

*ENGENDERING DECENTRALIZED POVERTY
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PROJECT*

INTERIM NARRATIVE REPORT

December 2008 – November 2009



Prepared By:

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1. DESCRIPTION

1.1	Name of beneficiary of grant contract	Agency For Accelerate Regional Development (AFARD)
1.2	Name and title of contact person	Dr. Lakwo Alfred Program Director
1.3	Name of partners in action	-
1.4	Title of the action	Engendering Decentralized Poverty Resource Management
1.5	Contract number	DCI- NSAPVD/2008/169-745
1.6	Start date and end date of this reporting period	December 2008 –November 2009
1.7	Target country or region	West Nile (Nebbi and Yumbe), Uganda
1.8	Final beneficiaries or target group	Final Beneficiaries- 189,563 women
1.9	Country in which the activities take place	Uganda

A: Introduction

The Engendering Decentralized Poverty Resource Management Project is funded by European Commission (EC) and is implemented by AFARD in the 6 Sub Counties of Drajini Akworo, Panyimur, Pakwach, Nyaravur, and Jangokoro in Yumbe and Nebbi districts respectively. While the overall objective of the project is that, "Lower Local Governments in the selected West Nile districts of Nebbi and Yumbe provide gender sensitive and equitable services to the community", the specific objectives are:

1. Women and local government leaders have increased knowledge and skills to champion women's needs in local government decision-making processes.
2. Effective participation of women in local government planning and budgeting increased.
3. Local governments are transparent and accountable to their constituents in general and women in particular.

This interim report, therefore, presents the annual performance status. It details activities implemented since the formal agreement was signed in November 2008 up to date. It also looks at some of the results produced, challenges encountered, and lessons learnt to date.

B: Project Operationalization

After the grant contract was signed between AFARD and the Delegation of the European Commission in Uganda on 24th November 2008, the process of mobilizing the resources required to kick-start the project started. This involved the following:

- Securing of a field office space in Yumbe district.
- Procurement of equipments and office furnitures like means of transport (vehicle and 2 motorcycles), laptop computers, desks and chairs.
- Recruitment of the 2 Field Officers (for Nebbi and Yumbe) and an Office Administrator for Yumbe (in conjunction with officials from Local Governments and District NGO Forum as part of the interviewing panel). By the end of the January 2009, the 3 staffs (all females) started work after an induction both on AFARD and the project goal, objectives and activities.
- Popularizing the projects to district and sub county local governments through personal visits by the Programme Director and the Community Development Manager. During these visits, Project Briefs were circulated to key stakeholders such as the Chairpersons Local Council V, Resident District Commissioners, Chief Administrative Officers, Sub-County Chiefs and Chairpersons LCIII of the targeted Sub-Counties. In addition, the Board of Directors and management of AFARD held a meeting with the District Executive Committee of Yumbe; a district where AFARD's presence was still insignificant.

Once the project operationalization was accomplished, full-scale implementation commenced as are detailed below.

2. Assessment of implementation of action activities

2.1 Activities and results

2.1.1 Summary of activities

Activities	Planned outputs	Actual outputs	Success rate (%)	Remarks
<i>Objective 1: Women and local government leaders have increased knowledge and skills to champion women's needs in local government decision-making processes.</i>				
1.1 Baseline survey	1 baseline survey	1 baseline survey conducted	100%	A baseline survey report was produced and an information sharing meeting with District Local Government officials held only in Nebbi. This meeting was funded by WENDI Programme.
1.2 Capacity assessment of Parish Task Force	1 study	1 study conducted	100%	This assessment was conducted concurrently with the baseline survey under 1.1 above
1.3 Training manual development	Review and produce 1 manual with 7 modules	1 manual with 7 training modules developed and 500 copies printed	100%	500 copies of the manual were printed and distributed to all leaders in the projects sub counties. Some copies were also shared with the district departments.
1.4 Training of trainers	Train 12 trainers	14 trainers trained	114%	The 2 Field Officers were also trained for purposes of providing effective routine backstopping to the trainers.
1.5 Training in Human and Women's Rights to development	Train 240 women and LLG leaders	240 women and LLG leaders trained	100%	
1.6 Training in PRMT, Mobilization and Communication skills	Train 240 women and LLG leaders	240 women and LLG leaders trained	100%	
1.7 Training in Gender Responsiveness Planning and Budgeting	Train 240 women and LLG leaders	246 women and LLG leaders trained	102%	Some people in Jangokoro and Panyimur attended this training even if they were not primary target beneficiaries.
1.8 Training in Advocacy skills	Train 240 women and LLG leaders	240 women and LLG leaders trained	100%	
1.9 Training in Participatory	Train 240 women	240 women and LLG	100%	

Gender Monitoring and Evaluation	and LLG leaders	leaders trained		
1.10 Training in documentation for change and advocacy skills	240 women and LLG leaders	240 women and LLG leaders trained	100%	
1.11 Training follow ups	Conduct 36 training follow ups	6 training follow ups conducted	16%	During the training of trainers, it was resolved that follow ups should be conducted after the first batch (1.5-1.7) of trainings were conducted.
<i>Objective 2: Effective participation of women in LLG budgeting and planning increased</i>				
2.1 Community awareness creation on women's rights and roles	6 awareness creation seminars	6 seminars held	100%	
2.2 Budget literacy seminars at parish levels	23 budget literacy seminars	23 seminars held	100%	
2.3 Mobilize women by drama shows	23 drama shows	23 drama shows staged	100%	
2.4 Produce and disseminate IEC in the local language	Produce 2,500 posters and 10,000 leaflets	2,500 posters and 10,000 leaflets produced	100%	
2.5 Hold radio talk shows to mobilize women	10 hours of radio talk shows	2 hours of talk shows were conducted on Radio Paidha	20%	The radio talk shows were reduced due to insufficient funds to support the program
2.6 Hold Sub County Women Forums	Hold 6 Sub County women forums	6 sub county women held forums	100%	
2.7 Hold Parish Women Leaders forum	Hold 23 parish women forums	23 parish women forums held	100%	
2.8 Participate in planning meetings at LLG levels	23 planning meetings at LLG levels	14 planning meetings	60%	The overlap in LLG planning meetings could not allow the Field Officers to attend all meetings at the same time.
2.9 Support women leaders to attend sectoral committee meetings	Support 30 Women Leaders to attend sessions of the sectoral committee	30 Women Leaders were supported to attend sessions of the sectoral committee meetings	100%	

	meetings	attended		
2.10 Inter district exchange visits	2 inter district exchange visits	-	-	Not conducted because of insufficient funding
<i>Objective 3: local governments are transparent and accountable to their constituencies in general and to women in particular</i>				
3.1 Develop and disseminate popular versions booklets of approved plans and budgets	600 copies of popular plans and budget	-	-	On –going but will be completed when funds are made available.
3.2 Erect bulletin boards at every LLG head quarters	12 bulletin boards	12 bulletin boards erected	100%	
3.3 Conduct plan and budget analysis	6 budget analysis	6 budget analysis conducted	100%	
3.4 Training in Gender Responsiveness Audit (GRA)	Train 240 women and LLG leaders in GRA	240 women and LLG leaders trained	100%	
3.5 Conduct participatory plan and budget tracking	36 periodic plans and budget tracking	1 budget tracking was conducted	2.8%	Budget tracking was only done in Drajini due to insufficient funds.
3.6 Hold bi –annual information sharing meetings at parish levels	36 bi annual information sharing meetings	-	-	These activities were not done due to insufficient funds.
3.7 Hold LLG advocacy meetings	36 Advocacy meetings	-	-	
3.8 Print T-shirts and caps	Print 250 T-shirts & caps	250 T-shirts & caps printed	100%	

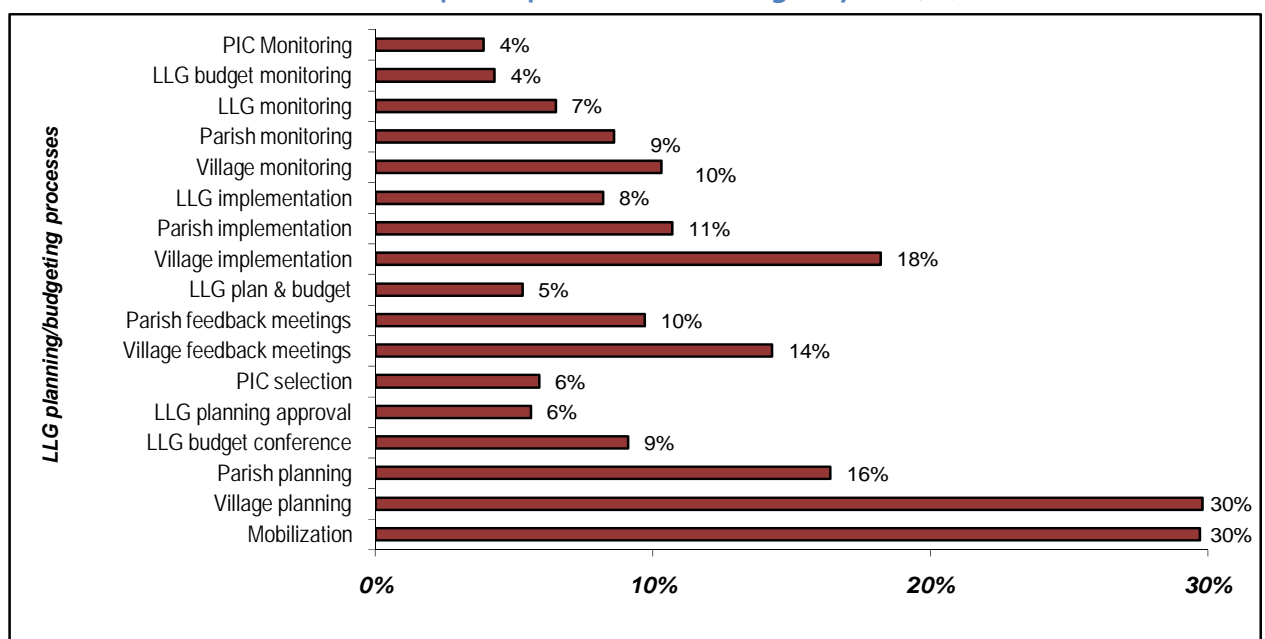
2.1.2 Details of implementation

Objective 1: Women and local government leaders have increased knowledge and skills to champion women's needs in local government decision-making processes.

1.1 Baseline survey on grassroots women's participation in local government planning and budgeting processes

At the design of the project document, no comprehensive data existed on the level of women's participation in the project area. The baseline survey was, therefore, conducted to establish the level and reasons for women's non-participation in lower local government planning and budgeting processes.

Figure 1: Grassroots women's participation in LLG budget cycles (%)



To accomplish this objective, critical performance indicators and previous project documents were reviewed; data collection instruments (focus group discussion guide and closed and open ended questionnaires) were designed; and data collectors were identified from the participating lower local governments and trained on data collection "best practices".

Data was collected using individual interviews from 2,232 grassroots women under the supervision of the Field Officers who also conducted the data entry. Analysis and draft report generation was conducted by the Programme Director and the Food and Income Security Manager (formerly the Community Development Manager).

The findings from this study as can be seen from Figure 1 below are that many grassroots women are significantly excluded from LLG planning and budgeting processes as at most only 3 in 10 participate in each planning stage. The scope of participation however declines

up the LLG hierarchy from 30% participating in village meeting to only 4% monitoring LLG budgets.

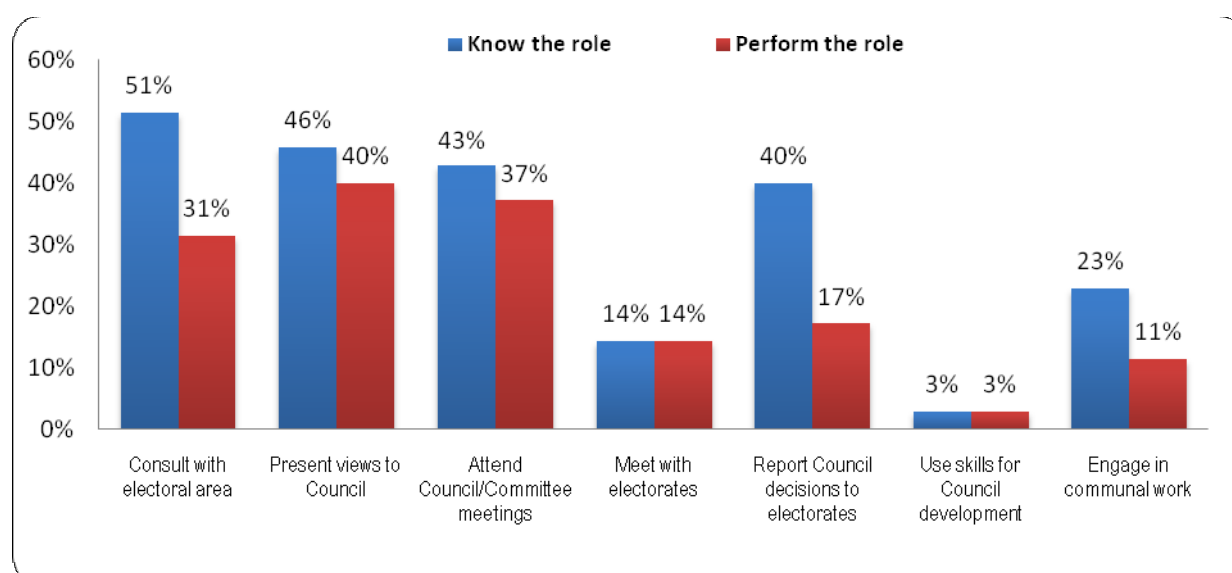
1.2 Capacity assessment of Parish Task Force members to engage with Local Governments

Another task the project is engaged with is building the political capability of women and lower local government leaders. To do so, it became important to assess to what extent these leaders knew their roles and were effectively implementing their mandated responsibilities. This assessment of Parish Task Force (PTF) members was done together with the baseline line survey.

Conducted by the Community Development Officers of the project sub counties after an orientation by AFARD management, a total of 30 Women Councilors and 118 Women Council Executives (WCE) were interviewed on the knowledge of their roles using individual interviews and group discussions. The result showed that:

- Regardless of the numerous roles, Women Councillors are expected to perform, only 51% were aware that they were required to keep in close consultation with their electoral areas (see Figure 2 below). Besides, only a paltry 3% were aware that they were to use their skills for the development of their areas. Awareness and performance of all other roles were below 50%. The few active Women Councillors are largely comfortable presenting views to the councils (although which views remains yet another question!) and attending council meetings.

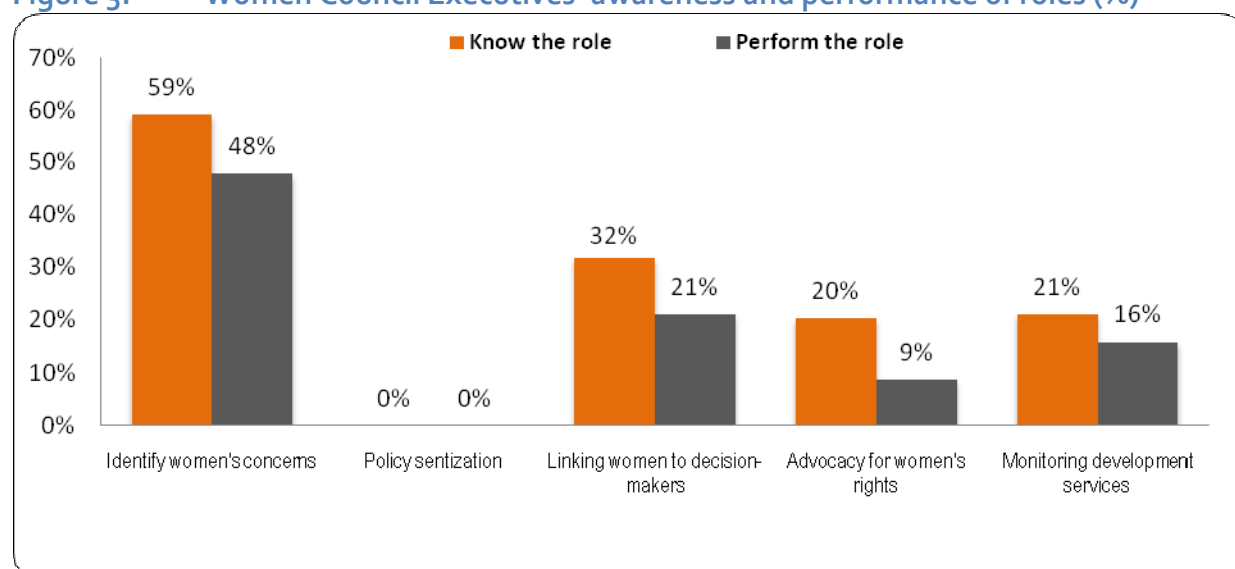
Figure 2: Women Councilors' awareness and performance of roles (%)



- Only 59% of Women Council Executives knew their roles of identifying women needs and none knew that for policy sensitization (see figure 3 below). Likewise 48% were performing identification of were women's needs (48%); the needs they hardly

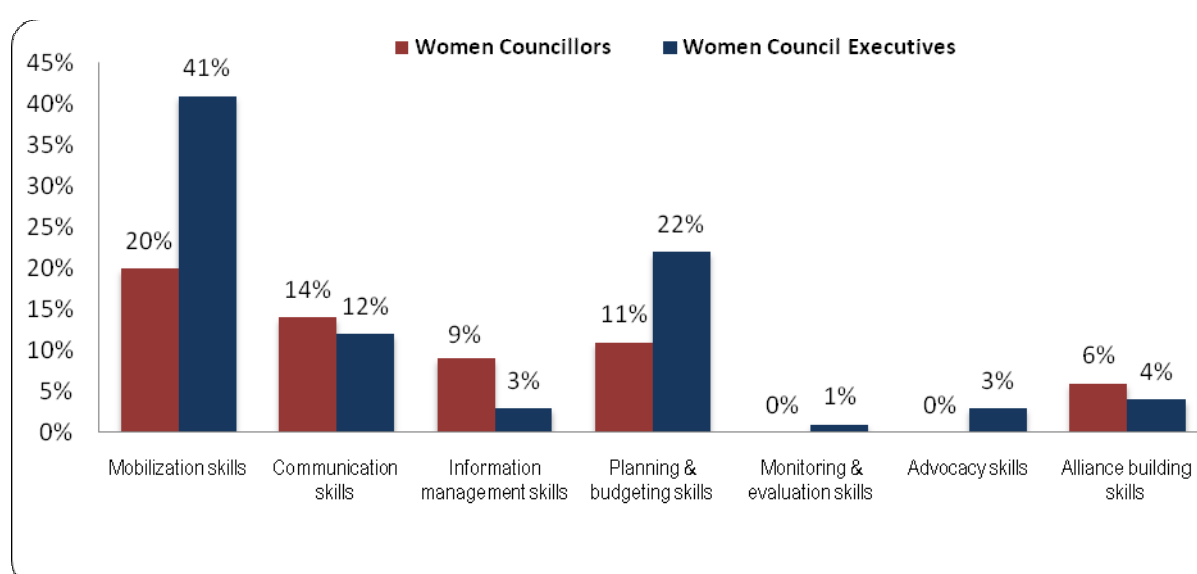
carry forward to any other level of government or development partners for support. While none was engaged in policy sensitization.

Figure 3: Women Council Executives' awareness and performance of roles (%)



- Concerning political capability, women leaders were also found lacking almost all core civic engagement skills (see figure 4 below). None of the women leadership structure scored 50% in having any core skills for mobilization, communication, information management, planning & budgeting, monitoring & evaluation, advocacy, and alliance building. Worst cases are for Women Councillors who knew nothing both in advocacy and monitoring and evaluation skills.

Figure 4: Women leaders' civic engagement skills (%)



From the focus group discussions, it became evident that the major roadblocks to effective women's representation in the decentralized political arena and development processes were:

- Less coordination between women leaders who are for most of the time engaged in wrangles about 'who is who' in the LLG political arena.
- Because of lack of leadership induction, many women leaders are simply ignorant of what their roles are as well as how to implement such roles.
- The women leadership especially at the district and sub county levels do not providing ample guidance to both lower level women leaders and to fellow grassroots women.
- Many women are illiterate and do not effectively participate in LLG meetings that are conducted in the English language.
- Sometimes local government meeting venues are far, typically in the parish and sub county headquarters.
- Many planning meetings are ill planned without caring that the women, who are also bread-makers in their homes, have to juggle between their domestic and public roles..
- Mobilization for meetings conducted by local councillors and Parish Development Committees (PDCs) exclude women.
- Sub counties segregate between Women Councillors and WCEs in paying participation allowances.
- Some men prevent their wives/sisters from attending public meetings.
- Unfulfilled budgetary promises has overtime accumulated into 'participation fatigue'.
- Religious dogma continues to curtail effective engagement of women in a male arena.

Thus, the consensus view agreed upon during the district feedback meetings to improve on women's participation and local government responsiveness and accountability (with gender sensitivity) are to:

- Build Women Forum as a coodination institution right from the village to district levels. Through the Forums, more capacity building should be conducted on issues of team building, roles of women leaders, women's rights, planning and budgeting, leadership skills, and govenrment policies.
- Widen mobilization channels so that the greater population of both women and men attend and voice their concern in local government policy-making processes.
- Sensitize more men and women on gender issues so that the influence of culture and male rigidity as well as the poor perception about women's empowerment is improved.
- Promote political engagement of women into leadership position. Women should be encouraged to join politics as are men in order for them to fend for their constituency.

1.3 Training manual development

With the knowledge and skills gaps assessed under 1.2, the design of appropriate capacity building strategy was ripe. Thus, a training manual with 7 modules (composed of Human and women's rights; community mobilization for gender equality; gender responsive planning and budgeting; advocacy; participatory gender monitoring and evaluation; gender responsive audit; and the module on documentation for change management) was prepared.

The team that produced the manual were drawn from Nebbi District local government, District Women Council Executives, and AFARD staff. This team reviewed the old manuals AFARD used during its partnership with Human Rights Network (HURINET) and European Union –Civil Society Capacity Building Program (EU-CSCBP) and identified gaps that were not effectively addressed.

Finally, 500 copies of the manual was produced and disseminated to all Women and lower local government leaders in the project sub counties. Other copies were also shared with the District Local Government Offices.

1.4 Training of trainers

A 10-day Training of Trainers workshop was held in Nebbi for 14 trainees. The trainees were composed of 12 members (community development officers and women leaders) chosen from the project sub counties and the 2 project Field Officers were also trained as trainers. The latter were involved to ensure that the subsequent trainings that will be conducted by the trainer trainers meet AFARD quality assurance demand, the. Besides, the Field Officers also got more insight about the project.

This training aimed at enabling the trainees to better internalize the project - its justification, objectives and the envisioned effects. It was conducted by AFARD management staff and the Nebbi District Community Development Officer. Apart from the focus on the modules, the training also provided skills in facilitation, training preparation, data generation and analysis, and training evaluation. These skills were found important when a Training Competency Assessment was conducted. The benefits of these skills can be captured from a remar of one of the trainees from Akworo who confessed:



Dr. Alfred Lakwo introducing the training
(Photo by Ms. Ochora Fiona)

I simply used to conduct trainings without giving attention to training evaluation and follow-ups. All we would do in government is to focus on imparting the training

content. Now I have learnt the need for assessing whether or not a training objective is met and what other gaps need improvement, before closure.

Important to note are that once the training of trainers were accomplished, the new trainer agreed on the following issues that they have continued to use through out the reporting period:

- a) Mobilization of trainers (women and local government leaders) should be done using a multi-channel approach. Letters and telephone calls from AFARD and face-to-face mobilization should be used concurrently.
- b) Before any training is done, the trainers should meet and conduct joint preparation so that they all know what who will handle.
- c) The same categories of people (drawn from parish and sub county Women Council Executives, area councilors, Parish Development Committees, Parish Chiefs and Local council II Chairpersons, as well as sub county technical staff and political leaders) should be trained so that the leaders acquire a comprehensive package of political capabilities.
- d) The Field Officers attend all trainings so that they are able to backstop the trainers, assess the progress made there and then, and finally write training reports.
- e) The trainings be clustered into 3 batches to allow for a break; a time the leaders would need to practice whatever they have learnt. This would also provide opportunity to refine the trainings that would follow to ensure that critical gaps are addressed.

1.5 Training in Human and Women's Rights

For the women to start advocating for equal benefits with men from the decentralized poverty resources that fund Sub County plans, they foremost need to know their rights as well as appreciate that their participation counts in development; it is not a privilege but a right. The main aim of this training was, therefore, to enlighten the various leaders on objectives of decentralization, hindrances to gender equality, rights of women, and to build their capacity to link decentralization to development. The participants also needed to get acquainted with the various supportive documents (like the Constitution and the Local Governments Act) that defend these rights of women as a vulnerable group in the society.



Overall, 240 people (139 women) drawn from women leaders and sub county technical and political leaders attended the training. What came out of the training were the

acknowledgement that many women leaders did not adequately know their rights. While one part of the problem had been the lack of orientation about these rights, the other was the inaccessibility to most government documents that are written in English. To this the Chairman Local Council III Mr. Kumakech John while giving closing remarks for the training in Akworo pointed out that:

No one has ever provided such a comprehensive information about rights to development as this training did today. We should thank AFARD for this work. Most of us leaders do not even have copies of the basic policies and laws. Besides, that these documents are written in English language only a few can meaningfully read and understand them. It is therefore high time that government and civil society alike take an added effort in making such documents avialbel and consumable to the masses. I thank AFARD for this great opportunity".

1.6 Training in Community mobilization and communication skills

This training focussed on community mobilization for gender equality. Its aim was to plant the seed for a coordinated and effective women leadership operation through targeting effective mobilization and communication skills.

The training attended by 240 leaders (138 women), therefore, focused on the role of women leaders and how they could mobilize other women to participate in all the lower local government decision-making processes. To this, Zainabu Omach of Pakwach Sub County said:



Hon. Nega Molly, the area councilor of Nyaravur commenting during the training Mobilization & communication skills
(Photo by Ms. Ochora Fiona)

I have for many years been mobilizing women with contentment that I am a good mobilizer. Today, I have realized from the training that I was only using my position to do mobilization. For all these years, I did not use any of the rightful skills I learnt from this training. As mobilizers, we could have done much better if we knew what was required of us.

From now on, I will conduct a meaningful and perfect mobilization given that I know not such how to mobilize but also that every mobilization is result oriented.

1.7 Training in Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB)

Every financial year, sub counties develop plans and budgets that are guided by the Indicative Planning Figures (IPFs) released by the central government and the needs of their people. Although mobilization for such planning meetings are supposed to be done right from the village to sub county levels in an all inclusive manner, evidences from the surveys revealed that they were done selectively in favor of men. Further, the deep-rooted gender inequalities manifest that local government poverty resources are gendered. Yet, part of the problem was the incapacity of women and local government leaders to engender decentralized poverty resources management.



MS. Oduba Masiana reacting during training in GRBP in Nyaravur Sub County at the Community Centre
(Photo by Ms. Ochora Fiona)

This training was therefore conducted for 246 people (156 women) to create an understanding of the government planning and budgeting cycle, its significance on (en)gendering development; and to lobby for a participatory and gender mainstreamed development. Using the last local government approved plans and budgets, the training demonstrated the critical variance between approved and actual budgets. It also demonstrated the gender insensitivities of the plans like in the lack of gender disaggregated outreach targets (and achievements). Such neutral services delivery were notes as a easy escape route for technical staffs to blindfall the masses that services are being delivered when actually they are either not being delivered or are being delivered to wrong beneficiaries. The Chairman of Jangokoro had this to say:

I used to think when they demand us of accountability that everything is about money. Today, I have learnt from the training that accountability is about making collective commitment to a gaol, persuing it together, and making the information available to every citizen. I have also learnt that the old ways of reporting like 250 people were trained or given seeds is gender neutral. What is needed critically is who of those people (men and women) benefited from the funds spent so that the public can know whether or not we are fighting poverty actually among the poor as well as wether or not we are honest to our commitments as approved in the annual plans.

1.8 Training in advocacy skills

Demanding for women's rights through effective representation in part requires have voice that is listened and responded to. This is the essence of advocacy. Thus, this training in advocacy was done with the objective of building the capacity of leaders especially women to be able to lobby and demand for services that they deserve. For other local government leaders, the training was meant to awaken them of the myriads of options women leaders have in ensuring that they finally reserve a considerable share of the decentralized poverty resources.

Attended by 240 people (154 women), this training brought to the fore the realization that:

- There is a very wide information gap in the Sub-county. Technical leaders have deliberately decided to keep some information such as on expenditures as confidential. Apart from breeding distrust, it was noted that doing so incapacitate many vulnerable population and their leaders from undertaking relevant and information-based advocacy as there will be no evidences to prove the reasons for advocacy. Doing so was also acknowledged as a strategic tactic leaders use to shelve off the masses from holding them accountable for their inactions.
- Advocacy is not a task for experts as many women leaders including Amaku Swaib, Secretary for Finance in Drajini confessed they thought. It was further noted that every citizen is and should be an advocate. And leaders echoed the need for teamwork in pursuing their constituency needs; something they were initially doing either individually and in a disjointed manner or in an ill-timed approach when plans have been approved and no budget virements could be made.

1.9 Training in participatory gender monitoring and evaluation (PGME)

Participatory Gender Monitoring and Evaluation (PGME) was one of the trainings conducted. The training aimed at operationalizing joint action in local government budget management. It also aimed at imparting skills for undertaking



Leaders in Akworo posing for a photo after advocacy training
(Photo by Ms. Ochora Fiona)



Hon. Amula Janet, councillor for Persons with Disabilities in Panyimur explaining the planning process
(Photo by Ms. Ochora Fiona)

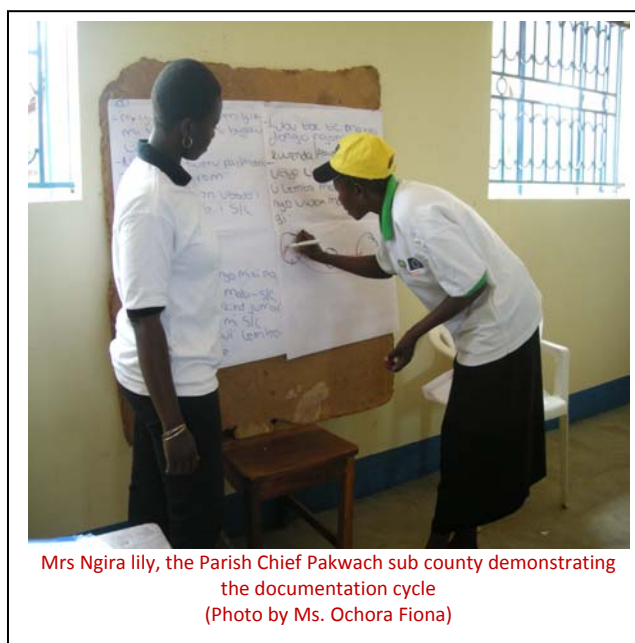
participatory monitoring but importantly from a gender perspective. Doing so was envisaged to open the current “closed door” approach to monitoring as a preserve of only councillors besides enticing women leaders that they too are active players in monitoring of poverty resources.

Overall, 240 people (152 women) were trained in PGME skills. From the training, it was evident that while initially monitoring was considered as an exclusive responsibility of the top sub-county officials especially the Chairman and the Sub-county chief, room to manouever exists for other stakeholders too to engage in the process. Some Parish Chiefs pointed out to the house that even if they are sometimes involved in monitoring, their findings (and voices thereto) count for nothing. It was, therefore, resolved that all Monitoring and Evaluation processes should include all leaders and both the processes and reports be conducted with a gender lens.

1.10 Training in documentation for change skills

Training in documentation was carried out to enhance the capacity of leaders with skills requisite for generating documented evidences both for accountability and advocacy. Attended by 240 people (158 females), the training the definition of documentation; justifications for documentation; the documentation processes; and the how of documentation.

This training ignited the realization among many leaders that for all the years they depended on their “personal memories rather than having a documented evidence”. One of the women leaders in Nyaravur noted that:



Without documentation, local government leaders are a hard nut to crack. In every meeting, a leader does not need to use “I recall phrase” because it provides the basis for being ridicled by some remarks like “that is an unfounded rumor that lacks evidence”. Having documentary evidences has always provided me room to follow and ask right questions on the right issues using the right evidences” she remarked.

1.11 Training follow-ups by top management

After trainings 1.5-1.7 were accomplished, this follow up was conducted. Its primary aim was to understand the immediate and long term impact of the training on the leaders by assessing the level of use of the skills imparted as well as the challenges the leaders were facing in utilizing the skills that they acquired.

Using joint meetings of all the trainees in the sub county, participatorily, the 248 participants (169 women) discussed the various questions (in line with the above purposes) and what came out were as summarized in Table 1 below.



Participants in Akworo recording issues during Training follow-up

Table 1: Progress in using the acquired skills

Utilization of skills	Challenges faced
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Almost all women leaders sensitized village women leaders on human and women's rights • Women leaders formed Sub county Women Forum as a coordinating unit for their effective advocacy and linkages • Elected leaders of the Women Forum participated in sectoral committee meetings in pursuit of women's prioritized needs • Many village women were encouraged to join functional project committees • Some women have taken on undertaking joint household budgeting with their husbands • Attendance of meetings by women was reported to have increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women leaders are not organized. They often clamour for positions than the goal of improving women's welfare that they should be striving for. • Many technical staffs underlook women leaders as those who are not schooled enough to ask them questions • Limited access to local government information affects mobilization, holding leaders accountable, and advocacy for women's needs • Some of the laws on the conduct of planning meetings as in the sectoral committees hamper effective participation

Objective 2: Effective participation of women in LLG budgeting and planning increased.

2.1 Awareness creation at sub county levels

To enhance effective participation of women and LLG leaders, 6 awareness creation meetings attended by 246 leaders (162 women) were carried out in all the beneficiary Sub-counties. This sensitization aimed at enabling local government leaders understand the essence of decentralization especially with respect to social justice in power centers and poverty eradication. It was also about setting stage for the realization that the effectiveness of decentralization inheres in equitable and collective decision-making, implementation, and monitoring.



PTFs of Drajini S/C pose for a photo after the Sub County awareness creation seminar (photo by Vuni Flavia)

Cardinal herein was the realization that in much as women were 1/3 of the decision-makers number, they were ineffectively representing the interest of their constituencies; an action that is contrary to the reasons for having women leadership within the approved local government structures. Equally, it was considered a manifestation of 'abandoning the electorate' for selfish interest. A Woman Councillor remarked:

If the majority of grassroot women know of what we are being told today we will all loose our positions. From today, I have realized that it is the electorate who are doing us a favir abd not the other way around. It won't take long for grassroot women to know that we have been thriving on their ignorance. The best way out is to actively involve them in the decisions that concerns their lives.

2.2 Budget awareness creation at parish levels

This activity was similar to that conducted under 2.1 above except that it targeted the lower administrative level of local governance; the parishes. The 908 people (565 women) who participated in this awareness creation seminars were made aware of why government adopted decentralized system of governance and how government is respecting its



The Chairman, LC 3 Nyaravur during a budget awareness creation (Photo by Ms.Ochora Fiona)

commitment by sending money for services delivery.

The participants were also made aware of the rights and responsibilities that they, as citizens, have in ensuring that they too benefit from poverty resources decentralized to their local governments. This went hand-in-hand with describing the budget cycle. Thus, the call to participate pro-actively in local decision-making processes was made because it would be the only way not to rely entirely on the “political goodwill” of their elected leaders. To this end, a participant in Drajini remarked:

We used to think that government affairs was only for the people who are employed and elected into government offices. We did not know that as ordinary people we should be involved in what takes place in our local government. From today onwards, our leaders should open up to let us get involved in the management of affairs of our sub county.

2.3 Drama shows at parish levels

That the population has been made aware of the need to participate in local government planning processes, when the various local governments declared the dates of their planning meetings, the project undertook to mobilize the masses to get actively involved.

The services of Ker Alur Cultural Troupe was hired to stage drama shows under the theme “The Lioness that Roars” in

Nebbi district while the Queen of Heaven Women’s club did the same in Yumbe district.



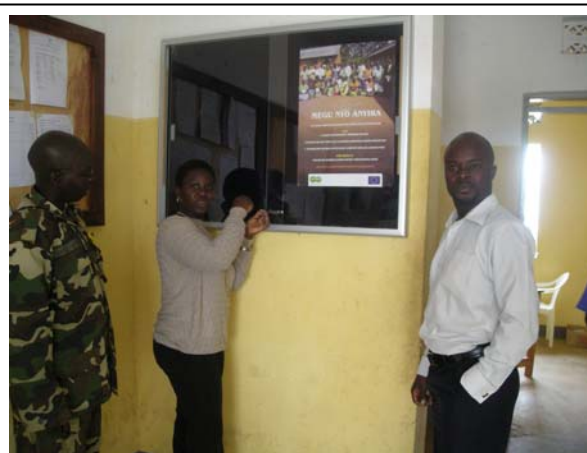
People gathered watching drama in Jupadindo parish in Jangokoro
(Photo by Ms. Ochora)

The mobilization for drama shows were done by the Field Officers in the parishes with the help of the Community Development Officers and women leaders of the sub counties. The plays acted gave a clear depiction of how women are excluded from the planning processes and the need to have them involved at all levels of planning. Further, the drama shows teased out the gendered development initiatives and its disadvantages. Finally, the plays echoed the need for the ordinary people in holding their leaders accountable.

2.4 Production and dissemination of IEC materials

To deepen awareness, key messages, designed together with the parish task Force members, for the posters and brochures were designed in the local languages to respond to and address the current knowledge gap that exists in society in the decision-making processes as well as to act as a catalyst for energizing women's participation. The messages stress the rights of women to voice their concerns to local government leaders in the planning and budgeting processes.

In all, a total of 10,000 leaflets and 2,500 brochures were produced and disseminated both to the trainees and through them to the grassroots communities.



Ms. Ochora demonstrating to the Chairman LC 3 and Sub County Chief of Jangokoro on effective information display.

2.5 Radio talk shows

Only 2 radio talk shows (2 of the 10 hours planned) were conducted in Nebbi with a focus on mobilizing community participation during the 2010/11 planning and budgeting processes and to discuss the implications of the budgets on poverty eradication.

Through phone-ins it was evident that the listenership had high expectations of government support in enabling them to fight poverty. They also attributed the current increasing level of poverty in the region to non-responsiveness (often lack of seriousness) on the part of government to provide enabling environment for improved welfare for poor people. A number of issues also emerged on the increasing level of corruption in local governments that were noted as "government is for leaders and not the ordinary people".

2.6 Sub-County Women Forum

After the Parish Women Forums (see 2.7 below), Sub-county Women Forum composed of 180 women leaders (30 per Sub County) held their meetings (once per sub county) to discuss the core issues that their local governments should fund in the 2010/11 budget. These priorities were derived from the Parish Women Forum's resolutions.

From the prioritized lists, women leaders gained the voice and ownership over the various projects they deemed fit for women's practical and strategic needs. These priorities were what they later developed strategies to lobby government officials to win resource allocations thereto as the Chairperson for Akworo Women's Forum remarked:

In the past, every woman leaders lobbied for her own identified project. Majority of us leaders even found it hard to stand in a council meeting and argue for a particular project simply because we were not identifying the needs of the women we represent. Rather, our selfish interest took center stage. As such, there was a tendency for competition among us women leaders. Some of us even hated each other who were successfully lobbying for funded projects.

With the evolution of the Women Forum right from the parish to the sub county level, it has become easy to identify projects; dialogue over which ones were of paramount importance; and strategize on how to lobby government officials for funding.

No doubt, this financial year women constituencies will not walk out of the approve budget bare handed. We shall achieve some success even if only few projects are accepted because of the limited funds in the sub county.

2.7 Parish Women Forum

The Parish women's forum brought together women leaders at the village and parish levels. The mobilization of the women leaders was done by the Field Officers with the support of the Area councilors and Parish Women Council Chairpersons. The forum meetings were held primarily to enable a women's caucus identify their key priority issues for the 2010/11 plans and budgets of their local governments.

As a result, the 633 women who participated in this activity identified a number of "village women specific priorities" and prioritized them for onward discussions and reprioritization during the Sub county Women's Forum meeting (see 2.6 above).

Importantly, many women leaders felt a sense of belonging and ownership of the local government planning processes. With their plans already agreed upon as women, they considered it easy to forward their needs upwards and hold their leaders at that level accountable for whatever results that will come. A remark by the women leaders in Pakwach sub county alludes to this when they noted that, 'for the first time ever since our election 10 years ago that we as women leaders sat together and agreed upon what women's needs are'.

2.8 Participating in planning processes

Of the planned 23 planning meetings, the Field Officers were able to attend only 14. This was because all the sub counties scheduled their meetings around the same time. In these meetings, the Field Officer provided adequate technical support to women leaders especially where technical staffs resort to jaargons aimed at making the public rubber stamp their needs.

2.9 Sectoral Committee meetings

That the priorities of the parishes determined the sub county priorities, it became important to sell women's priorities for funding. Given that the new planning guidelines set more precedence at the sectoral committee levels, it was inevitable for the identified women leaders to attend the various sectoral committee meetings in their local government. The identified women leaders strategized their participation in the sectoral committees where their priority projects fell (especially in production, community services, finance, education and sports, health and environment, and technical services).

In these meetings, the women were able to push their interests for consideration in budget allocations. As a result, a number of projects (see 2.1.3) that were championed by women leaders received budget allocations.

2.9 Inter district Exchange visits

This activity was not conducted due to lack of funds.

Objective 3: Local governments are transparent and accountable to their constituencies in general and to women in particular.

3.1 Develop and disseminate popular versions booklets of approved plans and budgets

An approved budget is the "sub county expenditure bible". Thus, the availability of the budget documents to as many people as possible contrary to the past practices of having only 3 copies was envisaged would increase sub county transparency on the one hand and empower other leaders (women leaders inclusive) to hold each other accountable for their sector budgets.

However, this activity was delayed because many local governments did not adhere to the deadlines set for approving their plans and budgets. Besides, even those sub counties that approved their plans and budgets early enough lacked other copies (apart from the single copy that is used by the Chairperson) to share with AFARD. As a result, the Field Officers have now compiled the popular versions of the approved plans and submitted them for translation into the local languages of the sub counties.

3.2 Erect bulletin boards

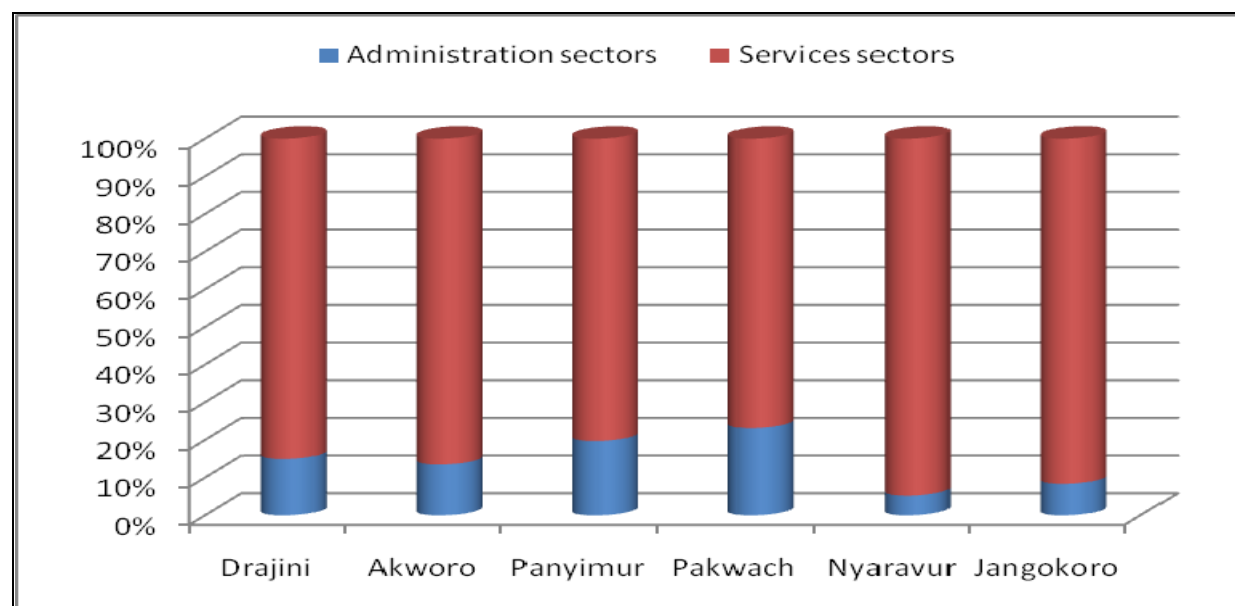
In order to increase access to information, 12 bulletin boards were procured and installed (2 at AFARD, 2 at the district local governments, 6 at the project sub counties and 2 at the District Women Council offices). The beneficiaries are now displaying information for public consumption on these bulletin boards.

3.3 Conduct budget analysis of approved plans and budget

Given the fact that many sub county officials doctor planned priorities to suit their interest, a joint post-hoc budget analysis provides a basis for providing a budget feedback to the population as well as ascertaining the responsiveness of the budget to poverty reduction. This exercise proves whether the approved budget is for the benefit of leaders (when the share of administration sectors is more than that of the services sectors) or it is pro-poor people (when the inverse is true).

Guided by the approved budget for the financial year 2009/10, the PFT together with their sub county leaders conducted this exercise and its evidences are summarized in the figure below.

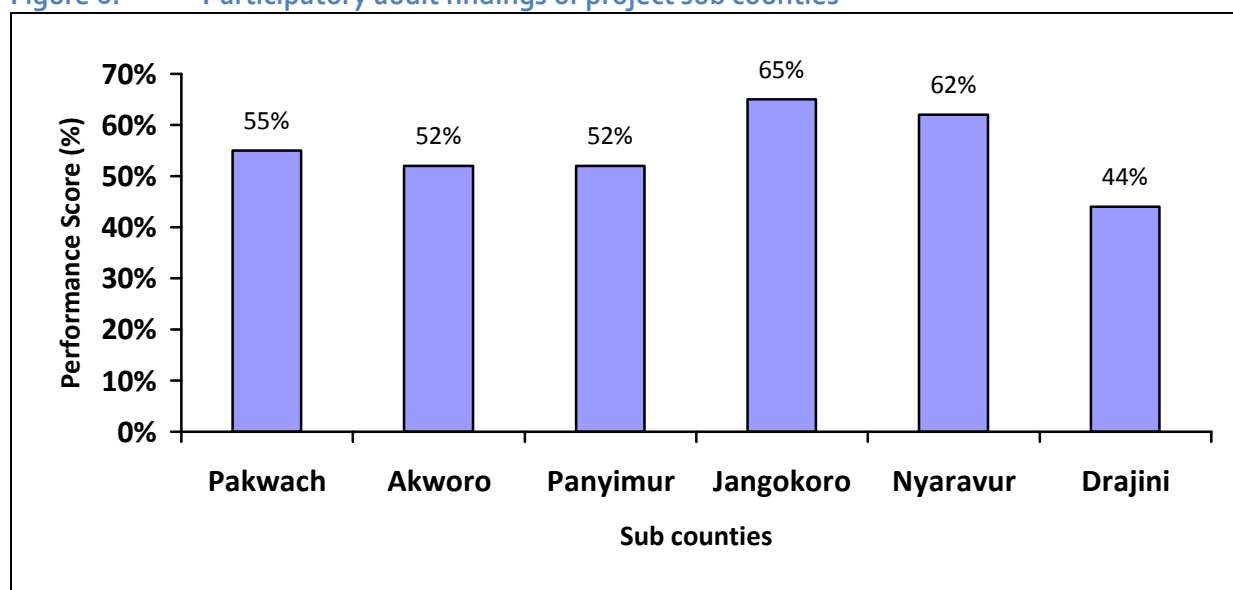
Figure 5: Project sub county's approved budgets showing Services Vs Administration Sectors



3.4 Training in Gender Responsiveness Audit

A total of 240 leaders (153 women) were trained in Gender Responsiveness Audit (GRA) skills. This training aimed at equipping women and local government leaders with the skills of undertaking periodically an audit exercise of the planning and budgeting processes as well as the performance of the plans and budgets. so as to be transparent and or hold their leaders responsible and accountable was conducted. Thus, the training focused on what GRA looks for, Actors in GRA, timing of GRA, how to conduct GRA, and utilization of GRA findings, among others. However, by practically using available information from sub counties, a mock audit showed (see figure ???) that many of the project sub counties had non-gender responsive plans and budgets.

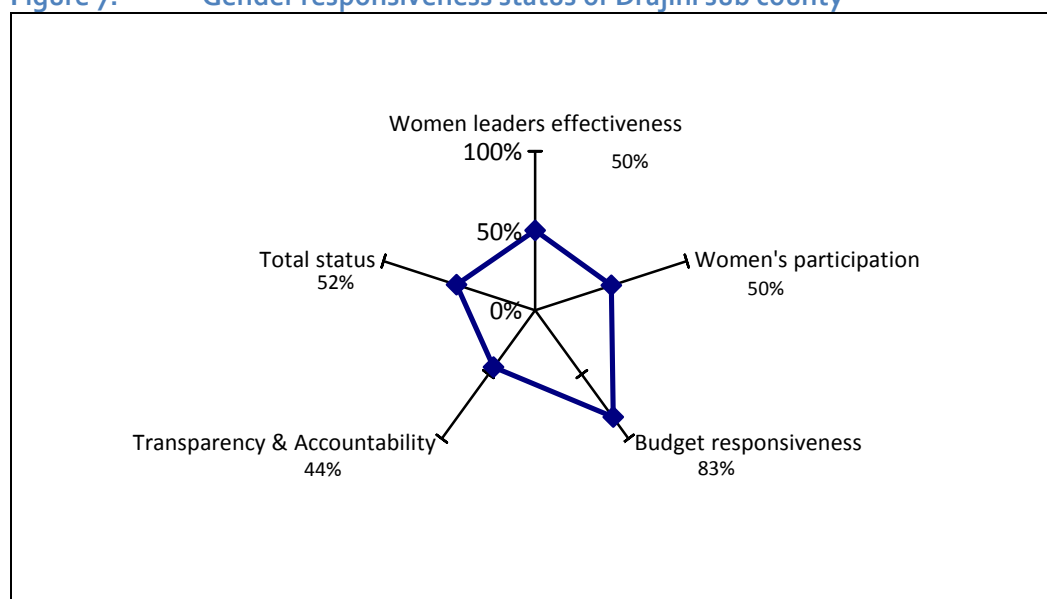
Figure 6: Participatory audit findings of project sub counties



3.5 Conduct participatory plan and budget tracking

Local government plans are approved by July. Quarterly reports according to the output driven financing approach is required. As such, in Drajini sub county (and not in the other 5 sub counties due to financial constraints), a budget audit for the quarter was conducted by women and local government leaders. The finding of this tracking exercise shown below reveals that although (i) government is still unaccountable to the masses in its jurisdiction; and (ii) both women leaders and grassroots women are less engaged in the budget cycle; (iii) budget sensitivity to gender issues is promising. It, therefore, calls for a concerted effort for improving the gender insensitivity status by filling the gaps hampering the effectiveness of i) & ii).

Figure 7: Gender responsiveness status of Drajini sub county



3.6 Information sharing meetings at parish level

This activity was not conducted due to lack of funds.

3.7 LLG Advocacy meetings

This activity was not conducted due to lack of funds.

3.8 Production of T-shirts and caps for visibility

Overall, 250 T-shirts and caps bearing AFARD and European Commission logos were produced and distributed to the trainees, trainers, AFARD staffs and other local leaders. Doing so improved on the project visibility.

2.1.3 Projects achievements

To date, the project has been able to achieve the following results:

- For the first time ever, a Forum that brings together Women Councillors and Women Council Executives have been established in the project sub counties. The Women Forum has helped harmonize the operations of women leaders. It has also provided a platform for effective coordination of women's issues. Besides, through the Forum, the traditional bickering of women leaders as to "who is who" has been avoided.
- Women Council leaders who used not to attend meetings together with the women councilors now sit together to discuss issues that affects their electorate –the women constituency.
- The women leaders also noted that the provision of bicycles to them enhanced their mobilization of grassroots women; something that is gradually leading to having many women participate in the planning processes.
- Local government political leaders in the project sub counties did acknowledge that they only used to tag accountability to only financial management. With the various trainings, they now appreciate that transparency and accountability entails co-management of decision-making processes.
- The engagement approach adopted by Women Forum secured women affirmative action budget allocations for their strategic gender needs. In Drajini sub county, for instance, specific targeting of improved seeds was achieved. In Pakwach sub county, funds were allocated for the renovation of the labour ward and the purchase of an ambulance bicycle. These engendered budgets were due to the physical participation of women leaders in sectoral committee meetings and lobbying through councilors.

Table 2: List of priorities approved by Sub Counties

Nyaravur Sub County -Health centre and equipment of the existing health facilities with mattresses, bed sheets, beds, bath shelters for women in paminya, -Improved seeds for women, especially those that will save people fast enough -Increase the number of women who will benefit from NAADS programmes like hybrid, poultry, seedlings -Train women in ways that can generate income especially strengthening women groups -Nutrition education	Pakwach Sub County -Renovation of adult literacy classes -Provide improved seeds like maize, cassava, beans -Home education, clean environment for women and families in all the parishes and villages -Provide transport facilities for women especially bicycle allowance -Renovate maternity wards
Akworo -Giving talks to girls at school levels -Adult literacy for women especially to aid the women leaders -Provide seeds for tree planting for women	Jangokoro -Equipment of maternity wards and construction of aid posts -provision of safe water in all the parishes (at least one) -Functional Adult Literacy classes at all parish levels -Provide improved seeds to women on both individual and group basis like beans, maize ,Irish potatoes -Support tree planting
Panyimur -Support Functional Adult Literacy -Provide improved seeds for better and faster yields -Tree planting for women and men -Train parishes in improved planting and storage methods	Drajini Sub County -Maternity wards at Dramba health centres and a placenta pit at Mongoyo. -Improved seeds -Trainings in HIV/AIDS, Family planning and other relevant ones

2.1.4 Challenges faced by the project

The project is also faced with the following challenges:

- The timing of the project disbursement of funds is far behind the local government planning and budgeting timeframe. This has delimited the effectiveness of the project engagement in the budget cycle as in this year, women leaders had to catch up late when most of the preliminary budget cycle activities were accomplished.
- While the sub counties have a Women Forum that helps coordinate women leaders operations, no such a structure exists at the district level. As such, there is a weak linkage between as well as technical backstopping by district women leadership and those below them. This has resulted into weak information flow.

- Many women are illiterate and do not effectively participate in LLG meetings that are conducted in English language. They prefer not to attend than be there and understanding nothing.
- It was also observed that most local government plans and budgets lack gender disaggregated data from which comparison of “who is benefiting from poverty resources” can be made.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the project has taken off well and did achieve most of its planned activities. Many women and local government leaders are appreciating the fact that they used to single handedly manage decentralization with effects of the exclusion of the masses and the perpetuation of gendered development. What remains important is the pursuit for co-governance between women leaders and other local government leaders so that government services delivery reach out to both women and men.

2.2 Contracts awarded

During the reporting, only two contracts were awarded to:

- a) YAJASO Enterprises worth €15,373 for the supply of bicycles after a market survey.
- b) Ker Alur Cultural Troup worth €5,192.3 for drama shows through a head hunting approach.

2.3 Action plan

Table 3 Activities for 2009-10

Year 2	Semester 1						Semester 2						
Activity	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Implementing body
Objective 2: Effective participation of women in local government planning and budgeting management increased													
2.5 produce and disseminate IEC in the local language -FISM/FOs identify core messages -FOs collect field messages -PD/FISM design materials -FOs disseminate materials and reports													AFARD
2.6 Hold radio talk shows to mobilize women -FISM/FOs identify core messages -Hired professional &FOs collect field messages -Hired professionals and FOs design materials -FISM/FOs coordinates air shows -FOs assess material use													AFARD
2.7 Facilitate Sub County women forums -FOs mobilize women leaders -women leaders schedule forum days -women leaders hold forum and FOs attend -WLs and FOs write forum report for follow ups													AFARD
2.8 Support parish women forums -FOs mobilize women leaders -WLs schedule forum days -WLs hold forum and FOs attend -WLs and FOs write forum reports for follow ups													AFARD
2.9 Participate in planning meetings at LLG -FISM/FOs secure dates for meetings -FISM/FOs attend meetings -FOs write reports													AFARD
2.10 Support PTF leaders to engage with LLG sectoral committees -WLs secure dates for meetings -WLs attend meetings -WLs write reports													AFARD
2.11 conduct inter-district exchange visits -FISM/FOs schedule dates for visits -FISM/FOs arrange for visits -FISM/FOs carry out visit -F.Os write reports													AFARD
Objective 3: Local governments are transparent and accountable to their constituencies in general and to women in particular													
3.1 Develop and disseminate popular versions booklets of approved plans and budgets -FISM/FOs secure copies of plans and budgets -FISM/FOs identify interpreters -PD/FAM signs agreement with interpreters -Interpreters translate plans and budgets													AFARD

[illegible]

3 PARTNERS AND OTHER CO-OPERATION

3.1 Assessment of the relationship between the formal partners of this action.

Not applicable.

3.2 Assessment of the relationship between your organization and state authorities in the action countries? How has this relationship affected the action.

AFARD has a cordial working relationship with the district and lower local governments where the project is operational. This is in part exhibited by the agreement the various local governments has in having their Community Development Officers (CDOs) as trained trainers for the project. And given that in sub counties CDOs are charged with gender issues, it became strategic to ensure that as insiders they too influence the budgeting processes in favor of gender equality.

3.3 Where applicable, describe your relationship with any other organization involved in implementing the action

- **Associate (s).**
- **Sub-contractors.**
- **Final beneficiaries and target groups.**

AFARD works closely with the women leaders in ensuring that they reach out to grassroots women both to solicit their views, provide feedbacks, and engage in joint implementation and monitoring of government projects.

- **Other third parties involved**

Linkages have been built with ActionAid ganda (Nebbi office) to help strengthen backstopping support of district women leadership to lower local government levels. Further, a cordial working relationship is also maintained with the District NGO Forums that act as advocates of CSOs and have oversight roles on what local governments do.

3.4 Where applicable, outline any links you have developed with other actions

AFARD has learnt lessons from this project that will guide its operationalization of the good governance component of the West Nile Development Initiative (WENDI) programme. Equally, the project is in close contact with Support to Decentralization programme.

3.5 If your organization has received previous EC grants in view of strengthening the same target group, in how far has this action been able to build upon/ complement the previous one(s) List all previous relevant EC grants)

AFARD benefited from the EC funded Civil Society Capacity Building Programme. This project has helped with deepening the understanding of 'local government budget manoeuvres' as well as 'building alliance of women leaders' in order to secure poverty resources for women constituency.

4 Visibility

How is the visibility of the European Union contribution being ensured in the action?

In order to promote EC visibility in the project the following were done:

- A project letterhead with EC-AFARD logo was printed. This is used for all communications concerning the project.
- All project documents are produced with EC-AFARD logo and an acknowledgement of EC funding for the same embedded.
- In all training and meeting sessions, EC support towards the project is acknowledged.
- The project also produced and distributed T-shirts and caps bearing EC-AFARD logo.
- All the bicycles that were procured and distributed to women and local government leaders involved in the project were printed on EC.

The European Commission may wish to publicise the results of actions. Do you have any objection to this report being published on EuropeAid co-operation office website? If so, please state your objection here

No objection

Name of the contact person for the action:

Signature:

Location:

Date report due:

Date report sent: