rubaga division in Wakiso district was not so lucky to escape from a crime he recently committed.

It all started on the afternoon of July 10, 2012 when a group of Village Health Team (VHTs) encountered a man – Aliphonse Kalisa selling VHT T-shirts to individual members at a fee of 7,000/= each, well knowing that they are uniforms freely given out to VHTs through the ministry of health. VHTs are community volunteers trained to offer health services at Health Center 1s. Services provided include; first aid, counseling, follow up, and referral of patients to higher health centers for medical attention.

The VHTs in a bid to halt this illegal act quickly tipped off the RAC monitors' chairperson – Karugutu branch who immediately informed two police constables – Bangania Samson and Atoko. The two caused the arrest of Aliphonse at Ntoroko District Headquarters, and a case filed against him under reference number SD 29/10/07/2013.

When consulted, the acting Ntoroko District Health Officer (DHO) said that sale of VHT T-shirts is illegal. To this end, the accused was convicted by the magistrate in

Karugutu court and sentenced to either one year in prison or payment of a fine equivalent to three hundred fifty thousand shillings only (350,000/=) – Aliphonse opted for the latter .

On July 12, 2013, the T-shirts were handed over to the acting DHO – Mr. Byaruhanga who in a follow up phone conversation with the RAC monitors said that he was going to give the recovered T-shirts to the VHTs of Kibuku Town council.

The RAC monitors of Karugutu have been highly hailed for their brave actions that led to the successful arrest of the culprit. The district CID Boss – Chemowo Victor appreciated the monitors' move which not only enabled government to recover its stolen property but also, money was earned through the fine paid. This success story has greatly improved the image of the police and judiciary, encouraging others with similar issues to report them to the relevant authorities.

We hope this will serve as a lesson to those out there who have turned government property into their personal source of income. This time round, it was Aliphonso.. who knows who the next victim will be? Watch out!

Theft of Drugs at Kabonero Health Center II

On July 14, 2011, RAC received a report from the GISO – Kabonero Sub-county about Ms. Nyakwera Elizabeth – a nurse at Kabonero health center II accused of stealing and selling government drugs. It is alleged that on June 29, 2011, Ms. Nyakwera was arrested at Nkimbiri with two boxes of coartem and a tin of paracetamol with a Government mark – 'Not for sale'. Elizabeth was however released shortly after her arrest on unknown terms, and that she was back on duty. The GISO thus wrote to RAC to ensure that justice was done.



Ms. Nyakwera after she was arrested with the stolen drugs

RAC, thus embarked on an investigation journey that led her to various offices including the Directorate of Public Prosecutions (DPP), the Anti-corruption Court and police among others; to push for facts and justification for releasing Elizabeth without conviction.

The Anti-corruption court confirmed to RAC that Nyakwera's case had been recorded and still under investigation but promised to share the findings/resolutions once the case was finalized.

Nyakwera was convicted on her own plea of guilty on counts of abuse of office and possession of classified drugs. She was thus interdicted out of office for 10 years, and ordered to return the drugs that were found in her possession to Kabonero health center II. She was further sentenced to a fine of 200,000/= for both offenses or serve six months in prison.



Sample of the stolen drugs in the picture

THE STORY OF ASIIMWE KABARWANI

Kabarwani Asiiimwe is a 7- year old girl born to a mentally-ill mother - Rhoda of of Kirindi Parish, Busaru sub-county - Bundibugyo District. There was a twist in Asiiimwe's life in June 2011 when a parked lorry accidentally rolled over, only to knock down the poor girl who was seated in their home front-yard, crushing her pelvis. The lorry driver could not tell what exactly started it off. John the lorry driver rushed Asiiimwe to Bundibugyo hospital but upon reporting to police, he was arrested, leaving the poor child helpless in the hospital.



Asiiimwe hospitalized

Later, Asiiimwe's aunt came to her niece's rescue but could not help much since the medical workers in Bundibugyo hospital could not attend to her patient because the hospital could not provide the necessary plasters. Asiiimwe's aunt was thus asked to pay UGX800/= to buy the plaster but since she could not afford that, the poor girl was left in hospital for two months without any medical attention; in great pain with her body rotting away.

During one of her monitoring visits to the hospital in September 2011, RAC received a report from one of her monitors about the girl's saddening story and immediately moved in to check on her. With no further ado, RAC officials phone-called the hospital superintendent, the district Police commander, OC traffic, Internal Security Officer, Chief Administrative Officer, the LCV Chairman LC V, The RDC and the Hospital Administrator for answers to the unbelievable story.

After a long discussion, it was agreed that the medical superintendent – Dr. Arthur with immediate effect take charge of the girl's condition and administer all the necessary medical support to ensure Asiiimwe's quick recovery. In addition, all the other officials present pledged to steadily follow up on Asiiimwe's condition until full recovery.

In November 2011, RAC made a follow up visit to the girl and found out that she had been discharged, and steadily recovering. Today, Asiiimwe, though partially crippled by the accident has fully recovered to good health. All she needs is a wheel chair to support her mobility.



Asiimwe seated in the compound A month after she was discharged



RHODA the mother of Asiimwe



Asiimwe fully recovered

BUTEBE FOREST RESERVE



Picture showing part of the controversial land of Butebe Forest reserve

Butebe Forest Reserve is situated in Karambi Sub-County, Kabarole District. It covers 20 acres (8 hectares) of land, it was gazetted as a local Forest Reserve by Legal Notice No. 53 of 1953, and the forest was in 1967 declared as a Central Government Forest Reserve by the Declaration Order S1 151/67.

The management of the Forest Reserve was decentralised to Kabarole District Local Government council in 1998 by the Statutory Instrument No. 63 dated 11th/ September/ 1998 which was issued by The Minister of Water, Lands And Environment. Records show that the management of the Forest Reserve was decentralised to Karambi Sub-county Administration as per the letters written by the District Forestry Officer to the Sub-county Chief dated 6th/December/1999.

The problem

RAC received a complaint from one of her monitors about encroachment on Butebe Forest Reserve in Karambi Sub County, Kabarole District. It is alleged that the forest reserve was encroached on by one Muhenda Rujumba the former CAO and currently CAO Kamwenge District and Bassima Reuben a native of the area and agent of news papers based in Mbarara. Mr. Rujumba encroached on about 7 acres which he turned into dairy farm while Mr. Basiima used the rest of about 13 acres to plant eucalyptus trees.

After encroaching on the forest reserve, the duo applied to Kabarole District Land Board to lease the same land they had irregularly taken over. The board also irregularly leased the land to the duo contrary to article 237 (2)(b) of the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Sections 4(1) and (2) and 5(2) of the forest Act and sections 44(1) and (4) and 59(1)(a) of the Land Act 1998.

Basing on the lease offer, Mr. Basiima processed and was issued a land title no 330047 dated 3rd-January, 2003 with validity of 49 years with effect from 1st-November, 2002 for the land he was leased by the board, which was approximately 6.69 hectares.

RAC's intervention



RAC officials with area councillors and journalists in a sight visit to Butebe Forest reserve. Extreme right is the Kamwenge District CAO who is one of the accused in the land grabbing of this forest reserve

Upon the above revelations, RAC made subsequent follow up with various stakeholders and noted that a 2004 report by IGG was issued with recommendations which had never been implemented. To this end, RAC in February 2012 petitioned the Kabarole District LCV chairperson – Mr. Rwabuhinga Richard to expedite the implementation of the IGG's recommendations; to which he complied. In response to the petition, a committee to spearhead the implementation of the IGG's report was constituted, which committee recommended that the boundaries of the land in question be opened to survey and determine the actual size encroached on, and hence the subsequent eviction of the encroachers. In April 2012, the land boundaries were opened – which report RAC received a copy. The opening of the boundaries was a big step taken towards the realization of the IGG's recommendations. According to the district chairperson, the survey report released indicated that out of the 7.65 hectares of the district land, 3.7 hectares were encroached on i.e. 3.2h by Mr. Basiima, and 0.5H by Mr. Rujumba.

Ownership of this land is not disputed; it belongs to the district as a small forest reserve according to the NFA. However, the land has no title.

According to Mr. Rwabuhinga – the district chairperson, the district is processing a land title for the reserve.

RAC facilitates recovery of misappropriated funds at Musandama Primary School

In 2010, three School Management Committee members of Busandama primary school were found guilty of swindling the school funds worth Shs. 2,425,925/= (two million four hundred twenty five thousand, nine hundred twenty five shillings), under the pretext of being the right owners of the land where the school was located. The money in question was compensation funds paid to the school by UGASURV during the construction of Fort Portal-Bundibugyo road. The trio shared the money amongst themselves, with a very small portion given to the school.

When RAC received this report, she went ahead to investigate and indeed, the allegations were found to be true. A meeting, comprising the School Management Committee, founder Members body, PTA and other relevant stakeholders, was thus convened to address the problem. When asked, the accused did not deny but rather, they acknowledged their fault and asked to be pardoned. They pledged to refund all the money swindled.

True to their word, the money was repaid and banked on the school account and for this, the school head-teacher extended his appreciation to RAC for their intervention that saw the school regain the funds that had been diverted by a few selfish individuals.

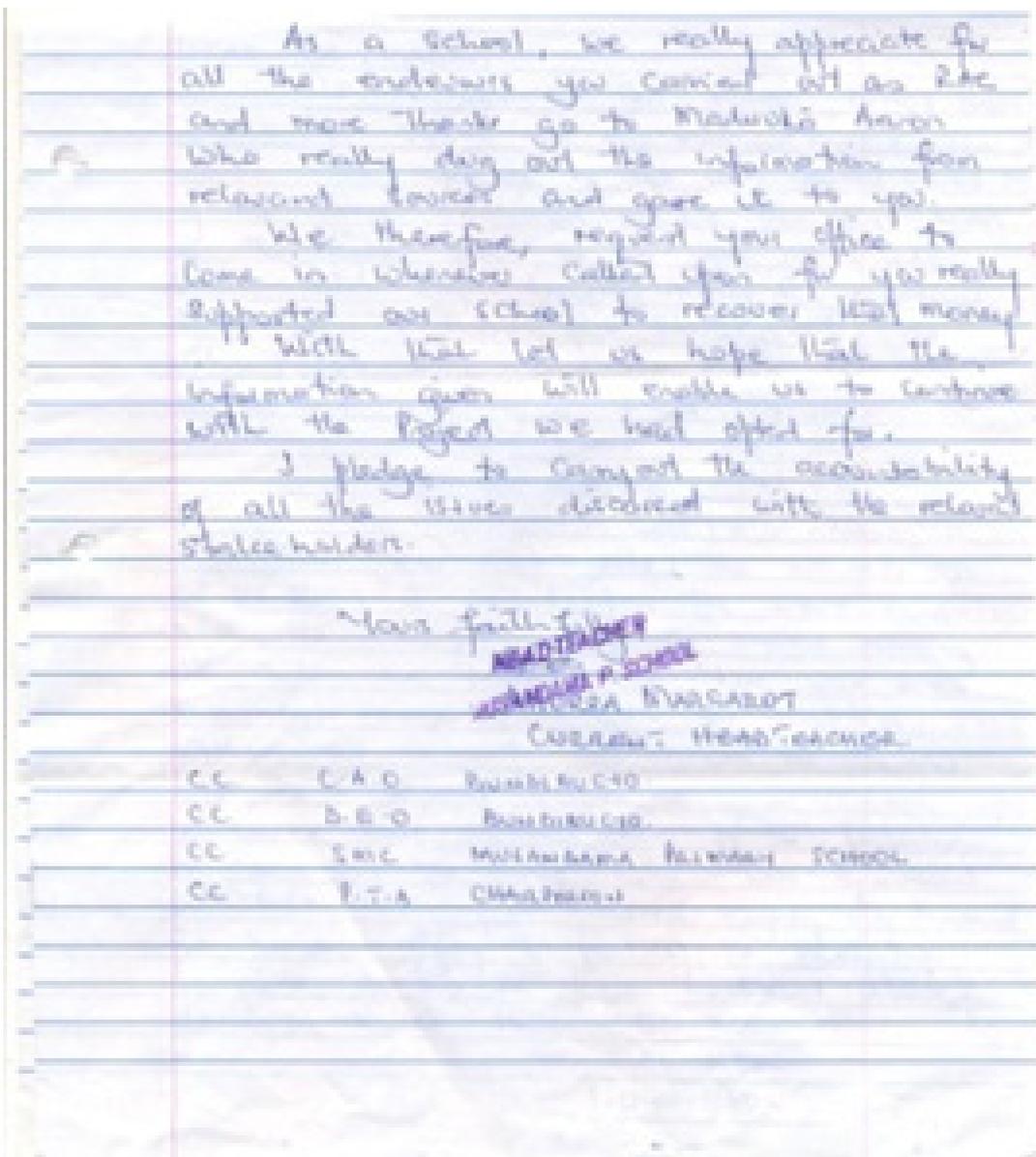


Figure 1: Copy of the appreciation letter from the head teacher to RAC

Some of our success stories in pictures



Buhinga referral hospital - a symbol of improved service delivery



In a joint monitoring move...



Our partners in development



RAC commemorates anti-corruption convention 2013



RAC, IAF and Kamwenge district officials in a joint monitoring exercise



Some of the RAC monitors from Ntoroko Branch