

UGANDA CHANGE AGENT ASSOCIATION (UCAA)

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| Date | 31 st Dec 2013 |
| Author | Lucy Akello Ayena |
| Project/ Programmatic Cooperation | Reduction of extreme poverty and hunger in the post-conflict areas of Gulu and Oyam Districts in Northern Uganda. |
| Organization | Uganda Change Agent Association |
| Country of implementation | Uganda |
| Project Nr. | |
| Period covered | 1 st Jan – 31 st Dec 2013 |

1 Context of the project

Northern and North Eastern Uganda experienced over two decades of armed conflict between the State of the Republic of Uganda and several dissident armed groups. This conflict resulted in diverse grave livelihood gaps and challenges. Despite several initiatives by Government of Uganda to mitigate the effects of armed conflict, there were still livelihood gaps manifested in form of low food and nutrition security, low household incomes, increased vulnerability, dwindling well-being, limited rights of access and stagnated or dwindling human dignity in post-conflict settings.

Uganda Change Agent (UCAA) proposed this project aimed at improving livelihood among people who earn less than US\$1 per day in Paicho Sub-County of Gulu District and Otwal Sub-County of Oyam District. The specific objectives of the project were: -

1. To develop Village Change Agent (VCA) skills among 40 members of self-help development groups by December 31 2013.
2. To build capacity in developing and managing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) among 40 change agents and leaders of self-help development groups by December 31 2013.
3. To develop group management skills among 40 members of self-help development groups by December 31 2013.
4. To promote collective and sustainable food production practices among the community groups by December 31 2013.

The primary focus group for the project was a total of 4,179 community members of selected model parishes in Paicho Sub-County (Gulu District) and Otwal Sub-County (Oyam District) at a modest unit cost of Euro 7.20 per beneficiary. These target groups mostly comprised of poor grassroots men and women engaged in subsistence agricultural production. The target group will also comprised of small scale artisans petty traders as their main forms of occupation. Among the target group was a significant number of out-of-school youths that had attained Adult age but lacked gainful employment.

2 Progress monitoring Protocol

The progress monitoring protocol of the project was as follows:

| Objectives / Activities | Indicators | Verifiable indicator |
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| Overall Objective: Improved livelihoods among people who earn less than US\$1 per day in Paicho Sub-County of Gulu District and Otwal Sub-County of Oyam District. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor grassroots women, men, youth and other vulnerable people managing their self-help development groups effectively Improved livelihood for poor grassroots women, men, youth and other vulnerable people Improved access to livelihoods resources for poor men and women | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 120 groups practising skills from the trainings Income of some beneficiaries increasing from 80,000 to 150,000= as per evaluation report |
| Objective 1: To develop Village Change Agent (VCA) skills among 40 members of self-help development by December 31 2013. | No. of Village Agents of Change supporting self-help development groups | 40 community members were trained in VCAs skills |
| Activity 1.1: Orient district and sub-county leaders and administrators in 2 districts of Gulu (Paicho Sub-County) and Oyam (Otwal Sub-County) to the planned project | No. of orientation meetings conducted | Office of RDC Gulu, DCDO and Paicho sub county officials including district councillor were met. While for Oyam, the LCV, Office, RDC office Otwal sub county Officials were mobilised and oriented into the project. |
| Activity 1.2: Select 2 parishes to be developed as model livelihoods parishes in collaboration with district and sub-county leaders and administrators | No. of parishes selected | 2 Parishes and 2 villages were selected in each of the target sub counties of Gulu and Oyam |
| Activity 1.3: Select 40 members of self-help development groups to be trained as community agents of change (25 female, 25 male) | No. of members of self-help development groups selected for training | 40 members were selected , 10 in each target village |
| Activity 1.4: Conduct comprehensive VCAT course for 50 selected members of self-help development groups (25 female, 25 male) | No. of community members participating in VCAT | A VCAT Course was conducted for 20 community members in each district |

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| Activity 1.5: Conduct follow-up and supervision of 100% of community agents of change that graduate from VCAT | No. of trainees who completed VCAT course followed up | All VCAT participants were followed and reached |
| Activity 1.6: Conduct 4 Review Meetings for UCAA branch offices in Gulu and Oyam | No. of Review Meetings held | Review meetings were conducted. |
| Activity 1.7: Conduct 2 District Assemblies in Gulu and Oyam for mutual accountability among project stakeholders | No. of District Assemblies conducted | All district Assemblies were conducted |
| Activity 1.8: Conduct 2 district development forum (1 per district) on key livelihoods issues affecting target districts and the entire Northern Region | No. of district development forums conducted | N/A Not budgeted for |
| Objective 2: To build capacity in developing and managing Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) among 40 change agents and leaders of self-help development groups by December 31 2013. | Proportion of Village Agents of Change and leaders of self-help development groups trained in VSLA who are supporting community groups | 40 Members in the 2 districts acquired VSLA skills |
| Activity 2.1: Identify 40 change agents and leaders of self-help development groups to be trained in developing and managing Village Savings and Development groups (20 female, 20 male) | No. of change agents and leaders of self-help development groups identified for VSLA training | 40 Community members were identified for a VSLA training. |
| Activity 2.2: Conduct comprehensive VSLA course for 40 selected change agents and leaders of self-help development groups (20 female, 20 male) | No. of change agents and leaders of self-help development groups who completed VSLA training | 2 VSLA trainings of 40 community members were conducted one in Gulu and another in Oyam |
| Activity 2.3: Conduct follow-up and supervision of 100% of change agents and leaders of self-help development groups that graduate from VSLA course | No. of change agents and leaders of self-help development groups trained in VSLA followed up | Trained participants of VSLA were followed up |
| Objective 3: To conduct Group Management Training (GMT) for 50 members of self-help development groups by December 31 2013. | Proportion of members of self-help development groups trained in group management skills who are supporting community groups | 80 Members of Self-help groups were trained in GMT Skills |

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| Activity 3.1: Select 40 members of self-help development groups to be trained in group management (20 female, 20 male) | No. of members of self-help development groups identified for group management training | 20 participants for GMT were selected for each of the four target Villages. Meaning that 80 community members instead of 40 were selected for a training in Group Management |
| Activity 3.2: Conduct comprehensive group management training for 40 selected members of self-help development groups (20 female, 20 male) | No. of members of self-help development groups trained in group management | 80 Community members were trained in GMT |
| Activity 3.3: Conduct follow-up and supervision of 100% of community agents of change that graduate from group management training | No. of people trained in group management followed up | Monitoring and follow up were made |
| Objective 4: To promote collective and sustainable food production practices among the community groups by December 31 2013. | Proportion of members of self-help development groups and change agents trained in improved agricultural practices skills who are supporting community groups | 33% of the Self-help development groups were trained in improved agricultural practices |
| Activity 4.1: Select 40 members of self-help development groups to be trained in improved agricultural practices(20 female, 20 male) | No. of members of self-help development groups and change agents identified for improved agricultural training | 10 participants were selected in each of the 4 target villages. |
| Activity 4.2: Conduct comprehensive improved agricultural training for 40 selected members of self-help development groups and change agents(20 female, 20 male) | No. of members of self-help development groups and change agents trained in improved agricultural practices | 2 trainings of 20 participants each were conducted in the two target districts |
| Activity 4.3: Conduct follow-up and supervision of 100% of community agents of change that graduate from improved agricultural training | No. of people trained in improved agriculture followed up | Monitoring and follow ups was done to trained participants of agricultural practices. |

3 Key result areas in 2013

COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION AND ORIENTATION



The Executive director –UCAA standing in t-shirt addressing community members in Oyam district during one of the project sensitization meetings.

Community mobilization was the first field activity conducted. This created awareness among project beneficiaries and other stakeholders. The team at UCAA including the Executive Director, The Programme Director and the Programme Officer moved to Gulu and Oyam in May 2013. In both Districts, the team visited the offices of the District leadership including the Resident District Commissioner to introduce the project. These meetings were preceded with other meetings at the sub-county level (target sub-counties for project implementation). The District officials approached welcomed the project and promised support in terms of creating conducive environment for UCAA activities in the said districts.

In Paicho Sub-county, the team met with the sub county leadership led by Mr Okot Peter, the local council chairperson III for Paicho who together with other sub county officials, with guidelines from UCAA indentified the least served villages for project implementation. In this participatory meeting between UCAA and Paicho Sub county leadership, Kalali and Kaluwumu Parishes were identified as model parishes for project implementation. Thereafter, two villages from these parishes were selected i.e. Lakwela and kiceke as model villages.

In Oyam District, the team met with the district leadership and same procedure as that in Gulu was followed till the Parishes of Okii and Omukugungo plus two villages of Alege and Odia were selected for the project implementation.

Together with the Local Leaders UCAA proceeded to the identified villages and met with the residents in those villages, each at a time and selected the beneficiary members. Members picked were suggested by the Local leaders of the villages. It is quite amazing however, after the sensitization; questions in Oyam were not different from those in Gulu.

TRAINING IN VILLAGE SAVINGS AND LOANS ASSOCIATION (VSLA)

1) VSLA Training In Oyam

This training was conducted from 19th-22nd May. A total of 22 participants were trained and were drawn from Alege and Odia Villages. One UCAA intern student and a change agent were also trained. This training took place in white house hotel in Oyam.

The training objective was to build capacity in developing and managing Village Savings and Loan Associations among Change Agents and the self-help groups that they are working with. The Key output of this training was 20 Rural Men and Women from the two target Villages equipped with VSLA skills. The acquired skills are to benefit 20 households with about 100 people at an average of 5 members per households as first beneficiary and later on the community of Alege and Odia villages as second beneficiary.



The UCAA programme director hands VSLA equipment to one of the beneficiary group(Can Lit group) in Lakwela village Paicho sub county Gulu. The Chairperson LC1 of Lakwela looks on.

2) Training in VSLA Methodology in Gulu

Similarly, this training was conducted between 23rd and 25th May. A total of 22 participants were trained and they were drawn from Kiceke and Lakwela Villages. One intern student and a change agent were also trained. This training took place in white house hotel in Oyam district.

The training objective was to build capacity in developing and managing Village Savings and Loan Associations among Change Agents and the self-help groups that they are working with. Output was 20 community members with skills in VSLA.



Mothers with children also attended the trainings. At least 4 mothers attended with children. Following the gender arrangements, both children and baby sitters were allowed to have meals and accommodation during trainings.

The members who were trained into VSLA skills were given some VSLA boxes and pass books. A total of 12 VSLA boxes instead of 20 as per budget were given to 12 groups in both Gulu and Oyam because the VSLA prices were found to be shs 100,000= each than the budgeted shs 60,000=

The Beneficiary groups on VSLA boxes were as follows:

GULU (Paicho Sub county)

- a) Can Lit group in Lakwela Village
- b) Orib Cing Group in Lakwela Village
- c) Aero Nyero group in Lakwela Village
- d) Lapwe Tooma Iyeng in Kiceke Village
- e) Kikwaki Ryem Can in Kiceke Village
- f) Bon lit in Kiceke Village

OYAM (Otwal Sub county)

- a) Bedo Abeda Nyok in Odia Village
- b) Ket Can Ttic in Odia Village
- c) Alege development group in Alege village
- d) Note barwomen group in Alege village

TRAINING IN BEST IMPROVED AGRICULTURAL PRACTICES

1) Training On Improved Agricultural Practice in Oyam

Similarly, this training was conducted between 23rd and 24th may. A total of 22 participants (11 males and 9 females) were trained and had been drawn from Alege and Odia Villages. One intern student and a change agent were also trained. This training took place in white house hotel in Oyam.

The objective of the training was to equip participants with skills in improved agricultural methods. The products of this training have now started establishment of Kitchen gardens, planting improved seeds and others in rows and clearing their garden. The Key Output was same as for VSLA training. The Facilitator was a NAADs coordinator in Oyam.



community members who participated in best agricultural practices training in Oyam district pose for a photograph after completion of the course.

Lesson Learnt,

Gender budgeting for activities is necessary especially when we are dealing with the rural community groups.

2) Training on Improved Agricultural practices in Gulu

This training was conducted from 19th-21st May. A total of 22 participants were trained and they were drawn from Kiceke and Lakwela Villages. It was facilitated by the Paicho Sub county NAADs Coordinator. One intern student and a change agent were also trained. This training took place in Multi-choice in Gulu. The gender balance for this training was 50%: 50%.

Participants were taught the skill that enhances food security, nutrition, income and environmental protection. The Key action points were 1) for the participants to train their fellow community members and improve on their gardens 2) To establish kitchen gardens for nutritional boosting in their households.



Gulu district

VSLA trainees attending a Session at Multi choice Hotel in

VILLAGE CHANGE AGENT TRAINING (VCAT)

UCAA received funds from FCA to conduct a Village Change agent training in the target districts of Oyam and Gulu in Uganda. A VCAT course is a 28 non residential course. The training topics were organized under the following main headings: Introduction to cash book accounting, communication and facilitation, poverty analysis, development theory, gender issues, conscientisation, working with groups, group savings and credit and income generating activities. A total of 41 participants including 21 females and 20 males were successfully trained as community agents of change in Oyam and Gulu districts. It was the first village change agent training in these sub counties. The participants appreciated and promised to utilize the knowledge and skills acquired for their own and community development.

GROUP MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Some Mobilization for the group management was done. This Mobilization enabled UCAA to have a Bank for those to attend the Group management training during the second half of the year. Four trainings were conducted instead of two. This followed a request from the districts that a second training in group management was necessary. UCAA sought permission from FCA to utilize funds meant for the National delegates' assembly and it was granted. 80 community members 40 from each target district were trained in group management training.



UCAA programme

Officer, Dinah Akallo in a review meeting with *Group Management training beneficiaries in Lakwela village, Picho sub county Gulu district.*

DISTRICT ASSEMBLIES

Two district assemblies in which Change agents came to account to each other were held one for Gulu and another for Oyam. During these assemblies, UCAA had to account to its members too and giving updates to the membership in the project districts on the FCA project and what was happening to UCAA country wide. The Change Agents also presented their progress reports to UCAA especially their work with the community self help groups and personal development initiatives. They also presented some community needs to UCAA that they felt UCAA could help them to handle in the areas of land rights or issues, vocational education especially for child mothers. A total of 30 change agents attended the district assemblies.

DISTRICT REVIEW MEETINGS

District review meetings were conducted in the two project districts. These meetings were attended by the project beneficiaries, Community members, UCAA staff, Local leaders and UCAA members of the Board. Review meetings were helpful to the project implementation because they provided solutions to some challenges such as the distribution of the few VSLA boxes as compared to the number of beneficiaries. It was through the review meetings that a way forward for the distribution of the few VSLA boxes was reached. Review meetings were again very helpful in identifying gaps and advising the project implementers on how to go about them.

VISIT OF THE PROJECT SITES BY MEMBERS OF THE UCAA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The project sites were also visited by members of the UCAA Board of Directors. The Board visits added some value to project implementation in form of project Visibility amongst the political leaders and the project communities. The

Board members were very appreciative to FCA for supporting the northern rural community that had suffered for long to transform their lives.

VISIBILITY

UCAA used part of the visibility budget. All implemented activities were covered by the Local FM Radio Stations for instance in Gulu was Radio Rupiny FM and Mega FM. While in Oyam District was Radio Shine FM. Both radios recognized the implementing agency as UCAA and the Funder as FINN Church Aid. The Rupiny a local news paper covered activities of UCAA as well and the voice of the project beneficiaries were also captured. The Uganda New vision paper also did mention UCAA once.

LAMAK CAL JACKSON KITARA



Odokonyero Amos lamemba me Aero Nyero tye ka gamo canduk me bolicup ki bot direkta me Uganda change agent Ass, Lucy Akello Ayena

Dwon lutedero



LACEN LUKWIYA:

Owaco ni pwonyo gi ki diro me nyayo lim okonyo gi oweko gi ngeyo kit ma omiero gi pok ki magoba me bolicup inino me yabo ne dok omiyo miti bot jo mukne ma onongo



LACEN AJULINA:

Wonkom me bolicup Aero Nyero otito ni bolicup okonye oweko iculu lutino ne igang kwan,iwilo dyangi,dyegi ki itye ki cente ma iwilo ki jami ode. Mego



KILAMA VINCENT:

Owaco ni pwonyo gi ki miyo bot gi can duk ki buke obi konyo gi pien onongo gin gitye ka tic ki can duk bao ma ki romo tongo ki tyero ka ki kwanyo cente,ento man dong ki miyo can



PATRICK OJARA:

Karan me can Lit bolicup gurup otito ni bolicup tye ka konyo gi weko gi gwoko cente dok ka mwaka otum ma ki yabo ni nongo gitye ki cente mo.En owaco

Goli ber

Uganda Change Agent opoko ngec ki gurup 20

GULU

JACKSON KITARA

Acholi obolo caro lok ni ngat ma mito konyi omiero omi boti goli onyo ngec ma itiyo kwede me yeny kwo, ento pe omi rec pien rec icamo woko nongo weki ki kec.

Man onen atyer kama leng ikare ma dul me Uganda Change Agent association opwonyo gurup me Bolicup 20 ka omiyo bot gi can duk me gwoko cente gi ki buke me gwoko wel cente ma ki gwoko ki ma ki deno.

Gurup ma kipwonyo ni oak i icaro Kiceke ki Lakwela matye ite parish me Kal Umu ki Kal

Ali igombola Paicho i Gulu dictrik.

Christopher Wambale me-nija me Uganda change agent association ite projek me nyayo lim icing lwak owaco ni gin gibedo ka pwonyo lwak igang kwan Kalamaji P/S ki diro me nyayo lim icing gi, deno cente, bedo ki diro me gwoko cente ki weko gin kwo pir gi ken gi abongo jenge ikom gamente onyo dul ma pe jenge ikom gamente.

Wambale owaco ni pwonyo lwak ma icaro ki diro me gwoko lim ni tye me weko lwak ma odok iwi obur gi ki inge lweny pa adui LRA nyayo lim icing gi.

Lucy Akello Ayena, Direkta me Uganda change agent association

owaco ni ite projek gi me nyanyo lim icing lwak i mwaka 2013, gitye ka tic igombola Paicho ki gombola Otwal i Oyam dictrik.

Mukungu me Kal Ali parish, Samuel Nyero Kaka opwoyo dul me Uganda change agent association ka owaco ni man tyen me acel ma ki tye ka pwonyo lwak ki diro me nyayo lim nicake ma dano odok gang iwi obur gi.

Closure ceremonies were organized at end of every activity and officiated upon by key district officials. For example, in Oyam the function was Officiated by the Oyam district Vice Chairman and the Oyam deputy Resident District Commissioner-Mr John Okuru Kwen. In their closing remarks, the vice chairman Oyam District encouraged UCAA to ensure that change agents are helped to acquire some income generating activities in order to acquire daily incomes for themselves. The RDC, noted that UCAA ought to look to the Value addition and then markets for the produce of the farmers.

In Gulu, the closing ceremony was graced by the Woman district councilor and the Chairman LC 3 of the target Sub county, who from the very begining of project activities have been an alley to UCAA. We see a promising future to work with these leaders.



Lessons learnt

- 1) Involvement of Community leaders and the media brings about quick Publicity of project activity output and outcomes.
- 2) The Budgeting for Visibility is an important element of project budget. It helps the project output to be known by the entire community
- 3) Registration with district local governments was now mandatory. UCAA is planning to ensure that registration is done for districts it has current interventions.

VEHICLE SUPPORT

The Vehicle support budget was very useful. UCAA depended on its double Cabin Vehicle to conduct all visits that were necessary under the project. The Vehicle also contributed to Visibility among the communities that staff visited. The Presence of UCAA was felt by the local communities.

BOARD MEETINGS AND BOARD VISITS

Board of Directors (BOD) Meetings not contributed to the project but the entire UCAA Operations. The BOD passed a

resolution after negotiating and convincing some staff members to offer their service on Voluntary basis. This resolution though taxing to staff contributed a lot to UCAA by reducing the salary claim burden. Only 4 staff was retained on the payroll to be paid for by FINN Church Aid and ICCO. The rest are being paid a volunteer rate.

The BOD advised management and approved all activities and advised staff on matters of Policy.

STAFFING

UCAA staff exhibited high level of cooperation during the period. Although only 4 staff had been maintained on the payroll, the rest continued to offer diligent service to UCAA hence contributing to the success of the Project activities.

OFFICE RUNNING COSTS.

Office running costs enabled the administration to execute its coordination role. Lira office where the project is based, continued to be maintained hence acting as focal point for the project.

OTHER SUPPORT

Other support to the project was received from the FCA regional office in Nairobi. Both Wycliffe and Scola the Finance Manager made support visits to UCAA. These Visits added value to the UCAA finance department. Through these visits a number of positive changes such as payment by cheque, improvement on the Voucher system have been adopted. A team of the FCA Members of the Board also visited UCAA during the Period.

UCAA was able to implement suggestions, and technical guidance from the support team in Kenya FCA regional office.



UCAA staff, Board Chairperson and one Ugandan Parliamentarian member who is a Change Agent in a consultative meeting with a team from FCA in Kampala in 2013.

Capacity building

Some other Support during the period was given to UCAA to support its capacity building plan through a separate funding from FCA. This support provided some skills to both UCAA staff and members of the Board in policy design and formulation. With this UCAA ably worked with the consultant to ensure that all policies necessary for UCAA were in place. By the end of 31st Dec 2013, the UCAA Board had approved the following Policies:

- Human resources
- Finance
- Procurement
- Assets Management
- Communication
- Conflict of interest
- Anti-Fraud
- Gender
- HIV/AIDs work place
- Child Protection
- Volunteers
- Internship

In addition to these UCAA Policies, the Board of Directors approved the 2014-2016 UCAA Strategy.

END OF PROJECT EVALUATION.

The end of projected evaluation was conducted during December 2013 when all project activities had been completed. UCAA through a bidding process sourced the Services of Clare Komuhendo to carry on the assignment.

The Evaluation report revealed that most of what had been planned for the project was achieved. That Impact was realizable. However, that few challenges appeared within the groups with whom UCAA engaged on the project because the group treasurers could not make proper accountability for group funds. The reason for this could be lack of a proper training in group fund management.

4. Challenges and Lessons Learned

The following Challenges were encountered and counteracted

- a) Staff remuneration was for a short period of 4 months instead of 12 in the project period. UCAA designed a means for volunteer pay rate, lower than the stipulated salary scales. The exchange gain and some locally generated income also were used to cover the gap.
- b) There was high demand for the project among the community members but UCAA had to remain with the targeted beneficiaries.
- c) Prices for VSLA boxes had gone high from the budgeted, few of them were bought. Through review meetings a compromise for their distribution was reached.
- d) Other costs which had gone high include cost of food, and transport.

The following were the Lessons Learnt

- Proper Induction and Mobilization of the Local Leaders and Communities was very helpful in this project implementation.
- Meetings with project stakeholders in the form of reviews assisted the project implementers to discover gaps, and sort out issues which would have otherwise failed to be solved.
- The staff team work, transparency practiced by the project managers was also helpful in building common understanding and cooperation. This did contribute to staff flexibility when it came to staff remuneration.